This study revisits Yuka Nakamura's (2004) Master’s thesis, “Finding a Way, Finding the Self: The Journeys of Nine Physical Education Students Pursuing ‘Non-Traditional’ Paths.” Semi-structured interviews were conducted with kinesiology students of self-identified “East Asian” descent. Stereotypical perceptions from peers and family members about the participants’ program are still commonplace in contrast to “realities.” According to participants, their parents did not see an inverse relationship between academic achievement and involvement in sport, and some parents served as the initial catalyst for their children’s sport participation. While many family members accepted the participants’ career paths, some parents had begun to second-guess the program quality if the participants’ peers in other programmes appear to have achieved more immediate success in more traditional programmes of study. Overall, a number of results from this study are similar to Nakamura’s (2004) findings despite the contextual changes in the faculty name and its demographic patterns.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Yuka Nakamura’s (2004, p. 1) Master’s thesis, which I revisit here in order to provide an updated comparison of the journey of East Asian students towards Kinesiology and Physical Education, begins with “a reflection, an observation, and an assumption.” Nakamura (2004, p. 1) describes her struggle to find a research topic and discusses how a simple assignment for her methodology course turned into a “pessimistic inward journey.” The question, “How did I get here?” (Nakamura, 2004, p. 1) led to her thesis topic about the process of becoming a physical education student. My qualitative methodology course also spurred me to begin to reflect on my own journey. Though my bachelor’s degree was in Political Science, a social science at the University of British Columbia (UBC), I had not considered “reflexivity” as a methodological procedure. Quite often in my undergraduate courses, students were told to distance their personal, normative politics from the positivistic study of the scientific theories behind them. Nevertheless, students were asked to connect the theories to practice in some assignments.

In my first year of undergraduate studies at UBC, the February reading week was extended due to the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Upon returning to my classes, we had extended discussions about patriotism, pride and nationalism generated by the media and perhaps reflected in society. As a company that takes pride in its Canadian origins, Tim Hortons featured the commercial entitled “Welcome Home” during the 2010 Olympics. The commercial showed the reunion of an African family in their adopted Canadian homeland (Chan, 2014). This 2010 commercial built on a similar Tim Hortons commercial broadcast during the 2006 Olympics, entitled “Proud Fathers,” which showed a first-generation Chinese immigrant, his son Jimmy, and his grandson Tommy. The grandfather surprises Jimmy by attending Tommy’s hockey games, as flashback scenes allude to his past outward disdain for hockey – displayed in the quote: “Jimmy, you must study harder...not just hockey all the time!” The creator of the advertisement, Paul Wales, noted a common strand among first-generation Chinese immigrants: “You work hard and you work first, and
that’s what your life should be about” (Keller, 2006). From my own position as a second-generation Chinese-Canadian, I partially share the same experiences as viewers who claim that “someone was looking right into my family” (Keller, 2006).

Although I was raised to believe that education is of utmost importance and that education should take priority over sports, with my enrolment in the graduate Department of Exercise Sciences I have come to realize that education and sports are not mutually exclusive. My journey to Exercise Sciences is not a traditional path. As a Political Science undergraduate, I was expected to take the Law School Admission Test and enrol in a Bachelor of Laws programme. While I still enjoy learning about lawmakers and best practices for policy formation, I do not enjoy the long hours of study necessary to make a career in law. During my time at UBC, a friend from high school told me that the Faculty of Human Kinetics offered a limited number of courses in sociology of sport. This friend – who is also a second-generation Chinese-Canadian like some other students from my southeast Vancouver high school – chose to enter Human Kinetics with a career in physiotherapy in mind. Although the demographics of my high school honours classes – where over 90 percent of the students were of East Asian heritage – have to some extent validated stereotypes of Asians as high achievers, I recognize that there are many within-group differences since all of these individuals had and have different interests.

Having taken several sociology of sport courses at UBC, where I was able to combine my interests in sport and politics, my journey has taken me to a Master’s programme in the sociocultural study of physical culture. As a result of my studies at the University of Toronto, I am attentive to the need for open-minded, empirically-driven research, rather than reaching expected conclusions by reinforcing my own experiences as an East Asian student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto (U of T KPE). Nakamura (2004) explained that, at the time of her research, Asian students were traditionally over-represented in mathematical, engineering, and health sciences programmes and under-represented in physical education and kinesiology programmes at many Canadian universities. Her research suggested that the few Asian students enrolled in physical education degree programmes were there as a consequence
of a successful process of negotiation with parents who were not initially supportive of their degree choice. Although statistical data on ethnicity are not collected at the University of Toronto, some U of T KPE faculty members have observed an increase in enrolment of students of Asian heritage since Nakamura’s study. Even though the university and City of Toronto have also become even more ethnically diverse in the past decade, and many students of Asian heritage do still enrol in mathematical, engineering and health sciences programmes, the increase in Asian enrolment in Kinesiology / Physical Education raises the possibility that it may no longer result from successful negotiations with some parents.

This study is an attempt to determine if the journey to U of T KPE is now seen less as a “non-traditional” path, and whether it is now being recognized by families more as a credible academic programme than at the time of Nakamura’s research, when it was called the Faculty of Physical Education and Health. During the same period of increasing enrolment (both overall and also apparently in terms of East Asian heritage students), the name of the Faculty was changed from “Physical Education and Health” to “Kinesiology and Physical Education” in 2012 after broad consultations with faculty staff and students about the name of the programme. More pragmatically, the objectives of the name change were reportedly to better position the Faculty for research funding and recruitment of high-performance athletes and high school students with high marks (Faculty of Physical Education and Health Faculty Council, 2011). Some U of T KPE faculty members have observed that, despite having essentially the same curriculum, the undergraduate degree programme has become more biophysically oriented as a result of the name change, which took place under a new Dean from a biophysical academic background. However, the degree remains generalist, with required and elective courses in the sociocultural, behavioural and biophysical disciplines relating to sport and physical activity.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study focuses on the journeys of male and female students of East Asian descent in the degree programmes at U of T KPE. Similar to the objective of Nakamura’s
(2004, p. 4) thesis, this study is an attempt to explore the “various obstacles, pressures, and support systems that surround the students, and the negotiations and compromises” that are involved in their path to a degree from the U of T KPE faculty. I provide an update to Nakamura’s (2004, p. 4) study of the “intersections of sport and ethnicity” in light of changing demographics in Toronto, shifting societal views of multicultural integration and inclusion, and a significant increase in stories of “Asian” identity. Nakamura (2004, p. 5) argued that, “understanding how these participants became and remained physically active may shed light on how to promote sport and physical activity participation among their peers.”

Through interviews with students, this study represents an attempt to determine if the journey has changed, and if there are differences in the experiences of U of T KPE students of East Asian heritage today compared to those in Nakamura’s (2004) study. More specifically, the following thematic research questions are investigated: Has the “model minority” stereotype changed? Have the careers that may be pursued with a kinesiology or physical education degree become more acceptable to the students and their parents? Is there still a negotiation process with parents involved with regard to sport and sport-related programmes, and with peers who may follow more traditional education and career paths?

**Overview of the Thesis**

In Chapter 2, I expand on Nakamura’s (2004) literature review by analyzing relevant articles, published primarily between 2004 and 2015, that focus on salient themes such as changing perceptions of multiculturalism, demographic pattern shifts in Toronto, the multiplicity of “East Asian” values, physical education policies and curricula, and the framework surrounding Asian critical race theory. In Chapter 3, I outline the methodology: the rationale for the approach taken, recruitment process, data collection, and data analysis procedures. In Chapter 4, I present a profile of the 12 participants in the study. In Chapter 5, I present the results of their interviews, categorized into two different but thematically interconnected sections: the first part compares the process of parental
negotiations with those reported in Nakamura's (2004) study, and the second part focuses on perceptions and realities of being U of T KPE students. In Chapter 6, I discuss the findings, summarize the study, and connect the results to past and future research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter expands on Nakamura’s (2004) literature review on ethnicity, identity, and sport. In this review of literature, I primarily cite articles published between 2004 and 2015 that focus on salient themes relevant to this study and East Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, such as changing perceptions of multiculturalism, demographic pattern shifts in Toronto, the multiplicity of “Asian” values, physical education policies and curricula, and the framework surrounding Asian critical race theory. The literature review begins with an examination of Nakamura’s (2004) broad-reaching thesis entitled *Finding a Way, Finding the Self: The Journeys of Nine Physical Education Students Pursuing ‘Non-Traditional Paths’* – the research that most informs this thesis.

Nakamura (2004) conducted semi-structured one-on-one interviews with nine participants of Asian descent and found that many of them “negotiated” with their parents in order to depart from more traditional educational and career paths in order to pursue their interests in physical activity and physical education. Of these participants, six were East Asian, one Southeast Asian, and the remaining two were South Asian. Nakamura (2004) noted that the recruitment process was difficult and the majority of individuals who participated in her study did not identify with the initial categories (“South Asian,” “Southeast Asian,” and “East Asian”) used for recruitment. Regarding these categories, Nakamura (2004) emphasized the problematic nature of such large, arbitrary population blocs that have a tendency to minimize within-group differences. However, the premise of Nakamura’s (2004) research relied on unifying these categories of Asian-Canadians.

In a physical education faculty that includes comparatively few “visible minorities,” it is understandable to pool together all students of Asian heritage in an attempt to achieve more significant results from a larger sample size. Nakamura (2004) recognized that the relatively small sample size would not make the findings easily generalizable to larger populations. Nonetheless, Nakamura’s (2004) thesis contributes meaningfully to our understandings of Asian-Canadians in sport. Building on her (Nakamura, 2002) study of
Muslim-Canadian women in sport, Nakamura (2004) reviewed a body literature on South Asian groups, though much of that literature was from the British or American context. In comparison, Nakamura (2004) found little research on East Asian and Southeast Asian groups. (That literature did begin to increase as Nakamura found more sources regarding “Chineseness” and the identities of Chinese-Canadians for her 2009 doctoral thesis.) As with South Asian groups, many of the literature review sources provided – with the notable exception of Tirone’s (2000) research, which helped to shape Nakamura’s multiple-identity framework – were not carried out in the Canadian context.

In her co-edited book, Race and Sport in Canada a decade later, Nakamura reflects that “studies of sport in Canada remain largely devoid of conversations about race” (Joseph, Darnell & Nakamura, 2012, p. 2). Due to these gaps in literature and the lack of official statistics on race in Canadian universities, Nakamura (2004) was obliged to rely on anecdotal claims about the number of students of Asian heritage, and assumptions regarding the “traditional paths” taken by these students before conducting her study. Nakamura (2004) mentioned the “model minority” but neither discussed critical race theory nor provided a thorough assessment of the context behind stereotypes pertaining to expectations of high academic achievement among students of East Asian heritage. While recognizing the limitations in recruitment and the small target demographic, Nakamura’s (2004) study attempted to cover a wide range of topics.

Although the “model minority” discourse can be applied to students of South Asian heritage – and Nakamura (2004) initially approached the study in a manner which “implicitly reflected the ‘model minority’ stereotype” (p. 150) – some of the other study components are much more salient to individual ethnic groups or individual participants. Themes ranged from the impact of religious beliefs, such as fasting for Ramadan, to parental expectations of femininity (such as not looking too muscular), to the participants’ understandings of identity, which ranged from feeling distinct to feeling more connected to their own ethnocultural communities. Ultimately, it is the strands of family influence that connect among the participants of different ethnic group backgrounds, with many participants needing to “negotiate” with their parents in order to pursue physical activity...
and physical education. However, Nakamura (2004) found that such negotiations were not as lengthy as she had anticipated. By using an inductive approach to research, Nakamura (2004) was open to surprises in her research and reflected extensively on her initial assumptions, brought upon by the lack of research in this area of sport and ethnicity in Canada. Overall, Nakamura’s (2004) ambitious thesis provided many important findings, and is the basis of comparison for this thesis.

Updates to Nakamura’s (2004) Study

In 2004, Nakamura found that the majority of research tended to use the assimilationist framework, with South Asian groups in Britain being the main focus of this research. In the scant literature that Nakamura (2004) found on the physical activity and sport experiences of East Asians, the studies also employed an assimilationist framework and were often too methodologically rigid to account for complex and dynamic changes in the individual beyond a continuum from the old culture to the new culture (Zieff, 2000; Nogawa & Suttie, 1984). Nakamura (2004) did examine the multiculturalism framework, but did not find many relevant studies pertaining to multiculturalism and sport relating to the immigrant experience in Canada. Only two studies reviewed in Nakamura’s (2004) thesis focused specifically on the complex and dynamic nature of identity formation, but they documented the experiences of South Asian teenagers and young adults (Tirone, 2000; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000).

“Assimilation”

In her section on assimilation, Nakamura (2004, p. 12) notes: “Our Canadian sensibilities immediately frown upon the notion, equating assimilation with the US ‘melting pot’” as opposed to Canada’s cultural mosaic. Nevertheless, Nakamura (2004) points to the importance of the “misunderstood” assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) due to its “multidirectional” view of the relationship between immigrants and their new country. Numerous recent US studies use Gordon’s classic assimilation theory, and variants such as the segmented assimilation theory, to measure the integration of immigrant adolescents (e.g. Waters et al., 2010; Xie & Greenman, 2011; Greenman & Xie, 2008). Models based in
assimilation theory are relevant in contexts where integration through assimilation is the societal standard for new immigrants. The US studies emphasize the value of differential processes of assimilation; for example, results that highlight decreasing gaps between groups instead of focusing on the consequences of assimilation (Xie & Greenman, 2011; Greenman & Xie, 2008). As intriguing as their findings may be about the converging pattern of many ethnic groups in terms of the outcomes of education and delinquency, de-emphasizing a focus on the consequences of assimilation itself involves making the problematic assumption that assimilation frameworks are the only lens through which to view immigrant populations.

“Multiculturalism: An Assimilation Alternative?”

Multiculturalism as a lens is important in the Canadian context; it was introduced as an official Canadian policy in 1971 and later enshrined in the 1985 Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada (Government of Canada, 2015). In Canada’s federalist system, the Departments of Citizenship / Immigration and Multiculturalism are firmly within the jurisdiction of the federal government. In 2014, there were four cabinet positions associated with Citizenship and Immigration in Canada: the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Minister for Multiculturalism, and the fourth for the Minister of State specializing in Multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 2014). The significance of multiculturalism in the Canadian political climate is evident in that two cabinet positions are devoted specifically to multiculturalism under a Conservative government.

Multiculturalism is complex, even in terms of its definition. Multiculturalism does not necessarily imply “first-generation immigrants” or those counted under the Statistics Canada term, “visible minorities.” Instead, there are many new immigrants from different self-identified ethnocultural communities, some of whom are considered “white” such as the Irish in Toronto who left Ireland during the recent economic turmoil.

My overall focus is on diversity as a component of multiculturalism, an approach that seeks equitable policies for all. Parts of Kymlicka’s (2012) Multiculturalism Policy Index are useful in order to operationalize multiculturalism. Kymlicka (2012, p. 9) acknowledges
that there is “no universally accepted definition” of multiculturalism and, thus, it is problematic to narrowly provide a single meaning due to its inherently subjective nature. In the Multiculturalism Policy Index, Western countries are ranked in terms of their government’s affirmation of multiculturalism, adoption of multiculturalism in their school curricula, ethnic representation in the media, funding for ethnic organizations to carry out cultural activities, and affirmative action for underprivileged groups, among other criteria (Kymlicka, 2012). As with the critique of research that assumes an assimilation framework without examining the consequences of assimilation, however, I also examine normative views of multiculturalism.

In her section titled “Multiculturalism: Assimilation Alternative?” Nakamura (2004, p. 16) critiques Canadian multiculturalism as a “neo-assimilationist” policy – one that celebrates the depoliticized topics of language, food, and dress, but neglects the overall acceptance of minority populations in institutions that are not adequately representative of minority views. Scholars who are concerned that the current values are not inclusive enough critique the liberal form of multiculturalism as “dance, dress, and dining” (Srivastava, 2007, p. 291) or “Taco Tuesdays” (Rothenberg, 2006), which ultimately help to reproduce “inequitable educational outcomes” (James, 2005, p. 1) and barriers despite their rhetoric of “inclusion” (Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008). There are also critiques of multiculturalism by social conservatives who argue that multiculturalism causes “self-segregating” ethnic divisions and that “national unity in Canada is threatened” as a result (Gregg, 2006, p. 41).

In the decade since Nakamura’s thesis, there has been backlash against multiculturalism in Europe. In France, for example, the extreme right-wing, anti-immigrant National Front party has representation in the French National Assembly, the European Parliament, and various regional councils of France; and its presidential candidate Marine Le Pen garnered nearly 18 percent of the vote in the 2012 election (Fouquet, 2012). Capitalizing on the opportunity to blame immigrants for civil unrest in France, then charismatic leader of the National Front Jean-Marie Le Pen called for the immediate deportation of arrested immigrant rioters, even if they were naturalized French citizens
Therefore, it is not surprising that the major geographic bases for National Front support are, according to one slightly dated publication, the very suburbs where the mainstream French population “live in daily fear of the ‘devilish’ immigrants just beyond the periphery of their neighbourhood” and thus “express their anger and resentment by voting for the National Front” (Brechon & Mitra, 1992, p. 70-71). In Britain, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron argues that “state multiculturalism” has “failed” (BBC News, 2011). Prominent British Labour commentator, Trevor Phillips, also claims that a multiculturalism policy would result in “sleepwalking towards segregation” (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010, p. 44). Chancellor Angela Merkel has expressed similar views in Germany, claiming “This [multicultural] approach has failed, utterly failed” (Weaver, 2010). Overall, extreme right-wing parties have proliferated in some European countries based on xenophobic sentiment, and there is a trend towards normalizing state racism (Des Neiges Leonard, 2015).

Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate to suggest that Canadian multicultural policies would follow the same trend as the recent European backlash. Despite the criticisms of the shortcomings of Canadian multicultural policy, the discourse on immigration from lawmakers has taken a comparatively less xenophobic tone and more of a fiscally neoliberal tone (Keung, 2013). There has been a recent shift away from “family reunification” to more opportunities for those who contribute to the “economic class” (Keung, 2013). In relation to this neoliberalism, the initial stage of the “healthy immigrant effect” is considered to be a desirable trait; it describes a phenomenon whereby immigrants from less-affluent regions with higher levels of “mortality and morbidity indicators,” such as parts of rural China, still possess “significant health advantages” in comparison with native-born populations (Kennedy, McDonald, & Biddle, 2006, p. 1). The Canadian usage of the term, “healthy immigrant effect,” dates back to the mid-1990s, when it was used interchangeably with the “healthy immigrant selection effect,” to emphasize the pre-medical screening of potential immigrants (Chen, Ng, & Wilkins, 1996). However, the second stage of the “healthy immigrant effect” is a decline in health after acculturating in a new environment, particularly if there is social pressure to assimilate
(Guendelman, Cheryan, & Monin, 2011). Although Chinese, Japanese, and Korean origin immigrants in the United States have the lowest obesity and overweight rates (Oza-Frank & Narayan, 2010), those of East Asian heritage have comparably low physical activity levels in Canada (Bryan, Tremblay, Perez, Ardern, & Katzmarzyk, 2006; Kukaswadia, Pickett, & Janssen, 2014).

Overall, there is conflicting evidence from measurable indicators of health. Regarding multiculturalism as a whole, there is similarly conflicting evidence about its success. Despite the rhetoric and differentiation from assimilation, multiculturalism remains a subjective concept. There may still be social pressure to assimilate, though it depends on the location and it affects groups differently based on ethnicity and income. The following section examines more recent research concerning East Asians and physical activity.

**East Asian Views of Leisure and Physical Activity**

There are numerous possible reasons for the low physical activity levels of East Asians in comparison to other ethnic groups. One explanation is the role of leisure in Confucian-inspired societies. At the individual level, Ap (2004, p. 13) suggests that “Asians generally have a negative attitude of leisure” unless it is for more than self-gain. In traditional Confucian-inspired Chinese culture, physical ability is contrasted negatively with mental ability, as seen in the proverb “strong limbs, simple mind” (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008, p. 36). In traditional Confucian-inspired culture, leisure is viewed through “moral and ethical criteria” (Kang & Davenport, 2009, p. 184). Supported by Hyun’s (2001) suggestion that lifestyles differ between the country of origin and diaspora communities while Confucian values remain intact, Canadian diaspora communities may be expected to have a “cultural preference for passivity rather than activity” and a focus on educational pursuits (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004, p. 384; Dong & Yi-Kook, 2010). Chinese immigrants in Canada have taken more of an interest in passive activities such as watching sports rather than actively participating in sport (Walker, Halpenny, Spiers, & Deng, 2011).
Despite the devaluation of personal physical activity in traditional East Asian values, acculturation can change participation rates, especially in leisure activities that are popular among the majority group culture. However, these data do not show a steady increase in positive attitudes toward leisure in correlation with the process of acculturation, as highly-acculturated Chinese display a much more negative view of leisure, in comparison to Anglo-Canadians, than lower-acculturated Chinese (Deng, Walker, & Swinnerton, 2005). Perhaps there is a honeymoon effect where, in the process of acculturation, the novelty of leisure would erode as more emphasis is placed on work and sustaining enough income for the future. Nevertheless, leisure attitudes may become more positive while the Chinese economy booms and more affluent immigrants are able to afford more leisure time (Stodolska, Shinew, Floyd, & Walker, 2014). One weakness of this projection is its implicit assertion that generations of Asian immigrants were poor when they came to North America. Although East Asian immigration to Canada has existed for well over a century and historically featured poor labourers from Guangdong province, some families of wealthy business people migrated from Hong Kong before the British handover of the territory to China in 1997 (The Vancouver Sun, 2007; Mitchell, 1993). Furthermore, Chinese immigration after the handover of Hong Kong has primarily been from Mainland China, with many of these immigrants bringing “tremendous human capital” in terms of education and wealth (Guo, 2013, p. 103).

**Demographic Shifts**

According to a 2010 projection, Canada’s “visible minority” population is expected to increase from 16 percent in 2006 to 31 percent in 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Canada’s foreign-born population is also expected to increase from 20 percent in 2006 to 26 percent in 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Toronto is expected to be made up of 78 percent first- and second-generation Canadians by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2011). The “visible minority” population of Toronto is expected to increase from 43 percent to 63 percent by 2031, with ethnic Chinese currently making up the second-largest “visible minority” group at 1.1 million residents (Statistics Canada, 2011).
At the University of Toronto, demographic data from the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement show that 78 percent of first-year students sampled selected a background “other than white” (University of Toronto, 2012). When Nakamura (2004) conducted her research on Asian students, this figure stood at 55 percent (University of Toronto, 2005). There are no official statistics on the ethnocultural backgrounds of kinesiology and physical education students at Canadian universities, but faculty members with whom I have spoken at the University of Toronto have observed a similar increase in diversity of the student body in the past decade.

Despite this perceived increase in diversity at the departmental level, Donnelly and Kidd (2014) claim that those who become heavily involved in sport and ultimately compete in the Olympics are “less and less representative of Canada every year,” and while they were referring primarily to the social class background of the athletes, the “Whiteness” of (primarily Winter) Olympic athletes is even more evident. Although Donnelly and Kidd (2014) provide evidence to show that inspiration from high-performance athletes in Canada does not readily transform into increased grassroots participation in sport and physical activity, having athletic role models of East Asian heritage may help to bring increased interest in and to legitimize sport as a career path for subsequent generations (Hartlep, 2012).

Research in the past decade suggests that Canadian sport policies have not sufficiently used a multicultural framework to target the full inclusive participation of new immigrants, at least in the context of Halifax (Livingston, Tirone, Smith, & Miller, 2008; Tirone, Livingston, Miller, & Smith, 2010). Although the non-profit Institute for Canadian Citizenship released a comprehensive report (2014) about the interconnectivity of new citizens, sports, and belonging, with the input of 4000 new citizens, governments have no obligation to follow the recommendations of the report, which include taking action to remove the structural barrier of income inequality that many new immigrants face. This report also recommended “first-time buyer” discounts for new citizens to participate in sport and recreation activities, and also encouraged a “two-way street” of learning about physical culture so that, in addition to new Canadians trying traditionally Canadian sports,
native-born Canadians may try lesser-known sports such as cricket (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2014). However, the federal government in place at the time of the report appeared to prefer the promotion of ice hockey rather than the introduction of different forms of physical culture. Citizenship and Immigration Canada has partnered with the National Hockey League to conduct citizenship ceremonies at arenas of “Canada’s favourite pastime” (Government of Canada, 2014). While the former federal Conservative government proudly claimed in the same October 17, 2014 news release to have the “highest sustained levels of immigration in Canadian history” at an average of 250,000 immigrants per year, critical scholars have the problematic myths of constructing hockey as a basis of national identity (Allain, 2011; Scherer & McDermott, 2011). Despite the reportedly lower levels of physical activity for East Asian youth, and a prevailing white male culture that may serve as a hurdle to full integration in participation, there is still visual evidence (for example, graduating class photographs) of increasing rates of Canadian students of East Asian heritage entering the U of T KPE programme.

Figure 1 is based on a visual analysis of graduating class photographs from the Class of 2004 to the Class of 2015 – a count was made of the “head shots” where the graduating student was considered to have an East Asian appearance, and of all graduating students whom appeared to be of a “visible minority” background. The graph shows an increase in the percentage of both East Asian and “visible minority” students over the 11 year period since the completion of Nakamura’s study. In both cases, the proportion of students has more than doubled over 11 years, with East Asian graduates increasing from approximately 8 per cent to approximately 25 per cent, and “visible minority” graduates in general increasing from approximately 20 per cent to approximately half of the graduating class.

1 I am extremely conscious of the limitations of this form of data collection in comparison to, for example, self-reported and self-identified ethnocultural data. However, since no such self-reported data are collected or available for Kinesiology and Physical Education graduates, graduation photographs help to provide an approximation of the changing nature of the student body.
Proportion of graduating students from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education who appear to be East Asian in particular and “visible minorities” in general based on their graduation photographs, 2004-2015.

Figure 1. Proportion of graduating students from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education who appear to be East Asian in particular and “visible minorities” in general based on their graduation photographs, 2004-2015.

Physical Education Policies and Curricula

Province-wide, governments have recognized demographic shifts and multiculturalism in designing their education curricula. For Kindergarten to Grade 10 students in British Columbia, there is a curricular emphasis on “cultural games” such as “shinny/shinty, pétanque, oba, korebe, snow snake” and “culture-specific” elements such as “gumboot, Chinese ribbon dance, highland, kathakali” (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2006, p. 17). The Grade 11 and 12 curriculum states that physical education should develop an “appreciation of games and dances from diverse cultural groups” in “multicultural education” (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, Province of British Columbia, 1997, p. 84). However, the extent to which these curriculum changes have been implemented is less clear. In my experience attending majority-minority Vancouver public schools for thirteen years, I do not recollect participating in any explicitly multiculturalized physical activity, even though a document recommending multicultural games was published by the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance as early as 2002 (PHE Canada, 2002). Existing sources do not show the number of
Toronto public school students who recall such activities either. There are reasons to suspect that curriculum and policy documents such as Many Roots, Many Voices (2005) may not be fully implemented in all schools. Teachers hold a high level of discretion over their topics of education despite curriculum recommendations.

Many education systems outside of Ontario require aptitude exams or standardized exams for students on university-stream high school courses. In the Ontario curriculum, there are no standardized provincial exams at the Grade 12 level, even for university-stream courses such as PSE4U / PSK4U (exercise science / kinesiology). Although there are numerous criticisms of standardized exams, with the main complaint being that they encourage “teaching to the test” (Volante, 2004, p. 1), the absence of standardized exams may also lead to disparity in the way that teachers teach courses. At a practical level, sometimes teachers do not finish all the content that they have prepared, and may de-emphasize or rush through units that they deem to be unimportant. In the outgoing curriculum for Grade 12 exercise science (PSE4U), the Ontario Ministry of Education approved two different textbooks for use (Government of Ontario, 2015): Exercise Science: An Introduction to Health and Physical Education (Temertzoglou & Challen, 2003) and Foundations of Exercise Science (Klavora, 2004).

These textbooks place a somewhat more prominent emphasis on biophysical components of the exercise sciences curriculum rather on social, cultural and multicultural components. In the outgoing Health and Physical Education curriculum, behavioural and sociocultural components combine for only eight out of 24 online sections in Exercise Science: An Introduction to Health and Physical Education (Temertzoglou & Challen, Exercise Science, 2009) and four of 21 chapters in Foundations of Exercise Science (Klavora, Foundations of Exercise Science, 2015).

Regarding policy documents for students in elementary school, Ontario has an antiracism and ethnocultural equity document that concerns physical education: it

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2 During a course I attended at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), Ontario teachers and administrators “collectively groan” over new curriculum and policy documents. Many teachers have reported fatigue resulting from frequent curriculum changes.
emphasizes “teachable moments,” “school-community interactions” that reflect the
diversity of the local community, and vitality in relation to healthy body image
(Government of Ontario, 2010, p. 56). This failure to connect physical activity to ethnic
heritage may partially account for the lower levels of physical activity among youth of East
Asian heritage and creating interventions specific to ethnicity may be important
(Kukaswadia, Pickett, & Janssen, 2014). Physical educators may need to change the
traditional white masculine culture present in Canadian high schools to better reflect
demographic shifts (Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008). While newer curricula
for health and physical education and high-school kinesiology courses may feature more
progressive components relating to diversity in sport, and they may view sport in a more
holistic manner (Government of Ontario, 2015), more research needs to be done in order
to explore the policies that help to shape education for Ontario students.

East Asian Views on Education

Since East Asian students are stereotypically high achievers who usually register in
degree programmes that lead to professional degrees, enrolment in the U of T KPE
programme represents a non-traditional path (Nakamura, 2004).³ Although families around
the world care about the quality of their children’s education, many East Asian parents
stand out in focusing on prestigious education in the hope that their often-expensive
investment (through tuition fees, extensive tutoring for academic subjects, etc.) will result
in future success (Sharma, 2013; Yu & Suen, 2005). This “education fever” (Sharma, 2013)
”can be traced back to the 7th century” in Confucian-inspired cultures (Yu & Suen, 2005, p.
18). Even for emigrants from East Asia who may adopt more Western lifestyles as part of
their acculturation process, some Confucian values have remained (Hyun, 2001). Children’s
education remains ingrained in their minds, as the first-generation immigrants value the
potential of social mobility and status through education (Zhou & Kim, 2006). In the United
States, Asian-American immigrant parents devote more time and resources to pre-
aademic activities and “constructive play” for their children than white American parents,

³ Nakamura (2004, p. 2) also notes that universities do not typically collect data on race and ethnicity, so this
remains an observation.
who focus more on “pretend play” (Parmar, Harkness, & Super, 2008, p. 163). There is evidence to show that a heavy investment in education may pay off, as second-generation Asian-Canadians often communicate flawlessly in English, surpass the educational achievements of their peers, and transition to jobs effectively (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). More controversially, Amy Chua (2011) has reflected on being a “tiger mother,” using strict methods of parenting that she attributes to Chinese culture, though these methods often lead to distortions of Asian parenting (Chang M., 2011), as revealed in the stereotyping section below.

**Stereotyping, “Model Minority,” and Critical Race Theories**

Despite the research noted previously regarding East Asian views on education, caution should be used in professing or reinforcing a “model minority” discourse, as it results in the expectation that East Asian youth will display individual academic success in science and mathematics (Lee S., 2009). While intelligence is usually seen as a positive trait, the stereotypical assumption that those of East Asian heritage are one-dimensional in terms of taking difficult academic programmes, while not having social lives, is problematic -- as evidenced by a sensationalist article titled “Too Asian?” published in Macleans magazine (Yu H., 2010). Nakamura (2004) argues that the “model minority” stereotype assumes that, beyond educational success, there are no mental health issues. Despite general academic success (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010), second-generation visible minorities who were educated in Canadian schools also show lower levels of overall sense of belonging and life satisfaction than first-generation Canadians (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). For some male students of East Asian heritage, the lower sense of belonging could be attributed to the othering of their masculinities (Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008). East Asian masculinities (in a North American context) may be represented as a polar opposite to the masculinities of “jocks,” whose “athletic prowess” serves as a “source of status” (Miller, Farrell, Barnes, Melnick, & Sabo, 2005, p. 126). However, despite high “bargaining power,” Miller et. al (2005, p. 125) find that some high-performance athletes reject their characterization as “jocks” due to negative connotations such as the “dumb
“jock” stereotype, which paints jocks as athletically-talented but otherwise unintelligent or of low achievement in academics (Wininger & White, 2008).

It would be disingenuous to collectively categorize all East Asians as having suffered emotional distress from overt or covert racism, just as it would be incorrect to deny that some people from East Asian families suffer from mental health conditions. Furthermore, emotions and opinions are not static and values and identity may progress through time. Some East Asian families recognize the importance of physical activity and value its benefits: second-generation and third-generation Asian-Americans have higher levels of physical activity participation than first-generation Asian-Americans (Allen et al., 2007). Due to the diversity of intragroup viewpoints, it is therefore important to view people with more complexity rather than creating simplistic accounts of them. Although classification of everyday occurrences into “types” is not inherently detrimental and allows us to understand the world with better clarity, a stereotype “reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics” (Hall, 1997, p. 257). In the framework on stereotypes as “signifying practices,” Hall (1997, p. 257) differentiates “stereotypes” from “types” by stating that stereotypes use the few simplified characteristics, exaggerate those characteristics, and remain closed to progress or development through time. Stereotypes also lead to a binary “splitting” of the “normal” and the “abnormal,” fantasy, and fetishism of the “other” (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, Hall (1997) considers the concept of “Orientalism” as a stereotype, as is hegemonic ideas of European identity as “superior” to “Oriental backwardness.”

Although the Orient is a social construction that moves across ideological and political boundaries, it is intriguing to examine the case of East Asians: a cluster of ethnic groups synonymous with the “Oriental” categorization (Lee L., 2005). While “fantasy” and “fetishism” (Hall, 1997) exist with regard to East Asian stereotypes, these stereotypes differ from other racial groups in the sense that the “model minority” categorization for East Asians appears to project intelligence and success rather than “Oriental backwardness.” Ironically, it is this very categorization of a hierarchy of racial groups that renders the stereotype problematic.
In studying issues of race, one more recent framework in sociology is critical race theory. Contextually, the lens of critical race theory emerged in the 1970s as a response to the stagnation of progress in the American legal system after gains in the civil rights movement a decade earlier (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Critical race theory is based on several major tenets: first, racism is the norm and not the aberration; second, whites are systematically privileged over people of colour; third, race is a social construction; fourth, racialization affects minority groups differently depending on convenient contextual conditions; fifth, identity must be seen in intersectional and anti-essentialist terms; and finally, voices of colour must be amplified (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Although Delgado and Stefancic wrote about critical race theory in 2001 and mentioned Latina/Latino and Asian categories, critical race theory was historically categorized in black (African-American) and white terms and primarily focused on American legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Remaining in the legal studies area, Chang (1993) extended the critical race theory framework to the Asian-American context in light of nativist racism and the perpetual “foreigner” stigma attached to Asian-Americans. According to Chang’s (1993) seminal Asian critical race theory (AsianCrit) framework, responding to oppression requires a diverse three-strategy approach: first, a “denial of difference” (p. 1316), which resembles colour blind assimilation; second, an “affirmation of difference” (p. 1316), which resists an assimilationist approach; and finally, a “liberation from difference” (p. 1316), which hypothesizes a post-structural lens and argues that Asian-American legal scholarship can use “multiple consciousness” to draw upon these different strategies “without inconsistency” (p. 1322). Since 1993, other theoretical perspectives of critical race theory distinctive to their blocs of scholarship have emerged, such as LatCrit for Latina / Latino issues and TribalCrit for indigenous issues. Extending AsianCrit theory towards higher education and examining the “model minority” and other stereotypes surrounding racialized experiences, Museus (2013, p. 23) provides a framework for the operationalization of AsianCrit based on four interconnected “Asian-American racial realities.”
First, Museus (2013, p. 23) focuses on “Asianization” and the societal perception of all Asians as a “monolithic group” that has been racialized as “overachieving model minorities, perpetual foreigners, and threatening yellow perils.” Asian-Americans are occasionally “honorary Whites” through their shared victimhood of affirmative action policies, but are simultaneously seen as a threat regardless of generational status (Museus, 2013, p. 24). As seen in the “Too Asian?” article, similar strands of the “model minority” exist in Canada (Yu H., 2010). Second, Museus (2013, p. 24) discusses “transnational contexts” and the historical and contemporary climate processes shaping migration, ranging from war refugees to globalization to skilled labour from those who already have “tremendous human capital” (Guo, 2013, p. 103). Third, Museus (2013, p. 25) writes about the importance of “(re)constructive history” that includes and exposes historical injustices towards Asian-Americans for the purpose of fostering stronger Asian-American identities. Finally, Museus (2013, p. 26) highlights “strategic (anti)essentialism” and the construction of racial categorization, though at the same time realizes that “complete rejection of racial categorization and uncritical reification of racial categories can both yield undesirable outcomes” due to the complexities of Asian communities.

One complex issue is the debate between colour blind assimilation and multiculturalism. Although Museus (2013) argues that this AsianCrit framework is not meant to be “permanent or definitive” (p. 23), one weakness of the framework in Canadian applications is the author’s assumption of “colorblind and post-racial ideologies” (p. 28) as the reality. While academics may dispute the success of equitable multiculturalism policy implementation in Canada (Srivastava, 2007; Rothenberg, 2006; James, 2005; Millington et al., 2008), affirmative action programmes (section 15) and multiculturalism (section 27) are still entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, 2015).

The University of Toronto website still prominently features an employment equity policy statement that the Governing Council enacted in 1991 (University of Toronto Governing Council, 1991). Career opportunity listings in which the University is the employer, including the U of T KPE faculty, include a disclaimer that “The University
especially welcomes applications from visible minority group members... and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas” (Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, 2015). Annual reports about the diversity of the workforce based on self-reported surveys are publically available on the University of Toronto website (University of Toronto, 2014). It is important to note that while affirmative action hiring practices focus on equitable opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups, these practices do not denote a quota. Regarding student enrolment at the University of Toronto, there is no quota system for admission based on ethnicity. Nonetheless, ethnicity is not typically factored into the admission process of the University of Toronto or any major Canadian universities, which complicates the understanding of affirmative action in Canada and appears to support the Museus’s (2013, p. 28) assumption of “colorblind and post-racial ideologies” as the reality. Since Museus writes in the American context, there is ironically a debate over affirmative action patterns in the American university enrolment discourse (Giambrone, 2014).

In Canada, the self-reported National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data are the best data available for measuring statistics on ethnicity. There are many limitations with the data, such as optional self-reporting and the lack of detailed statistics of ethnicity by department. The lack of specificity in the NSSE data necessitates the use of alternatives such as graduation pictures, and anecdotal evidence about changing demographics for this study – techniques with even more limitations. Nakamura’s (2004) study discusses the perceived overrepresentation of East Asians in the physical sciences in contrast to the lower numbers in a physical education programme. In 2015, it has been observed that more students in the U of T KPE faculty are of East Asian heritage. Alongside this demographic shift, it is important to consider the historical legacy of Whiteness, defined as a cultural space that normalizes European values as the basis for comparison (Frankenberg, 1993). It is therefore important to question the ideology that places white people in a place of structural advantage if it is assumed that the U of T KPE faculty has traditionally been “white space” and that students of other ethnic groups are not the norm. Furthermore, it is
important to examine more covert forms of Whiteness in the faculty, such as unquestioned assumptions that the standard study participant conforms to white, westernized ideals.

**Chapter Summary**

In this review of literature, I focused on salient themes affecting East Asians in the Greater Toronto Area, such as changing perceptions of multiculturalism, demographic shifts in Toronto, the multiplicity of “Asian” values, physical education policies and curricula, and the framework surrounding Asian critical race theory. In the decade since Nakamura’s (2004) thesis, there has been backlash against multiculturalism in Europe. Despite the criticisms of the shortcomings of Canadian multicultural policy, the discourse on immigration from lawmakers has taken a comparatively less xenophobic tone and a more fiscally neoliberal tone, with those who contribute to the “economic class” prioritized. Although East Asian immigrants to the United States have the lowest obesity and overweight rates (Oza-Frank & Narayan, 2010), people of East Asian heritage have comparably low physical activity levels in Canada (Bryan, Tremblay, Perez, Ardern, & Katzmarzyk, 2006; Kukaswadia, Pickett, & Janssen, 2014). The “visible minority” population of Toronto is expected to increase from 43 percent to 63 percent by 2031, with ethnic Chinese currently making up the second-largest visible minority group at 1.1 million residents (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Although 78 percent of first-year students selected a background “other than white” (University of Toronto, 2012), there is an assumption that athletic facilities and classes in these spaces privilege white masculine bodies (Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008). According to data from U of T KPE graduation photo headshots, however, East Asian graduates have increased from approximately 8 per cent in 2004 to a quarter of the graduation class student body in 2015, and “visible minority” graduates in general have increased from approximately 20 per cent to nearly half the student body. Caution should be used in professing or reinforcing a “model minority” discourse with regard to all Asians.

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4 The “visible minority” term remains official usage in Canada even when non-Caucasian and non-Aboriginal populations are growing rapidly, even constituting a majority in some locations.
as a “monolithic group” (Museus, 2013). Understanding that identity and values are not static, and that the literature on the subject of East Asian participation in sport can change, is one of the main rationales for providing a comparative update on the East Asian component of Nakamura’s (2004) study. Frameworks on Asian critical race theory based on the Asian-American experience provide insight, though the Canadian context remains largely unclear. While this thesis is informed by Museus (2013), Nakamura (2004) and other scholars cited in this literature review, the following chapter highlights both the inductive and deductive methodological processes used in developing the study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 3 provides an overview and rationale for the methodology used in this study. The purpose of this research is to compare the journeys of East Asian Kinesiology and Physical Education students with the results of Nakamura’s (2004) study of a similar population. A brief description of the selection process and the voluntary participants is followed by an explanation of the interview and data analysis processes. Finally, an outline and justification for the method of presenting results is given.

Purpose of Approach

Offering a comparison to parts of Nakamura’s (2004) study, I use the same qualitative research methodology grounded in the constructivist approach in order to best analyze an individual’s “constructed reality, ‘truths,’ beliefs, and the consequences of these constructions” (p. 47). As Nakamura (2004) explains, this study attempts to “understand the events, obstacles, negotiations, and compromises that were made, and how the participants interpreted and internalized these experiences in learning about themselves” (p. 47). This study focuses on students of self-identified East Asian descent. To justify the lack of generalizability associated with case studies, Nakamura (2004) uses a “multiple case study, involving participants whose background was from East, South East and South Asia” (p. 47) for better identification of shared experiences among her participants. In this study, I interviewed a larger sample of participants, and limit their backgrounds to East Asia in order to further advance the “analytic generalizability” of the research on this topic, and thus to better inform theory and policy. I discuss the limitations of this assumption in the conclusion, that despite a sample of 12 participants and limiting the participant background to “East Asian” heritage, it is still not generalizable. This approach does not imply that I have achieved the same results as Nakamura and, more importantly, it does not imply that the outcomes were expected before conducting the study. I approached the study with an open mind, to listen to the potentially diverse stories of the participants. With changes in society during the previous decade, as outlined in the literature review,
stories of the journeys may also change. These potential changes also justify the importance in updating Nakamura’s (2004) study. Although the findings with more participants will still not apply to an entire population, they may better inform theory and lead to subsequent research and more relevant social policies.

Operational Definition of Terms

This study uses the same operational definition of terms as Nakamura (2004). “Identity” is defined as the “process of making identifications, a process that is continuous and incomplete” (p. 5) and “negotiation” is defined as not necessarily bargaining but the “obvious and subtle strategies that are deployed in order to address, meet, or avoid the demands of others” (p. 7). Regarding my regional category, “East Asian” refers to people with ethnic roots in China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. It is important to note that the Asian diaspora may have resulted in a more indirect journey to Canada (for example, via South East Asia, the Caribbean, or South America), and that these regional categories are arbitrary. Categorizing ethnic origins in large generalized blocs is problematic because it implicitly ignores intra-group differences and devalues participants who prefer to be regarded as “Canadian” (Nakamura, 2004).

Participants

Participants are drawn from self-identified “East Asian” students in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto (U of T KPE). Although there has reportedly been an increase in the number of East Asian heritage students, the extent to which parents may “pressure” their children to pursue science-based careers or careers founded in professional programmes remains unclear. Appendix A is a call for participants for the study, which was emailed by the KPE Registrar’s Office to all students subscribed to the undergraduate listserv. This is not restricted to students currently enrolled in the U of T KPE degree programme. In order to generate a more diverse perspective, this study also includes an enthusiastic recent alumnus of the programme and a visiting student to U of T KPE who grew up in the Greater Toronto Area but graduated from a different university. Following discussions with executive members of the
Kinesiology and Physical Education Undergraduate Association (KPEUA), the message in Appendix A was also posted on the KPEUA Facebook page. Furthermore, I located potential participants who met the participant criterion through my involvement with health promotion organizations, and I attempted to recruit more participants through snowball sampling.

I met the minimum threshold established for the study by conducting interviews with at least a dozen participants, though only three of the 12 participants did not know me personally before recruitment. Six other potential participants inquired further about the study, but most of them asked for compensation for their time, and they did not continue when informed that the study did not include funding. I attempted to gather Korean and Japanese perspectives, as well as more male participants and first-year students, but these attempts were unsuccessful. With eleven participants having at least partial Chinese ethnic heritage, and eight of the participants being female, I decided to include data from a self-identified “East Asian Filipino-Canadian” male. Although I did not specifically ask if this participant is among the 22.8 million Filipinos of Chinese descent (Senate of the Philippines, 2013), his self-identification as an East Asian male and the inclusion of Filipinos as a “model minority” (Eisen, 2015) led me to include his data. Regarding the other eleven participants, their parents had lived in various places: India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Although many participants trace their ancestral history back to China and some participants use “China” to describe Chinese culture or people, none of the participants specified that their parents lived in Mainland China. I asked the participants to identify their own ethnocultural heritages, and while many did not mind being called “Chinese” or “Chinese-Canadian,” a few participants emphasized the “Canadian” part of their heritage. Below is a table summarizing information about the participants at the time of the research study:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Self-identified ethnocultural heritage(s)</th>
<th>Birthplace and generation</th>
<th>Sport activity interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Hong Kong, 1st generation</td>
<td>Swimming, basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Soccer, volleyball, track and field, softball, field hockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Filipino-Canadian</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia, 1st generation</td>
<td>Dragon boat, basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chinese / Vietnamese – Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Volleyball, softball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Contemporary dance, swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Contemporary dance, strength and resistance training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Long-distance running, strength and resistance training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Recent alumni</td>
<td>&quot;CBC&quot;: Canadian-born Chinese</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Badminton, skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Track and field, swimming, volleyball, softball, ice hockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Taiwan, 1st generation</td>
<td>Football, rugby, martial arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Canadian (Hong Kong Chinese)</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd generation</td>
<td>Martial arts, archery, strength and resistance training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chinese-Canadian</td>
<td>Canada, 2nd + generation</td>
<td>Baseball, swimming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

While I have adjusted the wording of some questions to reflect the prominence of “kinesiology” now in the name and description (although not necessarily the content) of the programme, interview questions are still grounded in the assumption that past physical activity experiences lead to future ambitions to study kinesiology and physical education. For various reasons (e.g., a growing number of students who entered the programme initially with a view to its potential as preparation for subsequently entering a training programme in the clinical professions), this assumption may be less applicable in 2015 than 2004; but participant answers to these interview questions are the only way to determine if this assumption is still valid. Furthermore in this study, questions about the general role of sport are also included, and the interviews are designed to illuminate the participants’ perceptions of social forces such as culture, community, and societal stereotypes so that it is possible to better understand how individual participants “maintain, react to, resist, and challenge existing structures” (Nakamura, 2004, p. 52).

The interview guide (Appendix B) is adapted from Nakamura’s (2004) study in its chronological sequence: It starts with past physical activity experiences (“History of Physical Activity”), followed by present identity as U of T KPE students, and finally ending with future ambitions and how, through their journeys, participants came to understand themselves as individuals who became students in a Kinesiology and Physical Education programme. Although participants may have opted not to disclose their specific ethnic background if, for example, they felt that it would compromise their anonymity, all of the participants proudly gave their self-identified ethnocultural heritages. Immigrant generation category has been included in Table 1. While the formula for calculating immigrant generations still relies on ambiguous self-reporting, it is still more appropriate for research purposes to separate the experiences of those who have lived in Canada for two years from those who have lived in Canada since they were two months old.
Interview Method

Semi-structured interviews were held over the course of three weeks in Spring 2015 at various locations and times, at the participants’ convenience. Interviews with four participants were carried out using Skype and the remaining eight were conducted on the University of Toronto St George campus. Although inconsistent internet connection quality caused some conversations to freeze, Skype is convenient for those who live far from Downtown Toronto. Skype also permitted several participants to display their trophies and other memorabilia, providing visual imagery for their accomplishments. For all participants, questions were open-ended in order to avoid pre-conceived notions of participants’ experiences and rather to allow participants to answer in their own way. Follow-up questions depended on the participants’ answers. The interviews had no restricted time limit and the length of the interview depended on the nature of the participant’s answers. Interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 135 minutes, and many free-flowing conversations emerged. All participants consented to recording, and felt comfortable to the extent that many of them “forgot” that they were being recorded. Recording permitted easy conversations to develop, and although I initially planned to take notes during the interviews to ensure active listening, I found that maintaining eye contact with the participants was significantly more helpful in facilitating natural dialogue. I kept mental notes, which I later jotted down immediately after each interview.

Before pressing the record button, participants were given a detailed information letter (Appendix C) and consent form (Appendix D), which all participants signed and kept copies. Although this study is identified as low risk and approved as such by the Research Ethics Board (Appendix E), I had on hand a list of contact information for ethnocultural relations officers and other support staff in case any of the areas of discussion caused distress for a participant. I began by asking background questions for participant descriptions and demographics before moving into the interview guide (Appendix B), though not always in the same order as the sample questions listed in each category. The interview guide was used with the first few participants but as I became more familiar with the questions, I anonymized and adapted examples from other participants. Since
concluding the interviews, no participants have asked to change their contributions, and upon recommendation from my supervisory committee, I did not take the initiative to member-check due to time concerns and the potential effects of social desirability.

All of these participants felt comfortable sharing their stories, and several participants laughed at the idea of developing pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Since the graduation photographs suggest that there are more students of East Asian heritage in the U of T KPE faculty, the risk of being identified is lower than in Nakamura’s (2004) study. This thesis specifically mentions U of T KPE to provide a more accurate context for their experiences. The participants felt comfortable talking to me in part because, similar to Nakamura’s (2004) experiences, I am an “insider” who shares the same categorized Asian race with the participants, which led to an assumption of common experience. Furthermore, I had already developed some rapport with the majority of the 12 participants through mutual participation in health promotion organizations. I asked the participants to be themselves and to use their own style of communication. Even with the three participants who did not know me before the interviews began, I quickly developed rapport. These participants felt comfortable using terms such as “whitewashed” (to describe a fully-assimilated person of Asian descent), “Asian six-pack” (to refer to university-stream academic courses such as chemistry, biology, and calculus) and “FOB” or “fobby” (a derogatory, albeit desensitized, term based on the acronym for “fresh off the boat,” which describes the lack of assimilation from East Asian cultural traditions). A few participants also used Cantonese slang phrases to describe their experiences such as “mo liu” (which means pointlessness and having nothing better to do), which would likely not happen if I did not also self-identify as East Asian.

Data Analysis

Alongside mental notes regarding facial expressions and body language, which I jotted down immediately after each interview, efforts were made to fully transcribe the interviews as soon as possible. Three consecutive interviews were scheduled on one day, which made it impossible to finish transcribing one interview before starting another, but
all recordings were fully transcribed within two weeks of completion of the interviews. The transcriptions are not completely verbatim, as I did not transcribe certain parts of the interviews that were substantively off-topic, but I took note of these parts because they help to substantiate the characters behind these interviews. I kept a time-logged index for questions, and some prompts in my questions were cut from my transcription records in order to save time and to more easily highlight participant responses. In coding the data, I read through these transcripts and used open coding to establish preliminary categories. Axial coding was then used to develop the themes identified. After systematically coding the data, I categorized and synthesized concepts and themes to search for patterns in the data, which later I interpreted to develop into findings. For example, some open coding categories are “parents don’t want me out late at night,” “they are afraid of injuries,” and “they wanted to know where I am.” Based on these similar themes established from open coding, I grouped them into the axial code of “parental over-protection.”

While cognizant of critical race theoretical frameworks and stereotypes that persist among East Asians, I still attempted to approach the data inductively in order to allow for surprises in the results. However, since this is also a comparative and updated study, deductive coding is required to discover similarities or differences among participants within this study and also to categorize similarities or differences in relation to the results of Nakamura’s (2004) study. Therefore, the axial code of “parental over-protection” is placed in the “parental concerns” section. While I am overall informed by Nakamura’s (2004) results and parts of my interview guide are adapted from her study, Nakamura’s (2004) themes were not used as the starting basis for data analysis since some different themes emerge from my interviews. I do not take a positivistic approach by attempting to replicate the same results in order to support Nakamura’s (2004) results, but rather an interpretivist approach to open-ended answers and a constructivist approach to best analyze the participants’ constructed realities.
Presentation of Data

Similar to Nakamura’s (2004) study, results are presented in two parts. In Chapter 4, profiles of the participants are introduced in order to provide contextual insight into their life backgrounds. These profiles add depth to the participants’ identities. By creating profiles, I attempt to honour their shared stories in a holistic manner that provides context for Chapter 5, where I group thematic patterns between the participants’ experiences in different categories. Although there is some repetition in the presentation of results, Chapter 5 contains more substantive extracts giving the first-person perspective of participants. In order to gain a more holistic view of the extracts from participant interviews, readers are encouraged to refer back to their descriptions in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction

The following are profiles of the 12 participants who volunteered to take part in this study. This chapter is intended to provide a background context to the interview extracts presented and analyzed in Chapter 5. In order to protect the anonymity of participants, pseudonyms have been used. The sequence of the profiles is alphabetical by pseudonym and does not reflect any particular point of analysis. All of these participants are self-identified “East Asian” students (and recent graduates) of the U of T KPE programme and, as Table 2 indicates, all are involved in physical activity. All of the participants were in their late teens or early twenties at the time of the interviews (Spring 2015).

Participants

Adrian

Adrian, self-identified as “Chinese or Chinese-Canadian”, has just completed his third year of studies. He came to Toronto to enter the U of T KPE programme, and now holds a Canadian permanent residency card alongside Hong Kong and United Kingdom citizenship. Despite his enrolment at a strict English-only international school in Hong Kong throughout his childhood, to which he attributes his problems in Chinese languages in comparison to other Hong Kong citizens, Adrian still mainly speaks Cantonese with his family for convenience since the majority of his family members cannot speak English. Adrian was good at soccer at a young age but developed acute bronchitis, which his parents thought was asthma. As a consequence he was removed from all extra-curricular physical activity except for swimming because his parents thought it would benefit his respiratory system. Swimming was not his favourite sport but he was skilled and would always participate in competitions, though Adrian claims that the coach was verbally abusive if high expectations were not met. In school, Adrian particularly enjoyed basketball in physical education class and performed at a high level which he attributes to his fitness from swimming.
Throughout his childhood education, Adrian’s parents were rather indifferent to physical education classes, and while they permitted Adrian to continue swimming, they did not otherwise encourage his physical activity. Adrian remembers always being interested in sports, and thinks that physical activity is “the best thing ever.” While not making specific recommendations, it was actually his godmother who persuaded Adrian to pursue a degree programme that reflected his interests rather than his initial decision to pursue psychology. Adrian then decided to look at sports-related programmes and eventually registered for U of T KPE because another friend did the same. When Adrian told his family about his acceptance to the U of T KPE programme, his family members were excited, primarily due to the prestige of the University of Toronto. Many of them did not know the specifics of the programme and Adrian says that explaining his career path choice to older generation family members is frustrating due to their lack of understanding.

In contrast, many of his younger relatives and peers are high-achieving students in law school or medical school. Adrian frames the translation of “kinesiology” in Cantonese as synonymous to sports medicine, but stresses that he is the one comparing himself to other high-achieving peers and not his immediate family, and that he is genuinely interested in a career in sports medicine or athletic therapy after graduation. Adrian’s family only wants him to avoid criminal behaviour and contribute to the community, although they expect him to succeed in university and be financially stable in the future. Adrian pointed out that, although his career path is still situated in the biophysical stream of the U of T KPE programme, he embraces sociocultural equity initiatives due to the influence of his peers in the department and also his own experiences volunteering in India, Thailand, and Malaysia during high school.

Amy

Amy, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese or Chinese-Canadian,” has just completed her fourth year. Her parents came from Hong Kong and she speaks a mixture of English and Cantonese at home, though she does not see herself as a proficient Chinese speaker. Amy has participated in and played comparatively well on several sports teams in elementary school, and stayed active in high school mainly with soccer, though she also
participated in volleyball, track and field, softball, and field hockey. Amy’s mother enrolled Amy and Amy’s sister in a variety of activities from team sports to martial arts; although other than taking them to these locations, Amy’s mother never watched her participate and only asked about winning or losing.

Growing up, Amy’s father did not value sports as much and thought more time should be devoted to studying, though he did not stop her from participating. Amy claims to have not encountered barriers from her family or others that prevented her participation, but she noted that one of her closest friends, who loved running, found it difficult to go to practices because her parents thought she was wasting her time. The majority of Amy’s friends growing up were ethnically Chinese due to the demographics of her neighbourhood, and only one close friend went into kinesiology at York University, though several of her high school Chinese-Canadian classmates entered the U of T KPE programme. Amy received high marks in all her science courses and received acceptance to the U of T KPE programme with a scholarship. The scholarship and relative proximity to her home, along with her love for sports and interest in the human body, were the deciding factors for choosing the U of T KPE programme over her other choice, the joint kinesiology and nutrition programme at Western University.

Amy’s parents supported the decision because they thought that this programme would lead to more career options than being a dietician, though Amy feels that the support has decreased. Both parents nonetheless advocate for more education beyond her Bachelor of Kinesiology degree in order to better position herself to find employment and earn money. Her father uses another family friend who went on to complete a PhD as an example of success. Amy has no regrets about her past four years and appreciates staying local and meeting her group of friends, whom she categorizes as “not that sporty” in contrast to stereotypical perceptions of students in kinesiology / physical education programmes as jocks. Looking into the future, Amy plans to stay for another year doing a research course and more nutrition courses to see if she wants to pursue a research-based graduate programme, or physiotherapy, or a specialized massage therapy programme that could be completed in two years.
Brian

Brian, self-identified as a first-generation “Filipino-Canadian,” has just completed his fourth year. His parents are ethnically Filipino and he speaks a mixture of English and Tagalog at home, but he was born in Saudi Arabia and spent the first eight years of his childhood there before moving to a Toronto suburb. Brian participated in basketball from a young age, playing both recreationally and competitively until the end of high school. He was also active on elementary and high school teams for cross-country, softball, and volleyball, but his main sports are basketball and dragon boat racing. As a child, Brian wanted to become the first Filipino basketball player in the NBA, and despite moving to several different schools around Toronto during childhood, he created his social circles through basketball. Brian participated in Filipino basketball leagues and he was coached by his father for five years before the competition level increased. His parents enjoy basketball and watched every game Brian played throughout elementary school.

Midway through high school, Brian realized that it was difficult to succeed in basketball since his high school team was a perpetual underdog in competition with other schools. Brian still plays basketball recreationally but decided to place more emphasis on competitive dragon boating, which he still does at a high level. As his participation in dragon boating coincided with the time when marks began to matter for university admissions, Brian’s parents were more hesitant to support dragon boating due to late night and early morning practices in Downtown Toronto when he lived east of Toronto. Only when they saw him achieving success did they start to openly support Brian, who says that his parents prior to his university entrance were uncompromising in terms of their high expectations that he could surpass the success of previous generations. Brian notes that many Filipino parents expect A grades in all subjects, and would question B or C grades on his report card out of concern. Also out of concern, Brian’s parents would tell him to stop any activity and see a doctor if he had a suspected injury.

Since suffering a knee injury from basketball at the age of 12, and seeing what kinesiologists did for a living, Brian said that U of T KPE was his only option since his parents were drawn to the prestige of the University of Toronto. Throughout his studies, he has
proudly talked to his parents about the multi-disciplinary aspects of the programme, but they are still more interested in the biophysical component, and the potential of becoming a sport medicine doctor so that they might claim that there is a doctor in the family. Since entering university, Brian’s parents have become more supportive of his career path, which is to pursue certification as a kinesiologist and go into the field of rehabilitation therapy. Despite finishing all required coursework and holding a job as a strength and conditioning trainer, Brian plans to take extra courses to strengthen his future application to physiotherapy programmes.

Claudia

Clau\(\text{d}i\)a, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese-Vietnamese-Canadian,” has just completed her third year. Her parents are ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam. Claudia would speak to her parents in a mixture of English and Cantonese and her parents would respond mostly in Cantonese, though her parents also speak fluently in Vietnamese whenever they do not want their children to understand what they are saying. Claudia started pick-up sports in grade five and later played organized sport but initially struggled due to her lack of height; she stayed on the bench for the majority of her team games. However, Claudia developed into a highly competitive and skilled player in volleyball and slow-pitch softball in high school.

Although Claudia eventually captained these teams and received Most Valuable Player awards on multiple occasions, she had disagreements with her volleyball coach over perceived favouritism toward other players. Furthermore, Claudia fought with her parents often about her involvement in sports, although her parents became more supportive during her grade eleven year when they saw that she was able to participate while maintaining honour roll standing in International Baccalaureate classes. Claudia emphasizes that her family came from a lower-class background in Vietnam, so they did not have time to play sports or did not see anybody playing sports, especially females who were expected to be housewives and to perform other forms of work. Claudia’s cousins understand the purpose of kinesiology due to their physical education class experiences, though some extended relatives do not. In Claudia’s immediate family, the only other
physically active person is her older brother, who does strength-training and plays football and rugby. While her older brother inspired her continued participation in sports, her parents were still unsure about her applying to kinesiology programmes; her father still wishes that she would become a doctor even though Claudia does not enjoy the human biology courses.

When applying to university, the University of Toronto was actually the last choice for Claudia, who wanted to enter the Western or McMaster kinesiology programmes so that she had a legitimate reason to live on her own. Despite receiving acceptance letters from those universities, Claudia’s parents objected to her moving away, and she reluctantly accepted the offer from U of T KPE. Although Claudia was hesitant to come to her current programme, she has since embraced the faculty and is an advocate for equitable initiatives in physical activity. While Claudia has not yet decided on a specific goal after her final year of studies, she hopes to use her personal experiences and leadership background to continue promoting physical activity in the fields of health psychology and the psychology of rehabilitation.

Ivy

Ivy, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese-Canadian,” has just completed her third year. Her parents are ethnic Chinese but Ivy’s father came to Canada as a young adult from Singapore, and Ivy’s mother came as a young teenager from Malaysia. Because of the early immigration on both sides of her family and becoming acculturated in Canada, Ivy and her parents communicate solely in English. During her early childhood, Ivy mostly participated in highly supervised activities such as skating and swimming lessons and sports camps. She mentions that the supervision was a part of her mother’s parenting style due to the influence of Ivy’s maternal grandfather. Ivy’s mother wanted opportunities to participate in different activities, but Ivy’s grandfather wanted all of his seven children to focus on school. Ivy credits her mother with allowing her more opportunities than her mother received, such as funding swimming lessons until she received lifeguard certification, but she found it difficult as a child to keep up with other peers.
In elementary physical education class, Ivy recalls standing in the back as the goalie in soccer with friends as defenders, doing nothing as other children with more experience in pick-up sports improved their skills. Ivy approached her grade nine physical education class as just one mandatory credit to get out of the way, but she eventually joined the high school competitive swim team and won the “Most Spirited Player” award for consistently working hard and keeping a positive attitude. Although Ivy did not take any further physical education classes in high school, she took a high school exercise science class because it was listed as a science class and she excelled in sciences throughout high school. The exercise science class was based in human biology because it was taught by a biology teacher, and doing hands-on work such as ankle taping was one reason why she thought kinesiology would be a positive choice for post-secondary education. Since both her parents and both older sisters had attended the University of Toronto, Ivy felt the pressure to go there.

When Ivy gave her family the news of acceptance, her closest relatives did not require further explanation about the programme as they already knew about the different career potentials available. Ivy’s mother also knew that Ivy was the most interested in accompanying her at the gym, which they found to be “bonding time.” However, more distant relatives and friends who viewed students in kinesiology / physical education programmes as ‘jocks’ expressed tremendous surprise at this decision because she was seen as someone far more interested in life sciences than physical education. Ivy has since taken a job as a contemporary dance fitness instructor and hopes to one day become a national trainer who trains other instructors; but since her two older sisters are in graduate school her parents have also told her to pursue that path; Ivy may make that choice depending on the success of her placement in a health psychology lab next year.

Jillian

Jillian, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese-Canadian,” has just completed her third year. Her parents came from Hong Kong and they speak to Jillian in Cantonese but Jillian often uses English to respond. Jillian’s neighbourhood has a very small East Asian population. In elementary school, she only knew of one other Asian; the
majority of her classmates were white. Growing up, Jillian could not easily participate in physical activity outside of physical education class because her parents were reluctant to sign consent forms for sport team participation. They had just arrived in Canada and wanted to be protective of her in a new environment, but they also thought that the activities were a waste of time. As a result, Jillian was not skilled in sports except for swimming – which she learned in her own backyard pool – and she disliked physical education class in elementary school because she consistently felt that she had let her team down, even though the primary objective was overall participation.

However, Jillian did take dance classes throughout high school, and for one year in high school her parents permitted her to take more dance classes outside of school. Jillian continues to dance, but usually she choreographs her own moves with friends rather than taking classes. Jillian also practices strength-training and provides advice for her parents about the benefits of proper exercise, but feels that her mother only asks for help because there are no other experts nearby to ask and her father feels indifferent about putting her knowledge into practice. Jillian describes her parents as not being well-educated, but they want her to become highly educated and obtain a career in healthcare. She applied to U of T KPE due to her interest in examining practical applications of anatomy and physiology, and her desire to pursue a more specialized education than life sciences. Jillian initially wanted to enter medical school after her degree and her parents still hope that she will become a doctor, but her career goals have changed a number of times during her degree programme.

When Jillian talked to her parents about pursuing physiotherapy or occupational therapy, her parents did not know what she was talking about but only commented that her marks should improve and she should be studying instead of accessing social media sites. Despite taking an hour to commute to Downtown, Jillian is still expected to arrive home by eight p.m. every day with the exception of mandatory outdoor project camps – about which her parents were hesitant – and three other nights per year as stipulated in a contract Jillian signed with her mother. Although Jillian’s parents cannot prevent her from accessing social media or participating in dance during the day, they still want Jillian to stay
at home until she finds a career. Jillian is still uncertain about a specific career path, but wants to work in some capacity at a healthcare clinic, similar to the two clinics where she currently volunteers.

Kathleen

Kathleen, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese-Canadian,” has just completed her second year. Her parents are ethnic Chinese who were born in India, and they communicate using English. Kathleen’s family is influenced by Indian, Chinese, and mainstream “Canadian” traditions, which is best represented by the alternating cuisines her family eats daily. Kathleen has always been critical of their dietary habits and sedentary behaviour, and since learning about diabetes in elementary school, she has avoided processed foods with high sugar content. In elementary school Kathleen participated in track and field, cross country running, basketball, volleyball, and softball. Her parents enrolled her in gymnastics, skating, and swimming classes outside of school. Kathleen's parents paid for the programmes and provided transportation, but these classes were merely a routine for both Kathleen and her parents. Kathleen neither enjoyed nor disliked these classes and her parents were rather indifferent about physical activity, although they want Kathleen’s older brother to continue playing competitive hockey because they spent a significant amount of money on his equipment.

As Kathleen grew older, her parents stopped registering her in sport and activity programmes because she still appeared “healthy” from her slim body weight and could make more decisions on her own. In high school, Kathleen became more self-conscious about her athletic abilities and only did pilates at home and ran cross country for a short while. Since Kathleen was in a regional arts programme, however, she enjoyed the fact that her performance was better than other female classmates who were not physically active. Despite being in a regional arts programme, Kathleen has been interested in physiotherapy since grade 11. This interest has informed her decision to enrol in a kinesiology programme, the only person in her social circle to do so. Her parents and classmates did not know anything about the programme, but their mutual reaction according to Kathleen was, “Ohhh, it sounds good... – ology!” While her family did not object to this potential
career path, her mother often looks at the cut-off averages for physiotherapy programmes and pressures Kathleen to increase her grade point average in order to reach those standards. Her father also remains a very protective figure in her life, discouraging her from attending evening events far away from their home in western Toronto.

Nevertheless, Kathleen has immersed herself in many physical activity promotion activities on campus and she has seen a significant increase in her own physical activity through strength training and competitive running -- despite chronic tendonitis and metatarsal problems -- in order to “live up to the title” of being a U of T KPE student. Kathleen initially envisioned everyone as “jocks” and was surprised that students in the U of T KPE faculty openly welcomed her even though she told them about her lack of sport team experience. In terms of her identity, Kathleen firmly sees herself as a kinesiology student, finding a job at a specialized sporting goods store easily because the manager wants to build relationships with exercise and health promoters. In the long term, Kathleen is still set on physiotherapy, though she has also looked into becoming a registered kinesiologist or a personal trainer as alternative plans.

Lisa

Lisa, self-identified as a second-generation “CBC: Canadian-born Chinese,” is a recent alumnus of U of T KPE, graduating in 2014. Her parents came from Hong Kong at a young age, and while Lisa knows Cantonese she primarily speaks to her parents in English. She sees herself as more “whitewashed” in comparison to her East Asian neighbours, but more “fobby” in comparison to non-Asian students enrolled in U of T KPE. Lisa’s immediate family in Canada does not encourage her to follow Chinese traditions, such as using honorifics when greeting elder relatives but instead call them by name. Her parents recognize the value of physical activity and took her to badminton clubs weekly when she was younger, and also swimming, skating, and skiing. Lisa described being in a school comprised of predominantly Chinese ethnicity students, though some embraced more “western” values than others. Lisa made friends with two different groups of people: athletic-minded badminton team members and academic-oriented band members. The latter group saw Lisa as a “jock” for associating with the former group, but Lisa disagreed
and continually manoeuvred around multiple identities. Chinese people in the
neighbourhood have voiced concerns to Lisa’s parents that Lisa was too carefree and
inattentive to studying.

While being supportive of Lisa’s outdoor play, Lisa’s parents also encouraged
academic success and long-term planning for a stable career path, which implicitly meant
taking the “Asian six-pack” of university-stream science and math courses during her upper
years of high school. Biology and exercise science were her favourite courses, and since she
also wanted to be a teacher, Lisa applied to the Concurrent Teacher Education Programme
(CTEP) in the then-named Faculty of Physical Education and Health at U of T. Lisa’s parents,
extended relatives, and peers questioned the legitimacy of the programme, thinking that
everyone played and partied all the time due to its perceived ease, and Lisa felt that she
needed to explain that her goal of physiotherapy with a possibility of entering medicine in
order to make it sound more credible, even after the name changed to include kinesiology.
Complicating the explanation about her studies was her negative experience in the
placement component of CTEP, where she was seen as too strict on students despite being
seen as carefree in the majority-Chinese neighbourhood where she grew up. Poor
reflective papers and poor relationships with programme directors, led her to leave CTEP.

In contrast, Lisa aimed for A+ grades in all of her biophysical classes, serving as an
anatomy tutor and “bawling [her] eyes out in the corner” if she received anything less.
While Lisa developed many friendships and particularly emphasized the camaraderie in the
U of T KPE student body in contrast to other faculties, she finds that this field remains a
very “western” programme with “whitewashed” Asians who do not conform to traditional
stereotypes. Although she is subject to jokes, such as “Asian failing,” Lisa emphasizes that
her drive toward achievement is not a consequence of strict Asian parenting and culture as
is perceived by non-Asian friends in the programme, but from her perspective it is due to
her self-motivation in obtaining a place in a competitive physiotherapy programme.
Lucy

Lucy, self-identified as a second-generation “Chinese-Canadian” though others view her as just “Canadian,” is a visiting student who initially completed her degree in kinesiology at a university in eastern Canada. Her parents are ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and she speaks Cantonese with her mother and grandparents. Lucy participated in a variety of sports starting in middle school, ranging from track and field to volleyball to softball, and took exercise science and physical education classes at her high school for all four years, winning many awards for her involvement. Outside of school, Lucy’s mother enrolled her in swimming lessons and she became a certified lifeguard. Her mother is a single parent and worked to support Lucy and her siblings to attend their sports activities, even though the siblings often played different sports from Lucy. Lucy’s older sister plays soccer, field hockey, cross-country skiing, and figure skating, while Lucy’s older brother is an avid skateboarder. More recently, Lucy became involved in ice hockey, and while Lucy’s mother was initially hesitant about females participating in a sport portrayed as violent in the media, she has no objections now, particularly since Lucy pays for all the costs herself.

Despite the wide range of sports played by Lucy and her siblings, her mother does not have time to participate in physical activities with the exception of swimming and occasionally line dancing. As far as Lucy is aware, other family members are not physically active in recreational activities, with Lucy listing only leisurely swims at Vietnamese beaches as the extent of physical activity for her grandparents. While Lucy’s grandparents are in many ways traditional, and still offer incense to ancestors on special days in the East Asian lunar calendar, they still provided support for Lucy’s sport participation. In high school, Lucy’s mother initially did not want her to travel to Newfoundland for a tournament, but her grandfather stepped in and paid for half the expenses. Her family was generally supportive of her move to Halifax, and her sister’s move to Montreal, for university; and they are also supportive of her return to Toronto as a visiting student to take specialized classes in exercise-based nutrition and physiology in preparation for writing the exam to become a registered kinesiologist.
While Lucy wants to study in an ergonomics graduate programme in Britain, she deferred her acceptance until Fall 2016 because she cannot afford the cost of living. Until then, Lucy plans to live at home and work at a clinic in order to save money. Since her return to Toronto, Lucy has often needed to explain her complicated career path to people. Despite passing as a native Cantonese speaker the last time she visited Hong Kong, Lucy described the difficulty she has in expressing her career goals since there is no direct translation for kinesiology and ergonomics and there is no clear path (as in medicine leading a career as a physician). Due to the apparent lack of a straight-forward direction, Lucy senses that her potential career is not perceived by Chinese people as one that will be prosperous. Nevertheless, Lucy hopes to become independent and materially comfortable, as those are characteristics of success for her and her family.

Simon

Simon, self-identified as first-generation “Taiwanese” though possessing Canadian citizenship, has just completed his third year. He moved to Canada with his family seven years ago for high school and they communicate in Mandarin. Simon plays competitive rugby and football, and he also currently participates in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and ran in track and field competitions at his Canadian high school. Regarding rugby, Simon participated in national competitions during his high school years, and when he returned to Taiwan in the summer of 2014, he trained with the under-20 Taiwanese team. Throughout high school, though primarily outside of school, Simon also played football. Considering himself an “average player,” Simon still made the University of Toronto Varsity Blues football team. The motivation to start and continually participate in rugby, football, and martial arts is the physical contact, which many sports do not allow. Simon chose these sports, and his family members generally do not pay attention to his sport participation, particularly since Simon’s father divides his time between Taiwan and Canada due to work. Simon’s father knows about football culture from spending time in the United States, but has only watched one game that Simon played and seemed – to Simon – to be indifferent about it.

Simon only revealed injuries to his parents when they were obvious, such as broken fingers and sprains. He has been diagnosed with two concussions which sidelined him for
three weeks and four weeks, but he considered them “minor” and did not disclose them to his family for fear of their overreaction and potentially a more restrictive approach to his continued participation in contact sports. Academically, Simon’s parents also took a relatively relaxed approach, in comparison to other parents in his “90% Asian” community, but that was because Simon’s academic marks throughout high school were already high and he was easily accepted to the U of T KPE programme despite claiming to not study hard. Out of all his high marks, Simon’s best mark in high school was in exercise science, and he was determined to pursue kinesiology because of his strong engagement with the teacher of the exercise science course.

Although Simon’s parents initially thought life science was more useful, they now understand his programme as the study of physical activity and movement. More importantly for his parents, in their approval of Simon’s career path, is the prestige of the University of Toronto as an internationally-renowned institution that can lead to more employment opportunities around the world. Simon chose not to enter life sciences because he was and still is not interested in spending time memorizing concepts; he prefers more practical applications of knowledge. Although Simon has not yet determined whether he will work abroad, he is keen to merge his interests in physical activity, fitness, marketing, and entrepreneurship and has started to apply for internships and jobs in start-up companies in this field, while concurrently holding personal training jobs to earn extra income.

Vincent

Vincent, self-identified as a second-generation “Hong Kong Chinese-Canadian,” has just completed his fourth year. His parents came from Hong Kong a year before his birth and he speaks Cantonese with them at their home. As a young boy, Vincent did not enjoy physical education class because of his small stature, and he felt that his elementary physical education teachers favoured athletic children. Vincent only began to take physical activity more seriously after middle school, when he took up traditional kung fu and trained to succeed in physical education fitness tests, where he ultimately scored a nine on the beep test and performed 37 consecutive full push-ups. With more physical strength,
Vincent realized that he could better play sports requiring coordination, such as archery. While he does not have time to pursue archery any more, Vincent expanded his participation in traditional kung fu to include “sanda,” a Chinese martial art that literally means “free-fighting” with an emphasis on kickboxing and wrestling. Vincent finds that many Chinese families do not value this type of martial art, but prefer wushu and other martial arts where the emphasis is on the defensive form rather than offensive striking. Demographically, most of the participants at his martial arts studio are white and the instructor is black. Vincent observes that many Chinese parents come from a culture of studying, and enrol their children in tutoring for academic subjects and music lessons rather than physical activity, violent or not. His parents enrolled him in piano, arts, and various skill development classes to help him concentrate since Vincent was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactive disorder as a child.

While his mother cares about nutrition and buys organic food, Vincent is the only physically active person in his family. His father does not value sport because it does not make money, but he reluctantly recognizes that strength training is a part of Vincent’s identity. When Vincent chose to enter the then-named Faculty of Physical Education and Health programme, his father initially objected because he wanted Vincent to find a path that would lead to medicine or pharmacy. Vincent needed to convince his father that sport medicine was a legitimate field before his father approved. Despite proficiency in Cantonese, it was difficult for Vincent to explain physiotherapy to his father, who still thinks it is a mixture of fitness training and massages.

Although Vincent applied to U of T KPE due to his interest from high school exercise science, his real desire at the time was to enter trade school because he had worked for a construction company and received two promotions despite only working for two high school summer vacations. While Vincent could pay for trade school by himself, his parents stepped in and paid for him to go to university. Four years later, Vincent finds himself under pressure to obtain full-time employment in the same field as his Bachelor of Kinesiology degree, but after spending the previous summer selling products for a mobile phone company, he is more interested in marketing. Although he may find a way to bridge
these interests of business and sport medicine by opening his own clinic or fitness studio, Vincent acknowledges that it may take some years to build a true career path.

Zoe

Zoe, self-identified as a part-second generation “Chinese-Canadian” but behaves as “more Canadian,” has just completed her second year. Her father is ethnically Chinese who came to Canada from India when he was 11, and her mother is of Hungarian descent and was born in Canada. Zoe only speaks English at home and growing up and did not feel any pressure to gain proficiency in Chinese (unlike her cousins on her father’s side). Zoe sympathized with her cousins who grew up with stricter parents, as their Saturdays and Sundays were dominated by Chinese lessons and tutoring sessions. While Zoe’s parents also focused on education and encouraged her to succeed academically, they also saw value in sport. As the firstborn child, Zoe was a “guinea pig” and her parents enrolled her in a variety of different extra-curricular physical activities. Zoe struggled with being “graceful” in gymnastics and dance, viewed herself as a “manatee” trying to play basketball, and did not enjoy contact sports.

Instead, Zoe leaned more towards swimming and baseball, the latter a sport her father also played extensively, as well as ball hockey with his coworkers. Zoe played at a high competitive level in a co-ed league, but a chronic shoulder injury led Zoe to quit baseball after grade six, and a major knee injury in grade 10 led her to coach swimming rather than participate competitively. While Zoe finds it difficult and frustrating to return to baseball recreationally due to its lower calibre and different interpretation of rules, she still has fond memories of the socialization process with her teammates through sport. Zoe enjoys sport culture, attending tournaments as a photographer if she did not play. Throughout high school, Zoe took physical education class and petitioned the school to offer exercise science. She attended a small alternative school that only offered basic academic subjects. Thus, U of T KPE seems like a very large department even though many of her university peers identify it as small. Students at the alternative school were mostly of South Asian background, in contrast to her middle school, which had a majority of white students.
In both cases, Zoe did not have many ethnic Chinese classmates and, with a Chinese last name, she encountered some stereotypes about her academic and athletic abilities. One stereotype she faced was the assumption of math proficiency. Throughout high school, she struggled in math and required lessons from a Chinese tutor who also expected her to be at a much higher level of competency. Ultimately, Zoe’s marks were good enough to enter U of T KPE, which was actually recommended by her mother, who thought that the CTEP would be a solid career path. Both her parents generally understand what Zoe studies at U of T KPE, and are understanding of her decision to leave the CTEP in order to pursue general kinesiology. Her mother would like Zoe to become a chiropractor but at this point she is undecided and jokes that one day she will work at Home Depot to teach best lifting practices.

**Summary**

As with Nakamura’s (2004) study, constructing participant profiles represents an attempt to provide a background picture of participants. The profiles demonstrate the uniqueness of each participant’s history, experiences, and memories. Although they all self-identify as “East Asian,” this categorization is arbitrary and is too simplistic to describe their individual identities. While reading the following results chapter, it is important to bear in mind the specific contexts from which each participant speaks in order to truly understand their individual identities alongside mutual similarities.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Serving as a basis for comparison, many of the categories used in the first part of the results chapter are the same as those in the “Finding a Way: Being and Becoming Active Physical Education Students” portion of Nakamura’s (2004) study, now in the context of the rebranded Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education (U of T KPE). This study examines participants’ perceptions of parental attitudes toward physical activity and physical education, catalysts for participation in sport, participants’ accounts of parental responses and concerns, and the extent to which participants “negotiated” and “manoeuvred” around these concerns. The childhood backgrounds lead to the decision to enrol in U of T KPE, and this study also examines the extent of “negotiations” by the participants in order to persuade parents of the legitimacy of the degree programme (which, as noted, underwent a name change during the early years of several participants’ undergraduate studies). In conjunction with official administrative changes to the programme, the second part of this chapter investigates the extent of attitude changes. More of an emphasis is placed on the perception and the reality of the programme rather than on individual identity. Therefore, this study does not replicate thematic categories from the “Finding the Self: Learning about Themselves Along the Way” portion of Nakamura’s study; rather, it groups together these findings in the broader categories of stereotypes and perceptions. This study attempts to bring these two parts together in the final category that considers aspirations for “successful” futures.

The Terrain that Marks Their Journeys: A Comparison

“Parents’ Indifference towards Sport and Physical Activity”

In Nakamura’s (2004) study, some participants noted that their parents did not value sport and physical activity. In this study, three participants did talk about parental indifference, but as with Nakamura’s (2004) findings, there are distinctive variations in the specific attitudes and values of participants’ parents. Simon’s parents are the most indifferent, though he does not seem to mind their “hands-off” approach. As long as Simon
was “doing alright” and entered the University of Toronto, his parents did not care about his extra-curricular activities. Adrian's parents also reacted with indifference to his progression in swimming, although initially they were the ones who enrolled him in swimming at a young age in order to improve his respiratory health. Regarding high-level competitive swimming, Adrian could not recall anything specific his parents did to encourage continued participation but nonetheless openly permitted him to continue swimming. Mutual indifference may also be seen when parents enrol their children in various types of physical activity but both the parents and the child do not care about the outcome. Kathleen's parents “didn't really care” if she played a sport or was physically active, but only cared if she “got fat.” Kathleen describes her experiences as follows:

They didn’t discourage me but they didn’t say ‘good job!’ They just dropped me off and signed me up. I didn’t really tell them I wanted this or that. They thought gymnastics would be good for me. They just told me the day of the event and I was like ‘okay!’ It was just a little bit emotionless, part of a routine...like, going here now. They knew that I should be doing it, so they gave me the means, financial and travel-wise. (Kathleen)

For other participants, their journeys in sport and physical activity participation may have been complicated, but their parents were not indifferent, and these non-indifferent responses are addressed in the section on parental responses to participants’ sport and physical activity participation.

“Parents' Indifference towards Physical Education”

All of the participants in Nakamura’s (2004) findings discussed their parents’ indifference toward physical education as a subject. This study revealed similar findings. None of the participants’ parents complained about their children’s physical education marks, but none of the participants scored poorly in physical education class either. Amy shrugged and said, “My parents didn’t care about the marks because all my other marks were good.” Kathleen, Lucy, and Simon all showed similar body language and expressed the same sentiment about not having to deal with this issue due to their high marks in all
subjects, although Simon also added, “They never really said anything...math and science, typical Asian stuff, yeah, I think they cared more.” Claudia and Lisa both mentioned that physical education was secondary to courses classified as “academic” or “International Baccalaureate” because they are calculated marks for university entrance while physical education is only one credit required for high school graduation.

Taking only Grade 9 physical education and no other PE classes, except for the academic university-stream exercise science course in Grade 12, Ivy only intended to “finish the credit, get it over with and done.” Her parents shared the same indifferent view of physical education in school, leading one of Ivy’s cousins to remark, “Our whole family never liked phys ed class, but here you are in Kin. Why are you the odd one out?” Ivy and Jillian both told stories about their poor physical education experiences, but they still received relatively high marks for participation rather than skill. Nevertheless, physical education was the lowest mark for Jillian’s brother, but their parents examined his science marks more carefully and dismissed physical education by saying, “It’s gym.” With less “traditional” parents, Lisa still concedes that her parents “think gym is play” but they would “rather ha[ve] me take gym than take a spare because they thought it was relaxing and would ease the mind” from the “Asian six-pack” university-stream academic courses such as chemistry, biology, and calculus. While this response may show that Lisa’s parents do value the benefits of physical activity, Lisa’s exasperated tone of voice indicates that her parents did not see physical education as a legitimate subject.

The only participant whose parents cared about physical education marks is Brian, but his parents focused on all of their marks and not specifically physical education. Brian attributes it to culture, saying, “A lot of Filipinos expect a lot from their children. They cared about all subjects. If they see a C or a B, they questioned you.” Nevertheless, Brian excelled in physical education class and obtained a physical education certificate for successfully completing four years of physical education and exercise science. While many other participants also excelled in physical education classes, these participants say that their parents reacted with indifference. While these results are similar to Nakamura’s, the next section features some differences.
Parents' Physical Activity Patterns

Nakamura (2004) found that most of the participants did not see their parents involved in sport and physical activity, and none of the participants’ mothers in that study participated in vigorous physical activity. In this study, more of the participants’ parents are physically active, but the extent to which they are physically active varies. Brian, Lisa, and Zoe’s fathers all provided coaching and instruction for basketball, badminton, and baseball respectively for their children when they were growing up. While all three participants still appreciate these sports, they do not participate as much as before. Nonetheless, Lisa’s father still plays recreational badminton and rents spaces in school gyms weekly to play. On the other hand, the fitness level of Zoe’s father has declined, as Zoe describes his return to sport: “More recently he decided to go back and try it with his buddies. He was knocked out...very tired after not doing it for a long time.”

Other fathers are far less active, with Amy, Claudia, Kathleen and Vincent’s fathers not seeing physical activity as important. Some participants repeatedly attempted to share their knowledge from the U of T KPE programme about the drawbacks of “sedentary behaviour,” but only Adrian successfully convinced both his parents to become more physically active. Other participants voiced frustration at the lack of genuine attentiveness from their parents. Kathleen says, “I talk to my mom all the time about being active...She says, ‘But I am active! I walk inside!’ and I’m like, ‘No, you need to walk outside!’ and she doesn’t listen to me...My parents are very sedentary.” Similarly, Jillian adds that her father is “very inactive” and would “drop the weights” if Jillian offered tips on proper strength training form. Despite telling her father, “You should also lift weights because you have osteoporosis,” her father ignored her advice. However, one day he told Jillian, “You should start lifting weights or you might get osteoporosis,” making Jillian realize that “nothing I said got through to him.”

Despite concluding that her father “gives no fucks” about putting her knowledge into practice, Jillian says that her mother frequently watches Dr. Oz – which Jillian made clear she personally despises – and asks Jillian for workout recommendations only because her mother does not know of any other nearby experts to ask. Several other mothers are
physically active. Ivy reports that her mother took all seven members of her immediate family to the gym and “out of all of us, I was the most interested. It was our bonding time.” Swimming is the most common activity, practised by Amy, Lucy, and Zoe’s mothers. Amy’s mother also does tai chi and recreational hiking and Lucy’s mother also occasionally does line dancing. Altogether, in comparison with Nakamura’s (2004) study, more participants’ parents – especially mothers – are physically active.

**Physical Activity and Culture**

Nakamura’s (2004) findings indicate that while parents of participants did not value physical activity and sports participation, physical activity was not uniformly classified as worthless in their cultures. In this study, several participants voiced similar opinions to Zach in Nakamura’s (2004) study, where the first priority for first-generation Chinese immigrants was to “get a job and make money.” Jillian added that, “especially for old-fashioned ones,” physical activity is “a waste of time” in contrast to doing well in school, not realizing that physical activity is “good for your brain.” Instead of realizing the benefits, Jillian portrays these “old-fashioned” immigrants as saying, “Physical activity is violent and you mess around and break things and hurt yourself.” Regarding violent sport practices, Vincent echoed Jillian’s sentiment: “Martial art is seen as bad. No matter how douchey the other person is, whoever hits the guy first is seen as the bad guy end of story.” In contrast to the celebration of fighting in Hong Kong martial arts-themed movies, Vincent added, “They don’t want their kids doing martial art, or if they do, it’s usually ‘sa tai gick’ or ‘wushu’, where they focus on forms and not fighting.”

In terms of overall physical activity and culture, Vincent observed from his neighbourhood that all of the local East Asians he has met have gone to tutoring places, the “equivalent to white kids’ hockey and soccer.” He attributed this lack of interest in physical activity to a “culture of studying,” which he claims many immigrants brought to Canada from China. Ivy and Simon offered more nuanced explanations of physical activity and culture across different generations and different groups of East Asians. In terms of emphasizing academic achievement or social development, Simon remarked, “If you’re like a first-generation Asian, they just came here under three years [of age], they’re more
focused on school.” Simon also mentioned that in Taiwan and East Asia, traditional perceptions of sport are changing and the rugby culture is similar to other parts of the world, where athletes “play to win during the game and they’re friends after the game.” In terms of more traditional approaches, Ivy added that her grandfather was a “control freak” who “did not want his kids doing anything besides school work and my mom wanted these opportunities and it didn’t happen.” Ivy’s mother in comparison still wanted all of her children to focus on school but “also noted the importance of doing other things.”

Amy and Lisa, both residents of a community where ethnic Chinese form the majority of residents, find intragroup differences in the Chinese community. While Amy’s mother “gets it” about physical activity and enrolled Amy in many sports, she recalls that one of her friends “would have trouble going to practices because her parents or guardians feel like she’s wasting her time with sports.” Lisa reported that even at a young age, other Chinese people would comment, “All your child likes to do is play;” to which her father responded, “She’s 4. All she knows how to do is play.” According to Lisa, another Chinese mother told her daughter to “stay away” from Lisa for her “bad influence” while other Chinese residents found it “strange” that Lisa was “biking at 5 pm instead of studying.” In response, Lisa’s father mused, “What’s wrong with that?” Due to the context of her neighbourhood and the conservative upbringing of many of her classmates, Lisa’s elementary school teachers saw her as a “bad child” in comparison to peers for defying the stereotype of “you sleep, you study, and you eat.”

Other participants never faced this type of culture. Kathleen said, “I don’t know if it’s because we’re in Toronto, and it’s multicultural. In my high school, there were still a lot of Asians – Filipinos – on the basketball team.” While it is important to recognize that all of these participants are in a university programme associated with physical activity, and may not be representative of other ethnic East Asians who could not participate, there appears to be a trend towards physical activity acceptance.
Nakamura (2004) found that friends were the most common catalyst for sport and physical activity participation, followed by older brothers, and finally parents for one participant. In this study, parents were the catalyst for many of the participants, though skill was a major reason for continued participation: Adrian, Ivy, Lucy, and Zoe’s parents enrolled their children in swimming, and their skill progression led them to participate in competitions or become certified lifeguards. Lucy and Zoe’s parents, as well as Amy, Lisa and Kathleen’s parents, enrolled their children in a variety of physical activity programmes to encourage them to find their interests. With the exception of Kathleen, who described these sessions as “emotionless” routines, they all stayed in the sports in which they excelled while gradually dropping other sports they found less enjoyable because of their skill level against the competition.

Lisa’s father served as the primary catalyst for her participation, driving her to badminton weekly and defending her free play when others in the neighbourhood voiced concerns. Brian’s path is similar; his father coached him in basketball at a young age but Brian left competitive basketball when he realized that his potential was in dragon boat racing rather than becoming the first Filipino player in the NBA. Brian still plays basketball recreationally and, as with a number of other participants, he mentions friends as the catalyst for continued participation and motivation. While Zoe finds it difficult to play baseball recreationally, she also notes the camaraderie from organized team sports that has the potential to build, but also the potential to destroy. While Zoe and Claudia both disliked coaches who practise favouritism which, along with injuries, Zoe offered as a reason for leaving baseball, Claudia reports developing stronger bonds with her best friends who were the catalysts for her participation, together with her desire to be an appropriate weight for her short height: “I liked leaving class early for away games. We just left early, ate lunch, bonded with my close friends, etc. We talked more about the game and hung out more. During our free time, we’d throw our baseball around.” Simon and Jillian were introduced to their activities, rugby and dance respectively, at school, but friends were also the catalyst for continued participation to the level of training with the
Taiwanese under-20 national team, and choreographing dance patterns for Lucy. Only Lucy mentioned a physical education teacher as a catalyst for participation, although Vincent also attributed his physical activity participation to what he refers to as an “innate sense of competitiveness” that he believes stemmed from testing fitness levels in physical education class at an age where he began to act more “masculine” to attract females.

Unlike Nakamura’s (2004) findings, siblings did not play as large of a role in facilitating sport participation. Only Claudia specifically mentioned that her older brother proudly bragged to everyone at school, “My sister’s the captain!” Physical activity participation among siblings varied, ranging from enthusiastic participation in the same sports due to parents registering them (Zoe’s brother in baseball) to interests in different types of physical activity from the participants (Claudia’s brother in football, Kathleen’s brother in hockey, and Lucy’s brother in skateboarding and sister in figure skating) to apathy (Brian’s and Lisa’s siblings who are more interested in music, and Vincent’s brother who, according to Vincent, spends a great deal of time playing video games). Jillian pointed out that her brother may have been an obstacle rather than a catalyst for her physical activity. Since Jillian’s brother never objected to his parents not signing consent forms, Jillian also found it difficult to protest. Overall, siblings are not influential in this study and, except for Jillian, parents served as the initial catalyst for sport participation. There is, however, significant overlap with friends, who mostly serve as facilitators for continued participation and motivation.

Parents’ Responses to Participants’ Sport and Physical Activity Participation

A previous section focused on “parents' indifference towards sport and physical activity,” especially Simon, Adrian, and Kathleen’s parents. Most of the other parents voiced opinions and took action when participants first showed an interest in physical activity. There was a range of reactions and these reactions did not remain static, but rather changed over time. Nakamura (2004) found that reactions ranged from “disapproval of participation” to “pragmatic acknowledgement” to “positive, but not overly involved” to “enthusiastic encouragement.” In this study, the results show a similar range of reactions from absolute refusal to total support.
With their refusal to sign consent forms, Jillian’s parents were the most disapproving, as she explained, “Growing up I couldn’t really participate in physical activity. The only form was gym in class. That was not my thing. I was not taught the skills.” In high school, Jillian took dance classes as elective courses and convinced her parents to register her in additional dance classes in the community, but she stopped after a year simply because her “parents didn’t like that.” Jillian claimed that her parents were “very protective” because “they just came here...everything was new to them so they just wanted to keep me home.” Although Jillian’s parents remain very protective, as seen above in the parental physical activity section, they now show some understanding of the benefits of physical activity.

None of the other participants’ parents provided such tangible barriers to physical activity participation opportunities. However, several parents did question choices and voiced concerns, even if they did not forbid or prevent their children from participating. According to Claudia, “My parents fought a lot with me about being active in sports. They weren’t too supportive and never went to my games. But one time they saw how upset I was and then they started picking me up.” Brian’s parents, though very supportive when he played basketball, acted with some skepticism about dragon boat racing before providing subtle support with transportation home:

Late night practices...early morning practices...I live [East of Toronto] and it takes time and money to come to Downtown Toronto...they were really hesitant in supporting me. They wanted me to put education first and sports should be secondary. Only recently when they began to see success, they started supporting me and picking me up from late night practices. I had to really prove to them that I’ll go somewhere with it. (Brian)

Vincent’s father was skeptical about where physical activity would lead and “doesn’t see any value in working out or playing sports because it doesn’t make money.” Amy’s father also thought that her time spent on physical activity could be used for studying. Nevertheless, both Vincent’s and Amy’s mothers value healthy living. Vincent’s
mother is “quite the health nut” and buys all organic food. Amy’s mother is the person responsible for her children’s involvement in sport by enrolling them in many types of physical activities, and while she does not always watch their games, she asks about the results. Providing backhanded encouragement for losses, Amy’s mother said, “That’s not news because I expected you to lose.” Ivy and Lucy did not talk much about their fathers’ sides of their families but also found that their mothers were the ones who encouraged physical activity and provided the financial support for their participation. The difference between Ivy and Lucy was the extent of their mother’s involvement. Ivy’s mother wanted “highly supervised activity” and she “tried to get everyone physically active” by taking her family to the gym and funding Ivy’s swimming lessons until she became a certified lifeguard and participated in competitions. In contrast, Lucy’s mother worked long hours and did not have time to attend many of Lucy’s events, except for special occasions such as athletic banquets if she was invited. When Lucy became eligible to drive, her mother allowed Lucy to take the car to drive to competitions by herself.

Regarding car rides, Brian reported that his parents would talk extensively about basketball in the car, watched all of the games he played in elementary school even during periods when Brian’s father was not the coach, and had positive “after-game socials with eating.” Lisa’s and Zoe’s parents also provided “enthusiastic encouragement,” giving instruction for badminton and baseball respectively but more importantly opening the door for their children to find their interests. Regarding parenting strategies, Lisa pointed out, “They said exercise is great for you but what do YOU want to do? I did go swimming, skating, and piano but my parents didn’t push me.” Zoe’s father served as the “at-home coach” who “liked to not give critique” but provided tips while her mother helped her with swimming, supplementing the coach’s instructions. Regarding the openness of Brian’s parents about sport participation, Brian said that his parents invested in sports at a young age due to his interests, as opposed to his siblings who are more passionate about music and arts.

As noted above, with their hesitation about supporting dragon boat racing during his grade 11 and 12 years, Brian’s parents can still have differing opinions. These differing
opinions serve as a reminder that views are dynamic and vary depending on context, although there appears to be a trend toward more encouragement of physical activity participation. Nakamura’s (2004) study emphasized the subtleties of parental support in terms of driving to and paying for physical activity participation since the data seemed to indicate parental indifference with regard to sport. In this study, almost all of the participants discussed financial support through parents registering them in physical activity outside of school, with varying degrees of subtlety. While Brian and Claudia needed to persuade their parents to pick them up from sport activities that their parents were hesitant to approve, a number of the participants, especially when they were younger, travelled to and from out-of-school physical activities with their parents not offering any objections.

**Parental Concerns**

Nakamura (2004) found five major concerns that parents of participants raised about their children’s participation: “Negative impact on academic achievement,” “possibility of injury,” “health concerns,” “femininity at risk,” and “cutting into quality time with family.” In this study, some participants said that their parents voiced similar concerns. Regarding “negative impact on academic achievement,” only Brian reported that his parents were “hesitant” in supporting his dragon boat racing during grades 11 and 12, specifically because those were the years that mattered for marks in courses required for university entrance. Although most other participants reported that their parents placed an emphasis on school achievement, and set conditions about participation should their marks decrease, these participants were already high-achievers in school and, with the exception of visiting student Lucy who went to an east coast university, accepted admission offers from the University of Toronto immediately from high school without needing to upgrade their marks. Thus, although participants reported that parents in this study had similar concerns, those concerns were not warranted given the academic achievements of the participants.

However, it should be recognized that this is a pre-determined sample of individuals who participated in sports and physical activity and had the marks to enter U of T KPE –
they may not be representative of the East Asian experience more generally. As seen in a previous section about physical activity and culture, participants reported many intra-group differences about East Asian diaspora communities in Toronto. In particular, Lisa was seen as a “bad influence” and Chinese residents found it “strange” that Lisa was “biking at 5 pm instead of studying.” Furthermore, Vincent discussed the “culture of studying” across the Chinese community in his neighbourhood. There are likely many Chinese-Canadians who were restricted from physical activity participation when they were growing up because of poor academic marks, or because their parents were concerned that involvement in sport and physical activity would lead to poor marks. This claim is nonetheless speculation, and a future direction of study may be to interview more broadly outside of the kinesiology/physical education environment at universities, and even beyond the university environment in order to generate a more representative sample to examine attitudes about academic achievement and physical activity.

Since none of these participants currently intend to pursue a professional career as an athlete, many of them, as well as their parents, view exercise as an enjoyable hobby, but that it is not worth risking potentially debilitating injuries. Due to potential brain and mental health deterioration, head injuries were particularly a concern for the parents of participants. Although Simon and Vincent are still active in contact sports, and Vincent said, “I don’t mind getting hit. I prefer to break a bone than hurt a joint,” he concedes that his parents worry about injuries and that he has “less motivation to fight” with increasing age. Simon’s family, while taking a “hands-off” approach to his participation, still tell him to “be safe and not get injured.” Regarding his injuries, Simon said:

I had two concussions, but they were not crazy concussions. They were minor ones, three weeks, four weeks and I was back. I broke two fingers, one thumb and one pinky. There were some strains and sprains here and there but nothing major, nothing that required surgery...They know about my finger but not my concussions...I knew that they would probably be scared and be like, ‘Stop playing the sport.’ Broken fingers are not as bad; it’s not the brain. (Simon)
Nonetheless, Simon’s and Vincent’s parents have never stopped them from participating in contact sports. Being more actively involved in Brian’s sport participation, his parents are more assertive in insisting that Brian rest and see specialists if they suspect a concussion or serious injury. Although Brian demonstrates his knowledge about sports injuries to his parents, they tell him, “I know you know what you think it is, but I want you to get a diagnosis from a professional.” Nevertheless, particularly in basketball where his father coached him for several years, his parents did not discourage him from expending his energy to succeed at a high level. Also heavily involved in his child’s sport participation was Lisa’s father. While Lisa pointed out that her parents “have always let me choose,” her father preferred individual non-contact sports such as swimming, skating, skiing, and (most influentially) badminton because he found the “group dynamics” of certain sport cultures “more dangerous.” Zoe’s parents also “steered clear of hockey” in part due to perceived dangers of body contact, an issue Zoe finds “a lot of girls struggle with.” Zoe chose to pursue baseball and swimming since these sports generally do not contain violent bodily contact, but injuries shortened her competitive career. While her parents were concerned about injuries, it was ultimately Zoe’s decision to stop participating in these sports competitively at the age of 12 for baseball and 16 for swimming.

In terms of parents withdrawing their children from physical activity over “health concerns,” only Adrian recounted such an experience: “At the age of 5, I was good at soccer, or football, but I kind of had bronchitis – acute bronchitis – but my parents thought it was asthma so they got me out of all land sports.” However, Adrian’s parents permitted him to swim, believing it to be beneficial for Adrian’s respiratory system. Adrian adamantly points out that this decision was “definitely for my health... maybe it wasn’t the right choice but it was definitely health reasons” and it did not affect his participation in physical education classes and with friends as he grew older. Reflecting similar parental health concerns about weightlifting from one of the participants in Nakamura’s (2004) study, Vincent reported that his parents were “very scared” about his weightlifting despite his reassurances that he understands how to properly engage in strength training. Vincent’s parents did not hesitate to speak directly about his appearance, saying, “You’re too big!”
Vincent’s father reluctantly recognized the large role of strength training in Vincent’s identity at home but “at dinner with other people, he says, ‘Oh, look how strong my son is.’” Zoe also engages in strength training and proudly states, “My parents call me ‘Muscles’ because I can bench 15 pounds on each side of a 45-pound bar. They would say, ‘Come on muscles, we need your help lifting this.’” Although her parents seem delighted with her strength, Zoe also adds, “I’ve been lifting a lot of weights lately. They’ve kind of caught on and didn’t try to tell me not to do it but commented I might not look female.”

This “femininity at risk” reaction is similar to the observations offered by female participants in Nakamura’s (2004) study, as parents voiced concerns about how their daughters should look but ultimately did not stop them from pursuing their desired body shape. In response to her parents’ observations, Zoe lightheartedly responded, “I still look female. They may ask me to lift heavier things for them, you know, they’re getting old.” Lucy’s mother also made observations about her body size, as Lucy said, “I was a chubby kid... they said I became less chubby. My muscle mass is a lot larger than my sister could ever be.” While Lucy’s mother is “proud” of Lucy’s health, Lucy and Kathleen’s mothers view weight as the standard of health. While Kathleen became rather self-conscious and did not participate in organized sport during her teenage years, Lucy participated in a variety of different sports. More recently Lucy became involved in ice hockey, which initially caused comments about her femininity.

Trying to emphasize the then-and-now opinion transformation, Lucy said, “My mom didn’t think girls should play hockey but her views definitely changed. You know the culture of girls should do this and guys should do that? I play hockey now and she doesn’t question it at all.” Claudia, whose parents, like Lucy’s, moved to Canada from Vietnam, explained that traditional Vietnamese culture has the expectation that women should be “housewives,” with her father thinking that she should be “more girly.” In addition, Claudia said that her aunt would “make fun of me when I was outside...and I came home all dirty and sweaty, when I was not girl-like and the stereotype that only boys can play sports.” Claudia pointed out that her family came from a low economic background with little time to play or watch anyone play sports. Despite this background and fights over sport
participation, Claudia’s parents let her “do a lot of free play,” which led her to participate in pick-up games and eventually to captain her softball and volleyball teams. After a moment of consideration to reflect on her experiences, Claudia concluded, “They weren’t too bad with that; they were pretty good actually,” given that her cousins had also taken physical education classes and understood her experiences from the same generational viewpoint.

Although different generations often hold different life perspectives, and no participants in this study specifically stated that their physical activity participation was “cutting into quality time with family,” their families still directly influence the lives of participants. Almost all of the participants at the time of the interviews lived with family members, even older participants who had graduated such as Lucy and Vincent. Lucy said that despite spending four years at an east coast university, “I don’t mind living at home, and it’s not rare in the Asian culture. In the future, I’ll probably still live at home.” Vincent added, “One thing Asians do get right is the family orientedness. White people say 18 you’re out the door...It’s embarrassing being mommy’s boy but financially, it makes a lot of sense.” One more recent parental concern, while not specifically limited to physical activity, is safety at night, particularly for the female participants. For some participants, having a curfew while living far away from Downtown Toronto restricts their opportunities to attend evening events. Nearing the age of 21 at the time of this interview, Jillian vented her frustration:

Yesterday my mom got mad at me because I came home late when I was studying on campus...My mom made up this contract that I had to sign. Clubbing events – she doesn’t want me going at all – but dancing is my thing. My mom says I can only go three times a year – I’ve used up all three. Both my parents are really stubborn. It doesn’t matter how many times I fight about it. They’re not going to agree with me. At this point...my parents also don’t trust me. She said, ‘Start taking pictures every time you’re outside the house.’ (Jillian)

While not having parents as intrusive as Jillian’s, Kathleen added that she could not attend many of the late evening events hosted by health promotion organizations due to
her parents’ concern if she stays out of her west Toronto home past ten o’clock. Kathleen said, “Last night I stayed out bowling with my friends until 12 and my dad called me 16 times.” Lisa’s and Ivy’s parents also voiced concerns about late-night commutes alone to their family homes in suburban areas using public transportation. While relatively more lenient now, Ivy recalls that her mother “didn’t always want us in the house fooling around” but at the same time “still wanted us highly supervised... If we weren’t supervised, then we would stay home.”

Overall, while “cutting into quality time with family” is not a significant factor in itself, several parents appear to remain highly protective of their children, even as they become adults. It should be emphasized that the parental overprotection is a perception made by the participants. Although some perceived experiences can, on the surface, be comparable with “tiger mother” parenting (Chua, 2011), it is important to emphasize the contexts of the immigrant parent experience. With the exception of Zoe’s mother, all of the parents of the participants were born in and spent at least part of their childhood away from Canada. Although the parents of participants came from different countries (ranging from India to Hong Kong to Vietnam, and other countries) and had varying levels of socio-economic status before arriving in Canada (for the second-generation Canadian participants), they are still immigrant parents with aspirations for their children to succeed in their new adopted homeland. As part of the immigrant experience, many parents are concerned about their children’s ability to prosper and these parents view education as vital to social mobility and improved status (Zhou & Kim, 2006). The next section describes how participants navigate these parental concerns.

“Negotiating” and “Manoeuvring” Parental Concerns

Nakamura (2004) found that participants manoeuvred around conditions imposed by parents and negotiated with parents over their concerns regarding school, injury and health, and femininity, though her participants found that the struggles were not as complicated as they had expected. In this study, these negotiations appear to be even less complicated, as many parental concerns about sport did not translate into action where participation was forbidden. As noted, because of the selection process this selection of
participants is not likely to be representative of all East Asian experiences. Regarding academic achievement, many participants revealed that their parents had high expectations and set conditions regarding sport and physical activity participation should their marks decrease; all of the participants maintained marks high enough for university acceptance. Thus, it never came to the point where any parents needed to forbid or restrict sport involvement.

The only participant whose parents showed hesitation due to academic achievement is Brian, but they did not stop him from participation and, after showing that he could maintain success in school and success on the dragon boat team, became fully supportive. Regarding health and injury, parents also did not order their children to stop participating after an injury, but some parents took preventive measures such as not enrolling their children in contact sports at a young age. For example, Zoe’s parents “steered clear of hockey,” but Zoe had the final say in quitting baseball and swimming due to her injuries. Simon hid his concussions for fear that his parents would intervene. Adrian is the only participant to recall that his parents withdrew him from land sports because of “health concerns” at the age of five, but he genuinely believes that his parents had no ulterior motives and Adrian resumed these activities in physical education class and with friends at an older age without any consequences.

None of the participants recall their parents denying them an opportunity to participate in an activity that they enjoyed. Although Jillian’s parents did not sign consent forms for sport participation, Jillian did not express any particular interest in sports when growing up. Her parents also stopped her from taking dance classes outside school after one year, but she kept on taking dance classes through high school and began choreographing her own moves with friends, which her parents did not prevent her from doing. For participants involved in more dangerous sports, such as Vincent in martial arts, he took an “I know what I’m doing” attitude and his parents did not question or attempt to prevent his participation. While voicing concern, Lucy’s mother did not try to stop her son from participating in skateboarding either, even though “he broke his arm once and he comes back all bruised.”
Although Lucy and her sister also participated in many sports while growing up, Lucy’s mother was hesitant to support her ice hockey participation due to expectations regarding femininity and because she had little knowledge of the sport other than its violent culture portrayed in the media. Nonetheless, a simple explanation of the sport for women, including the prohibition of body-checking and fighting, together with paying for all the costs herself were enough to convince her mother to view ice hockey differently. Addressing ‘feminine body shapes’ and their parents’ perceptions of health, Zoe and Kathleen lightheartedly tell their parents that health is more than body weight and slimness, and encourage them to work out as well. Claudia had the most disagreements with her family over traditional gender norms but, upon reflection, her parents never prevented her sport participation, and therefore she did not experience much of a “negotiation” process. However, there appears to be a gendered dimension in terms of safety as a parental concern.

While the parental concern themes about participation in sport that Nakamura (2004) discovered are no longer evident in this study, concern about safety – which transcends sport – is more complicated. Ivy, Jillian, Kathleen, and Lisa’s parents all continue to have concerns about their daughters coming home late, even though they are all 20 years of age and older. In contrast, none of the male participants reported that their parents are concerned about their day-to-day personal safety, although Vincent hinted that rebelling might succeed when he said, “I don’t really have a curfew...my mom tried to guilt me by staying up...but she couldn’t take it anymore...It works as long as you maintain your grades and show you’re not just dicking around but know what you’re doing.” The four female participants mentioned here, while at times frustrated that they cannot stay late without notifying their parents, still value the care that their families continue to provide. There may very well be complicated negotiations involved in the arguments about arriving home late, and complicated manoeuvring over parental expectations that they should stay home, as is the case with Jillian. Her parents, who had not signed consent forms, were hesitant to support her mandatory attendance at the outdoor projects camp that is part of the U of T KPE programme. The process of choosing a career path is a complicated, and the
next section focuses on the negotiation processes involved in selecting the career paths of participants.

“Negotiations” Continue: Choosing to Study Kinesiology and Physical Education

Nakamura (2004) found that participants were “keenly aware” of parental concerns about academic achievement and “conscious” of the low value of physical education in comparison to other academic and professional courses of study; but they embarked on a journey in the Faculty of Physical Education and Health anyway. In this study, parents similarly place more emphasis on sciences and professional careers than physical education. While many parents were indifferent about physical education as a course of study, they were more supportive of sport participation and they did not appear to see an inverse relationship between academic achievement and involvement in sport. Therefore, the negotiation process to participate in sport was almost non-existent for many participants. With regard to life choices in pursuing a sport/physical activity related career path, many parents posed questions about the U of T KPE programme yet most participants did not face a complicated negotiation process beyond providing an explanation about what the programme entails. Nevertheless, participants still spoke to me at length about their journeys into the U of T KPE programme.

In Nakamura’s (2004) study, four participants were advised by others to apply to U of T’s Faculty of Physical Education and Health (two by friends, one by a high school teacher who graduated from such a programme, and one by a sibling), one participant had a clear goal of studying chiropractic, one participant had a clear goal of studying medicine following a perceived easier and more enjoyable undergraduate experience, and three others, together with Nakamura herself, “fell into the programme completely by chance.” In this study, three participants were advised by others to apply (Adrian, Simon, and Zoe), eight participants followed their own passions (Amy, Brian, Claudia, Ivy, Jillian, Kathleen, Lisa, and Lucy), and only one participant could be classified as falling into the U of T KPE programme by chance (Vincent).
Although Vincent enjoyed his high school exercise science course – which was taught by someone with a Master’s degree in kinesiology – he later chose to enter a university programme in this area only once his parents offered to pay for his education. Vincent said, “For me, I never really wanted to go to university. In high school, I was exposed to the fact that if you want to make good money, you should go to the trades.” Vincent claims that his skills in welding are a result of his dexterity from drawing and playing the piano: “Grade 11 and 12 summers, I worked construction and I got promoted twice in two summers alone!”

For those who entered U of T KPE on the advice of others, all three participants credited different people in their journeys. Adrian credits his godmother for persuading him to do “something more specific,” and after searching through sports marketing and sports economics, one of Adrian’s friends said that she would enrol in kinesiology, and that is the reason for Adrian’s enrolment. Simon thoroughly enjoyed exercise science in high school and credits that teacher for motivating him to apply for the U of T KPE programme: “It was my highest grade ever...there were many good applications of the content.” Although Simon’s parents also “forced” him to apply to life sciences, Simon chose U of T KPE because of its real-world applications: “I wasn’t that huge of a science guy. I don’t really like memorizing stuff. I don’t like to study. I like to do something in the field or apply something.” Zoe showed her interest in high school exercise science by petitioning for the course to be offered at her small high school. She said, “The teacher actually graduated from our programme, getting the same profs as me. The high school system has failed a lot of individuals but exercise science, it was fine.” She points out that her mother was the person who found and recommended the CTEP programme in U of T KPE. However, Zoe later dropped out from the CTEP component and is pursuing the Bachelor of Kinesiology path because she thinks there are more opportunities in Kinesiology and she knows CTEP is about to be phased out.

For the eight participants who followed their own passions, only Claudia pursued this field to learn more about sports and coaching, possibly as a result of disagreements with her high school senior volleyball coach. The other seven participants all had
biophysical and clinical ambitions in mind. Although Amy said, “I took exercise science because I liked sports,” the alternative programmes Amy had in mind centred on nutrition and biophysical-focused courses. Amy decided that the nutrition programmes were “too narrow” and that U of T KPE would lead to more potential career choices in allied health professions. Some participants had narrow career paths and set clear goals related to their interests. Lucy had an interest in ergonomics, and decided to register as a visiting student at U of T KPE in order to take specialized classes in exercise-based nutrition and physiology in preparation for writing the exam to become a registered kinesiologist. Brian has also “wanted to be a kinesiologist since grade 7” after suffering a knee injury in basketball. He reached the decision fairly easily because he wanted to pursue sport medicine and his parents wanted him to attend the University of Toronto. Similarly setting a clear career path early, Kathleen emphatically stated, “Physio…I knew Kin was a good route to get to physio…I knew I wanted to come to Kin in grade 11. I did a lot of research beforehand…I was very narrow-focused. Physio, I knew I wanted to do physio.”

While ultimately ending up in a physiotherapy programme, Lisa’s original plan when entering her undergraduate programme was to pursue teaching. Instead of taking spare courses in high school, Lisa chose physical education as her “outlet” from the “Asian six-pack” of courses. About her decision, Lisa said that in grade 12, “Biology and exercise science were my favourite, so kinesiology was the right route, and because it had the joint teaching programme, it was perfect.” While both Ivy and Jillian excelled at biology and many people around them expected them to go on to study life sciences, they thought that U of T KPE would be more distinctive and yet still cater to their interests in anatomy. Ivy found that out of everything that she was doing, exercise science was the best fit, with “ankle taping” and the anatomy aspects taught by a biology teacher being the main reasons for her entrance into U of T KPE. Jillian reached her decision based on her desire to “start with the big picture and then look at the small parts, not the other way around.” While Jillian applied to life sciences programmes at other universities as backup plans, she only applied to the KPE department at the University of Toronto: “I thought, ‘Am I making a
wrong choice here? Everyone’s applying to life science.’ Then I thought, ‘Everyone’s applying to life science. NO, I’m trying something different and applying to Kin.’”

Regarding the choice of university programme, Nakamura (2004) found that most parents “had little idea of what the programme entailed and immediately asked what kind of jobs they could get with a physical education degree;” and, in turn, participants felt the need to “negotiate” through demonstrating the usefulness of the degree and its scientific components. In this study, half of the participants (Adrian, Amy, Ivy, Kathleen, Lucy, and Zoe) received strong support from their parents during the decision-making process, while the other half (Brian, Claudia, Jillian, Lisa, Simon, and Vincent) received lukewarm support that required varying levels of negotiation and manoeuvring to resolve questions or conflicts. With the exception of Zoe, whose mother recommended the U of T KPE programme, most participants in both categories needed to explain the learning objectives of the KPE programme. Jillian and Kathleen both mention that “—ology” made kinesiology “sound good” for their parents who, according to the participants, continue to lack a detailed understanding of U of T KPE. Jillian said, “What I’m doing right now is beyond their knowledge.”

While Kathleen’s focused plan easily gained strong support from her parents, Jillian’s overprotective parents appeared to jeopardize her full participation in faculty-sponsored events such as the mandatory outdoor projects camp. After Jillian responded, “I need it to graduate,” to her father’s hesitation, he asked, “Why did you choose this programme? You don’t have to do it in other programmes.” Knowing her father, Jillian interpreted this question as another sign of protectiveness rather than disapproval of her career path. Jillian’s parents were adamant about staying at home: “As long as I was...not having to live in residence, it was okay...They said I could go to McMaster, but I would have to commute every day from [East of Downtown Toronto].” Claudia similarly discussed numerous conversations with her parents who objected to her plan to move out of her home at the age of 18, and she reluctantly accepted the offer from U of T KPE in order to repair their relationship: “U of T was actually one of my last choices. I wanted to go to Western or McMaster...I just applied to make my parents happy...I literally chose U of T the
day before the deadline, last minute.” Due to the reputation as a top-ranking research university, Claudia was “more scared than happy it was U of T.”

In contrast to Claudia’s situation, Lucy had little trouble moving to Halifax. While Lucy’s mother initially described her decision as a “peculiar” choice, Lucy’s sister also moved away to attend McGill University in Montreal. Lucy’s mother also supported her decision to move back home after graduation from an east coast university to take courses as a visiting student at the University of Toronto. Despite this support, Lucy said that it was a “bad idea” trying to explain ergonomics to her mother because she does not understand the field and “doesn’t even know anything about ergonomic chairs.” Lucy added that she could pass as a native speaker the last time she was in Hong Kong, but simply did not know how to explain ergonomics in Cantonese.

Although he was born and raised in Hong Kong, Adrian has problems speaking Cantonese in comparison to other Hong Kong locals who do not speak English well; this is due to his attending a British international school with an English-only policy. Despite having difficulties translating the U of T KPE to Cantonese, in part because there is no direct equivalent translation to “kinesiology” in the language, his parents were simply “really happy” about his acceptance to the prestigious university. Adrian’s parents have no problems with allowing their son to travel abroad because in high school Adrian also volunteered in India, Malaysia, and Thailand. In explaining the kinesiology programme to his parents and older generation family members, Adrian described it as “wan dung fo hok,” meaning “sport science” that encompasses “the nutritional side, sports side, medicine side,” but ultimately he concludes that “it’s just hard to explain” since they are “not well-educated.”

Although Adrian did not have to orient his studies towards the biophysical route in order to convince his parents – who “didn’t care which programme” Adrian chose and had less influence in his university choices than his godmother who advised him to pursue a programme more specific than psychology – several participants did need to manoeuvre around their parents’ science and medicine expectations. Simon, whose parents took a
comparatively laid back approach but still insisted that he apply to life sciences, reports: “I don’t say any physical education or gym class. I try to steer it away and make it more scientific so they kind of accept it more.” Simon emphasizes that his parents were still happy about his acceptance to the University of Toronto due to its prestige, which may prove to be useful if he decides to move and work abroad with his fluency in multiple languages: “U of T just has a reputation...I know the western way of thinking and I know the eastern way. They think it’s better if I go to a place that’s more well-known.” Expanding on the “eastern way” of thinking in expectations for their children, Simon notes, “Mostly all Asian parents...want people to go into medicine. That stereotype is kind of true,” before adding, “You can go in with Kin as well.”

Correspondingly, Vincent needed to emphasize the biophysical components of the degree programme in order to convince his father about the legitimacy of the then-named Physical Education and Health; his father wanted him to find a path that would lead to medicine or pharmacy: “For my dad, he said I should be a doctor or at least a pharmacist. I kind of lied to him and said if I do well, there’s sport medicine.” Vincent’s mother encouraged him to follow his passions and “realizes RMT is a real field and people need physiotherapy.” Vincent added that to this day:

My dad thinks I’m a cross between a personal trainer and masseuse. He always says this other girl in Kin gave me a good neck rub and I’m like, ‘Dad, that’s not my job. That’s actually quite insulting.’ Asian culture is hierarchical too, so as soon as I start talking about something, he would just shut off his brain. They know what mut lay ji lieu [physiotherapy] is, but they think it’s just exercise and not medicine...You translate it into physiotherapy so people get it but even then, they think it’s unnecessary. So I think, ‘How about you try lying in a bed for 6 months and trying to walk again?’ It’s not as easy as it sounds. (Vincent)

Also entering the programme when it was named Physical Education and Health, Brian said that he needed to explain to his parents that the programme was “more than just being a gym teacher.” While his parents were happy that he gained acceptance to the
prestigious University of Toronto, they particularly wanted to “have a doctor in the family” and when Brian was a child, his mother “bought shirts...about being a doctor.” Nevertheless, Brian’s family became more supportive of his course of study to the point that he felt comfortable de-emphasizing the biophysical component and educating them about courses in “stress and coping” and the “theory of dance” to highlight the interdisciplinary course selection leading up to becoming a kinesiologist in the sport medicine field.

Claudia’s parents have become “more lenient” and Jillian’s parents “are okay with it now,” but they still have lingering expectations for their children to become doctors despite Claudia’s distaste for physiology and Jillian’s current “pretty clear” stance on not applying to medical school. Amy’s father also wants her to pursue acupuncture and Chinese medicine, though Amy has no intention of pursuing that career path because it would mean learning significantly more Chinese. Although her parents were very supportive when Amy began her degree, these views have changed over the past four years. Amy feels that her father is “way more proud of my sister doing nursing than me doing Kin” and her mother “wishes I had gone to Western because I’d get the double-degree in five years;” but, she concedes, “that’s already over and I can’t change anything.”

Amy’s parents are of the opinion that, with non-professional programmes, “Every degree, you need more stuff after an undergrad,” which particularly resonates with her father because he was unsuccessful in obtaining a Master’s degree.

Ivy’s parents – who are both University of Toronto alumni and still strongly support Ivy’s decision to come to U of T KPE – similarly believe that graduate school is necessary, and they have encouraged Ivy to pursue a Master’s programme as she is “next in line,” following her two older sisters who are also in graduate programmes. Ivy’s parents “tried to push for the sciences” and she mentioned her eldest sister in neurological and rehabilitation sciences – who does research on depression in children with concussions – as a path that her parents would view as successful; though Ivy laughed and says, “Yeah...but my marks aren’t there.” Even though she had only completed second year, Kathleen similarly feels the pressure from her parents to attend graduate school. Although she has
planned to go into physiotherapy since senior high school, her mother has become far more invested by researching admission grade point average cut-offs despite not knowing much about the content of physiotherapy. Regarding this parental over-involvement, Kathleen groans and says, “It’s annoying...like, let me handle it mom!”

Lisa, whose parents’ reaction was, “Oh good, she has a future!” to her recent acceptance to a physiotherapy programme, also felt happy about her acceptance as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto. Despite being a strong supporter of Lisa’s involvement in badminton and approving of her then-goal of becoming a teacher through the CTEP, her parents were hesitant to embrace the culture of the then-named Faculty of Physical Education and Health, and they thought the students “just play around a lot and go to clubs.” In addition, Lisa felt that despite some strands of non-traditional Chinese thought and attempts to “not react negatively” during her undergraduate years, her parents “were at the end of the day still immigrants.” Lisa said this in the context of describing her father’s lack of understanding about the difficulty of the programme of study, and further explains, “No matter how hard my parents try to think that you guys are smart kids, it’s really hard to get it out of their system that we’re not as smart.” Although Lisa identifies her parents as the initial catalyst for sport participation, and although (according to their children) a number of the parents in this study did not expect to see an inverse relationship between academic achievement and involvement in sport, only one participant (Zoe) entered the U of T KPE program on the advice of her parents. Most of the other parents did not know much about U of T KPE, and many of the study participants needed to explain the courses that they had to take, though the parents were aware of the prestige that comes from attending the University of Toronto. In this study, half of the participants reported strong support for their decision to enrol in the U of T KPE programme and the other half reported lukewarm support, with none actually attempting to prevent their offspring from registering (although Simon’s parents insisted that he also register for life sciences).

In comparison to Nakamura’s (2004) study, where four out of nine participants were advised by others to apply, two had personal passions, and the remaining three “fell
into the programme completely by chance,” the results of this study indicate that three out of twelve participants were advised by others to apply, eight had personal passions, and only one just ‘fell into’ the programme. Most of the participants registered with the intent of following a biophysical stream of courses, although some felt the need to frame the programme in even more medicalized terms in order to gain stronger support from their parents. While all parents accepted their children’s identities as students in the programme, some participants nonetheless voiced frustration about not being understood -- such as Lisa’s belief that her parents still perceived the students in the U of T KPE program as less intelligent than students in other program. The following section examines the participants’ experiences of the perceptions and stereotypes of East Asians in sport, from their peers and from others outside of participants’ immediate families.

**Being East Asian U of T KPE Students: Perceptions and Realities**

**Stereotypes, Assumptions and Discrimination toward East Asians in Sport**

In this part of the chapter, I report on the participants’ views about their present-day identities as U of T KPE students of East Asian heritage. However, connections are made with the past, by recalling instances of incorrect perceptions, and the future, by thinking of career goals. In this section specifically, participants reflect on perceptions of East Asians in sport. None of the participants said that they personally faced overt discrimination or racist verbal abuse while growing up. Nonetheless, many of the participants are familiar with stereotypes of East Asians in sport, described by Nakamura (2004) as “bookworms...good at math...aren’t good at sports,” and some participants have faced these stereotypes. Despite claiming that “there’s not much stereotyping that we put down on other racial backgrounds,” Brian still reported the following experiences from his high school basketball team:

My team was mainly from Asian descent. That high school was located in an area with many East Asians. We played teams that are more...who are more athletically gifted such as African-Canadians and Caucasians who are more muscular and built. We were the underdogs. We were challenged because we weren’t gifted or the
tallest athletes in the league. It wasn’t racial slurs but just how they treated us, they shunned us because you sensed that they just thought they were Asians who weren’t good. The expectations were just lower...that we weren’t going to go far. (Brian)

Although his motivation to be the first Filipino basketball player in the NBA had waned by this point, Brian said:

I wanted to represent my race in sport...for me personally, gym class...I take things to the next level. I always like to have fun but also be competitive so you can see that in different ethnicities as well. Two different races will see who’s superior in gym classes. You have the more skilled players who want to demonstrate the skills we learn in gym class. I would always competitively teach skills to the class. Someone from a different ethnicity would do that too. African-Canadians and Caucasians, Filipinos and other Asians always tried to show their skills. Of course they didn’t publicly say that but you could feel that. (Brian)

Despite the candidness of these comments, Brian, along with a number of other participants, appeared hesitant about labelling and portraying different identity groups in a negative light, hence the ironic overcompensation in reinforcing stereotypes of racialized athletic abilities. Dividing athletic abilities into racialized categories still exists, according to Vincent, who reported facing more stereotypes in university about his weightlifting abilities: “Any social circle, when they hear how much weight I lift, they say he must be on steroids or they can’t believe Asians can be that strong.” Vincent explained that even an East Asian friend who went to Western University for physiotherapy thought that “Asians could never be athletes because they have slow twitch muscle fibres.” Vincent uses these quotes as motivation and proudly claims, “I’m squatting more than double my body weight.”

Simon also felt the need to counter predominant stereotypes of East Asians in sport through participation in activities that require physical strength. While he acknowledged the meaning captured in a remark made by Lauren in Nakamura’s (2004) study, that
“Chinese style is non-confrontational” regarding sporting behaviour, and while Simon is often a reserved person, he spoke with passion when he said, “You don’t see many Asians playing football, and when you make plays, others will be surprised. It’s kind of a good thing because you always represent and want to be great.” Simon reported that being East Asian is “a bad first impression” and other non-Asian players “don’t really care about you...don’t think you’re good...don’t really look at you...until they see you’re good and changes happen after.”

Zoe observed that “everyone sort of has a preconceived notion of what Chinese people can do” such as “swimming and racquet sports” rather than football. Having been involved with baseball with an ethnically Chinese father from India, Zoe shrugged and said, “These stereotypes don’t faze me.” Attending schools where her Chinese family name was unique in her classes, Zoe encountered some stereotypes about her academic abilities, notably the assumption of math proficiency: “At the beginning, [classmates] were like, ‘You’re half-Chinese, you should be good at math.’” However, Zoe struggled with math and found that her ethnically Chinese tutor “had the whole mentality that if you’re Asian, you had to be good at math.”

Lisa also faced numerous jokes about her academic achievement during her time at university. Her non-Asian friends in U of T KPE see her as a “FOB” and ask, “You’re not active enough; why are you studying all the time?” and “Did you Asian fail this time and get a 99?” Although Lisa is good friends with these people, and does not take their comments too seriously, she emphasized that her pursuit of high marks stemmed from her desire to “get into physio and not because I’m Asian.” The irony is that while growing up, Lisa was seen as a “bad child” in her Chinese-dominant neighbourhood for “biking at 5 p.m. instead of studying.”

In more “multicultural” high schools, Claudia, Ivy, and Kathleen all reported not having experienced stereotyping. Ivy pointed out that “cliquey” social circles were a much bigger factor at her school, and that despite personally achieving high marks in the sciences, “It wasn’t as if the Asians were better at school than anyone else – the top marks
always went to the white kids.” Claudia labels “skill and favouritism” and (jokingly) her height as the biggest problems on her volleyball and softball teams. She reported that her volleyball and softball teams consisted of players from many different ethnic groups. Finally, Kathleen dismissed the notion of facing discrimination by saying, “I never experienced anything like that. It might be a general stereotype, but there are many who are very active. Right now, my closest friends are Asian and they’re active…I’m friends with them not because they’re Asian…it just happened.”

While Kathleen’s comment is by far the most vehement in denying the presence of East Asian stereotypes in her life, numerous stereotypes have shaped the identities of participants such as Brian, Vincent, and Simon, who use them as motivation to counter those who do not think Asians have the ability to succeed at physical activities that value size and strength. Some participants find that the stereotypes and assumptions they encounter also exist with their close friends or in the East Asian communities, and they often occurred due to ignorance and surprise rather than malice. Although Vincent said that “racism towards Asians is brushed off as A-Okay,” he does not consider himself to be a victim – in fact, he is wary of “social justice warriors” – and none of the other participants claim to be victims of discrimination either, though many participants agree about the importance of changing stereotypical assumptions.

Participants’ Identity as U of T KPE Students: Perceptions of Others

Although the previous section on stereotypes and assumptions found that none of the participants claim to be victims of discrimination, it is also evident that many assumptions regarding East Asian behaviour exist both within and outside the East Asian community. A previous section on “negotiating” enrolment in the U of T KPE programme found that many parents still required explanations from the participants in order to understand what they intended to study, and while the participants all said that their parents eventually tolerated or accepted their children’s enrolment, some participants felt frustrated about the continued lack of understanding from their parents regarding their university experiences. Several participants reported a similar lack of understanding from their peers and others with varying degrees of influence over their day-to-day lives, though
other participants reported growing recognition of the field. As in the previous section, participants attribute these incorrect perceptions to ignorance and surprise rather than malice.

Many assumptions exist regarding participants’ identity as U of T KPE students, and while not unanimously for all participants, one major theme that the majority of participants (Claudia, Jillian, Kathleen, Lisa, Simon, Vincent, and Zoe) mentioned is the way outsiders perceived that they were in a “jock”-dominated programme that was not academically challenging. In reality, Vincent notes the hourly class time and studying in the “high 20s per week, not including assignments.” While recognizing that he lifts weights frequently and is seen as “cho lo” (Cantonese slang to describe ungracefulness), Vincent says: “I also draw and play music, so it’s hard for people to understand who I am. The perception of our field...that I’m a personal trainer or a phys ed teacher? No, that’s a load of crap.”

Entering at a year with a class of 250 other students, Ivy noticed that more people know about kinesiology and she senses, “It’s never really a negative reaction, as kinesiology is growing. People don’t negatively look at it like jocks anymore. It’s become science-based. It’s more than just being a phys ed teacher, which was what I heard a lot before.” Ivy mentioned that her high school exercise science course was “bio and anatomy based, so that was the perception of Kin, so they sort of knew it was still a science;” but nonetheless she recalled that when she told people about her decision to enter the U of T KPE programme, her “high school friends were shocked – like kinesiology out of all places?!’ before saying “that’s cool.” Ivy admitted that her views about perceptions of the U of T KPE programme are shaped by her students at a fitness studio, who all view this programme in a positive light. Simon’s viewpoint, on the other hand, is shaped by East Asian peers and citizens of his community, as he carefully adds, “I don’t know if it’s only Asian people” to preface the following: “People who are uneducated think it’s just about being gym teachers or trainers so they look down on you...and have the stereotype of people taking kinesiology as unintelligent because they think that’s not useful or won’t make any money.” Simon,
who has set his sights on entrepreneurship, has defied these negative perceptions by already securing part-time fitness training jobs to earn extra income.

Kathleen has also used assumptions about her sportiness to successfully apply for a job at a specialized sporting goods store, despite having zero work experience: “The manager looked at my résumé and asked, ‘You’re in kinesiology?’ After I went in for an interview, I got the job and the manager said, ‘The reason I hired you was to build relations with people in Kin.’” While Kathleen does not personally identify as a “jock,” she vividly described how, during Frosh week, she gladly took part in “We Do Gym jock-like behaviour” where “at every stop light, one of our leaders would say a phrase and we’d all do squats and push-ups.” Although Kathleen heard numerous “GYM IS NOT A MAJOR, GYM IS NOT A MAJOR!” chants during Frosh week, she dismissed it as playful banter. While Kathleen is the only person from her high school graduating class to enter the U of T KPE programme, and often needed to explain to her friends outside of the faculty about what the programme entailed, she says, “I don’t think anyone has seriously teased me about it.” However, Kathleen does recall hearing these stereotypes from her closest friend in the programme: “In one story, someone says, ‘Oh, you’re just learning about gym. That sounds so easy!’ but [her friend] says, ‘No, it’s not. We’re learning about this, this, and this,’ but the other guy says, ‘Oh, but it’s just…like…gym!’”

Brian has similarly experienced these stereotypes about “just learning gym class” during first year when the faculty was named Physical Education and Health, but “when the name changed, more people realized it’s more than just being a gym teacher.” Upon reflection, however, Brian says that his “fondest memories were in PAC.” Claudia, Jillian, and Zoe have all encountered these stereotypes too but they all respond lightheartedly. As an extrovert, Claudia interacts with many people outside of U of T KPE, and in light of her history as the captain of her high school volleyball and softball teams, she said (semi-seriously), “I feel bad because I sort of fit the stereotype with sports, though I don’t like working out and getting jacked.” In response to her identity as a student in U of T KPE, Jillian playfully responded, “They realize how much I can lift and then they’re like, ‘Oh yeah, you must be in Kin!’” Zoe added, melodramatically,
Have you seen all the anatomy stuff or the psychosocial stuff? It’s not all fun and games and gym...but what’s more friendly than a jock? Do I take pride that I’m a jock? I think so; it makes me unique and different from my friends. Not many of my friends know a million things about the body and have seen things I’ve seen and done things I’ve done. I see why some people would not be seen that way due to negative connotations – is that the right word? Maybe I am a jock; I don’t even know the words I’m spitting out! (Zoe)

While Zoe is from a small high school and still thinks of U of T KPE as a large faculty, she senses that the camaraderie within the faculty student body is much higher than in other departments. Zoe noted that while the back-door route to medicine has existed for many years, the camaraderie may erode if the admissions committee begins to target the unsuccessful applicants of the “vicious, conquer-all” life sciences crowd in light of the closing of the CTEP programme which she initially entered. Amy also reported that in contrast to the social support in U of T KPE and “our perspective that we can easily help,” she recalls seeing on social media an offer – described by other U of T KPE students as “evil and cutthroat” – to do a simple task such as sharing life sciences notes for $20.

Lisa, a participant who felt frustrated about the lack of understanding from her father when he blurted out, “You guys, phys ed kids, are not as smart as the life sci students,” found a similar sense of superiority complex among students in life sciences, particularly those raised with more traditional Chinese parents. She described the ethnically Chinese friends with whom she grew up as the following: “My friends who did kinesiology were the whitewashed athletic ones. The music friends are into pharmacy, medicine, etc. and they saw us as the type who would only do gym, play around, not study; drink, and club.” Lisa says that she almost “needs to push it in the direction that Kin students can go into nursing and med school” even though she does not want to discredit many other career paths such as physiotherapy and teaching. Although Lisa finds that

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5 Due to cultural perceptions of athletic facilities as white space (Millington, Vertinsky, Boyle, & Wilson, 2008), Lisa found that Chinese-Canadians in her school displayed “whitewashed” behaviour when they actively engaged in sport (as opposed to more “traditional” norms).
other East Asians can “consciously” say they know about kinesiology, Lisa argues that “deep down inside it’s so ingrained to them since elementary school that gym is the least important.” Regarding other people Lisa met in life sciences, she said that they “treat us like we were stupid,” despite having lab experience with specimens and cadavers. In one example, Lisa recalls: “One student bragged about how he got 97, and that got me ticked off, like, ‘Why did you tell me that?’ Then I responded that I got 100, and he’s like, ‘Oh.’”

Although Lisa arguably feels the most annoyed at the ignorance displayed by others regarding the perception of U of T KPE students’ identities, some of the other participants seem to treat the “jock” perceptions – which are not universally felt – with lightheartedness and pride. Some participants, notably Zoe and Lisa, starkly contrasted the small communal U of T KPE faculty with their own negative perceptions of the individualism inherent in the much bigger life sciences. Overall, while peers and other people outside the U of T KPE faculty may have varying degrees of influence over the lives of the study participants, none of the participants felt the need to negotiate or disguise their identities as U of T KPE students to suit others. Nevertheless, personalities may change and the next section focuses on participants’ own evolving viewpoints after entering the U of T KPE programme.

Participants’ Evolving Views and Assessment of the KPE Programme

As the participants discovered, expectations of university life do not always align with the realities. The participants have completed at least half of their undergraduate studies. Five have been in university for four or more years, five participants for three years, and the remaining two have completed two years of university. Before enrolling in university classes, the 11 participants who went to high school in Ontario took the Grade 12 university-stream credit course, “PSE4U: Exercise Science,” mandatory for entrance into the U of T KPE programme if offered by the high school. A sizable majority of participants enjoyed exercise science and found that it prepared them for university, with Ivy and Simon crediting this course for their decision to enrol in U of T KPE. Although Ivy’s teacher had a biology background, other participants who enjoyed exercise science (Amy, Kathleen, Lucy, Vincent, and Zoe) had teachers who came from a kinesiology background, with some
being recent graduates of U of T Physical Education and Health, and who were taught by some of the same professors who are currently teaching the participants.

Although Vincent initially did not want to enter university, as explained in a previous section, he chose U of T KPE in part because of a “good” teacher who had a Master’s degree in kinesiology. Nevertheless, Vincent gave the following evaluation of exercise science: “For some people it was a bird course but for me, it was an intro to every topic I’d study in my bachelors. It was more bookwork than physical.” Jillian’s experience of high school exercise science was typical of a “bird course” in the sense that the teacher gave “easy marks but...not from learning.” Jillian describes “selling daffodils and poppies” for 10% of her grade and was disappointed that she did not learn much from the course, saying, “This class should’ve played a role in applying to this programme, but probably not.” Although she was interested in leadership and coaching, Claudia similarly does not recall learning anything from high school exercise science that transferred into university, stating, “We did some bone stuff, but it didn’t transfer into first-year anatomy. Biology helped me more.” When Claudia first found out her schedule of courses, she was surprised at the diverse range of courses because she thought “it was just the human body and coaching.”

Despite the fact that they both said that exercise science was enjoyable and prepared them well for university, Kathleen and Amy – whose interests lie in the biophysical components of the programme – did not expect so much content from the behavioural or sociocultural streams. Upon further reflection on her exercise science class, Kathleen recalls, “We did do some kind of sport policies...we had to write an essay. My topic was, ‘Is competitive eating a sport?’ I didn’t understand the social construction of sport then, but I know now.” Kathleen adds that when she first took physical cultural studies, she did not know this course was part of a kinesiology education: “First semester was all biophysical, and the second semester was the social aspects. Many people wondered why we are taking this, and it didn’t seem relevant at all.” Amy adds, “I didn’t even think there would be the whole physical cultural stuff. I don’t know how they promoted it but what I anticipated was...well, I didn’t think about that part.” Nonetheless,
both Kathleen and Amy value the inter-disciplinary nature of the programme, with Kathleen taking a social psychology course as an elective and Amy saying, “They’re always my lowest marks, but I appreciate the value of [the behavioural and sociocultural streams], as they give me a different way of thinking about things critically.”

Even in the CTEP stream, which Zoe and Lisa initially entered, the participants expressed surprise about the behavioural and sociocultural courses. Similar to Amy, Lisa said, “The CTEP programme did a lot of reflective pieces and no matter how reflective I’m being on my paper, I always got a D or a C. The highest was a C+.” In her other courses, Lisa “always aimed 90+” and that “you can see on my transcript that in anatomy I would be getting 97 but I worked my butt off in social science classes and the highest would only be a B+.” While Lisa said that she was “happy” about the learning process despite the low marks, Zoe did not enjoy the non-biophysical components, saying, “I’m not always a social science kind of girl, so a lot of material for [behavioural and sociocultural classes], they were in my short term memory and they were gone.”

Several people do recall topics learned in their first year of physical cultural studies, as Ivy gave a detailed explanation of the Washington Redskins controversy and Vincent eloquently recited Michael Smith’s typology of violence. Regarding the practicality of sociocultural courses, Vincent said, “These courses were interesting because I find them interesting...in terms of usefulness...well, I don’t know. I actually enjoyed sport history for example. I read them like stories and I did well in the course.” Jillian added, “When the instructor was teaching it, I was really into it. But at other times, I was sort of, m’eh.” Jillian emphasized the importance of the messages covered in these courses, which align with the messages in the health promotion organization she supports. However, her involvement in this organization does not stem from learning about these issues in her behavioural and sociocultural courses, but rather from the practical desire to find relevant volunteering experience.

Some of the other participants associated with health promotion organizations (Adrian, Amy, Ivy, Kathleen, and Simon) genuinely care about the organizations’ messages,
but their catalyst for involvement similarly came from seeking relevant volunteering experience as well as from friends rather than from their interest in behavioural and sociocultural issues. Only Claudia found that learning about equity in university played a significant factor in her deep involvement with promoting equitable initiatives in physical activity settings, and said, “I want biophysical to be less dominant,” in response to the culture of the faculty. It was intriguing to find that the majority of participants involved in health promotion organizations want to pursue biophysical paths, given the behavioural and sociocultural nature of the organizations’ messages. In terms of making recommendations to improve the U of T KPE programme, Kathleen, in contrast to Claudia, wanted even “more anatomy courses, spaced throughout the years...because it’s so hard to retain it all without constant practice.” This suggestion is repeated by second-year student Zoe, who similarly wanted anatomy every year to properly prepare for the sport medicine course that she is taking next year.

Simon is involved in health promotion organizations but does not necessarily want to pursue a biophysical path; he does not share Kathleen and Zoe’s interest in anatomy: “The memorizing and stuff in anatomy...I don’t think it will last when you graduate. You have to keep applying the knowledge and reinforce what you learn in real-life situations to start understanding what you want to do.” Simon added that anatomy is good background for medical science programmes but otherwise wanted “more practical stuff that we can use when we’re working.” He reflected, “To be honest, I don’t think I’ve learned a lot. In general, what I’ve learned so far is hard to apply.” Although Simon dismissed the placement component of the programme as “doing random tasks like buying coffee,” Amy had a positive view of her placement experience, which she saw as practical. While reiterating her support for “thinking about things critically,” Amy said that there are “too many required courses” that restrict students from fully engaging with their interests. Compared to her friends who grumbled, “Why am I showing up for two hours? Waste of time!,” Amy enjoyed the mandatory practicum (PRA) courses, along with Simon who added, “I like PRA – they show you lots of different things – people always trash it, but in
3rd-year PRA I saw for the first time how CrossFit is good because it shows you the business side.”

However, Vincent was discouraged by the decreasing amount of physical activity with PRA in contrast to its predecessor PAC and explains, “I’m very happy about things I was exposed to. Besides volleyball and soccer, I did gymnastics, which I would have never done, I did dance...but they got rid of all that shit and now it’s all academic and boring.” Furthermore, Vincent does not appreciate the removal of hands-on labs in physiology, saying, “They saved money on TAs and lab equipment, but they made money by selling us these books and DVDs. I’m all for the university making money, but don’t go too far. So you basically sold me a lemon.” Nonetheless, Vincent reports a relatively positive experience throughout his undergraduate studies, beginning with the mandatory outdoor projects camp. Vincent recalls, “The first person I saw was a monster on the football team, so I thought everyone is jacked and I couldn’t believe I was about to take gym with these people. Everyone turned out to be really friendly overall.”

Kathleen and Jillian shared the same positive experiences about the friendliness and cohesion that physical activity-based courses bring to the point that they significantly reduced their levels of self-consciousness. Kathleen said, “When I got accepted, I started thinking, ‘Everyone’s probably really fit’...And then I started being nervous that I’m going to be the odd one out.” After attending outdoor projects camp and telling people, “I don’t play anything,” Kathleen “expected everybody to judge,” but instead “everyone was super nice” with people of varying levels of sport participation experience. Jillian adds, “Everyone’s really friendly. In this environment, I didn’t care what people thought of me anymore...There are improvements that can be made but I can’t picture myself in any other programme.” Zoe said that she met her closest friends through the outdoor camps and attributed the culture of “saying hi” to everyone in the faculty to these outdoor camps. Lisa shared this assertion and described the following:

It’s a small-knit group. We just help each other even if we don’t know you. We share notes and in labs, we never try to kill you like stereotypical life sci students.
Every time we sit beside each other in Kin, we say, ‘Hey, how it’s going?’ But when I went to a calculus class, out of habit I started talking to the person beside me, and she walked away from me, like, ‘Why is she talking to me?’ One of my best friends in high school went to life sciences, and I said I was meeting up with a university friend, and she said, ‘You have friends? Are you sure you can trust them? What if they’re trying to screw you over?’ At first I thought it was a small group. 200 is small compared to life sci, but another friend who’s in engineering science – which is still really small – they don’t talk to each other. Me and my friend – we’re both going to physio, competing for the same school, but if she gets in I’ll be like, ‘Good for you!’ I’ll never go behind her back and say, ‘Oh, I’m so jealous’ or ‘I should have gotten in.’ (Lisa)

Despite the cheerful outlook above, Lisa has also experienced unpleasant aspects of the programme, notably the fallout from the CTEP practicum. While comfortable sharing the story now since she has graduated with sufficient marks to enter a physiotherapy programme, Lisa still remembered her exit out of the CTEP as if it had happened yesterday:

When I went in, I really liked it. But for some odd reason, I felt that students didn’t really like me. Maybe the school I went to [for high school]...95% are immigrants from China. I was so used to that culture that once I went to other schools, I wasn’t able to understand those students as well. Our generations are different too. When I did my practicum at that high school, kids would be texting while speaking to the teacher and the teacher wouldn’t say anything. I mean, that’s just basic manners. For me, I’d be like, ‘Excuse me, please put your phone away,’ and I didn’t understand why others wouldn’t do that. Other people told me not to be too strict and they didn’t understand the way I taught, so we just never got along... [An administrator] said, ‘You’re not a good teacher. You have no patience. You’re not even that good at gym – meaning volleyball and basketball, not excluding badminton – you’re not even good at these sports, you’re not even good with kids – do you even like kids?’ That’s basically what I went through. That really triggered my push out of the programme. (Lisa)
Even with this demotivational conversation with an administrative figure, which none of the other participants recall having, Lisa still finds U of T KPE to be a worthwhile degree programme. Although all of the participants have already completed at least half their degree programme and thus it may not reflect the experiences of everyone who has taken U of T KPE courses (not even all of the students with East Asian backgrounds), the majority of participants still felt that there were more enjoyable components than problematic components of the programme, with the camaraderie built from outdoor projects camps being the most frequently mentioned positive memory. Among improvements, the most recommended are more practical components and more space to pursue individual interests within the inter-disciplinary programme, which many participants still deem to be a necessary aspect of the programme, if not universally the most exciting aspect of the programme.

Although the majority of participants saw high school exercise science as a useful preview for the U of T KPE programme, the teachers – some of whom are alumni of the U of T programme – primarily focused on anatomy and biophysical components. Thus, many students were surprised when they had to take behavioural and sociocultural courses for the first time. It is surprising to me that, despite having served with seven of these participants in health promotion organizations and seeing their genuine commitment to themes raised in relation to behavioural and sociocultural causes, most of them did not gain the inspiration to serve as volunteers in physical activity and health initiatives from courses in these areas. At the same time, while recognizing the small sample of those interested in biophysical-related paths, students do engage in the full inter-disciplinary nature of this programme despite many continuing to pursue biophysical-related career paths. The following section considers the participants’ future goals and career ambitions, examining what success means for the participants.

**Defining Success and Future Goals**

In the section on “negotiations” to enter the U of T KPE programme, the parents of participants were, according to the participants, split between strong support and lukewarm support for their children. All of the parents eventually accepted the
participants’ career paths after varying levels of negotiation and manoeuvring to resolve questions or conflicts. Even when parents showed strong support at the beginning, the support did not necessarily remain constant throughout the duration of the programme, as is the case with Amy. Although Amy described her parents as “pretty understanding,” she also felt that her parents were impatient about the absence of immediate success. Her parents equated success to the “prerequisites of life” -- finding employment and earning money -- and they want her to “push along, hustle” for rapid completion of more education in order to find a “successful” career. Her father wished that career would be in acupuncture and Chinese medicine – an idea “shot down right away” by Amy. Since choosing to enter U of T KPE rather than the narrower field of nutrition, Amy still does not know what path to pursue next. She said that even if she obtains a nutrition diploma, it does not guarantee a job. Initially Amy thought about physiotherapy, but “those dreams started to shatter” after realizing the competition. Then Amy thought about being a registered kinesiologist but felt that it does not have as much value as physiotherapy.

Similarly, Jillian’s idea of a “successful” career path has changed several times: “In high school, I was like, ‘I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR! I WANT TO GO TO MED SCHOOL!’ Then I got to university and I’m like, ‘I don’t want to be med school!’” Jillian then described the “opening” and “narrowing” of opportunities ranging from physiotherapy to occupational therapy, as long as it will lead to a “career job in the healthcare field, not a part-time job.” Jillian and her parents’ share this viewpoint as the measure for success, though her parents still wish that Jillian could become a “bone doctor.” Claudia and Brian’s parents similarly expected their children to become doctors, but they have become “more lenient” in their parenting over time, accepting that their children are receiving a high-quality education at a prestigious institution. In the “Filipino and Asian” definition of success, Brian explained that parents have “high expectations for their children” and “want each generation to be more successful” in comparison to the previous generation. Brian’s career path has, for the most part, remained the same, as he still wants to pursue certification as a kinesiologist and go into the field of rehabilitation therapy. The only other participant who has remained consistent with regard to a career path is Kathleen, who considers long-term success to be
obtaining a job after completion of physiotherapy credentials. Kathleen’s parents “define success as money: if you can make a good wage, and title: they don’t want me to be a plumber.”

Other participants (Adrian, Amy, Ivy, Lisa, Lucy, Simon, Vincent, and Zoe) report having “enough” money through sustainable employment as their parents’ vision of success. This interpretation of success is compatible with the participants’ views of success, which are often similar but with an added emphasis on happiness upon finding enjoyable careers. Lisa in particular emphasized that her parents care about her quality of life beyond her job title: “My parents never wanted me or my sister to go to a really stressful environment. They asked if we really want to be a doctor. They don’t want us to stress out for a million dollars a year.” Nonetheless, Lisa recognizes that doctors are still valued highly in East Asian culture. When Lisa and her mother were in a shopping mall during Lisa’s first year in university, they saw the woman who had told her daughter to “stay away” from Lisa’s “bad influence.” Lisa remembered the brief conversational exchange between her mother and the other woman: “She said, ‘Oh, my daughter is going to medical school.’ In a nice way, my mom would go, ‘My daughter is in a double-degree programme!’”

Kathleen, Lucy, Simon, and Zoe also said that their parents have encountered other East Asians who enjoy comparing successes and failures, but they all point out that their own parents do not bring up these issues to boast about success, but they are willing to defend their own children even if the parents do not fully comprehend their children’s programme of study. Describing this phenomenon of comparing success, Simon merely rolled his eyes and said, “It’s just how it is with Asian parents.” Reacting with mild exasperation, Zoe added, “If I didn’t go to university, what will everyone say? All the Chinese families like to gossip...if things get leaked out to my extended family, all hell breaks loose and you’d have to find a bunker.”

Comparisons about education are more commonly made within the immediate family. Pointing to her elder sisters as successful graduate students, Ivy’s parents have let her know that she is “next in line” to pursue a Master’s degree. Making the case for more
education, Amy recalls her father “bragging about someone else’s child who did a Master’s and then a PhD... a perfect example of the ideal.” Similar to Amy, Vincent has completed all four years of his degree programme, and recognizes that it could take many more years to build a “successful” career path, which does not adequately satisfy his parents who compare him to his engineering friends and say, “You should have done that.” Vincent’s vision for a successful career path has taken many detours. His parents discouraged his initial desire to work in a trade, and his father questioned Vincent about the U of T KPE programme before approving and funding his education. Despite his new career interest in sales and marketing, Vincent feels pressure “to make a lot of money” in a field related to kinesiology, as he said, “It is a bit humiliating because I told many people physiotherapy and then I’m doing something different.” While Vincent said that his parents do not regret his career path, it is ironic that his father uses some of Vincent’s reasoning in order to convince him to stay in kinesiology and become certified, which Vincent no longer wants because “getting a licence is time-consuming and expensive... and once you get that job, you don’t even make that much.”

Ironically, Vincent’s last quote leads back to his parents’ – and many other participants’ – views of success as having enough money through sustainable employment. Many participants themselves share this view of success, with the addition of happiness after reaching such a high level of achievement. Although some parents were strong supporters and others were lukewarm supporters when participants made the choice to enrol in U of T KPE, participants claim that they all eventually accepted the participants’ career paths. As participants finish their degrees and parents do not see immediate returns on their educational investments, however, the participants believe that parents are beginning to second-guess the quality of the programme, particularly if the peers of the participants are achieving more immediate success from other degree programmes. While few participants have clearly-planned career paths and many remain uncertain about their future, all of the participants understand that realizing their future goals of “success” through stable finances and happiness will take time.
Summary and Conclusion

This chapter examined the journeys of twelve self-identified “East Asian” students. The first part of the chapter re-examined the “Finding a Way: Being and Becoming Active Physical Education Students” portion of Nakamura’s (2004) study. In comparison to Nakamura’s, over a decade later there are still similarities in terms of parental indifference with regard to physical education as an academic subject and the students found it necessary to explain the educational outcomes of this programme, with some participants having to “negotiate” more than others. There are also several differences between the results of this study and Nakamura’s study. Firstly, more parents in this study led by example in physical activity, which has long been shown to increase childhood participation (Moore, et al., 1991); secondly, more parents served as the initial catalyst for their children’s sport participation; and thirdly, more parents did not view high academic achievement and high involvement in sport as mutually exclusive.

The second part of the chapter considered changes in viewpoint and the effect of stereotypes and perceptions in contrast to the realities. Although many participants valued the importance of correcting stereotypical assumptions about themselves and the KPE programme, none of the participants claimed to be victims of discrimination or felt compelled to disguise their identities as U of T KPE students. The majority of the participants started the U of T KPE programme with their own assumptions about it being a biophysically-oriented programme; and while many participants continue to pursue career paths in that direction, “successful” futures may take many years. The following chapter offers an interpretation of results, and relates them to Nakamura’s (2004) findings and to the scholarly literature.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study has its origins in a personal reflection on the journey that brought me from Vancouver to Toronto and from political science as an undergraduate to exercise sciences as a graduate student. My parents were born in China and moved to Canada in the 1970s. I was born and raised in Vancouver and I grew up and attended schools in Southeast Vancouver, where the majority of the population was of Chinese heritage. I later attended the University of British Columbia (UBC), which was jokingly nicknamed “University of a Billion Chinese” by many students of East Asian heritage. My interests in sport and in multiculturalism eventually led me to the exercise sciences graduate programme at the University of Toronto and my experiences as a Chinese-Canadian made me conscious of the “model minority” values in that community.

In this final chapter, I consider the contexts in which Nakamura (2004) carried out her research and I have carried out this research. Then I consider the research questions in the context of the journeys made by Nakamura’s (2004) participants and the participants in this study. Although the results of this study provide an intriguing comparison to Nakamura’s (2004) findings, there are also numerous limitations in the methodology of this study. In the last section, I critically evaluate the significance of this study and offer recommendations for future research.

Context of the Journeys

The University of Toronto has had a prestigious reputation for many decades – consistently ranking among the top universities in the world (Times Higher Education, 2015; QS Top Universities, 2015) – and attending the university is an aspiration for many prospective students and their parents. However, three major changes in context, directly relevant to this research, occurred between the time Nakamura (2004) conducted her study and the time that I conducted this study: first, the name of the faculty where this research took place changed from the Faculty of Physical Education and Health to the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education; second, the number of students in the
Faculty has doubled; and third, the demographic patterns of those students appears to have changed. Assuming the role of Dean in 2010, Ira Jacobs had a mandate to “increase the pool of student applicants” and to “better position both the Faculty as an organization, and individual faculty members, for access to broader research funding and partnering opportunities” (Faculty of Physical Education and Health Faculty Council, 2011, p. 4). To address the perception that the Physical Education and Health programme was losing potential applications to other universities because its name did not include the word “kinesiology”, and to harmonize the name of the programme with similar departments/faculties at other universities, Jacobs facilitated discussions in which he advocated for a name change (Faculty of Physical Education and Health Faculty Council, 2011).

Ultimately, the name changed to the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education on January 1st, 2012 (Blackburn-Evans, 2012). Of the four participants who entered the faculty before this date, only Vincent noticed shifts in the pedagogical direction of this programme. Vincent voiced displeasure at the changes in the practical activity aspects to more theoretical PRA classes in contrast to his preferred experiences of more free play in PAC classes. Two other participants who entered the faculty before 2012, Lisa and Brian, encountered differing viewpoints about the new faculty name. While Brian claimed that “more people realized it’s more than just being a gym teacher,” Lisa still needed to link the new name to medicine-related career paths to make it sound credible to those who otherwise did not know its meaning.

Apart from some perceptions about the changing orientations of the programme, I argue that this name change is essentially cosmetic. Each year, new courses are offered or taught by new professors as the number of faculty members has expanded in parallel to, but at less than half the rate of, the increase in student numbers. However, the programme has remained broad-based since Nakamura’s (2004) study, with students required to take both mandatory and optional courses in the biophysical, behavioural, and sociocultural streams. Although the introduction of a Bachelor of Kinesiology degree involved some different requirements that the Bachelor of Physical Health and Education degree,
undergraduate students in both degree programmes, and in the Concurrent Teacher Education Programme must take courses in all three of the above streams. Apart from the themes discussed in each individual class, and technological advances in the delivery of the content, the educational outcomes of the Kinesiology and Physical Education programme today are essentially the same as the Physical Education and Health programme in 2004. Despite offering a similar number of biophysical or lab-based science courses as the programme had offered before the name change, the marketing of the “new” (newly branded) programme accomplished exactly what it was intended to do: it persuaded some parents and potential students that the degree was “more scientific” without making any significant changes in the degree programme. (Despite similar requirements, there is an increased opportunity to specialize in one of the areas of the programme.) Kathleen and Jillian noted that the “–ology” sound of the word “kinesiology” made the programme more appealing for their parents, and the other participants – given the choice between a BPE and a BKin degree -- placed a stronger focus on “kinesiology” than “physical education” since all of them plan to graduate or have graduated with a Bachelor of Kinesiology degree, introduced to coincide with the name change.

There is a change in terms of the proliferation of the term “kinesiology” since Nakamura’s (2004) study. Under new regulated health professions legislation, the Government of Ontario officially created a regulatory body for kinesiologists (College of Kinesiologists of Ontario) in 2013, but graduation from a kinesiology programme alone is not sufficient to call oneself a “kinesiologist” (Government of Ontario, 2013). Instead, a separate process is required to “register” as a kinesiologist, though the potential careers that emerge after obtaining this specific credential are less clear. As an operational definition, “kinesiology” is defined by the Kinesiology Act, 2007, as: “The assessment of human movement and performance and its rehabilitation and management to maintain, rehabilitate or enhance movement and performance” (Government of Ontario, 2013).

In contrast to the clinical definition of kinesiology in the Kinesiology Act, 2007, the University of Toronto Faculty of Physical Education and Health voted for the name change on the basis that kinesiology was defined in academic terms as “encompassing the study of
physical activity and inactivity, sport, exercise, play and dance...accomplished by drawing upon all of the major sources of knowledge in the academy: the physical and life sciences, the social sciences and the humanities” (Faculty of Physical Education and Health Faculty Council, 2011, p. 3). Whereas the U of T KPE faculty emphasizes the multi-disciplinary nature of kinesiology as a reason for the name change, some kinesiology departments at other universities (e.g., McMaster, Waterloo) have opted for a more clinical definition of kinesiology. The Canadian Council of University Physical Education and Kinesiology Administrators also indicate a preference for a more academic definition of kinesiology. They currently list McMaster University and McGill University – kinesiology programmes for which some participants in this study had also applied – as “institutions with lapsed accreditation” for failing to meet accreditation standards, which include at least two “core courses” in social sciences or humanities (CCUPEKA, 2015).

From the results of this study, it is clear that the majority of participants did not know about the multi-disciplinary breadth of the U of T KPE programme before enrolling in their first classes, despite the fact that this is made clear in the undergraduate handbook, in promotional materials distributed by the department, and at university recruitment initiatives. While many of the participants chose to come to the University of Toronto over other universities for various reasons, such as the prestige of the institution, and the relatively convenient location from their home, the data suggest that these participants – and by extension other prospective students – have a vague understanding of the broad area of study encompassed by the term kinesiology, perhaps in part due to the contradictory and perhaps more prevalent clinical usage of the term. The practical connotation of the term “kinesiology” is inherently contradictory because ‘ology’ is a suffix to indicate the study of a subject; in the case of kinesiology, the broad-based study of human movement. Nonetheless, this current context of confusion will likely change as the obligatory high school exercise science course for U of T KPE applicants is renamed as “kinesiology” and the introductory chapter to a new textbook explains the complex definition of this term (Thompson Educational Publishing, 2015).
The other third contextual difference between this study and Nakamura’s (2004) study concerns demographic pattern shifts in the broader community, at the University of Toronto, and in the KPE programme. By 2031, Toronto is expected to be made up of 78 percent first- and second-generation Canadians, with the “visible minority” population growing to 63 percent of the total (Statistics Canada, 2011). At the University of Toronto, according to the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement, by 2012, 78 percent of first-year students selected a background “other than white” (University of Toronto, 2012). In the U of T KPE faculty, the suggestive data presented in Figure 1 shows that, in the past decade, East Asian graduates increased from approximately 8 percent of the graduating class in 2004 to 25 percent in 2015. The “visible minority” proportion of graduating students accordingly grew from 20 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2015. Accompanied by the doubling of the undergraduate student body, the total number of East Asian students has evidently grown significantly. However, it would be incorrect to say that the values of these East Asian individuals are all similar. Socioeconomically, most of the newer Chinese immigrants come from Mainland China and they are often wealthier than previous generations of Chinese immigrants (Guo, 2013). Although none of the participants reported immediate family connections to Mainland China for comparison, it was intriguing to hear the perspectives – albeit filtered through Canadian-born participants – of their Chinese diaspora families in Vietnam and India. Despite my uneasiness in viewing East Asians as a monolithic bloc for reasons raised in Asian critical race theories (Museus, 2013), there are some important commonalities in their journeys, discussed in the following section.

Journeys of Participants

The journeys of the participants may be divided into four stages: pre-selection, the decision to apply to U of T KPE, life in the programme, and future goals. First, the pre-selection component offers intriguing data about the sport and physical activity experiences of the participants and their families. The main similarity between Nakamura’s (2004) study and this study is the apparent indifference of parents to physical education. Despite this, more parents (though not all) were physically active in various ways, and had served as the catalyst for their children’s sport participation. Nonetheless, the parents still
expected their children to achieve high marks in school. In allowing for sport participation while also expecting strong academic achievement, it seems that – in contrast to the parents in Nakamura’s study -- parents have come to believe that these factors previously seen as contradictory, can instead work together. For example, Lisa’s father perceived sports and play as tools to “ease the mind” and he defended her from other people in the ethnic Chinese community who critiqued her excessive play time. In Lisa’s identification that she feels “whitewashed” in comparison to others in the community with her “non-traditional” parents (who do not encourage her to follow Chinese traditions such as using honorifics when greeting elder relatives), she describes an acculturation process where some immigrants may be adopting mainstream middle-class “Canadian” suburban values, such as enrolling children in organized sport and physical activity programmes.

In another case of acculturation, Ivy’s family highlighted the difference across generations in Canada. Ivy described her maternal grandfather as a “control freak” who “didn’t want his kids doing anything besides school work” despite her mother’s desire for them to have other opportunities. Ivy’s mother still wanted all her children to focus on school but “also noted the importance of doing other things,” which is a more balanced approach that does not imply an inverse relationship between academic achievement and involvement in sport. However, these examples, alongside the physical activity practices of Vincent and Jillian’s parents when they arrived in Canada from Hong Kong, seemingly contradict previous literature showing that highly-acculturated Chinese display a much more negative view of leisure, in comparison to Anglo-Canadians, than lower-acculturated Chinese (Deng, Walker, & Swinnerton, 2005). One possibility raised in the literature review is a honeymoon effect, where new activities seem enjoyable in a new country until the desire to settle down occurs. Since the participants indicated a different trajectory, the best possible explanation is that sport and physical activity are seen as different from leisure, and all of the participants worked hard throughout their childhood education to maintain high marks in contrast to the “idleness” that is sometimes associated with leisure.

With these high marks, the second stage of the participants’ journey was the decision to apply to and subsequently to attend U of T KPE. Similar to Nakamura’s (2004)
study, all participants needed to explain to their parents about the educational outcomes of this programme, with varying levels of “negotiation” among different participants. It can be argued that all of the participants “negotiated” since the explanation process required subjective framing. Although I previously argued that the name change was “cosmetic” because the programme has not changed in terms of its breadth and essential content, there is also an element of social reproduction involved in conflating the biophysical and clinically-driven connotations of the term “kinesiology” with the multi-disciplinary definition that officially defines the U of T KPE programme today. Despite the availability of detailed course descriptions, some participants were drawn in only by the biophysical and clinical kinesiology elements, and they explained only the human biology and clinical professions associated with kinesiology degrees in order to gain acceptance from parents, other family members, and peers. From a marketing perspective, the faculty may achieve success from some perspectives in accomplishing its rebranding goals if the ambiguity continues between the clinical and multi-disciplinary definitions, as it may lead to even higher enrolment from prospective pre-med students, even though that was a rationalization and career goal for many students when the Faculty was named Physical Education and Health, as evident in Nakamura’s (2004) study. It should be noted that two other justifications for the name change have not been fully realized – namely, that a U of T KPE brand would help to recruit high school students with higher marks; and that the name change would result in increased success in achieving research funding. The average mark of incoming students has decreased somewhat as the number of students admitted has increased (Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, 2015); and although the level of success in terms of research grants has increased, it is difficult to disentangle that level of success from the successful recruitment of a number of new faculty members/researchers.

A narrow medicalized interpretation of kinesiology is not the case for all participants; for example, Brian took pride in emphasizing the inter-disciplinary and inter-connected nature of the faculty to his family despite his unwavering plan, starting at the age of 12, to become a kinesiologist in the field of sport medicine. Other than Brian, the interconnected third and fourth parts of many participants’ journeys are stages of
discovery. Many of the participants entered the U of T KPE programme with dreams, or dreams as stated to their parents, of working in the healthcare and bio-science-oriented professions. However, some participants have come to the realization that these dreams may not always work out as planned. In her time spent at the University of Toronto, Jillian continually changed her mind about her career path and remains undecided about her future. Furthermore, Lisa discovered that the CTEP programme was not suitable for her, and also discovered that despite her “whitewashed” social status in her Chinese-dominant community, her studious ways in the U of T KPE programme led others to joke that she is an “FOB.”

Examining the first research question, “Has the ‘model minority’ stereotype changed?” the last sentence, alongside examples from other participants about lowered athletic expectations for them, suggests that it has not changed. While most of the participants have not needed to negotiate regarding their sport participation as much as the participants in Nakamura’s (2004) study, the societal expectation for East Asians to achieve high marks is still evident. The significance of this finding, some 12 years later and with some striking changes in context, is that it appears to indicate the ongoing power of an ideology – of the values characterized as “model minority.” The AsianCrit framework considers the “model minority” stereotype as part of a racist hierarchy (Museus, 2013), and while many participants do not attribute the “model minority” stereotype to broader societal power structures, participants do share a common desire to change some aspects of the stereotypes (for example, about athletic abilities). Re-examining Chang’s (1993) framework, a three-strategy approach to Asian critical race theory provides one approach to address these stereotypes. First, “denial of difference” (Chang, 1993, p. 1316) can help to address concerns about stereotypical understandings of the physical capabilities of East Asian bodies. Second, “affirmation of difference” (Chang, 1993, p. 1316) can help to promote and legitimize multicultural physical cultural activities in elementary school and high school. Despite the encouragement to promote diversity outlined in the Ontario Physical Education curriculum (Government of Ontario, 2005; PHE Canada, 2002), many participants do not recall participating in culturally-specific physical activities. Finally,
“liberation from difference” (Chang, 1993, p. 1316) may have practical applications despite being a post-structural theoretical concept. This concept can help to remind those who work in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, and more broadly in a culture with a historical legacy of Whiteness, to be mindful of how stereotypes are constructed and how stereotypical discourses could remain.

In response to the second research question, “Have the careers that may be pursued with a kinesiology / physical education degree become more acceptable to the students’ families?” the answer must be conditional on finding relevant employment – that is, employment in a career/profession that has perceived status and a good income -- or demonstrating that they are able to find such employment after more specialized graduate and/or professional training. Although none of the participants is currently planning to apply to medical school, and many parents (according to their sons and daughters) have accepted their decisions, some parents still appear to maintain the hope that their child will become a “bone doctor” or a specialist with a professional-sounding title. If there is a hierarchy where physicians are at the top, physiotherapists are in the middle, and registered kinesiologists are at the bottom, the lack of a clear translation of the term kinesiology into Chinese, and the widespread confusion about the actual roles of kinesiologists in society, could possibly lead to a positive connotation rather than the more negative “jock” connotation that some associated with physical education.

With these different connotations in mind, this leads to the last question, “Is there still a negotiation process involved with parents around sport and sport-related programmes, and with peers who may follow more traditional education and career paths?” As noted previously, there is less negotiation now with regard to participation in sport and physical activity, with more parents of these participants now more likely to initiate and facilitate such participation; although, according to the participants, their parents are still indifferent with regard to physical education. The term “kinesiology” rather than “physical education,” arguably makes it easier to create more sense of relevance for those who do not plan to enter medical school but who still want to pursue career paths in
the biophysical sciences and clinical fields. The ambiguity of the term leads to creative framing of the programme.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

There are several limitations to this study. It is interview-based and focuses on recollection of data, which may not always be accurate. This is a case study of the U of T KPE programme that includes 12 participants, out of potentially 200 East Asian candidates (i.e., based on 20% of the 2015 graduating class, and extrapolating that proportion to the entire student body), and the results from this convenience sample may not be readily generalizable to the entire group of East Asian students enrolled in U of T KPE, or in similar programmes at other Canadian universities. However, it is striking how similar the results of this study are to Nakamura’s. Also, as with Nakamura’s (2004) study, no comparison is intended between U of T KPE students and students in other departments at the University of Toronto who may have had markedly different journeys. While it is purely speculative to suggest that some students did not enroll in U of T KPE because their families voiced more discouragement about physical education/kinesiology programmes, this claim about the participant sample is a valid limitation in terms of what may be concluded from this study about “model minority” values as a whole. Because participants’ parents and other people (e.g., high school teachers, coaches) these participants mentioned were not interviewed, it is important to re-emphasize that the views represented in this thesis are filtered through the participants.

A further limitation of the study concerns my own researcher status. Although I am not an alumnus of the undergraduate U of T KPE programme, as a graduate student in Exercise Sciences I was occasionally (mistakenly) perceived as an advisor with expertise regarding future career paths. While I tried to help to the best of my ability, and while this perception of a researcher may have been useful in building rapport, I am mindful about potentially influencing the results. As an “insider” who shares the same categorized Asian race with all of the participants (and gender, sexual orientation, social class, and ethnic ancestry with some participants), I am cognizant of who I am and what I know; and I tried
my best to conduct inductive, empirically-driven research rather than attempting to achieve expected outcomes. Nakamura (2004) found that only rarely were her own experiences mirrored by the participants. Likewise, I was continually surprised by the participants. For example, having served alongside many of them as volunteers in health promotion organizations, I had mistakenly assumed that this was an indication that all of them would pursue career paths informed by the sociocultural or behavioural fields, in health promotion, public health, or health policy. Overall, there has been relatively little research on race and physical culture in Canada (Joseph, Darnell, & Nakamura, 2012), and if voices of colour are to be amplified according to a critical race theoretical approach (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), the lived experiences of East Asian participants must be heard.

Students represented in this sample are enrolled during a transition period, where some participants entered before the programme name change and some participants entered after. It is too early to determine the full impact of the name change, although there is an ongoing assumption that the name “Physical Education and Health” was a barrier to diverse enrolment, from the limited data of the graduation photographs it appears that the percentage of East Asian students and visible minority students was increasing steadily in the years before the name change (this interpretation is also driven by an assumption that students in the graduation photographs finished their degree programmes four years after they initially applied). Furthermore, the participants in Nakamura’s (2004) study also entered the programme despite the “Physical Education and Health” name. Overall, it is inconclusive whether “Kinesiology and Physical Education” constitutes a programme that is more likely to attract students who may be seeking a career in clinical and bio-science related fields.

The logical next step for research purposes is to continue the longitudinal nature of this study at the University of Toronto, with perhaps another iteration in ten years’ time when it will be interesting to see if there are any evident effects of the name change, and whether the study and career achievement values characterized in the “model minority” stereotype are still evident. Other related research might include kinesiology programmes at other universities outside of Toronto for comparative purposes in order to evaluate the
different demographic patterns. To avoid relying on participants’ assumptions and the filtered points of view when participants speak on their behalf, future research on this topic should directly involve parents, high school kinesiology teachers, guidance counsellors, and peers. In particular, future research to explore the place and value of sport and physical activity among East Asian students might seek out such students and their parents in more “traditional” departments, such as life sciences. The perception of life sciences was often negative among the participants and it may be interesting to see if this is a case of competing stereotypes between students who are achieving in a more traditional and culturally acceptable way in life sciences programmes who are taking a “dumb jock” approach students to U of T KPE students, who are countering with their own criticism. Additionally, the journeys of East Asian students into the life sciences programmes – which may or may not be grounded in sport participation – offer a unique comparison that could lead to greater knowledge about East Asians in sport.

Furthermore, future research might seek out those individuals who wanted to enter U of T KPE but may have been prevented from doing so by parents who would not support their decision. Different perspectives across different segments of the East Asian population could lead to a better overall understanding of the challenges and barriers to participation in sport and physical activity. Theoretically, we cannot know or understand the full effects of the “model minority” stereotype until we study young East Asians who were dissuaded from sport participation. It would also be intriguing to study third generation of Asian-Canadians in order to see the evolution of the “model minority” with increasingly integrated parents. This also raises the theoretical question: Is the “model minority” subject to the integration effect of being “Canadianized” despite the multicultural context of Toronto?

The year 2015 was the “Year of Sport” in Canada, declared by the Governor General mainly because of hosting mega-events such as the FIFA Women’s World Cup, and the Pan American and Parapan American Games in the Toronto region (Government of Canada, 2015). In May, the federal Citizenship and Immigration department commemorated Asian Heritage Month by featuring Asian athletes on its website, with the intent to “recognize
the importance of sports in our everyday lives and in our identity as Canadians” (Government of Canada, 2015). This thesis similarly has attempted to focus on the cultural roles of physical activity and physical education in shaping the identities and journeys of East Asian U of T KPE students. Writing from the perspective of a self-identified Chinese-Canadian, I also believe that the research helps to answer Museus’s (2013) call to (re)construct history from experiential knowledge. Looking beyond 2015, perhaps there will be further studies, creating a longitudinal set of data on this topic, and providing qualitative (and quantitative) updates about student experiences in light of demographic shifts, as I have attempted to do by providing a comparative update of Nakamura’s (2004) thesis.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Call for Study

(Adapted from Nakamura’s 2004 study)

Request for participation in a qualitative research study: I am a Master’s student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto (U of T KPE), and I am carrying out a research study with KPE undergraduate students who identify as East Asian. The study concerns their former (before university) and current participation in sport and physical activity, their decision to become a KPE student, and any barriers and struggles they encountered in relation to their participation or their decision to become a KPE student. I hope you will consider participating in this study if:

You are enrolled as a U of T KPE student in Toronto in the 2014/15 academic year, and identify your heritage as or are identified by others as being East Asian (roots in China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, etc.).

I am contacting you via email with the hope that you will take the time to consider participating in this study. Your time commitment would be an interview for one hour, at a place of your convenience. The interviews will discuss your physical activity and physical education experiences, and those of your friends and family. Interviews will be recorded, unless requested otherwise, and your confidentiality will be protected.

If you would like more information or are interested in participating, please contact me at alvin.ma@mail.utoronto.ca.
Appendix B: Interview Guide

(Adapted from Nakamura’s 2004 study)

The proposed research questions are as follows:

1. Has the “model minority” stereotype changed?
2. Have the careers that may be pursued with a kinesiology / physical education degree become more acceptable to the students’ family?; and
3. Does entry to a Kinesiology / Physical Education programme still have to be negotiated with family members, and with peers who may follow more traditional education and career paths (cf., Nakamura, 2004)?

After providing participants with the information letter and obtaining signatures on the consent form, I will begin by asking background questions: year of study, duration in Canada/generation Canadian (citizenship status), language(s) spoken at home, place of birth of parents/guardians, self-identified ethnocultural heritage(s) and how others may identify them. I will then ask questions categorized in the following themes: history of participation in physical activity; experiences in school Physical Education; physical activity and practices and identity (present); Kinesiology, Physical Education, and identity (present), and future / career ambitions.

History of participation in physical activity

A. In school (elementary, junior high school, secondary)

Encourage the participant to think back about his/her history of physical activity in pre-university school settings (reflecting on highs and lows). The participant may describe joining inter-school sport leagues and/or intramural activities. If so, ask the participant to further describe their experiences in these activities, particularly his/her motivation to start and the continual involvement (or lack thereof). If the participant did not participate much or otherwise quit an activity, also ask the participant to explain further (though clearly emphasize that the participant does not have to answer this question if he/she is not
comfortable, which may be the case if a traumatic event ended his/her participation). If the participant describes facing discriminatory language or attitudes, ask what he/she did in response (if comfortable). Ask in general about cultural belonging and the demographic makeup of the school. If the participant talks about injury affecting participation, ask (if comfortable) about how injury affected school life and how their close family members reacted. Ask in general about how family members felt about school-related extracurricular activities and ask about physical activity levels among their siblings or cousins (younger generation) in comparison to their parents' generation.

Sample questions:

1. Did you participate on any sports teams? Which ones?

2. Did you participate in any intramural activities? Which ones?

3. What was the impetus for you to participate in a particular activity? (Was there a particular role model who encouraged you? What led you to continue or discontinue this activity?)

4. What was the ethnic makeup of your school? Friends? Teammates?

5. How did your parents and siblings feel about these school-related extracurricular activities? (Did they ever come to watch you play? Why or why not?)

6. Are your siblings and family members physically active? What about extended family?

7. Did you ever face any problems when you wanted to participate in an activity (from a teacher, coach, teammates, spectators, facilities, parents, siblings, extended family, religious concerns, etc.)? How was it resolved? What did you do?

8. While you were participating, did you ever experience any discriminatory language or attitudes, either by fellow players, coaches, classmates, teachers, and/or spectators? If yes, what did you do?

9. If you attended school in Canada, did your school offer “non-traditional” or “multicultural” physical activities that represented your culture? If yes, did you participate and what was the experience?
B. Outside of school

Continuing from the previous section, ask about specific physical activities in which the participant and his/her relatives participate. If relatives participate together, ask about what it might mean to the participants' relatives, particularly if it relates to physical culture affecting specific ethnocultural communities. If family members do not participate in a physical activity but the participant did, ask about his/her motivations to start and the continual involvement (or lack thereof). Ask about the parents/guardians' role in facilitating these extracurricular physical activities (or lack thereof).

Sample questions:

1. Did you participate in any physical activity outside of school [i.e. with family, members of ethnocultural community (i.e. same language school, temple, etc.), and/or friends]? What kind of activities?

2. Did you participate in any locally organized leagues or activities (i.e. physical activity opportunities offered by Parks and Recreation)?

3. What was the impetus for you to participate in a particular activity? (If you didn’t participate very much in school, what made you participate outside of school?)

4. Were there any differences between participating in school, versus with people in your ethnocultural community? (Was the experience different? Was the way that you played different?)

5. How did your parents, siblings, or extended family feel about your participation in physical activity with your ethnocultural community?

6. Did your parents, siblings or extended family also participate with your ethnocultural community?

School Physical Education experiences

Regarding non-extracurricular physical activities, ask the participant about family expectations and perceptions of high school physical education classes. Ask about the
participant's own performance and experiences in physical education classes, and if applicable, ask about the high school physical education experiences of their Asian peers.

Sample questions:

1. Did you enjoy your physical education classes? Why or why not?

2. Compared to the grades you received in other subjects, how did you do in physical education classes? (If there was a difference, what did this tell you about yourself?)

3. Was physical education important to your parents? Siblings? Extended family? What was their expectation of you and your performance in physical education classes?

4. Were there other students of your background in your physical education classes?

5. Did you take high school physical education after compulsory physical education? Why or why not?

6. Did other students of your background continue with compulsory physical education?

**Physical activity and identity (Present)**

Moving onto the present, ask about evolving perceptions of physical activity (if any) from the participant, his/her siblings/cousins, and parental generation and the current effect it has on the participant's identity (if any). If the participant also mentions cultural identity, ask about specific expectations around behaviour (such as gender expectations, for example, if the participant brings it up) and the ways in which the participant manoeuvres around these issues if expectations are not met.

Sample questions:

1. Is physical activity considered important in your ethnocultural community? To your parents? Siblings? Extended family? Why or why not?

2. Is it important for you to be physically active? Why or why not?

3. Is physical activity related to your sense of identity? To your sense of ethnic identity?
4. In a particular culture, there may be unique behaviours, ways of thinking etc. In your opinion, do you think there are unique ways that sport and physical activity are understood (i.e. talked about) in your culture? Do these differences ever conflict with how sport and physical activity is understood in Canada?

5. Do you think there are specific expectations around behaviour in your ethnocultural community? What are they? Do you comply with all of them? Why or why not? Do these expectations differ for boys and for girls?

6. How do these expectations affect physical activity?

7. Do you think there are stereotypes about your ethnocultural community? Do any of them relate specifically to physical ability or athleticism?

8. Have you ever thought that these stereotypes are true? If yes, when and why?

**Kinesiology, Physical Education, and Identity (Present)**

Continuing from cultural identity, ask the participant about academic expectations, particularly in high school. Ask about the participant's discussions with family members regarding post-secondary choices and the decision-making process to apply for the Kinesiology and Physical Education programme. Ask the participant about how he/she frames the programme to different family members and peers, and their reaction to the participant's description. Ask about the perceptions and knowledge of family members about this academic field. Particularly if the participant claims there is little knowledge from outsiders who do not fully understand the field, ask about the prevalence of stereotypes such as the "dumb jock" categorization and ask the participant to expand on his/her perceived social status among different groups of people. Particularly for third and fourth-year student participants, ask about their impression of the faculty and how their viewpoints and their families' viewpoints evolved (if they did evolve) since applying for the programme.

Sample questions:
1. How did you reach the decision to apply for the Kinesiology and Physical Education programme? What other programs were you considering?

2. (N/A for post-2012 applicants): How did you feel about being in a Physical Education programme instead of a Kinesiology programme? (If you had to choose between physical education and kinesiology degree, which would you choose and why?)

3. If you chose to pursue a BPHE rather than a BKin, how did your parents react when you told them your decision?

4. If they reacted negatively to your programme of study, how did you gain their support?

5. How did other family members and relatives react?

6. Was anyone surprised that you are major is in Kinesiology / Physical Education? Who and why?

7. Has anyone ever teased you about being in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education? (What happened and how did you feel? Does this happen a lot? Why do you think that’s the case?)

8. Do you think your parents fully understand what you study? (How do they explain to relatives or family friends what you study and what your ambitions are?)

9. (Particularly for third and fourth-year students): What was your impression of the Kinesiology and Physical Education programme after your first year? What surprised you?

10. Have you ever regretted your decision to pursue this career path?

11. Have you ever been stereotyped as a ‘jock’ because you are associated with physical education? (Does it happen a lot? How did make you feel the first time this happened? How do you feel about it now?)

**Future / career ambitions**

Ask the participant about what this programme means to him/her, views of success, and future ambitions. In comparison, ask about the ambitions of the participant's family and how
the family would define success. Ask the participant to assess the compatibility of these visions for the future. Ask the participant about how his/her family views academic and athletic achievement, and ask how these opinions have evolved (if they did evolve).

Sample questions:

1. Are there benefits of taking Kinesiology and Physical Education courses? How do you think this relates to your future career goals? (Are you a member of the Ontario Kinesiology Association and do you have plans of pursuing a Masters in Professional Kinesiology degree in the future?)

2. In your family’s culture, do you think that some professions are more valued than others? What professions are they, and why?

3. In your family’s culture, how is academic achievement versus athletic achievement valued?

4. How would you define success at university? Personal success?

5. How would your parents define academic and personal success?

6. Did your career aspirations change since you started your degree programme? Why?
Appendix C: Research Information Letter

(Adapted from Nakamura’s 2004 study)

Project Title: Journeys of East Asian Kinesiology and Physical Education students: A 2015 University of Toronto case study

Investigator: Alvin Ma (MSc student, Year II, Department of Exercise Sciences)

Supervisor: Peter Donnelly, PhD (Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education)

Request for participation in a qualitative research study:

I am a Master’s student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto (U of T KPE), and I am carrying out a research study with KPE undergraduate students who identify as East Asian. The study concerns their former (before university) and current participation in sport and physical activity, their decision to become a KPE student, and any barriers and struggles they encountered in relation to their participation or their decision to become a KPE student. I hope you will consider participating in this study if:

You are enrolled as a U of T KPE student in Toronto in the 2014/15 academic year, and identify your heritage as or are identified by others as being East Asian (roots in China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, etc.).

I am contacting you with the hope that you will take the time to consider participating in this study. Your time commitment would be an interview for one hour, at a place of your convenience. The interviews will discuss your physical activity and physical education experiences, and those of your friends and family. Interviews will be recorded, unless requested otherwise, and your confidentiality will be protected.

If you would like more information or are interested in participating, please contact me at alvin.ma@mail.utoronto.ca.
Potential Harms and Discomforts/Inconveniences to Participants

There is no physical harm, discomfort or inconvenience. Some of the questions, however, may trigger negative memories, depending on the nature of your experiences. The researcher will not coerce you to disclose any information that is not offered voluntarily. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you are free to refuse to answer questions, stop the interview, or withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. I will also provide you a list of referrals for counsellors, should you so require.

If you have any concerns about the study or questions about your rights as research participants, you may contact Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

Potential Benefits to the Participants

There will be no direct benefit and no monetary compensation for participating. You may gain some satisfaction in furthering knowledge, and from the opportunity to share and reflect upon your experiences.

Confidentiality

Data (audio recording, transcripts, consent letters, and notes) will be locked in a secure place at the researcher’s home and campus office. Data will be accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor. Computer data will be password protected. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the final draft of the thesis, and obvious identifiers will be changed. Only the researcher and the supervisor will see the drafts of the thesis. Transcripts and audio records will be destroyed approximately 6 years after the research has concluded. There is a potential risk that anonymity cannot be completely assured depending on the number of participants, the relatively small student body, and relatively low representation of students of East Asian heritage. Thus, excerpts of your experiences may be recognized by your peers. Because of this potential risk, it is important to emphasize that participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. You will be given the opportunity to give your consent to publish your specific ethnic background.
Conflict of Interest

You may already be familiar with me by attending my office hours for graded work in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years. U of T KPE is a relatively small faculty so you may also know me from other physical activity-related clubs. Although the findings in this study will not benefit you directly, your participation will add to existing research, and potentially inspire other questions for researchers to pursue in the future. Your stories will add to our understanding of the experiences of Asian people in Canada. After you have been interviewed and the final draft is complete, I would be happy to provide you with a summary of the findings from the study, and you may, of course, attend the thesis defence, as well as access the entire thesis, once it is published. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at alvin.ma@mail.utoronto.ca with any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Alvin Ma

Principal Investigator

alvin.ma@mail.utoronto.ca
Appendix D: Research Consent Form

(Adapted from Nakamura’s 2004 study)

Project Title: Journey of East Asian Kinesiology and Physical Education students: A 2015 University of Toronto case study

Investigator: Alvin Ma (MSc student, Year II, Department of Exercise Sciences)

Supervisor: Peter Donnelly, PhD (Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your reference, is part of the process of informed consent. The information letter that accompanies this form provides a detailed overview of what the research is about and what your participation involves. Please feel free at any time to ask questions if you need clarification or more information. Please take the time to read this carefully.

This is to certify that I, _____________________________________ agree to take part as a volunteer in this project on the condition of confidentiality. I acknowledge that the research procedures described in the information letter has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that, as a participant in this study, I will take part in an interview (approximately 1 hour long), and that I will be asked questions about:

■ My physical activity and physical education experiences

■ My sense of identity as a person of East Asian heritage in Canada

■ My ambitions and how they relate to my identity and choice of degree programme

I also give my permission to allow the researcher to identify my specific ethnic background, while acknowledging that there is a risk of being identified as a result. Yes □ No □

I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study, and that I may refuse to answer any questions, stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand both the potential harms and benefits. I know that I may ask now, or in the future, any questions I have about the study or the research procedures. I have been assured
that records relating to me will be kept confidential and that no information will be released or printed that will disclose personal identity without my permission unless required by law. I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any concerns about the study or questions about your rights as research participants, you may contact Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Date:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the investigators:

Alvin Ma
Principal Investigator
alvin.ma@mail.utoronto.ca

Professor Peter Donnelly
Supervisor
(416) 946-5071
peter.donnelly@utoronto.ca
Appendix E: Ethics Approval

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 31569

May 8, 2015

Dr. Peter Donnelly
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Mr. Alvin Ma
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Dear Dr. Donnelly and Mr. Alvin Ma,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Journey of East Asian kinesiology and physical education students: A 2015 University of Toronto case study"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHICS APPROVAL</th>
<th>Original Approval Date: May 8, 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expiry Date: May 7, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing Review Level: 1</td>
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We are writing to advise you that the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

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