Caught in the middle: Experiences of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders with their parents' expectations in the context of romantic relationships

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Abstract

Previous research has recognised that young adults of Asian immigrant families experience significant phenomena regarding their parents' influence on their romantic relationships, particularly when residing in predominantly non-Asian countries. This study offers a qualitative analysis of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders' experiences regarding their parents' attitudes towards their dating activity. There were sixty-nine survey respondents and eight interview participants, aged between 18 and 34 years old. Using thematic analysis to identify significant themes, it is revealed that conflicting cultural values between respondents' home Asian culture and the prevailing New Zealand culture played a key role in shaping parents' attitudes towards respondents' dating activity, as well as respondents' reactions to their parents' attitudes.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Savannah Autumn Rain Roque

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Ethical Approval

AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved the ethics application for this research on 14th December 2020. The application number was 20/415.

Written and informed consent was obtained from all of the interview participants. Interviews occurred on February 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, 2021.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The influence that culture has upon romantic entanglements is one that few would deny, but perhaps even fewer could quantify. This thesis proposes that the link between culture and romantic activity is inextricable. This study draws on previous research into the romantic experiences of young adults in immigrant families, the influence of immigrant parents on these adolescents' romantic relationships, and the lived dating experiences of Asian adolescents in predominantly non-Asian or multicultural countries. The study builds on this existing knowledge by analysing 1.5 generation Asian adolescents' perceptions of their parents' responses to their dating in a New Zealand context.

New Zealand, a multi-cultural nation, provides a rich 'territory' for investigating the romantic relationships of immigrant youth. While presenting this research report, the researcher acknowledges the potential contention surrounding the use of terms such as 'Western,' 'Asian' and 'New Zealander.' Accordingly, for the purposes of this study, the term 'Western' is used to generally encompass cultures of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia, primarily as a point of delineation from 'Asian' cultures in a similar style to previous studies that have made this rough and generalised 'labelling'. Likewise, the term 'Asian' is used in a generic sense and does not intend to level differences between the myriad of Asian countries and ethnicities. New Zealand is considered by some to be a 'Western' country (Bartley, 2010). For the purposes of this study, the term 'New Zealander' or 'Kiwi' is used in a generic manner to encompass the experiences lived by participants; it does however not intend to question or define the cultural makeup of New Zealand or the ethnic identification of the individual.

Commencing romantic relationships during the transitionary years into adulthood is a common phenomenon (Lau et al., 2009; Longmore et al., 2001; Michael & Bickert, 2001). For young adults, dating provides various benefits such as personal enjoyment, the exploration of self and sexual identity, socialisation and personal growth, the improvement of social status, an avenue of developing maturity, and a means of mate selection (McCabe, 1984; McDaniel, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Skipper & Nass, 1966). During these early dating experiences, young adults often draw on a range of sources for guidance to help develop their dating and sexual behaviours. One source may be their parents, who are typically considered influential socialising agents to children's

romantic behaviours and sexuality (Darling & Hicks, 1982; Longmore et al., 2009; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Tang & Zuo, 2000). While many parents may be naturally concerned for their children's wellbeing and sexual health, the expression of their concern may not always be delivered pleasantly or effectively to children (Lau et al., 2009; Regnerus & Luchies, 2006).

Existing research (Afifi et al., 2008; Aronowitz et al., 2007; Brotto et al., 2005; Chung et al., 2005; DiIorio et al., 2003; Elliot, 2010; Jordan et al., 2000) into communication patterns between parents and their adolescent children suggests that communication about romantic engagements is often unclear, sparse, insufficient or poorly delivered, particularly when focusing on the topic of sex. These studies, undertaken in a range of cultural settings including African American, Caucasian American, Asian Canadian and Filipino American contexts, indicate that parents may find topics of romance and sexuality uncomfortable or difficult to discuss with their children. Despite any perceived difficulty, scholars such as DiIorio et al. (2003), Hadley et al. (2009) and Hutchinson (2002) advocate that it is important for parents to communicate effectively about intimate topics in order to decrease the risk of their children making unsafe sexual decisions.

Some researchers (e.g., Brotto et al., 2005; Espiritu, 2001; Gravel at al., 2016; Kao & Martyn, 2014; Witt et al., 1992) have found that issues of parent-child communication regarding dating appear to be exacerbated when conflicting cultural values are involved. This is because individuals' attitudes towards dating and sexuality are often significantly influenced by their cultural beliefs and upbringing (Brotto et al., 2005; Espiritu, 2001; Gravel at al., 2016; Kao & Martyn, 2014; Witt et al., 1992). Consequently, children of Asian immigrant parents growing up in different cultural environments may experience additional complexities in their early dating activities, as they might have to navigate between their parents' cultural expectations and the prevalent cultural practices of their host country (Kibria, 2009; Manohar, 2008; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Samuel, 2010). Previous studies by Nguyen (1998), Sung (1985) and Lau et al. (2009) have acknowledged a difference in parenting styles between Asian and 'Western' cultures (such as those of the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia), especially with respect to their children's social lives, romantic involvement and beliefs on individuality and independence. Looking specifically at children whose families have immigrated to these Western countries, the cultural differences were often magnified in areas of divergent beliefs between Asian and Western cultures, such as expectations with respect to dating and marriage, individualism and traditions, and respect of elders.

Most previous research on the topic has been conducted in an Asian-American context (e.g., Chung et al., 2005; Elliott, 2010; Kim, 2005, 2009; Lau et al., 2009; Nguyen, 1998; Okazaki, 2002; Trinh et al., 2014), or with a specific focus on immigrant families in the United States (e.g., Aronowitz et al., 2007; Louie, 2004; Nguyen, 1998; Tang & Zuo, 2000; Ward & Wyatt, 1994). Findings from these studies suggested that the culture of origin was a key influencer in parents' communication about sexuality. The present study seeks to discover, from the point-of-view of young adults, how parents' attitudes, as influenced by their home culture, may affect young Asian New Zealanders' dating and sexual behaviour. This study seeks to contribute to qualitative knowledge in acculturation studies, especially with respect to inter-generational relationships in immigrant families. To the author's best knowledge, this study may be the first to discuss inter-generational experiences in the context of parental influences on young adults' romantic relationships in the Asian New Zealand setting.

The research involved young adults aged between 18 to 34, who identified with at least one Asian ethnicity, and were either born in New Zealand or moved here during their childhood. Through online surveys and interviews, participants were invited to explain how they saw their parents influencing their romantic relationships, for instance through parental monitoring, the minimum age they were permitted to date, how much their parents taught them about romantic relationships, and how they influenced children's dating and sexual behaviours. It is hoped that this research will help to create a better understanding of the experiences young Asian New Zealanders face with respect to the varying expectations between their parents' generation, the cultural standards of their ethnic affiliations, and their own lived realities as members of New Zealand's youth.

1.2 Aims of the study

This research aims to qualitatively explore the lived experiences of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders, specifically in terms of how they perceived their parents to affect the decisions they made with respect to their romantic activity.

The key objective of this research is to answer the research question:
How do 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders experience their parents' influence on their dating lives and romantic relationships?

This question seeks to discover how young 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders experience their parents' responses to their dating, how they respond to their parents'

attitudes and why they responded in that manner. The research aims to examine the various nuances of this phenomenon and how individuals may have unique experiences under the same overarching issue of parental influence on adolescents' romantic activity. Acknowledging that parent-child discussions about dating and sex may be considered a challenging task, this research also seeks to discover how 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders perceive their parents' communication approaches to the topic. The findings are not intended to be representative of Asian New Zealanders in general, but they seek to shed some light on the lived experiences of some of the individuals in this demographic group.

1.3 Significance of the research

The study seeks to fill a gap in the knowledge area of the dating experiences of immigrant youth by focusing specifically on a New Zealand demographic, which has not yet been sufficiently examined. Previous studies into the romantic experiences of young Asians living in non-Asian, predominantly 'Western' countries have mainly been conducted in the USA or UK, and primarily investigated parental influence in the context of sexual attitudes, the onset of first dating experiences, and the use of contraception. These studies often focused on a specific Asian ethnic group, such as Filipino Americans (Chung et al., 2005), Chinese Americans (Huang & Uba, 1992; Tang & Zuo, 2000), British Chinese (Yu, 2007) or Chinese Australians (Mak & Chan, 1995). Existing relevant research has generally explored (1) the effects of acculturation on children of Asian migrant families; (2) the role of parents as socialising agents for children's romantic and sexual attitudes; (3) parent-child communication about sex; (4) the influence of culture on parents' and children's dating attitudes; (5) dating attitudes of children from immigrant families; and (6) the differences between Asian and Western culture regarding dating and sexuality. However, there are very few studies which overlap all of these categories, and the closest to doing so were either based in the USA or tended to have an explicit focus on adolescents' sexual behaviours (e.g., Lau et al. 2009; Tang & Zuo, 2000; Okazaki, 2002; Witt et al. 1992). A study that might be comparable to the current research focus was Lau et al.'s (2009) study, which examined the dating behaviours and sexual attitudes of Asian American youth. Their study analysed participants' adherence to Asian values and discovered that participants who more strongly observed their cultural values were significantly more likely to date without parental knowledge and date a partner longer before having sex. Some other studies (Kibria, 1997; Li et al., 2010; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Ng et al., 2014; Tong, 2013) have found that Asian parents were generally 'stricter' than Western parents, mainly imposing dating restrictions on their children in fear that their education would be jeopardised. However, these studies did not explicitly focus on the

felt experiences of these children. This research would contribute some of the first qualitative studies into the perceived impact of parenting on immigrant children in a New Zealand context. Studying this New Zealand demographic is important, as it is a multicultural nation that welcomes diversity (NZ Labour Party, 2021), strives for inclusiveness as a culturally diverse nation (Local Government New Zealand, 2016; Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2021) and would benefit from working together as a nation to proactively discover the challenges faced by its citizens. The findings may provide a point of comparison to existing studies through garnering new data, which may affirm, modify or challenge existing knowledge about 1.5 generation Asians' dating experiences as influenced by their immigrant parents.

The research directly benefits the participants by acknowledging and validating their personal experiences. It further benefits the wider New Zealand society, and especially groups who are involved in mixed-ethnic communities, such as many high schools, most universities, and sundry community groups in New Zealand. Providing a deeper understanding of how these young adults feel about their parents' approaches to their dating may encourage broader dialogue about the acculturation experiences of immigrant youth with respect to dating, the resulting parent-child relationships and the perceived cultural pressures in immigrant families. For example, the research might be useful for informing relevant community groups supporting migrant parents, as well as in counselling contexts for both parents and affected young adults. The findings might benefit current and future parents, by educating them about how their communication regarding dating and sex might affect their children. It is hoped that the study's findings might also prove useful to New Zealand's communities in general by providing insights into the personal experiences of young immigrants when they become involved in intimate relationships with Kiwis. A greater mutual understanding of what it means to date between cultures might assist with fostering an inclusive society.

The study was inspired by the researcher's personal experiences and observations of Asian New Zealander friends, families and peers. The researcher has experienced and witnessed a range of complex situations related to dating as an individual between two very different cultures, and thus found it necessary and useful to explore the true lived experiences of Asian migrant children with respect to their romantic relationships.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters in total. The first chapter presents an overview of the study, provides background information and outlines its aims and purpose. The

second chapter delivers a review of relevant literature in order to build the contextual knowledge for the study. The third chapter details the methodological framework of the research, its design, the methods of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter provides a summary of findings from both qualitative and quantitative data sets, namely a survey and a number of individual interviews with relevant participants. The fifth chapter discusses the findings by addressing the research question in the wider context of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealander youth. The sixth chapter concludes the thesis by answering the research questions, addressing the limitations of the study, and providing recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of relevant existing scholarship that provides a contextual background for the research. It focuses on Asian immigration to New Zealand, the concept of acculturation and its consequences, particularly in relation to children of migrant Asian parents. The chapter summarises how relevant studies, primarily from the UK and USA, have conceptualised Asian parents as influential on their children's dating activity, and how young adults viewed and responded to their parents' attitudes.

2.2 Asian immigrants in New Zealand

New Zealand generally considers itself to be a multicultural society (Local Government New Zealand, 2016; NZ Labour Party, 2021; Young, 2018). New Zealand is home to many Asian immigrants who have moved to the country from regions across Asia. As of the 2018 New Zealand census, 707,598 of the 4,699,755 caucus (i.e., 15.05%) identified with an Asian ethnic group (Stats NZ, 2018). Of this demographic, 46.8% had lived in New Zealand for at least ten years. The Asian population in New Zealand has been steadily growing, from 471,708 in 2013 to 707,598 in 2018, signifying a 50% increase in the span of five years (Stats NZ, 2018).

For the purpose of this study, the Stats NZ (2018) classification of Asian ethnicities is used, encompassing Southeast Asian (Filipino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Indonesian, Lao, Malay, Thai, Karen, Chin), Chinese (Hong Kong Chinese, Cambodian Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Singaporean Chinese, Vietnamese Chinese, Taiwanese), Indian (Bengali, Fijian Indian, Indian Tamil, Punjabi, Sikh, Anglo Indian, Malaysian Indian, South African Indian), Sri Lankan (Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil), Japanese, Korean Afghani, Bangladeshi, Nepalese, Tibetan, Eurasian, Bhutanese, Maldivian and Mongolian.

The researcher acknowledges that definitions and/or classifications of 'Asian' vary amongst individuals and is a contested term, both academically and by members of this wide grouping. Rasanathan et al. (2006) and Ho (2015) recognised that the term 'Asian' is often misinterpreted by the general New Zealand public and also in the context of policy creation. For instance, a common assumption would be that all Asians in New Zealand were born in Asia. Instead, while most individuals who identify themselves with an Asian ethnicity were indeed born in an Asian country, twenty percent were born in New Zealand (Ho, 2015). Further, Ho (2015) clarified that there

were Asian immigrants residing in New Zealand who were born outside of Asia, such as those born in the Pacific, the Americas, Europe or Africa. Another common misunderstanding would be that individuals who identified with Asian ethnicities were non-European, non-Pacific or non-Māori. Contrarily, individuals who identify with Asian ethnicities can, and often do, belong to more than a single ethnicity (Ho, 2015).

These individuals have immigrated at different stages in their lives and have various reasons for choosing to call New Zealand their new home. The Department of Labour (2010) and Ho et al. (2000) located the key reasons for Asian migration to New Zealand in the hope for improved employment and education for their families. Educational incentives were a particularly major motivation for Asian families to immigrate to New Zealand; education in Asia was typically considered highly competitive and stressful for children (Lee, 2002; Lightfoot-Rueda, 2018; Mak & Chan, 1995). For international students, appealing factors for migrating to New Zealand included the country's image as a clean, green and safe place with a welcoming environment to study in (Aston, 1996; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Working and studying in New Zealand presented beneficial social opportunities that often could be developed into professional relationships and employment prospects (Young, 2018). Overall, New Zealand was considered by many Asian individuals to have great educational, occupational and social benefits for themselves and their families.

2.3 Acculturation

The process called 'acculturation' has been deemed a key factor that affects the social adjustment – and subsequently, the romantic attitudes – of children from immigrant families (Chung et al., 2005; Kim & Ward, 2007). Acculturation was described by Berry (2001) as the process by which two cultural groups make contact and affect each other's culture. According to Kim and Hocking (2016), acculturation focuses on the way individuals migrate from one culture and adapt to the unfamiliar social context of the host culture. More specifically, Abe-Kim et al. (2001) defined acculturation as the process by which an ethnic minority's beliefs and behaviours gradually become influenced by the dominant culture of the host country.

A popular concept for understanding acculturation is the bi-dimensional paradigm as proposed by Berry (1992, 1997), whereby an individual loses some of the principles of their home culture while simultaneously acquiring some of the values of the host culture. Acculturation levels are not normally measured by the amount of home versus host culture behaviours retained, but rather measured by metrics such as the duration of residency in a host country, the primary language spoken in the family home, or the

observed changes in one's values, beliefs or sense of cultural identity (Cabassa, 2003; Chun et al., 2003; Felix-Ortiz et al., 1994; Ryder et al., 2000).

Immigrating from one country to another and having to adapt to a new culture may present an array of challenges, defined as 'acculturation stress' by Smart and Smart (1995). Smith and Khawaja (2011) discussed that during the cultural transition, many young adults encounter acculturation stress as a result of the conflicting norms of their home and host culture. Previous findings by Bartley (2010), Ho and Bedford (1998), Hillcoat-Nallétamby et al. (2006) and Stuart and Ward (2011) suggested that children of migrant parents in particular face exaggerated acculturation issues, as they manage social adjustment into the host culture while simultaneously navigating their identity, relationships and sexuality during a developmentally transitional time in their lives.

2.3.1 The Asian '1.5' generation in New Zealand

Bartley (2010) recognised that the children of Asian migrant parents, also known as the '1.5 generation' in New Zealand form a unique group that endures distinct acculturation challenges. The concept of the '1.5 generation' was defined by Rumbaut (1994) and Park (1999) as child migrants who are positioned between the first and second generations in a migrant family. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) devised that the term encompasses foreign-born children who migrated to a new country at a young age, usually before adolescence. Bartley (2010) defined the 1.5 generation as "children, aged between six and eighteen years, who migrate as part of a family unit, but who have experienced at least some of their formative socialisation in the country of origin" (p. 386). Bartley (2010) noted that a key difference between the 1st (parents') generation and the 1.5 (adolescents') generation would be the common reality that the children had minimal autonomy regarding the decision to migrate. Further, these children tended to be more deeply immersed into the host culture compared to their parents, often facilitated by the education system and daily peer interaction. Because the migrant children, due to their young age, were often unable to partake in the migration decision of their family, they were usually not in a position to appreciate nor envisage the profound change and long-term effects that migration may have on their future (Bartley, 2010).

Bartley (2010) recognised that questions of identity, self-perception, and a struggle to fit in as 'foreigners' were among the key challenges for 1.5 generation migrants. He observed that while Asian immigrants would often prosper in their careers and educational pursuits in their new, predominantly 'Caucasian' countries, they often faced trials achieving social identity and national integration (Bartley, 2010). As Devos and

Heng (2009) and Stuart and Ward (2011) argued, the feeling of belonging to an ethnic group would be important, particularly for immigrants who seek to fit in with the dominant host culture. However, they posited that ethnic minorities are usually less likely to be granted a national identity by members of the majority group, due to their image as immigrants or outsiders who are new to the culture.

One aspect that may make acculturation particularly difficult for 1.5 generation Asian adolescents is the cultural pressure and expectations for them to succeed academically (Bartley, 2010). It has been observed that parents of Asian cultures tend to uphold the importance of educational success (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Kao, 1995), and often seek to instil the belief in children that education is the foundation to a fruitful career and a prosperous life (Vartanian et al., 2007). Immigrant minorities have been described as likely to exhibit academic attitudes that lead to success, due to their perception that opportunities in the host country are abundant compared to those of their home country and therefore must be maximised (Ogbu, 1979, 1991; Vartanian et al., 2007). Kao and Martyn (2014) found that parents would sometimes use stories of their hardship in their home country to incentivise their children to study harder in their new, more prosperous country which they risked everything to move to. Accordingly, children may oblige and view high academic achievement as an avenue to 'repay' their parents for the sacrifices they have made for them (Mak & Chan, 1995).

Some studies (e.g., Ho & Bedford, 1998; Sue & Okazaki, 1990) have further suggested that the pressure on Asian migrant children to succeed may also stem from peers and members of the host culture. Ho and Bedford (1998) noted that society typically saw Asian immigrants as 'young and skilled', creating and perpetuating a heightened expectation for them to be educationally and economically successful. Similarly, Sue and Okazaki (1990) observed that Asian students were inspired to perform exceedingly well in school because they anticipated discrimination from peers. These observations are cognisant of Bartley's (2010) finding that children of Asian immigrants often feel they must compete with peers of the host culture to fit in, and thus use educational success as an avenue to prove their worth.

Stuart and Ward (2011) and Kwak (2003) discovered that another reason that Asian immigrant parents would often continue to impose the norms of their home culture on their children would be a general mistrust in the host culture's ability to raise their children with what they considered right values. Many Asian cultures commonly uphold values such as collectivism, a patriarchal family structure, respect for elders, chastity until marriage, and modesty in women (Chun et al., 2003; Lau et al., 2009; Stuart &

Ward, 2011). Conversely, 'Western' traits such as individualism, independence, individuality, sexual liberty and gender equality were generally perceived as unideal and undesirable in Asian families (Nguyen, 1998; Stuart & Ward, 2011; Sung, 1985). The conflicting values between their home and host culture would often leave 1.5 generation adolescents navigating between preserving their ethnic values and trying to fit in with the host culture (Chun et al., 2003; Phinney, 1989; Yu, 2007). These challenges can be overwhelming and confusing, making it more difficult for immigrant youth to develop a coherent identity which Stuart and Ward (2011) deemed vital for young adults.

Despite the challenges they face, Kao and Martyn (2014) and Bartley (2010) proposed that children of immigrant families would be more likely to acculturate and accept the host culture's values compared to their parents, because they would be exposed to the host culture in more frequent and immersive ways, primarily through school. Bartley (2010) identified that the in-between cultural navigation of immigrant children would also render them 'cultural brokers' for their parents. This role may include reading or translating texts, doing their parents' banking or grocery shopping, or completing legal documents for them. Evidently, children of Asian immigrant families possess diverse roles and responsibilities, juggling their parents' expectations on them while also acting as an intermediary of navigating the new host culture.

2.4 Asian parents' expectations of adolescent dating

2.4.1 Implicit communication in Asian families

Various authors (Chung et al., 2005; Hahm et al., 2006; Yu, 2007) have noted the difference in communication styles between Asian and Western cultures, and the notion that Asian-diaspora parents tend to have comparatively less parent-child communication about dating and sex. Several scholars (e.g., Angera et al., 2008; Beckett et al., 2010; Darling & Hicks, 1982; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999) have highlighted the importance of parent-child communication in terms of educating adolescents about sex and relationships, especially given that parents commonly function as prime socialising agents for children's sexual attitudes. In a non-culturally specific context, previous research has acknowledged that parent-child discussions about sexuality in general may be uncomfortable or challenging for most parents (Afifi et al., 2008; Jordan et al., 2000). Feldman and Rosenthal (2000) found that parents were most likely to discuss the biological aspects of sex and the potential negative consequences of sexual activity. Parents were significantly less likely to discuss personal sex-related issues (such as preferences, desires or masturbation) or practical aspects (such as the process of acquiring and using contraception) (Feldman &

Rosenthal, 2000). Where discussion did occur, parents tended to deliver their principles about dating and sex through prohibitive messages or cautionary comments. In other words, parents would usually try to address sex-related topics with adolescents by discussing content that they considered less sensitive (Wang, 2016). This parental method of communicating about dating using primarily prohibitive comments was evident in Romo et al.'s (2002) study featuring Latino adolescents, Ward and Wyatt's (1994) study comparing African American young women with Caucasian young women, and Kao and Martyn's (2016) study concerning Asian American adolescents.

Previous research (Chung et al., 2005; Gudykunst, 2001; Hull et al., 2011; Kim & Ward, 2007; Okazaki, 2002; Regnerus, 2005; Zhang et al., 2007) pointed to some explanations for why parents of Asian cultures may be particularly less likely than parents of non-Asian cultures to discuss sexual matters with their children. One explanation was a recognition that sex is considered a taboo subject in many Asian cultures (Okazaki, 2002; Zhang et al., 2007). Further, Chung et al.'s (2005) study proposed that parent-child communication about sex might be deemed a violation of respect for elders, which is a core value in many Asian cultures. Their study exploring parent-adolescent communication about sex in Filipino American families found that parents often perceived open dialogue as 'talking back' and being disrespectful, as compared to cultures where open discussion might be encouraged. Regnerus (2005) and Hull et al. (2011) posited that parents' religiosity may influence their attitudes towards sex and determine the communication they have with their children about the topic. A further and particularly prominent explanation was the understanding that Asian cultures may be considered 'high-context', meaning that they intrinsically value indirect communication and a reliance on observed situational factors for interpreting meaning (Gudykunst, 2001; Kim & Ward, 2007). Another explanation was parents' assumption that discussions about sex may be perceived by their children as permission to engage in the activity (Aronowitz et al., 2007; Elliott, 2010; Flores & Barroso, 2017). Kao and Martyn's (2014) study comparing White and Asian American adolescents highlighted this belief, where the Asian parents generally seemed to think that an absence of sexual dialogue towards their children meant that they would not be curious about sex.

Kao and Martyn (2014) and Kim and Ward (2007) found that Asian Americans and minority parents in predominantly Western countries would be more likely to use indirect methods such as 'monitoring' and 'disapproving attitudes' to convey their viewpoints about dating. For instance, Kim (2005) determined that Asian parents

tended to express their prohibitive attitudes through comments on the sexual behaviours of other friends or family members. Moreover, some parents would implicitly convey a negativity of sexuality by controlling their daughters' clothing, media consumption and romantic relationships (Kim, 2009). However, some studies (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2009) established that despite a lack of clear communication, children nonetheless understood their parents' attitudes that were expressed through speaking tone, choice of words, facial expressions, or remarks about other people's dating behaviours. Thus, despite the absence of direct dialogue from parents, young adults were still able to gauge their parents' attitudes and conclude that dating and sexual activity was generally unapproved of (Kim, 2009).

Several authors (Hahm et al., 2006; Holtzman & Rubinson, 1995; Kao & Martyn, 2014; Koniak-Griffin et al., 2003) regarded the lack of clear communication as counterintuitive, based on the assumption that adolescents are more likely to make poor sexual decisions if they are not properly educated. Chung et al. (2005) proposed that quality communication between parents and children could be associated with a healthier sexual understanding and development. Similarly, Koniak-Griffin et al. (2003) observed that appropriate parent-child communication often preceded a delayed onset of first sexual experiences and lower pregnancy rates amongst youths. Kao and Manczak (2013) and Kao and Martyn (2014) emphasised the importance of consistent communication as a positive influence on adolescents' sexual attitudes. Alternatively, DiIorio et al. (2003) and Lefkowitz (2002) argued that the content and style of the communication would matter more than frequency. More generally, Hahm et al. (2006) posited that explicit communication regarding safe and responsible sexual behaviours would be crucial but needed to be undertaken in a trust-fostering manner for children to follow.

Contrary to most previous findings, Gravel et al. (2016) speculated that Asian parents' communication styles may change as they become more acculturated to mainstream Western values. Relating to this, the South Asian youth in Deepak's (2004) study commented that their parents discussed topics surrounding dating and sex more frequently as they became more acculturated to the prevailing U.S. culture. Witt et al. (1992) remarked that some progress has been made by Asian cultures towards more liberal views on sexuality and freedom of choice in marriage, but they may still be considered overall conservative compared to the average Western view.

2.4.2 Romantic activity as a threat to education

Literature regularly mentioned that Asian-diaspora parents deemed dating as a distraction from or threat to children's education. In most Asian cultures, it is believed that a child's primary responsibility is to succeed academically, with romantic activity perceived as a risk to this priority (Kim & Ward, 2007; Louie, 2004; Nguyen, 1998; Sung, 1985; Yu, 2007). Mak and Chan's (1995) study held that education was considered by many Chinese individuals as the key to achieving security and prosperity, and this attitude was often shared by both parents and children. Lau et al. (2009) found that many Asian young adults agreed with this sentiment. Violato and Kwok's (1995) research found that Hong Kong Chinese students valued their grades, education and future career more highly than romantic relationships and sex. Similarly, Tang and Zuo (2000) discovered that only one-third of college students in China had dated, in contrast to two-thirds of college students in the United States. They also found that the onset of dating occurred at a much earlier age for students in the United States.

Taken from these sources, it appears that parents were mainly concerned about their children neglecting their grades or losing focus due to their dating activity. This notion is based on education being deemed a priority in most Asian cultures, as they often believe that educational success is a foundation for future prosperity through improved employment opportunities (Mak & Chan, 1995; Vartanian et al., 2007). Kao and Martyn's (2014) study involving Asian American youth reflected a general understanding that parents believed that "sex takes away opportunities" (p. 11). Parents generally seemed to believe that sexual activities might jeopardise their children's future success, thus they tried to give cautionary advice against dating and romantic activity. According to Lau et al. (2009), it was a not an uncommon practice for Asian parents to permit their children's dating activity as long as their grades were maintained. Some parents would tell their children that they could only date after graduating, but remained silent about their children's romantic activity once they observed that their academic results were sustained.

Kao and Martyn's (2014) study, which compared Asian American youth to Caucasian American youth, observed that some young adults in Asian cultures felt that their parents' love was conditional to their academic success. They noted this in contrast to young adolescents of Caucasian families, who were more likely to describe their parents' care as unconditional because they believed that their parents generally just desired for their children to be happy.

Parents were also largely concerned about unwanted pregnancy. There was a common perception amongst both parents and children that falling pregnant before completing one's studies would mean that life was ruined and many opportunities were lost (Kao & Martyn, 2014; Lau et al., 2009). Parents seemed to believe it would be impossible for their children to study while caring for a baby, compounded by the assumption that they would have to work full time instead of studying in order to financially provide for their newborn.

2.5 Young adults' perspectives on dating and sex

2.5.1 Significance of cultural influence on dating attitudes

Existing literature has recognised that the cultural disparity between Asian and Western societies is, at least so to a notable part, responsible for differences in dating and sexual attitudes (Witt et al., 1992). This means that dating behaviours are culturally influenced. For instance, parents' attitudes towards sex were often found to closely relate to the family's cultural or religious beliefs (Kao & Martyn, 2014). According to Lefkowitz and Gillen (2006), Western cultures would generally accept emerging adulthood as a time for adolescents to explore dating and sex, which they commonly recognised to play an integral role in identity development. In contrast, the perceived expectations of Asian-diaspora parents included the encouragement of young adults to date with commitment, to remain chaste until marriage, and to uphold the belief that sex is solely for the purpose of reproduction (Brotto et al., 2005; Lau et al., 2009; Nath & Nayar, 2004; Nguyen, 1998). Consequently, it might be common for many Asian-diaspora young adults to possess more conservative attitudes towards sex, compared to peers of other cultures or ethnicities (Lau et al., 2009). In Witt et al.'s (1992) analysis, half of the Korean respondents disapproved of sex before marriage, while only 6.7% of American respondents disapproved. Some studies found that the onset of dating and first sexual experiences amongst Asian youths tended to occur at a later age compared to their U.S. peers (Lau et al., 2009; Regan et al., 2004; Tang & Zuo, 2000).

Hahm et al. (2006), Kim (2009) and Trinh et al. (2014) suggested that it is not uncommon for many Asian cultures to possess certain expectations for young women and men with regards to independence and permitted sexual behaviour. Findings across various studies (e.g., Espiritu, 2001; Griffiths et al., 2008; Hahm et al., 2006; Kim, 2009; Trinh et al., 2014) seemed to agree that sexual communication was generally differentially targeted towards women than towards men in such a way that female sexuality was more strictly patrolled, and daughters' sexual experiences were more regulated than sons'. For instance, Asian American youths (Kim, 2009), U.S.

born Filipino women (Espiritu, 2001), and young British Bangladeshi women (Griffiths et al., 2008) recollected that their male family members and peers had significantly less restrictions on their social activity than they themselves. Decreased restrictions for male youths included less parental monitoring, later curfews, and the provision of condoms from parents. Further, Hahm et al.'s (2006) and Trinh et al.'s (2014) studies on Asian American adolescents revealed that young men received fewer prohibitive sexual messages and were even encouraged to date, whereas women were generally prohibited or were given heightened expectations to protect their virginity and be more selective about their partner choices. In correlation with these findings, Espiritu and Omi (2000) noted that adolescents were often sensitive to the implicit and explicit messages about their sexuality and how society expected them to behave, in that they sensed an expectation in them to comply. Thus, it was common for young women in Asian families to report that they intended to remain chaste to uphold cultural, familial and religious values, and to preserve family harmony (Hahm et al., 2006).

Research (e.g., Brotto et al., 2005; Chen & Yang, 1986; Huang & Uba, 1992; Lau et al., 2009; Yu, 2007) has suggested that increased acculturation commonly leads to less conservative sexual attitudes in adolescents. These scholars deduced that young adults who were more acculturated to the dominant host culture were more likely to have adolescent sex and place less importance on their family cultural values. Hahm et al. (2006) observed that a partner's ethnicity could influence a young adult's level of acculturation, namely that Asian women who dated Caucasian men were more likely to adopt liberal attitudes towards sex. They also gathered that young Asian women may view sex as an avenue to assert independence, break the traditional gender expectations of their culture, and seek social acceptance in the host culture. Additionally, scholars found that Asian American young adults who were acculturated into the host Western culture preferred more open conversation with their immigrant parents about sex (Chung et al., 2005; Kim, 2005; Kim, 2009).

Despite the observation that children of migrant Asian families are generally more likely than their parents to adopt the values of the host culture (Bartley, 2010; Kao & Martyn, 2014), research has suggested that this demographic still strongly retain the qualities of their original Asian culture. For instance, Fuligni et al. (1999) found that Asian American young adults valued obedience and respect for elders more highly than their European peers. Chen and Stevenson (1995) and Reglin and Adams (1990) discovered that Asian American adolescents had fewer dating experiences and spent less time dating compared to their peers of other ethnicities. From these findings, it may be concluded that adolescents' adherence to traditional Asian principles might

help explain the differences in dating behaviour between Asian youth of migrant families and peers of other ethnicities (Lau et al., 2009).

2.5.2 Reciprocal silence and secretive behaviours

As established in the previous section, Asian parents generally had little and, if at all, rather implicit communication with their children regarding dating and sex. It was observed that, likewise, few adolescents were comfortable with or willing to discuss the topic with their parents. Wang's (2016) study of parent-child communication about sexuality in Chinese families found that one of the reasons for adolescents' reservations was based on self-image. Participants expressed that they wanted their parents to preserve their image as a 'good child' who was not involved with sexual activity. Another reason that children often avoided discussion about dating was to protect the parent-child relationship, because they believed that addressing the topic would risk disagreement or conflict (Wang, 2016). In addition to respondents understanding that the topic of sex was taboo in their Asian culture (Kao & Martyn, 2014), they also avoided conversation as they generally felt that the topic had an "overwhelmingly negative connotation" (Wang, 2016, p. 241). Thus, adolescents usually preferred to keep the peace within their families by avoiding explicit communication about romance or sexual activity.

Because adolescents understood their parents' generally disapproving attitudes towards dating and sex, it was not uncommon for them to resort to dishonesty (Lau et al., 2009; Wang, 2016). Lau et al. (2009) discovered that parental disapproval of romantic and sexual experiences would sometimes encourage secrecy among Asian American adolescents. Dating without parental knowledge was a common practice, as evidenced in Lau et al.'s (2009) study where almost 75% of respondents declared that they dated without parental knowledge. A key explanation for children to keep their dating activity a secret from parents was their perception that the activity would contradict their parents' views. Contested activities included being out late at night, dating casually or without the intention of marriage, and most prominently having casual or premarital sex. Knowing that their parents were opposed to such activity, adolescents did not tell their parents about it in order to keep them from worrying or restricting their movements. When going out to meet their partners, respondents in Lau et al.'s (2009) study often lied and told parents they were going out with friends.

2.5.3 Peer influence

Trinh et al. (2014) suggested that while parents were seen as important socialisation mediators in children's' lives, peers would also play a critical role as sexual informants.

Asian young adults in previous relevant studies often turned to their friends for information, especially when they received little to no sexual education from their parents (Chung et al., 2005; Hahm et al., 2006). This finding is cognisant of Whitaker and Miller's (2000) proposal that the influence of peer communication about sex may be magnified when parental sexual communication is minimal. Existing research (Lau et al., 2009; Trinh et al., 2014) has recognised that peers may be key influential sources on children's dating and sexual behaviour, whether they receive messages through the observation of their peers or through direct conversations with them. Lau et al.'s (2009) study suggested that Asian American adolescents, through the observation of their school peers, developed the understanding that casual sexual activity was normal for teenagers in the mainstream U.S. culture. Through witnessing this behaviour, some of the respondents developed the desire to 'fit in' through partaking, and eventually adopting the same viewpoints. In other words, peers of the host culture often encouraged Asian adolescents to have similar attitudes towards dating and sexual activity in accordance to the conventions of the host nation, which reflects Brotto et al. (2005) and Trinh et al.'s (2014) findings that suggested a higher level of acculturation would lead to more permissive sexual attitudes.

The overall impact of peer influence in comparison to parental influence on young adults' dating and sexual behaviours appeared to be inconclusive. Some studies suggested that peers were more influential than parents over an adolescent's likeliness to engage in sexual activity (Brown & Theobald, 1999; Leigh & Andrews, 2002). Other studies suggested that while parents were usually the first to educate children about sex, young adults consistently reported having more sexual communication with their peers than their parents (DiIorio et al., 1999; Pistella & Bonati, 1998; Sprecher et al., 2008). Trinh et al.'s (2014) study discovered that "peer sexual communication exceeded parental sexual communication across all discourses except abstinence" (p. 217). Trinh et al.'s (2014) finding was reflected across previous studies analysing Caucasian young adults (DiIorio et al., 1999; Lefkowitz & Espinosa-Hernandez, 2007; Sprecher et al., 2008) as well as Asian young adults (Kim & Ward, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007).

In contrast to a primacy of peer influence, Kao and Martyn (2014), Kao et al. (2007), Markham et al. (2003) and Chen et al. (2007) indicated that while peers had a strong influence, it was ultimately the parents who guided adolescents' sexual attitudes. Kao and Martyn (2014) held that close parent-child relationships, parental monitoring and consistent communication were crucial in prolonging the onset of adolescents' first sexual encounters and decreasing their chances of partaking in what they perceived to

be risky sexual behaviours. However, it may be generally unrealistic to attribute an adolescent's influences to a single specific source, as the above studies suggest these to be a combination of factors that guide a young adult's romantic and sexual attitudes.

2.6 Summary

The review of literature has revealed that the motives for Asian immigration to New Zealand were primarily based on factors of greater economic and educational opportunities (Ho et al., 2000; Young, 2018). This immigration process is closely tied with the consequent process of acculturation, which can be largely influential on a 1.5 generation adolescent's social and romantic attitudes (Bartley, 2010; Chung et al., 2005; Kim & Ward, 2007). Literature (Kao & Martyn, 2014; Witt et al., 1992) has also more broadly acknowledged the significant role of cultural beliefs in developing adolescents' dating attitudes. In particular, Asian cultures were generally found to encourage more conservative dating behaviours and discuss romantic topics infrequently, in contrast to Western cultures where adolescent dating was typically more accepted and openly discussed between parents and children. Research has also revealed some explanations for adolescents' dating behaviours, such as their secrecy in response to parents' minimal communication and the attitudes they possessed as influenced by their peers. Overall, existing literature has made it clear that parents' immigration motives and entrenched cultural beliefs, coupled with the effects of acculturation, may play an integral role in shaping young adults' dating attitudes and sexual behaviours.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological design of the study. It explains thematic analysis, i.e., the methodological framework used to analyse this study's qualitative data. The chapter outlines how data was obtained using two collection methods; first, a quantitative online survey to gauge individuals' contextual information and general stance on the topic; and, second, qualitative interviews with eight of the survey participants to develop a more in-depth understanding of their individual experiences as well as some of the topics mentioned in the survey. This section offers an explanation of the sampling, data scope and participant selection for both the survey and interviews.

3.2 Methodological framework

This study resides in the phenomenological research paradigm, i.e., a qualitative research approach that examines data involving the lived experiences of individuals as they perceive them (Koch, 1995). Phenomenology is largely interpretative and aims to explore the various meanings of individuals' human experiences within society and the wider world (Van Manen, 2016). The research paradigm investigates human beings' respective realities through analysing their experiences regarding certain phenomena and their interpretations of these phenomena. Unlike observational methods that seek to 'objectively' observe, measure and evaluate phenomena independent of human involvement, phenomenological meaning of individuals' experiences is sought through listening to their own recounts (Polit & Hungler, 1991).

Phenomenological methodology often aims to uncover new, previously unrecognised findings and data (Holloway & Wheeler 1996). The use of phenomenology can help the researcher elucidate an individual's lived experiences through directly interviewing the participants. Thus, phenomenology does not ask 'what something is' but 'how something has been experienced'. This method encourages individuals to reflect on their feelings and share their experiences with the researcher. Because phenomenology is an interpretative method, the researcher is able to utilise their own pre-knowledge of a phenomenon to formulate educated interpretations of the data (Gadamer, 1975).

3.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative research

This research concerns a primarily qualitative research perspective, as it focuses on the lived experiences, thoughts and emotions of individuals in terms of their parents'

responses to their dating activity and topics surrounding romantic relationships. While the study is primarily qualitative, it utilises both quantitative and qualitative data sets. The study works with both a predominantly quantitative survey and with qualitative interviews, with the former being used to inform and contextualise the latter.

An initial survey provides a general overview of the experiences that young Asian New Zealanders have with their romantic relationships, which is used to situate the subsequent in-depth interviews with a few of the survey participants. The survey, albeit largely quantitative in nature, aims to inform the design of the qualitative follow-up interviews. The survey data supports and provides added validity to the interview findings. Keyton (2006) posited that the authentication of qualitative information with quantitative data reinforces the dependability of qualitative evaluation. While both quantitative and qualitative focuses are employed, the overall research paradigm of this study is qualitative, as it inquires into the lived experiences of interviewees who each have unique experiences with the same phenomenon.

Bradshaw et al. (2017) acknowledged that "many interpretations of reality exist" (p. 2). Hence, a benefit of qualitative research is that it allows for individuals' subjective experiences to be recognised. Scholl (2015) characterised qualitative research by

> its openness towards the research object in order to reconstruct its attributes authentically and to gain a deeper insight into these attributes […] the research process includes an interactive and close relationship between the researcher and the researched persons or material rather than an objective, detached, or neutral relationship (p. 510).

Using a qualitative focus through in-depth interviews is ideal for this study, as it allows the researcher to interact with the participants personally, obtain deeper insights about their experiences and learn about behaviours that cannot be examined through mere observation (Yang, 2011).

3.2.2 Thematic analysis

The data for this study is analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a method for identifying, analysing and recognising themes and patterns within qualitative research. Vaismoradi et al. (2013) believed thematic analysis to be an "independent and reliable qualitative approach to analysis" (p. 400). Boyatzis (1998) recognised thematic analysis as a method of collating seemingly unrelated data and "systematically observing a person, an

interaction, a group, a situation, an organisation, or a culture" (p. 4). Thematic analysis is thus useful for this research as it has a specific cultural focus on the group of young Asian New Zealanders.

Thematic analysis is suitable for analysing data that is based on human experiences within unique contexts, given that language and individuals' experiences cannot always be understood through a precise or pre-existing framework. Since thematic analysis is not bound to a specific academic field or conceptual framework, it is easier for the researcher to identify themes and patterns that actually appear in the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

A primary objective of thematic analysis is the eliciting of themes that the researcher identifies and extracts from the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined a theme as information that "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning with the data set" (p. 82). Vaismoradi et al. (2013) defined themes based on their repeated nature within the data, describing thematic analysis as "the search for and identification of common threads" (p. 400).

Braun and Clarke (2006) devised six key steps towards an increasing level of insight into qualitative data. These steps include (1) familiarisation with the data, (2) producing initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) naming and defining themes, and (6) producing the report. Step one involves the researcher becoming familiar with the data and identifying recurring or salient information, such as categorising repeated key words. Step two involves the act of generating the codes, which are identifiers of emergent meaning, whereby codes are analysed individually and in relation to the respective research questions. Step three entails the researcher finding patterns of significance throughout the data (i.e., emerging themes), followed by step four where themes are reviewed by relating them back to the codes and the data. In this step, the researcher aims to ensure that the prevalent themes accurately represent the data through a narrative and subsequently evaluates whether the themes require amendment or re-assembly. Step five requires the researcher to purposefully name and define the themes, followed by step six, where the themes are presented in an insightful and concise report.

3.3 Research Design

This section on research design provides a description of the quantitative online survey and the qualitative interviews, the sampling method, as well as the scope of the data, together with rationalising selection criteria and sampling size.

3.3.1 Data

This research utilises two data types, namely a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with some of the survey participants. The online survey, hosted on Google Forms, aims to gather more general information about 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders and their perceptions about their parents' influence on their dating lives. The survey contains 47 questions which ask participants how they generally felt in certain situations and how much they relate to certain statements regarding their dating experiences. The survey also seeks participants' perspectives on what they have learned from their experiences and how they might do things differently if they were to become parents themselves in the future.

Using a survey as a research instrument helps to ensure the anonymity of participants, which may encourage respondents to give entirely truthful answers. Hosting the survey on an independent platform helps to eliminate bias by providing accurate data that is not interfered with by the researcher during the collection process (Park & Park, 2016). The survey also functions as a platform to recruit participants for the subsequent interviews; the end of the survey contains another link for gathering the details of participants who were also interested in partaking in the in-depth interviews. Eight interview participants were selected and interviewed via Zoom during the first two weeks of February 2021.

3.3.1.1 Survey

The survey is undertaken in an electronic online format, posted to relevant social media sites. Sharing the survey on Facebook groups specific to Asians in New Zealand (such as 'ASIANS IN NEW ZEALAND' and 'Kiwi Asians'), New Zealand immigrants (such as 'Filipino sa New Zealand' and 'Koreans in New Zealand') and Asian relationships and Asian dating (such as 'Subtle Asian Relationships' and 'Subtle Asian Dating'), increases the chances of the survey being taken by individuals who likely meet the selection criteria, i.e., relate to the topic or have had first-hand experience with dating as a young Asian New Zealander. The survey is left open for four weeks and can be completed by participants at any time in this timeframe.

Most of the survey questions (45 of 47) provide participants with multiple answer options, which is ideal for participants as they are more likely to respond to single-click answers than questions requiring written responses (Keyton, 2006). However, many questions also provide participants with the option to add their own response, should they feel that the provided answers are not accurate, relevant, or sufficient, or if they have comments to supplement an answer.

In addition to multiple-choice questions, others are measured on Likert scales, which are "an ordinal psychometric evaluation of behaviours" (Alarooj, 2020, p. 29) as they ask respondents to answer according to their level of agreement or disagreement. Likert scales are advantageous as they produce comprehensible and quantifiable results that can easily be compared (Madu, 2003; Keyton, 2006). The final two survey questions are open ended and provide participants with a text entry box that has an unlimited character count.

3.3.1.2 Interviews

The survey responses help inform the interview questions, which aim to garner more in-depth information about participants' worldviews, emotions and behaviours (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews are common within qualitative research (Gray, 2004) and are conducted to elicit more detailed responses from participants. Interviews are designed to gather qualitative data through face-to-face interactions with the interviewees, in an attempt to better understand their perspectives and experiences as told using their own language (Gray, 2004; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The interviews for this study are undertaken via the online video-calling platform 'Zoom' and are voice-recorded for transcribing purposes. Interviews are designed to last between forty-five minutes and one hour.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews can be highly structured, unstructured, or semi-structured, which is a combination of the former two categories. Such categories are defined by the questions' characteristics, ordering and format. Highly structured interviews consist of questions that are pre-written, pre-ordered and strictly followed by the researcher during the interview. An advantage of this format is that it is efficient when seeking straightforward answers from interviewees. Contrastingly, unstructured interviews consist of questions that serve as "aide-memoire" (Bryman, 2012, p. 213) or 'memory aids' in the form of an unofficial list of topics to be discussed with the interviewees. Unlike the highly structured format, the delivery of unstructured interview questions may vary between interviews and adapt to the participant's responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Combining the two formats to

create semi-structured interviews is ideal for this research as it utilises the strengths of each.

Kim et al. (2017) posited that the semi-structured format is often used within qualitative research because the nature of qualitative interviews often requires participants to respond using their own words and ways of thinking, which may be eclipsed in a highly structured interview format. A key advantage of semi-structured interviews is the flexibility they provide to the researcher, who is thus able to clarify respondents' answers as the interview happens and ask further follow-up questions that arise naturally from the conversation (Bernstein & Lysniak, 2018). Thus, the semi-structured format is best suited for this study as it allows the researcher to keep responses generally consistent across multiple interviews by having key discussion categories, while also allowing the researcher to adapt the delivery of questions to suit each interviewee.

In preparation for the interviews, the researcher creates a general list of questions that seek to examine the participants' experiences regarding their parents' attitudes towards their dating activity. The full list of interview questions is appended at the end of this document. There are six categories, each with a varying number of questions. The categories and questions are asked in the same order as listed. The first category is based on participants' initial senses of their parents' attitudes, and how they gauged their parents' stance on certain topics surrounding romantic relationships and dating. The second category is based on how their parents' stance affected their partner and romantic relationship. The third category focuses on participants' perception of their experiences and how they compared themselves to others, namely peers or siblings. The fourth category discusses matters surrounding sex and more personal issues such as respondents' emotions regarding romantic relationships. The fifth category is based on culture and asks respondents about their general opinions on how cultural beliefs affect dating attitudes. The sixth and final category is named 'hindsight and looking forward' as it asks participants to comment on their past experiences, as well as consider the future and how they might parent differently with their own children.

During the interviews themselves, the researcher ensures to give participants a warm greeting, and begin with a light-hearted conversation about the participant's lives or current interests in order to build rapport and establish a comfortable setting. Prior to asking the interview questions, participants are reminded that in this context, the terms 'romantic relationship' and 'dating life' can be used interchangeably. Participants do not need to be in an 'official' or exclusive relationship, and can draw on experiences from

multiple relationships they may have had. Additionally, respondents are reminded that a ‘partner’ can also mean someone they were wanting to date, had a crush on, or went out with casually without having any ‘boyfriend’ or ‘girlfriend’ labels.

There are 31 interview questions in total, but respondents are only asked questions that are relevant to their experiences. Because of the semi-structured format, the researcher is able to add or exclude some questions where appropriate, based on the respondent’s previous answers. Participants are not required to answer all the questions, and can easily tell the researcher to move on to the next question if they find it uncomfortable or irrelevant for them to answer.

The interviews are audio recorded for transcription purposes and video recorded for contextual information such as facial expressions and non-verbal cues. Interviews are then transcribed with the help of the Otter.ai transcription software, then analysed using thematic analysis as detailed in section 3.2.2.

3.3.2 Sampling

The online survey aims to reach as many participants as possible and may be completed by Asian New Zealander youth living anywhere New Zealand. Respondents are accepted to partake in the survey if they meet the following selection criteria:

- Must be 18 years old or over
- Must identify with at least one Asian culture
- Must have parents who immigrated from Asia to New Zealand
- Must currently be living in New Zealand (can be born here or have moved here from their home Asian country)
- Must have/had at least one parent living in New Zealand

These criteria are set to ensure that participants are part of the demographic being studied. The researcher understands that individuals under the age of 18 would also have experience in this domain, however, the minimum age is set to 18 for ethical research reasons. The age boundary is alleviated through the fact that respondents can still discuss their experiences from their teenage years.

There is no requirement for participants to have been in a romantic relationship, as individuals’ own opinions about the topic can be based on their observation of other individuals and are valid nonetheless. There is also no minimum time requirement for how long respondents or their parents have lived in New Zealand. This is done to avoid

limiting the research by potentially excluding individuals who have valuable experiences, simply because they may be a few weeks short of the minimum duration. Additionally, it is difficult to justify or define a specific minimum amount of time for an individual to have 'enough' experience within a host culture to make their experiences 'valid' in this context.

Interview participants are required to meet the same selection criteria as the survey, with the additional criteria of being able to meet with the researcher physically or virtually. These interview participants are selected after they express interest through a link at the end of the online survey. If more than ten participants agree to participate in the interviews, convenience sampling will be used, based on first-come-first-serve basis or individuals' accessibility.

Qualitative research usually deals with smaller sample sizes than quantitative research because qualitative research involves "intensive contact with participants and the findings are not expected to be generalizable" (Bradshaw et al., 2017, p. 4). Additionally, Bradshaw et al. (2017) posited purposeful sampling as a technique that seeks to obtain "information-rich" (p. 338) responses within a small sample size. Thus, eight to ten interview participants are sufficient for this study and will provide a range of unique yet in-depth information.

3.3.2.1 Data scope

For the online survey, the aim is to obtain as many participants as possible. There is no exclusion criteria or upward limit to the number of individuals who can participate. According to data from the most recent NZ census (2018), roughly 3000 individuals would meet the demographic criteria for the survey. Assuming about 900 individuals may be reached based on the platforms used to contact participants, a response rate of 10-15% would return 90-135 participants. Based on the estimated number of survey respondents, the indicative range of participants for the interviews would then be around 8 to 10 individuals. Since this qualitative research does not aim to be representative, the estimated number of survey and interview participants is suitable for this study.

3.3.2.2 Participant recruitment and selection

The layout and order of the survey is crucial (Fan & Yan, 2010), hence the survey for this study is designed to separate those who are interested and meet the criteria from those who do not. The title of the survey provides a concise summary of what the study is about, and a condensed version of the information sheet presented at the beginning

of the survey informs readers of the study's objectives and ethical approach. Additionally, the short description that accompanies the survey link on Facebook mentions that it should take around ten minutes. These pieces of information combined may influence individuals' willingness to participate, which effectively also translates to the overall response rate.

For the purposes of this study, Bartley's (2010) definition of '1.5 generation' will be used, and expanded to include a greater age bracket as well as children who were born in New Zealand to Asian migrant parents. The first few questions of the survey check the aforementioned participation criteria, such as participants' age, which Asian ethnic group they identify with most, how long they have lived in New Zealand and how long their parents have lived in New Zealand. As previously mentioned, there is no exclusion criteria, so the survey does not end if, for instance, a participant answers that they have spent less than 3 years in New Zealand. None of the survey questions are compulsory so a respondent can continue to complete the survey even if some questions are left unanswered. This prevents respondents from being forced to answer each question, which may act as a deterrent for some.

Respondents are also encouraged to share the survey link to other people in their network that may be interested in participating. This method of recruitment is known as 'snowball sampling,' where respondents refer other potential participants to the researcher (Keyton, 2006; Babbie, 2013). Participants can either share the survey by copy pasting the link or using the share function on Facebook to directly share the post to other Facebook users.

3.3.3 Data analysis

This study utilises the in-built Google Forms software to analyse the survey data and provide initial visualisations of the quantitative findings. These visualisations include basic pie charts and bar graphs to represent the percentage of certain answers for each question. Using the default Google Forms master interface, results can be analysed based on individual questions or individual responses. It is also possible to cross-tabulate answers by downloading the data into a Microsoft Excel sheet and using filters to compare responses from multiple questions. The raw quantitative data is examined to identify the ranking of different responses and the frequency of concepts occurring. These statistical results are then depicted in the form of graphs, tables and charts to provide a visual summary of the data.

In terms of interview data coding and analysis, this study follows the method of thematic analysis, whereby data is arranged and coded using Clarke and Braun's (2013) six stage process to identify emerging patterns and themes related to the research questions. The conception of codes is based on interviewees' responses about their experiences. The goal is to observe behaviours and viewpoints that are repeated and common amongst interviewees, while also identifying responses that are new, unique or significant. Through this process of analysing the data, it is likely that subthemes may emerge within the category of individual themes. The data is evaluated to discover codes and themes based on the following concerns:

- Participants' interpretation of their parents' beliefs and attitudes surrounding their dating activity, including why respondents believed their parents acted the way they did;
- Participants' responses to their parents' attitudes towards their dating and sexual activity, including the courses of action they would take in response to their parents' attitudes;
- Behaviours, traditions or phenomena that respondents found most significant or had the most impact on their lives;
- Participants' opinions on the significance or influence of cultural values on their experiences;
- Participants' own observations and opinions on the issue, based on what they have experienced or witnessed through friends, family and other individuals;
- Participants' theories and advice for how they might have changed their own situation, and how they may act differently as parents in the future.

3.4 Summary

This chapter presented the methodological design of the research. Data collection methods consist of an online survey to gather quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews to obtain qualitative information about respondents' experiences. The quantitative interview data is analysed using thematic analysis to uncover significant themes and patterns of meaning.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the online survey and the in-depth interviews. First, it details a summary of responses from the survey, which inquired into participants' general viewpoints, attitudes and experiences in terms of their parents' responses to their dating activity. Following, this chapter summarises the interview responses, where eight unique participants provided a more in-depth elaboration of their personal experiences and opinions in relation to their parents' attitudes towards their romantic activity. The interview findings provide the significant and recurring themes that arose from the thematic analysis, which are discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

4.2 Survey findings

In order to gauge an initial quantitative understanding of the target demographic, it is necessary to determine the social and emotional contexts of individuals, such as how long they have lived in New Zealand and how comfortable they feel when it comes to discussing relevant topics. To obtain these general details, a survey was posted on a number of social media platforms, such as Facebook groups specifically for Asians in New Zealand, Asian relationships and young Asians worldwide. The survey collected data from 69 respondents in total.

The ages of respondents ranged between 18 and 34 years old. The largest age groups were 21 and 22 year olds, which each equally accounted for 19.1% of all respondents (together, 38.2%). The single largest age cluster by far involved respondents of years 20 to 23 (63.2%); with the remaining age groups scattered over the full range of 18 to 34 years. Most of the respondents were female (81.2%), with 17.4% of respondents being male, and 1.4% identifying as gender diverse.

While there was a wide range and relatively even spread of ethnic groups that respondents identified with, there was a notable number of Filipino respondents, who accounted for almost 1/3 of all respondents (30.4%).

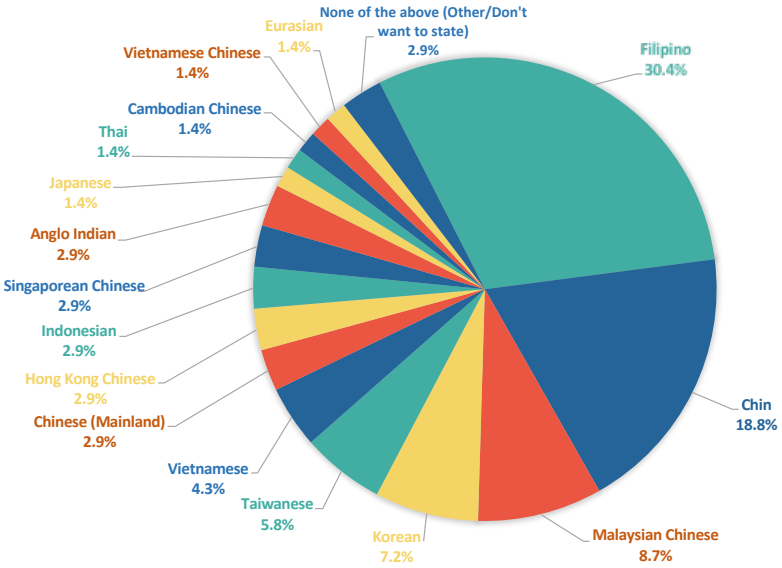


Figure 4.1 Participants' ethnic affiliations

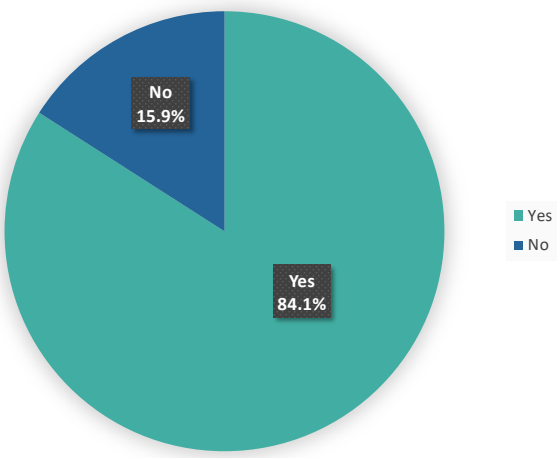


Figure 4.2: Participants' experience with romantic relationships

Most respondents (84.1%) had been in a romantic relationship at some point in their lives, except for around one sixth of respondents (15.9%) who had not.

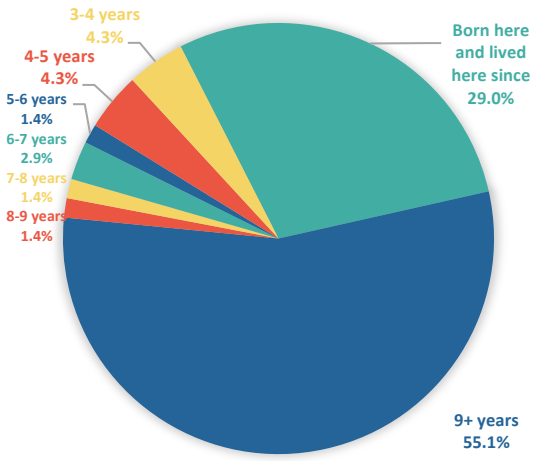


Figure 4.3: Duration of respondents' residence in New Zealand

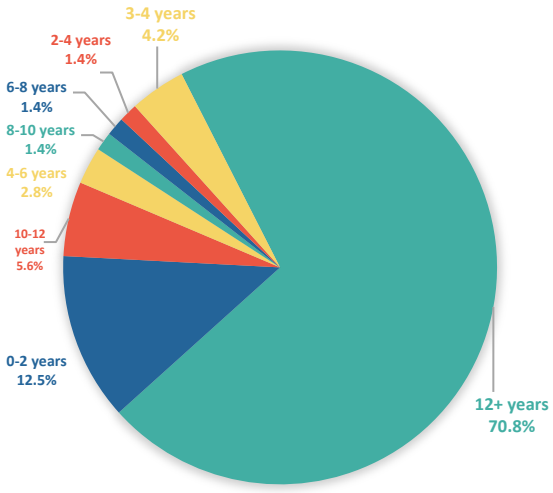


Figure 4.4: Duration of respondents' parents' residence in New Zealand

Just over half of all respondents (55.1%) had lived in New Zealand for at least 9 years or more. Around one third (29%) were born in the country and have lived here since. The few remaining respondents had spent between 3 and 9 years in NZ. Almost ¾ of respondents (70.8%) said that their parents have lived in New Zealand for at least twelve years or more. The second largest group's (12.5%) parents have lived in NZ for 2 years or less, and the remainder of responses ranged between 2 and 12 years. These answers together could indicate that around ¾ of all respondents and their parents have spent a significant amount of time in New Zealand and have likely become well acquainted with its culture and traditions.

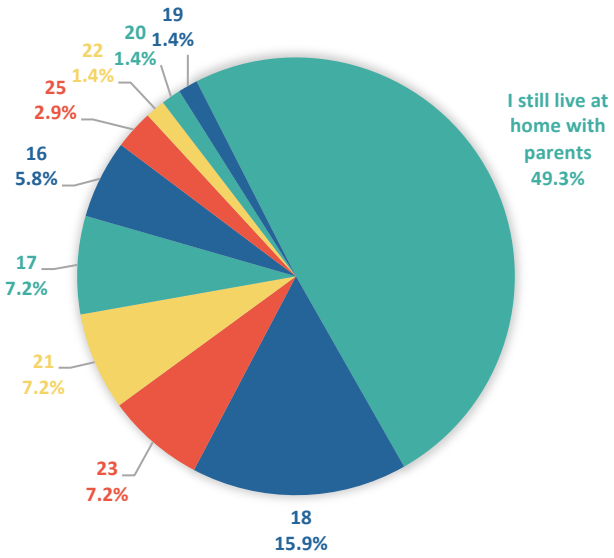


Figure 4.5: Respondents' age of moving out

Almost half of all respondents (49.3%) still lived at home with their parents, with the age of these respondents ranging from 18 to 30. Of those who still lived at home, there was a particular cluster for the ages 20-22. The second largest group (15.9%) had moved out at the age of 18, followed by the ages 17, 21 and 23 which each accounted for 7.2% of all respondents.

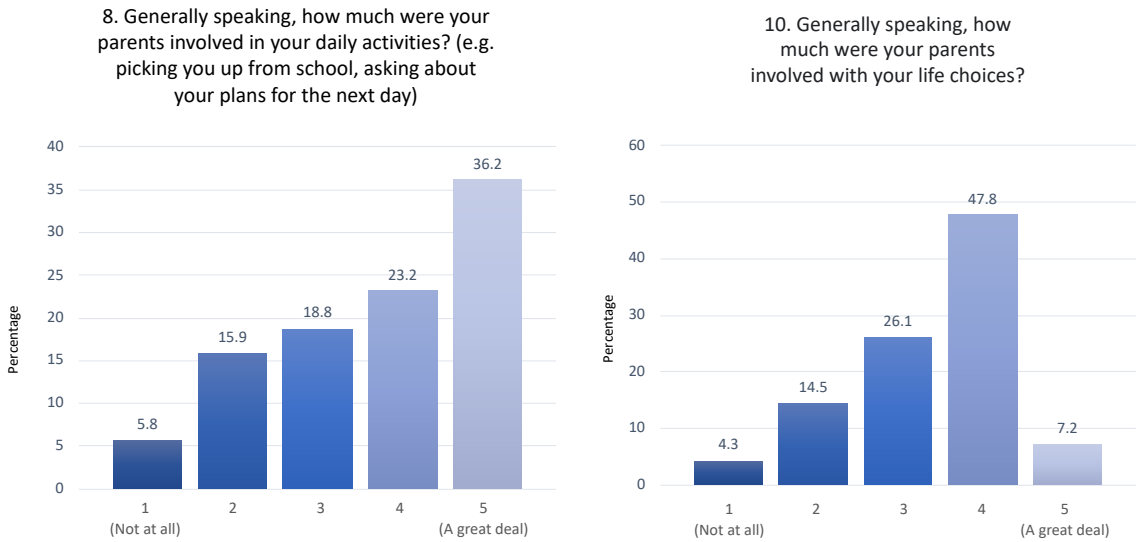
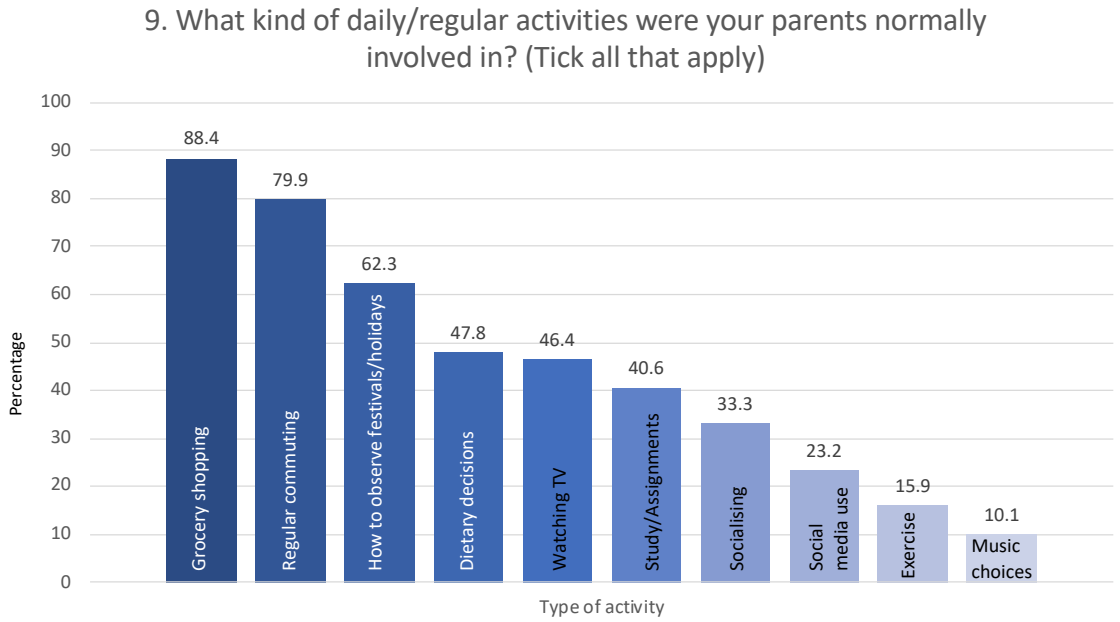


Figure 4.6: Comparison of parents' involvement with children's daily activity versus their life choices

It was clear that parents were generally very involved in the daily activities of respondents, and even more so with their life choices. Almost two thirds (59.4%) were on the upper end of the scale (points 4 and 5), indicating that parents were highly involved in respondents' daily activities. Only 5.8% of respondents had parents who were uninvolved with their daily activities (Likert scale point 1), and 18.8% (point 3) had parents who were somewhat involved. As for parents' involvement with respondents' life choices, almost half selected point '4' on the Likert scale. Compared to parents' involvement with children's daily activities, this chart clearly followed a similar upward formation favouring responses towards point 5. However, it had a much greater concentration of responses for point 4.



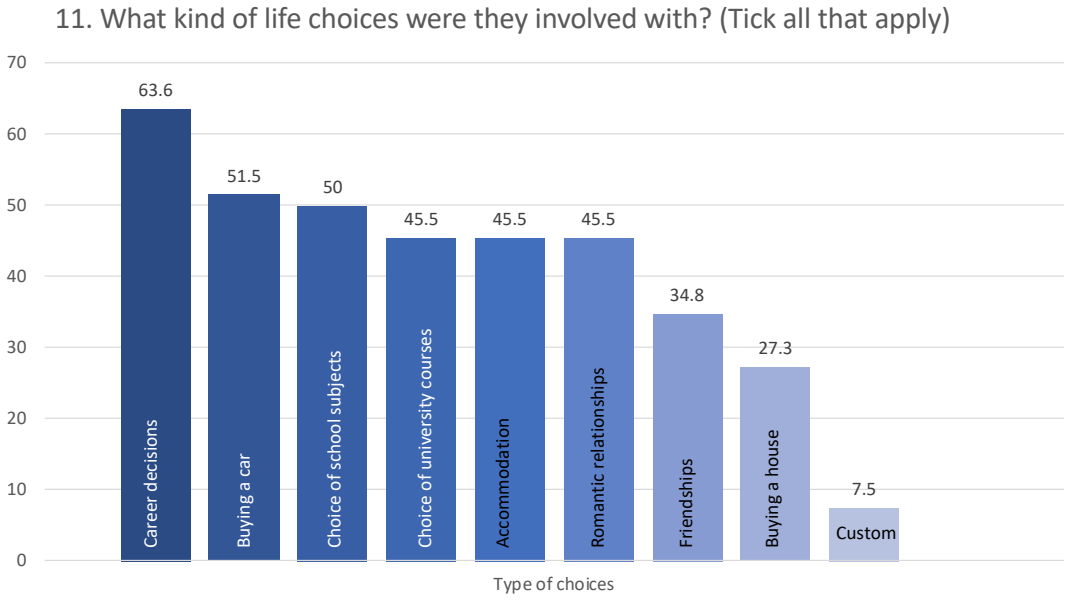


Figure 4.7: Comparing the daily activities and life choices parents were involved with

Considering parents' involvement in respondents' daily activities, results indicated that parents were more involved with children's commuting and dietary choices, and less involved with choices surrounding media consumption. When examining respondents' life choices, results suggested that parents were most involved with children's career decisions, educational course decisions, travel, accommodation and romantic relationships. The latter four all weighed similarly in importance based on the very similar percentages of responses to these options. There were a few custom responses (7.5%), which included life choices surrounding moving out, identity, travel destination, finances (such as investments and savings) and workload.

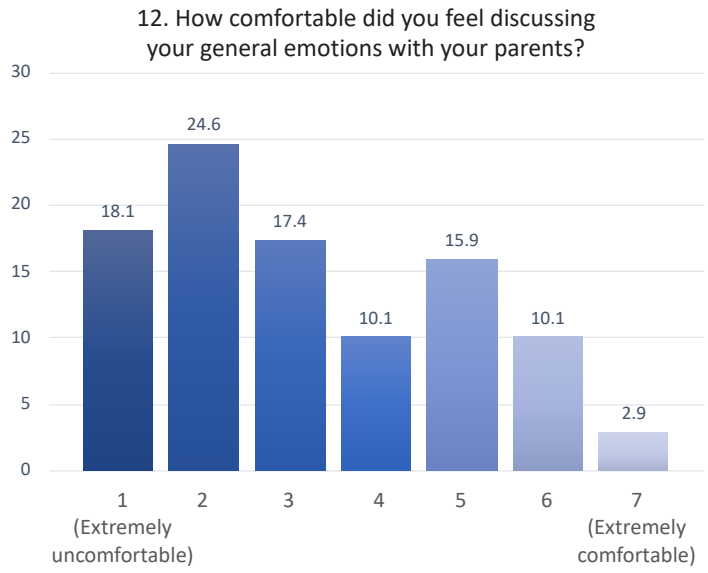


Figure 4.8: Participants' comfort levels discussing emotions with parents

When asked how comfortable participants were in general with discussing their emotions with parents, results presented over the full range of a 7-point Likert scale but with a clear slant towards less comfortable appraisals. Combining responses from points 1 to 3, 60.8% of respondents were on the lower half of the chart, which signifies that respondents felt generally rather uncomfortable with discussing their emotions with their parents. Adding responses from points 5 to 7, 28.9% of respondents were on the upper half of the chart and generally comfortable discussing their emotions with their parents. 10.1% selected the middle answer (point 4), suggesting that they were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable discussing their general emotions with their parents.

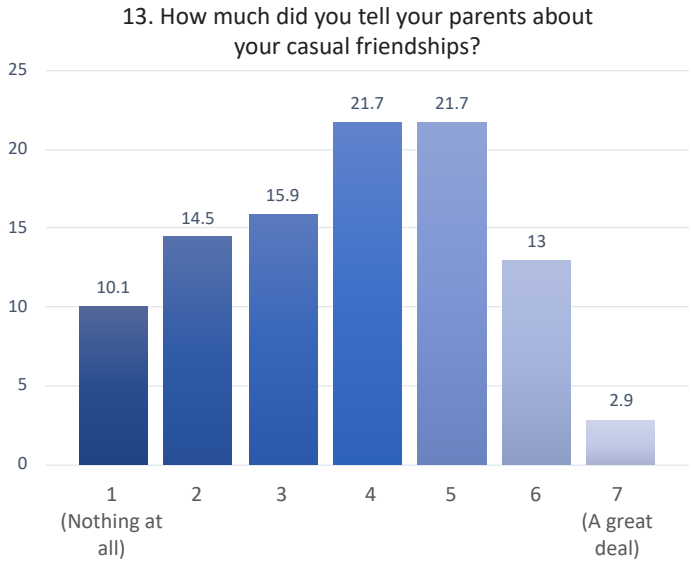


Figure 4.9: Amount of details shared about friendships

Results from the question of how much participants revealed about their friendships to their parents formed a slanted bell curve. Most answers were concentrated on points 4 and 5, indicating that, overall, there was an approximate balance between telling and not telling parents about casual friendships. Adding responses from points 1 to 3, it is revealed that 40.5% shared less about their friendships, compared to the 37.6% that were on the upper half of the chart (points 5-7) sharing more about their friendships. This comparison suggests that there was a comparable number of responses on each side of the scale. The percentage of answers for the middle point (4) indicates that 21.7% of respondents felt that they told parents a moderate or appropriate amount about their casual friendships. There was notably very few (2.9% on point 7) who shared a great deal about their casual friendships with their parents.

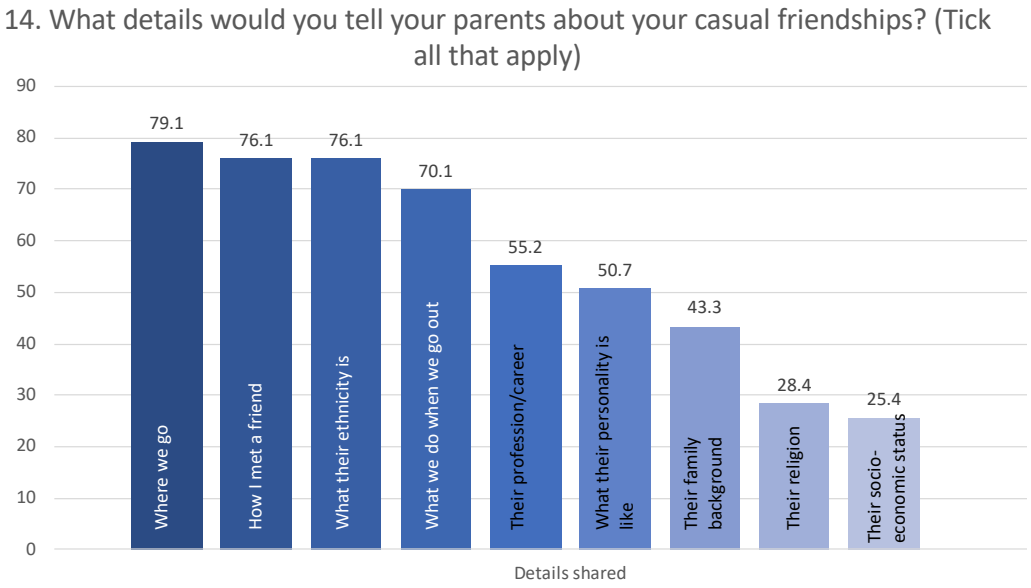


Figure 4.10: Categories of details shared about friendships

The details respondents shared about their friendships included their whereabouts on outings (79.1%), followed by how they met a friend (76.1%), their friend's ethnicity (76.1%), and what activities they would do together during outings (70.1%). Details that were shared considerably less concerned friends' careers, personalities and family background. The least shared details concerned friends' religious beliefs (28.4%) and socio-economic standing (25.4%).

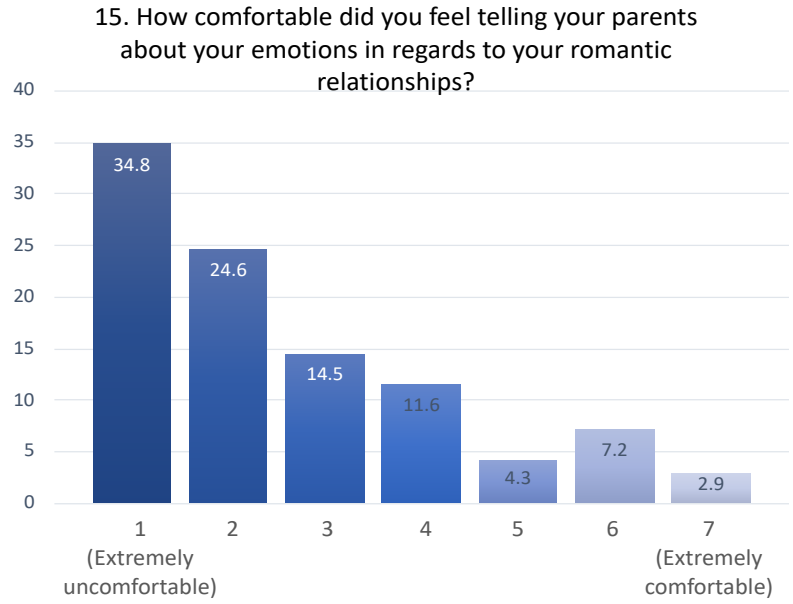


Figure 4.11: Comfort levels when sharing emotions about romantic relationships

In contrast to sharing about casual friendships, most respondents were not at all or not very much comfortable discussing their relationship related emotions with their parents. Almost ¾ of all respondents (73.9%) answered in the lower half of the scale (points 1-3), and there was a clear downward slope from points 1 to 7, indicating a consistently decreasing level of comfort. Exactly 14.4% were on the upper half of the scale (points 5-7), indicating that less than 1/6th of respondents were generally comfortable with discussing their romance-related emotions with their parents. The number of responses in the middle (point 4) indicates that 11.6% of respondents felt neither comfortable or uncomfortable telling parents about their emotions regarding their romantic relationships.

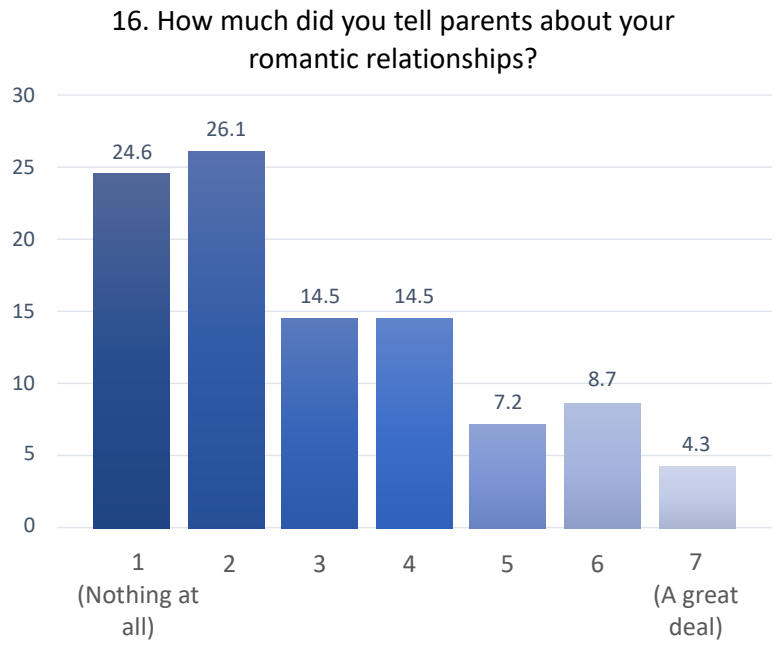


Figure 4.12: Extent of details shared about romantic relationships

In correspondence with respondents' comfort levels when sharing emotions about their relationships, the extent of relationship-related details shared also had a general downward trend. Responses were concentrated towards points 1 and 2 ('nothing at all' and very little). Almost ⅔ of all respondents (65.2%, combining points 1-3) told their parents rather little about their romantic relationships. 14.5% of respondents answered point 4, indicating that this group told their parents a moderate amount about their romantic relationships. Only ⅕ (20.2%, combining points 5-7) felt at least somewhat comfortable sharing details about their romantic relationships with their parents.

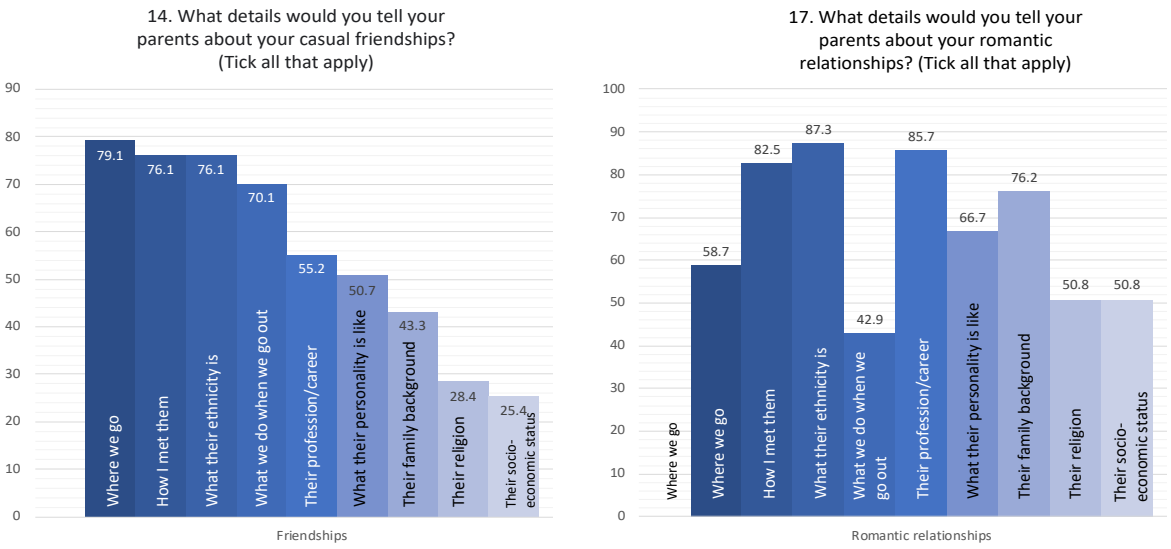


Figure 4.13: Comparing details shared about friendships versus relationships

When considering what respondents would share with their parents about their romantic relationships, the most popular answer was their partner's ethnicity (87.3%), closely followed by their profession (85.7%) and how they met their partner (82.5%). The least shared details concerned the activities they do when they go out (42.9%), their partner's religion (50.8%) and socioeconomic status (50.8%). When comparing the details shared about romantic relationships versus friendships, it appears that it was more important to tell parents about a person's family background, religion and socioeconomic status when it concerned romantic relationships as opposed to friendships.

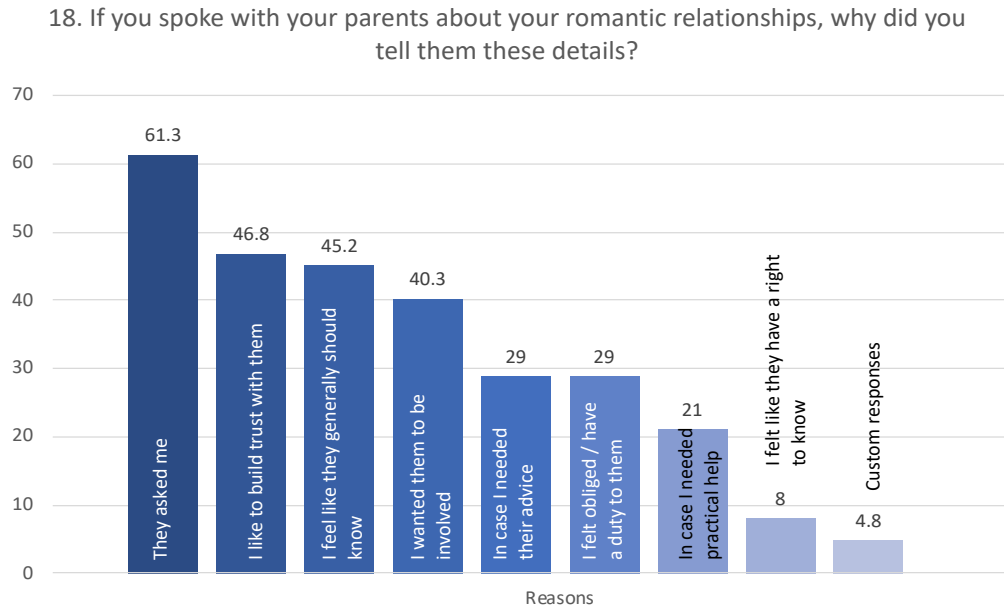


Figure 4.14: Reasons for sharing details about relationships

The most popular reason respondents shared details about their romantic relationships was because their parents asked (61.3%). Almost half (46.8%) shared these details with their parents because they liked to build trust with them, and 45.2% did so because they felt like their parents should generally know. 40.3% expressed a voluntary desire for parents to be involved. Almost a third (29%) told parents details about their romantic relationships as they felt a sense of obligation or duty to do so. Another 29% told parents in case they needed advice in terms of relationship issues or emotional support, and 21% told parents in case they needed help in a practical sense, such as requiring transport in the event of a car breakdown or similar. A small amount (8%) felt like parents had a right to know. Of the 4.8% custom responses, 1.6% only shared details of their relationship after they had moved in with their partner.

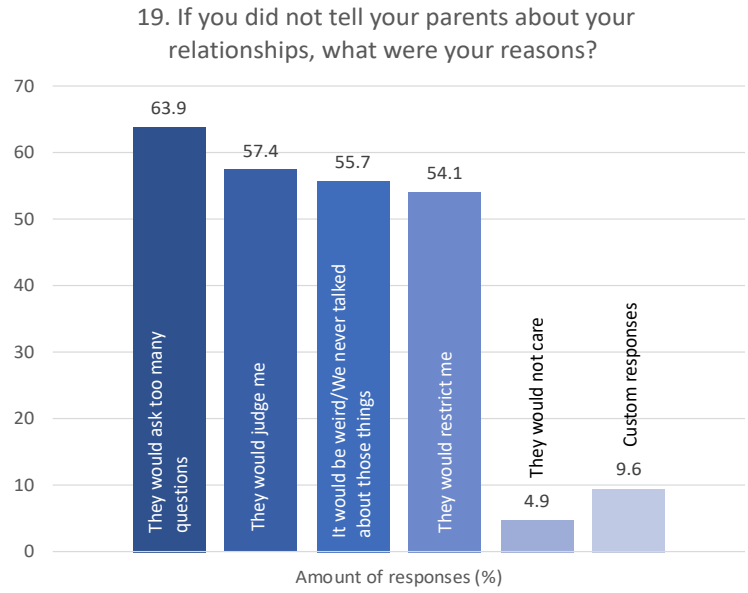


Figure 4.15: Reasons for concealing details about relationships

Conversely, a key reason some respondents supressed details about their romantic relationships was because they anticipated their parents asking too many questions (63.9%). Anticipating judgement (57.4%) and restriction (54.1%) from parents were also popular reasons for supressing details, as well as 55.7% saying it would be weird to discuss such topics with their parents as they did not normally do so. These 4 options had a fairly equal number of responses. There was also a notable number of custom responses, such as one respondent who said that they were not comfortable sharing details with parents if they did not think the relationship would last or be serious. Another response suggested that they felt some pressure to first finish university before revealing they were in a romantic relationship. One respondent refrained from sharing details about their relationship because they knew that their parents would not approve.

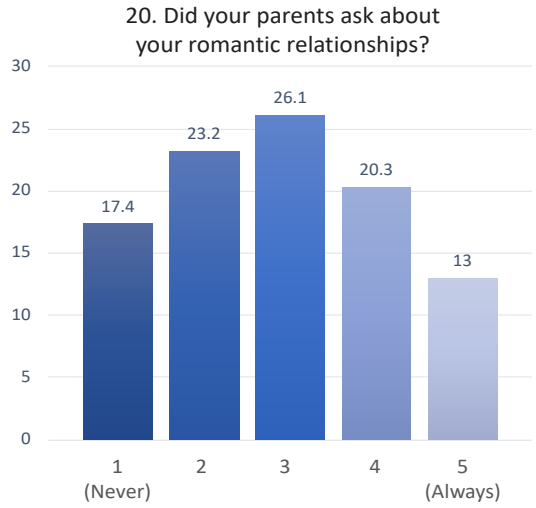


Figure 4.16: Frequency of parents asking about respondents' relationships

There was a rather flat bell-shaped curve for responses to the query of how often parents asked about children's dating lives. The respondents answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The most popular response was the middle answer (point 3) with over a quarter (26.1%) of all respondents indicating that their parents asked about their dating life sometimes or occasionally. 40.6% (points 1 and 2 combined) were on the lower half and had parents who seldom or never asked, and 33.3% (points 4 and 5 combined) were on the upper half and had parents who often or always asked about their dating life.

When asked about the type of dating-related information that participants' parents were curious about, four response clusters (groups 1 to 4 in fig. 4.17 below) seemed to emerge. The most common details parents asked about ('Group 1') concerned a partner's family (78.1%), job (78.1%), ethnicity (73.4%), age (71.9%), study path (71.9%) and how they met (67.2%). In the second most popular group of questions ('Group 2'), parents asked about a partner's upbringing (56.3%), location (56.3%), personality (56.3%) and how serious the relationship is (54.7%). Questions asked notably less ('Group 3') concerned a partner's income (45.3%), religious affiliation (43.8%), how often they saw each other (42.2%), the duration of the relationship (42.2%), the partner's appearance (40.6%), their thoughts and feelings about the relationship (37.5%), and a partner's hobbies (34.4%). Parents asked least about matters in 'Group 4', which included their partner's sexual orientation (20.3%), how safe they are being in terms of sexual health (20.3%), and how physical their relationship is (14.1%).

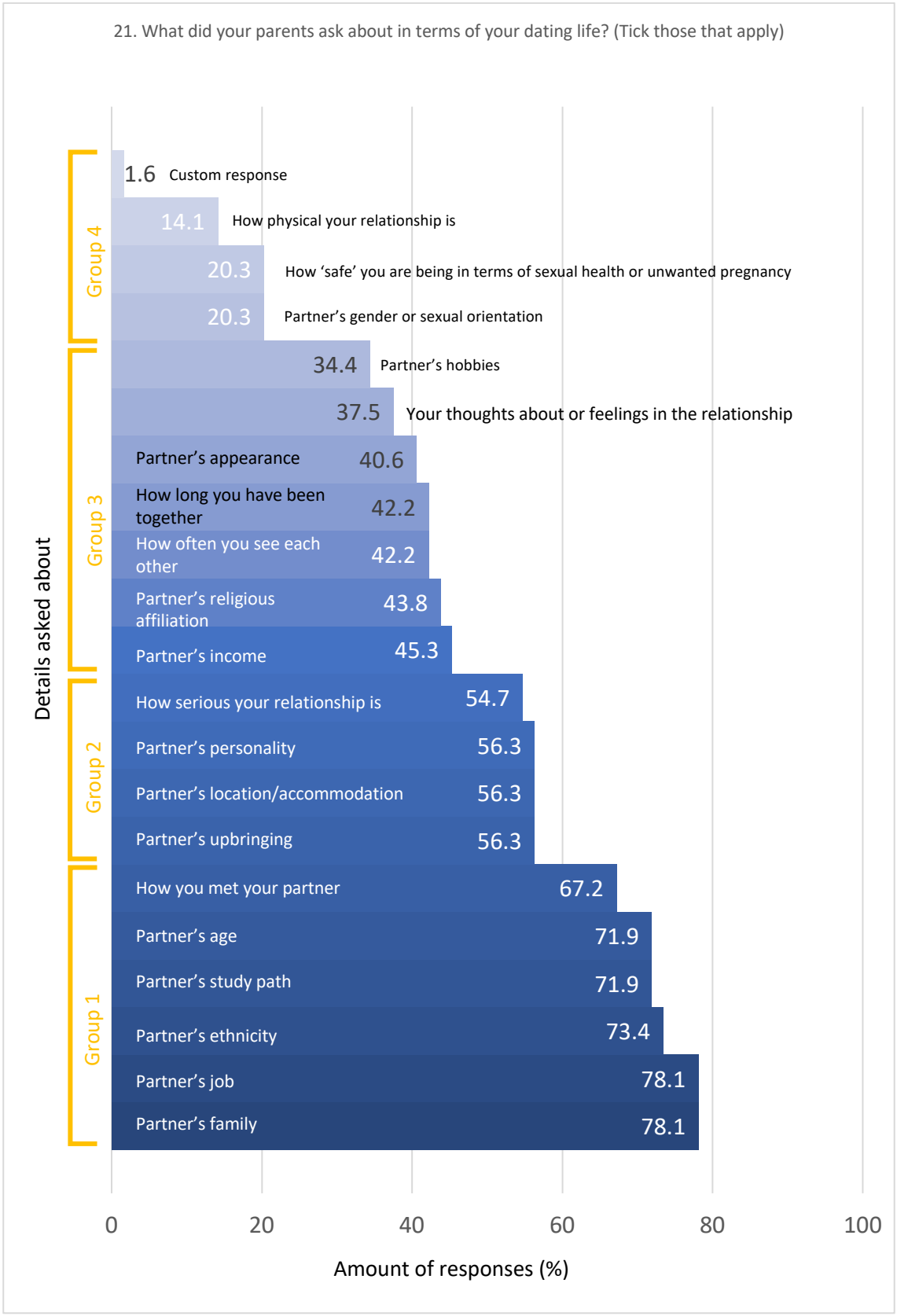


Figure 4.17: Details asked about respondents' dating activity

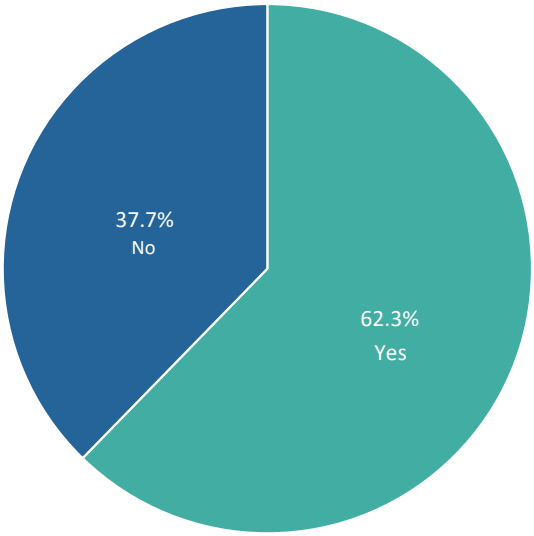


Figure 4.18: Percentage of respondents disallowed from dating

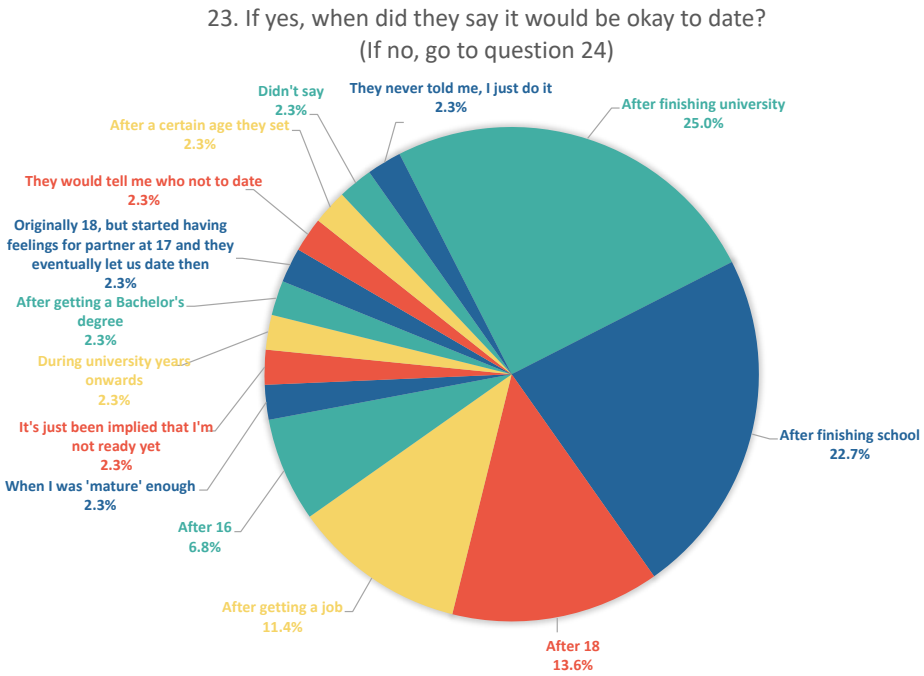


Figure 4.19: Permitted ages and criteria for dating

Almost ⅔ (62.3%) of all respondents informed that their parents had ordered or implied that they were not allowed to date. Of this group, exactly ¼ said that their parents would only permit them to date once they had finished university. A fifth (22.7%) were allowed to date once they finished high school, 13.6% were allowed once they had turned 18, and 11.4% were allowed only after getting a job. There were also a number of custom responses, which included, “When I was ‘mature’ enough,” and, “It’s just been implied that I’m not ready yet,” which suggest that the acceptable time for dating can be dependent on respondents’ behaviour rather than a set age or metric. Another response said, “They would tell me who not to date,” which suggests that parents’

acceptance of dating activity may be dependent on the partner, rather than the child's age or other metrics. One response said, "They never told me, I just do it," implying that the respondent proceeded to date regardless of their parents' opinion since there was seemingly no communication from them about the matter.

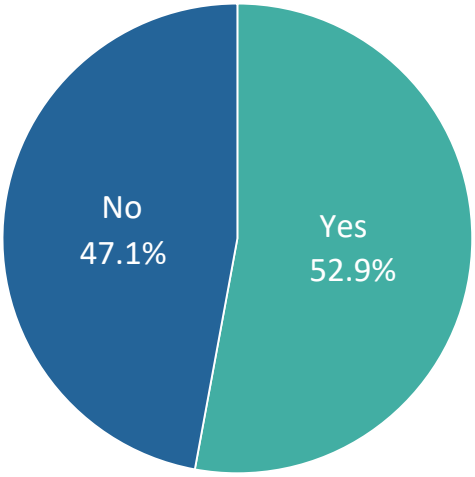


Figure 4.20: Percent of respondents who faced opposition towards their romantic relationships

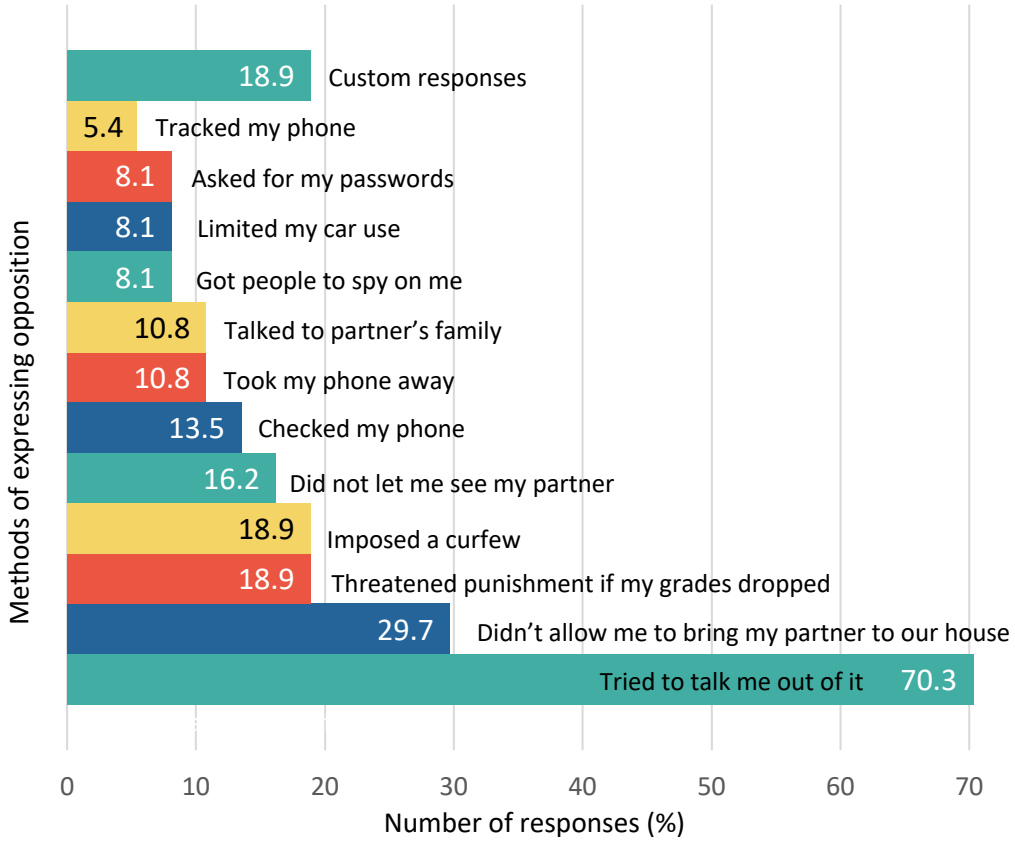


Figure 4.21: Parents' methods of expressing opposition

When asked if parents had ever opposed their romantic relationships, just over half (52.9%) of respondents said yes. Of these respondents, the vast majority (70.3%) said that their parents expressed their opposition by trying to talk them out of the relationship. Almost a third (29.9%) were banned from bringing their partner to the family home, 18.9% had a curfew imposed on them and another 18.9% were threatened with punishment if their grades dropped. Other methods of parental opposition included checking the child's phone (13.5%), taking their phone away (10.8%) and talking to their partner's family (10.8%). Less popular methods included parents limiting their children's car use, (8.1%) asking for their passwords (8.1%), having other people spy on their children (8.1%) and tracking their phone (5.4%). There was also a notable range of custom responses, which included parents trying to convince their child's partner to break up with them, using siblings to pass the message on, telling their child why they thought dating was bad and suggesting why the relationship was not suitable.

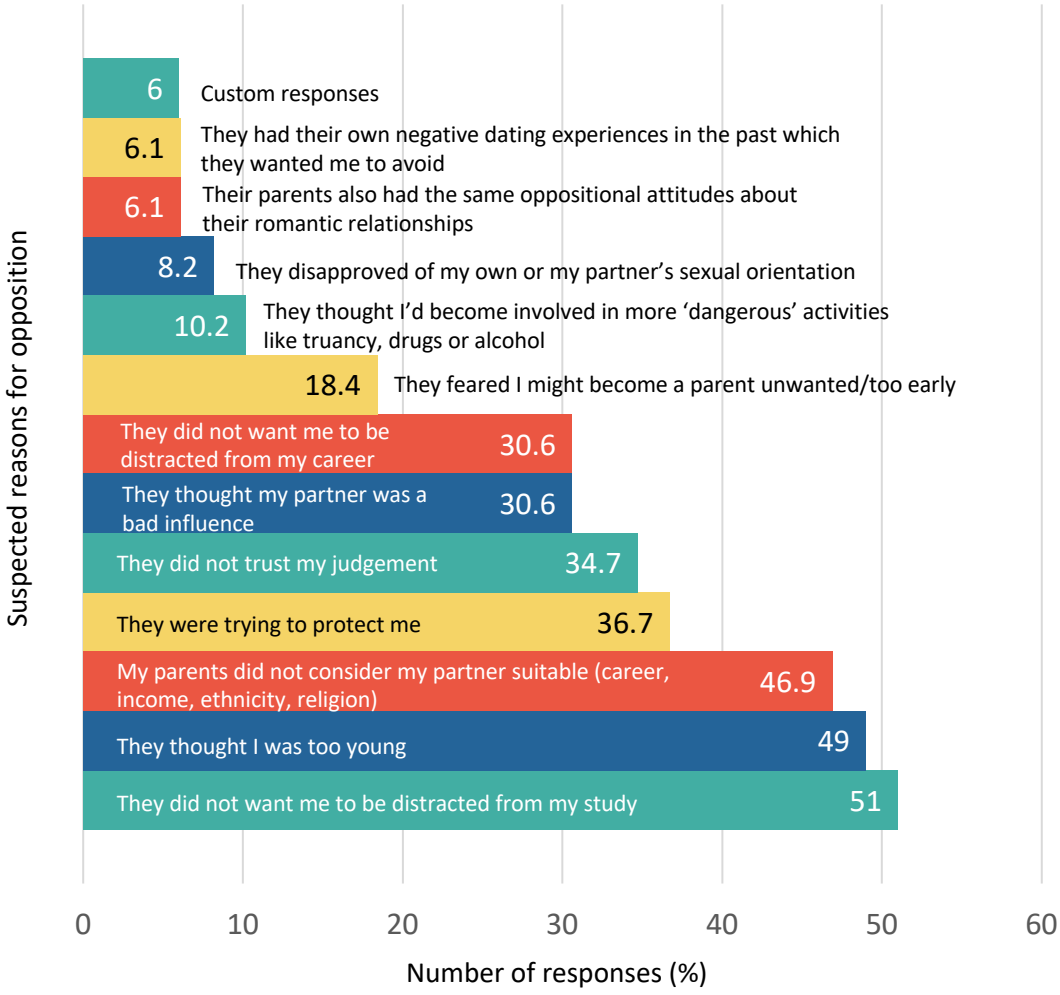


Figure 4.22: Respondents' assumptions of parents' reasons for opposing

For the respondents whose parents opposed their relationship, half (51%) believed that they did so because they wanted their child to stay focused on their studies. The second most popular reason was parents thinking their child was too young (49%), followed by parents believing their child's partner was not suitable (46.9%). The fourth largest reason was parents trying to protect their children (36.7%), followed by the fifth largest which was parents lacking trust in their child's judgement (34.7%). Other perceived reasons for opposition included parents thinking that their child's partner was a bad influence (30.6%), as well as the general belief that parents did not want their child to be distracted from their career (30.6%). Parents fearing unwanted pregnancy for their child (18.4%) was another notable reason for their opposition, albeit its position lower down in the chart. There was a small number of custom responses, including one which said that their parents "claimed that dating someone with Western influence is harmful to the Asian collectivist values, and that we are essentially not the same". Another respondent said that they were unsure if they were ever explicitly allowed to date or not, and proceeded to act however they desired with regards to their dating life.

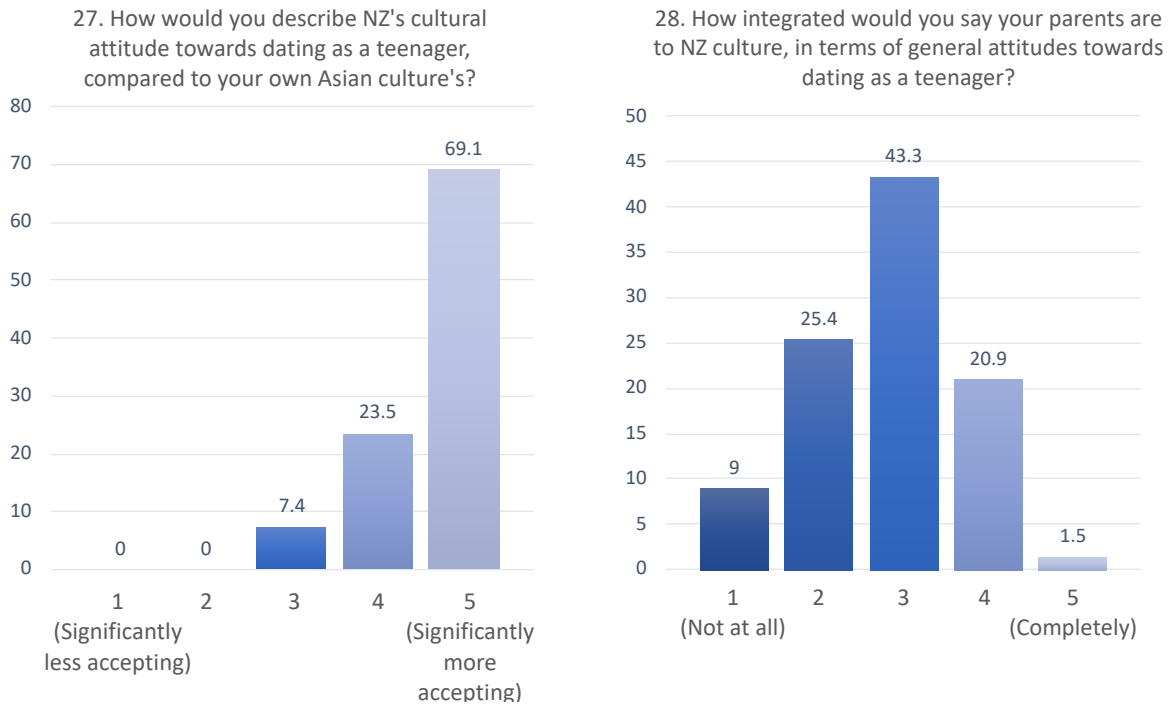


Figure 4.23: Comparison of NZ versus Asian cultural acceptance towards teenage dating, relating to parents' integration with NZ culture

When considering Kiwi and Asian cultural differences regarding attitudes towards dating, there was a significant concentration of responses for point 5, where over ⅔ of respondents believed that New Zealand's culture would be significantly more accepting of dating as a teenager compared to their own Asian culture. The comparatively small number of responses for points 4 and 3 suggests that respondents deem the difference

between Asians' and New Zealanders' cultural attitudes severe rather than slight or subtle. All responses were either in the middle or upper end of the scale, indicating that none of the respondents believed that their Asian culture was more accepting of teenage dating.

In terms of parents' integration into New Zealand culture with respect to attitudes towards dating, there was a clear concentration in the middle range with most of the data (89.6%) falling between points 2 and 4. This information suggests that few responses were in the extremes (i.e., few parents were either completely integrated with NZ culture or not at all integrated). Point 3 was clearly the most popular answer, suggesting that ⅖ of respondents had parents who were moderately integrated into New Zealand culture in terms of their attitude towards teenage dating. By comparing the upper half of the scale (points 4 and 5 combined = 22.4%) with the lower half of the scale (points 1 and 2 combined = 34.4%), it is evident that there is still a lean towards less integration.

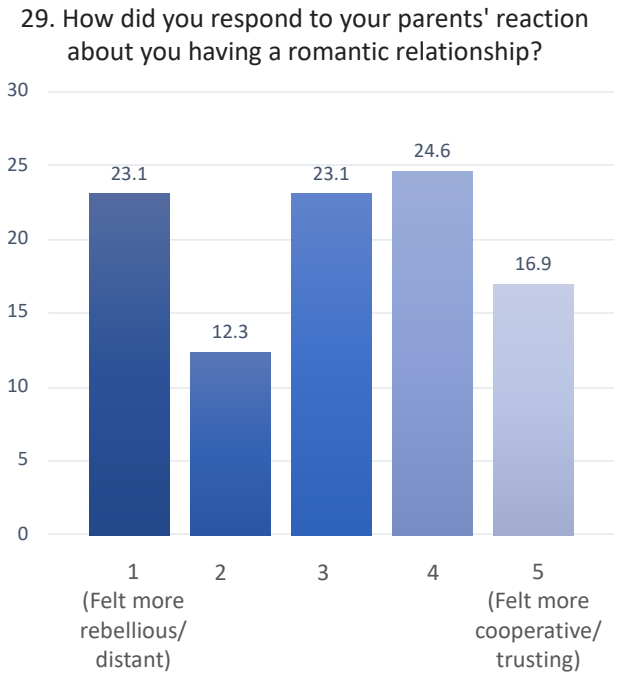


Figure 4.24: Participants' responses towards parents' reactions to their romantic relationships

In terms of individuals' responses to their parents' attitudes towards their dating, there was a spread across the full scale. This spread indicates that overall, there was no clear sense whether a majority of respondents wanted to rebel or be cooperative with their parents. There were more responses on the upper half (41.5%, points 4 and 5 combined) than the lower half of the chart (35.4%, points 1 and 2 combined), indicating that, as a whole, there was a tendency towards cooperation and trust rather than

rebellion or distance. Almost ¼ (23.1%) of respondents located their answer in the middle (point 3) and felt neither more rebellious nor more cooperative.

Of those who felt more rebellious or distant (point 1), 86.6% answered 'yes' to having their relationships opposed by their parents and 93.3% continued to see their partner anyway despite their parents' opposition. Comparatively, of those who felt more cooperative or trusting (point 5), 27.2% answered yes to having their relationships opposed by their parents and only 0.09% of these respondents continued to see their partner anyway despite their parents' opposition. These cross-tabulated results suggest that respondents who felt more rebellious were more likely to take a course of action that defied their parents' opposition to their romantic relationships. Likewise, it could be said that respondents who felt more cooperative were less likely to take defiant action against their parents' opposition.

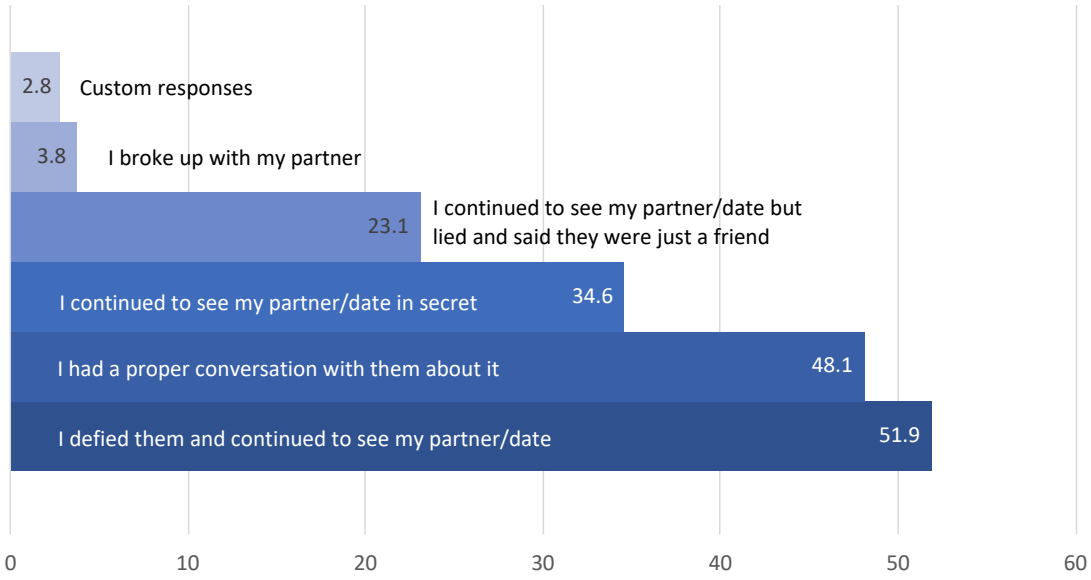


Figure 4.25: Participants' responses to parents' opposition

Of the respondents whose parents opposed their romantic relationships, the most popular response was to defy their parents and continue dating their partner anyway (51.9%). However, the second most popular response was to have a proper conversation with their parents (48.1%). A third (34.6%) continued to date in secret and 23.1% continued to date but lied to their parents and claimed that their partner was just a friend. Only 3.8% ended their relationships because of their parents' opposition. The number of people who answered to both 'having a proper conversation' with parents and 'continuing to date in secret' (23.1%) may indicate that the conversations did not result in parents accepting their relationships. Thus, respondents may have decided to continue their relationships in a defiant way. Based on these responses, it may be possible that parents' opinions did not have a major bearing on the romantic

relationships of some adolescents, as they may continue to date anyway despite parents' opposition.

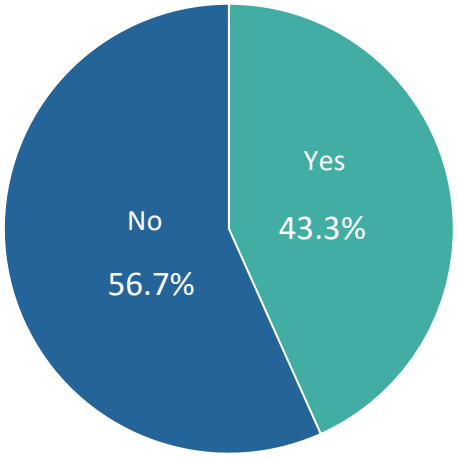


Figure 4.26 Percent of respondents whose relationships were encouraged

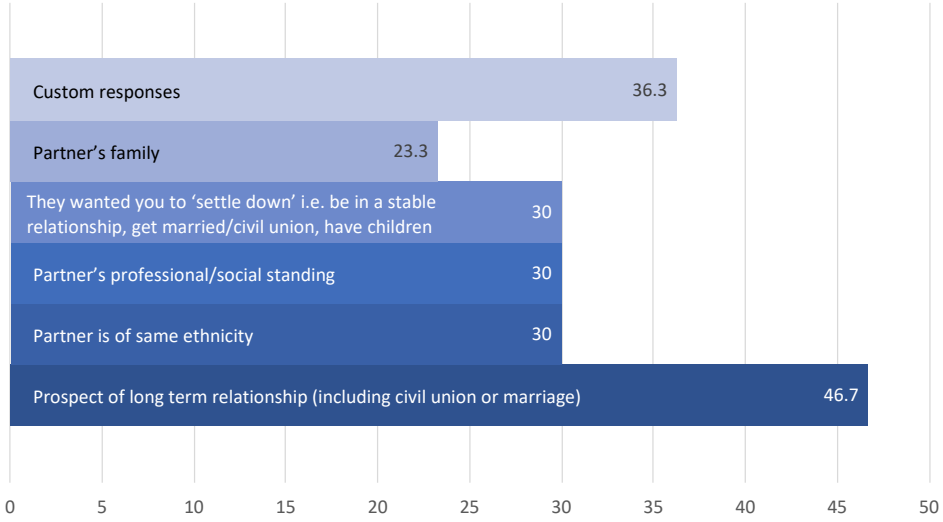


Figure 4.27: Respondents' assumptions of parents' reasons to encourage their relationships

Over ⅖ (43.3%) of respondents had parents who encouraged their romantic relationships. The most popular reason for parents doing so was the prospect of their child having a long-term relationship, such as ones that result in civil union or marriage (46.7%). The following answers, all equally tied at 30% were a partner's social/professional standing, the partner being of the same ethnicity, and parents wanting their child to 'settle down'. Additionally, almost ¼ assumed that their parents encouraged their relationship because their partner's family was appealing to them. There was a notable number of custom responses from individuals, with most of these being based on the idea that parents simply liked their child's partner or thought they were a suitable match. For instance, some responses were, "Just genuinely likes my partner and trusts me after a lot of relationship building," and, "Partner was caring and

respectful towards me". One answered that their parents were "Trying to be more accepting and wanted me to be happy, I think, I hope so anyway". Another responded that it was an issue of ethnicity, saying, "Not same ethnicity but similar is good enough. He is Malaysian Chinese which is much closer to our ethnicity than my last boyfriend, which was Indian". These custom results may suggest that parents' acceptance or encouragement of their children's romantic relationships can be largely influenced by the personal traits of their child's partner.

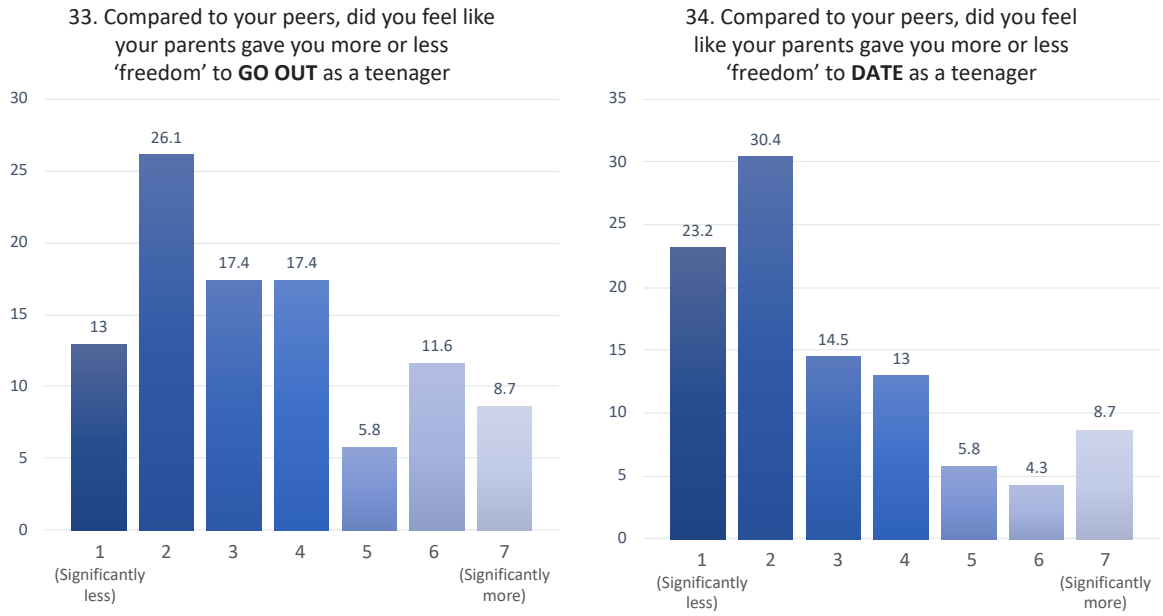


Figure 4.28: Perceived levels of freedom granted for going out compared to dating

Regarding the perceived levels of freedom that respondents were granted for going out, 56.5% of respondents were on the lower side of the scale (points 1-3), suggesting that over half of respondents felt that their parents gave them less freedom than their peers to go out as a teenager. The most popular answer was point 2, suggesting that ¼ of respondents felt they had noticeably less freedom than peers, but not to an extreme extent. Another ¼ of respondents accounted for points 5-7 combined (26.1%), suggesting that fewer respondents felt that they were granted more freedom than their peers. Exactly 17.4% selected the middle answer (point 4), indicating that just under ⅕ of respondents felt they had the same amount of freedom as their peers.

The same question in the context of dating provides results similar to the previous question, except with a much clearer slant of responses to the lower half of the chart. Over ⅔ (68.1%) of answers were concentrated between points 1 to 3, suggesting that most respondents felt they had significantly less freedom to date compared to their peers. Under ⅕ (18.8%) of respondents (points 5-7) felt they had more freedom to

date. Exactly 13% chose the middle answer (point 4), suggesting that relatively few respondents felt that they had the same amount of freedom to date as their peers. When comparing perceived freedom with respect to going out versus dating, it appears that respondents generally felt they had less freedom to go out compared to their peers, and this finding was amplified in the context of dating. The decrease in freedom from going out to dating suggests that parents are notably more opposed towards their children's dating activity compared to their regular social outings with friends.

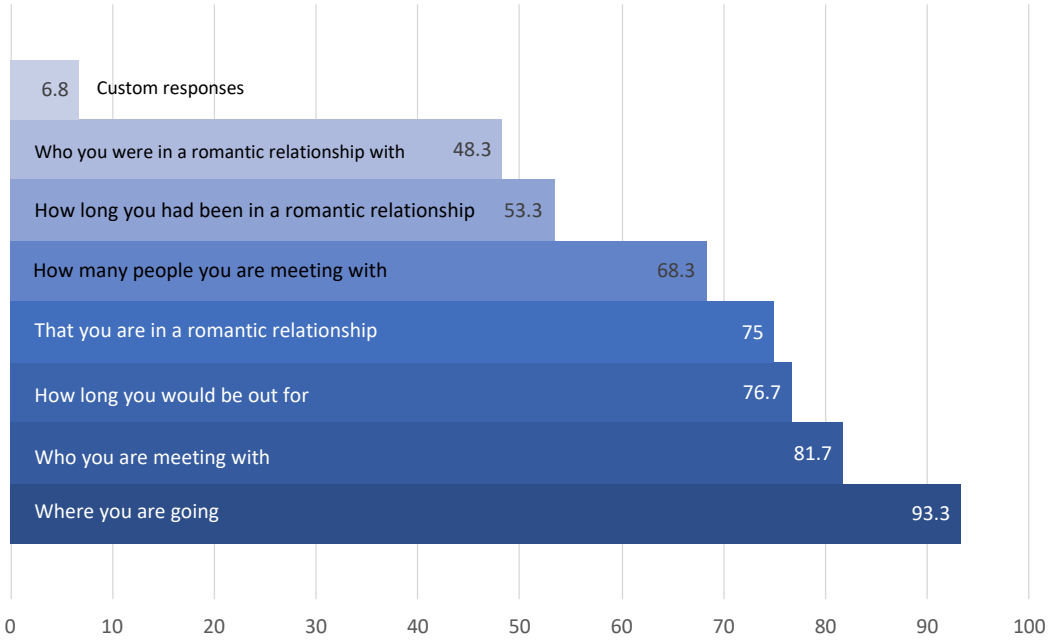


Figure 4.29: Topics that respondents were dishonest about

When considering respondents' dishonesty to their parents, the topic most lied about was respondents' whereabouts (93.3%), followed by who they were meeting with (81.7%), how long they would be out for (76.7%), and the fact that they were in a romantic relationship (75%). In fifth place was the amount of people they were meeting with (68.3%), followed by how long they had been in a romantic relationship (53.3%) and who they were in a romantic relationship with (48.3%). From the custom responses, some said they were dishonest about their sexual identity, their past romantic interests and their reasons for meeting certain people. These custom responses suggest that participants chose to keep personal matters of their sexuality and romantic activity a secret from their parents.

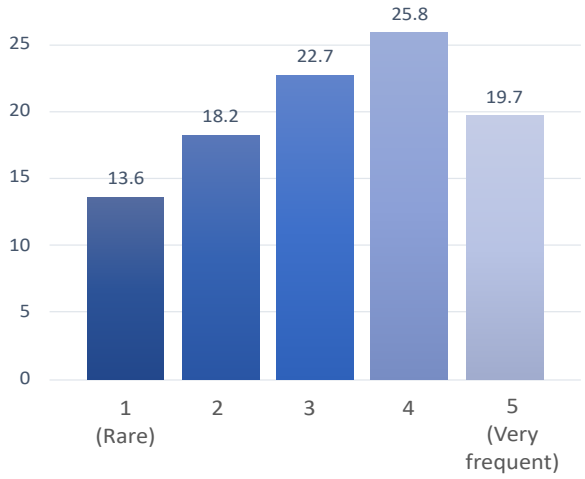


Figure 4.30: Frequency of respondents' dishonesty

Roughly half (45.5%) of respondents indicated that the dishonesty was frequent (points 4 and 5 combined). Almost a third (31.8%) of respondents (points 1 and 2 combined) answered that the dishonesty was infrequent or rare, and 22.7% selected the middle answer (point 3) suggesting that their dishonesty was occasional. Overall, the upward slant of this chart and the concentration of responses around point 4 indicates that dishonesty towards parents was consistently increasing amongst respondents.

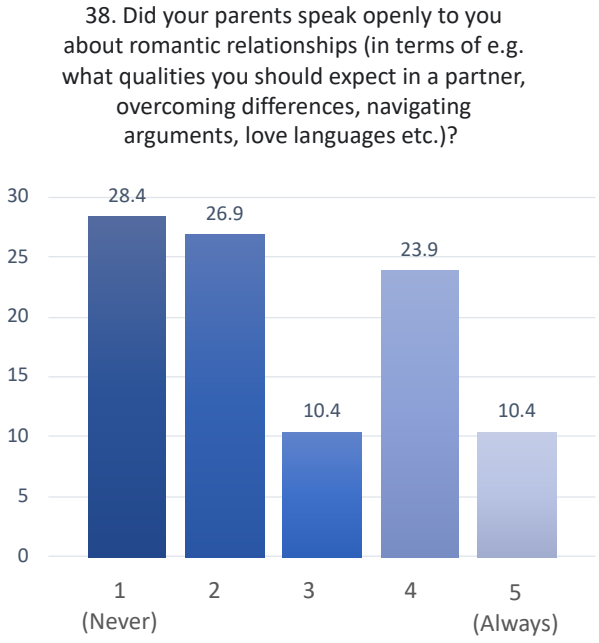


Figure 4.31: Occurrence of parents speaking about romantic relationships

Question 38 asked respondents how frequently their parents spoke about the general challenges or practical aspects of a romantic relationship. 55.3% of respondents were

on the lower half of the chart (points 1-2) indicating that over half of respondents' parents rarely spoke openly to them about romantic relationships in this context. Just over a third (34.4%) were on the upper half (points 4-5) and only 10.4% selected the middle answer (point 3). The almost even distribution of responses at points 1, 2 and 4 with low responses for points 3 and 5 might suggest that some parents did engage in relationship conversations but did not necessarily do so very frequently or reliably.

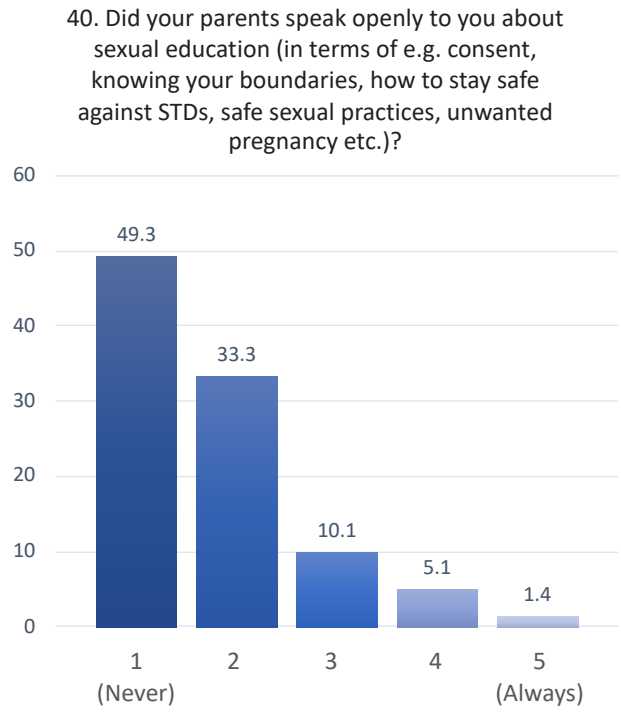


Figure 4.32: Occurrence of parents speaking about sexual education

Responses to the question regarding sexual education from parents exhibited a high concentration of responses on the lower half of the scale (points 1-2). Almost half of respondents (49.3%) answered with point 1, and the vast majority of respondents (82.6%, points 1 and 2 combined) settled for the lower half of the answer scale, indicating that most parents rarely or never spoke openly to their children about sexual education. Only 10.1% (point 3) had parents who discussed the topic occasionally. A sixth (16.6%) of responses were located on the middle-upper half of the chart (points 3-5) suggesting that, overall, it was very uncommon for parents to discuss sexual education with their children. Only 1.4% of respondents had parents who openly spoke to them about sexual education at a consistent rate (point 5).

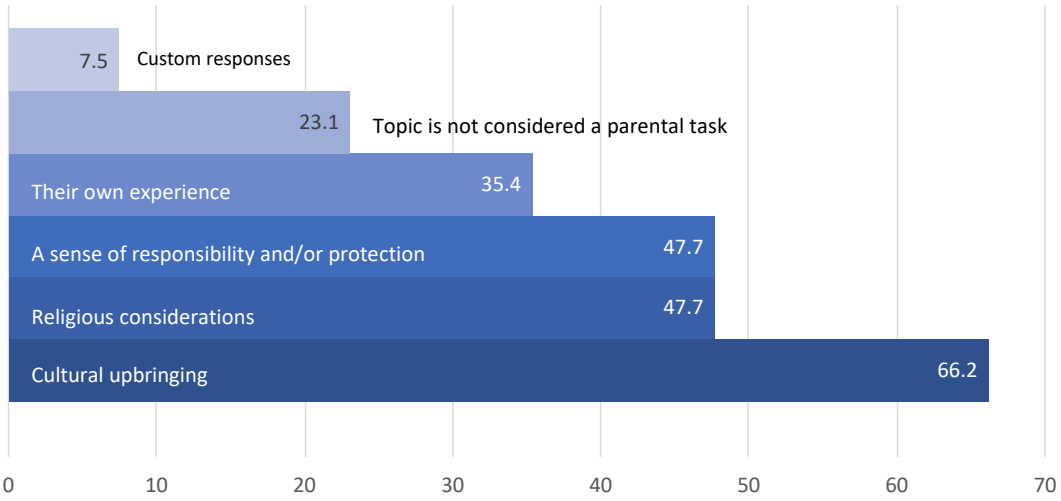


Figure 4.33: Respondents' assumptions for parents' approach to about sex education

The following question asked respondents about the factors which they believe guided their parents' attitude towards discussing sexual education. Based on the responses, the largest factor by a significant number was parents' cultural upbringing (66.2%), followed by their religious considerations and feeling a sense of responsibility which were both at 47.7%. Over a third (35.4%) attributed their parents' stance to previous experiences they must have had, and 23.1% thought that their parents believed that sex education was not a parent's job. As for the custom responses, one respondent said, "I avoided any conversation of the sort with them because I did not want to discuss it and was heavily uncomfortable. I got my sex ed elsewhere (school, internet) and we have differing opinions on abortion and the HPV vaccine, which I was not allowed to get when it was available to me when I was younger as my mom felt it would encourage sexual activity when I wanted to just be protected". This response suggests that a possible deterrent for children to approach the topic with their parents is the knowledge that they have opposing views. Other custom responses said that their parents had assumed schools would teach sexual education, or that their parents were simply uncomfortable speaking about it.

Of those who selected cultural upbringing as a guiding factor, none claimed that their parents were 'completely' integrated to NZ culture in terms of general attitudes towards dating as a teenager. However, for this cross-tabulation, there was a spread of answers between parents being not at all integrated (point 1) and very integrated (point 4). This information could suggest that respondents' parents strongly held onto their cultural values in terms of sexual education, regardless of how integrated they may have been to New Zealand culture. When compared to the question of how frequently parents spoke about the general challenges of a romantic relationship, results suggest

that parents are significantly more willing to discuss the expectations and practical aspects of romantic relationships compared to matters of sexual health and intimacy.

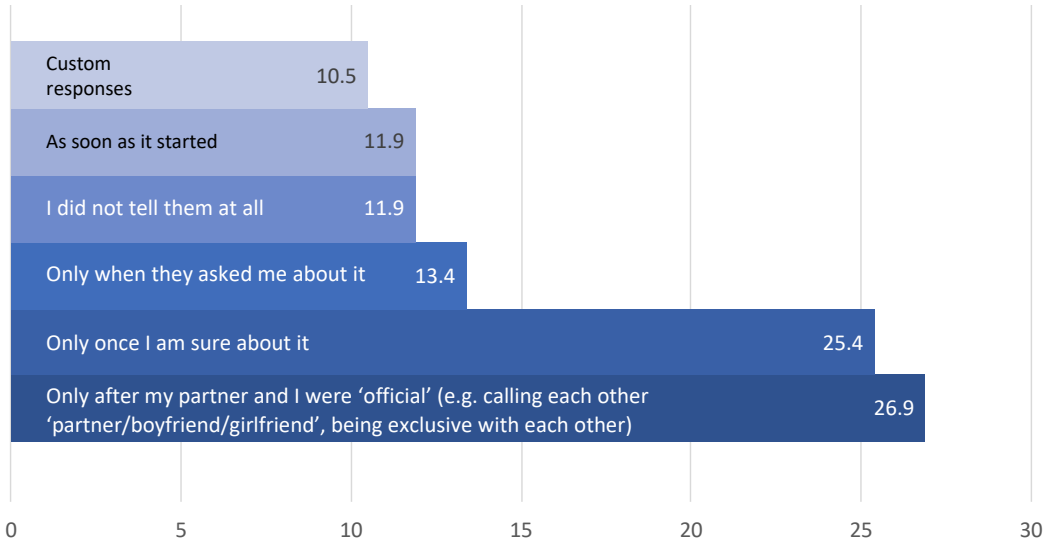


Figure 4.34: Time of telling parents about a romantic relationship

Question 43 asked respondents about when they would inform their parents of a romantic relationship. The most popular answer at 26.9% suggests that respondents would tell their parents about a romantic relationship once it had become 'official' (such as being exclusive with each other or using labels such as 'boyfriend'/'girlfriend'/partner'. Closely following is another quarter (25.4%) who only told their parents once they felt sure about the relationship. With significantly less answers, 13.4% only confirmed being in a romantic relationship if their parents asked, followed by 11.9% who told their parents as soon as the relationship started and another 11.9% who did not tell them at all. There were also a notable number of custom responses, which included telling parents only after the relationship had ended, or parents finding out for themselves through another source. These two types of responses suggest that some participants only shared news of their relationship when prompted. Another custom response said, "First relationship: Was forced into telling them when my partner's stepmom threatened to put an end to things. Second: As soon as I could feel comfortable". Other custom responses were, "Only when I needed to fly to another continent to see my partner (long distance relationship)" and "When I knew that we felt the same way about each other". The results in general may indicate that respondents needed to feel a level of seriousness in their relationship before telling their parents, as it was significantly less common for respondents to share news of the relationship as soon as it started.

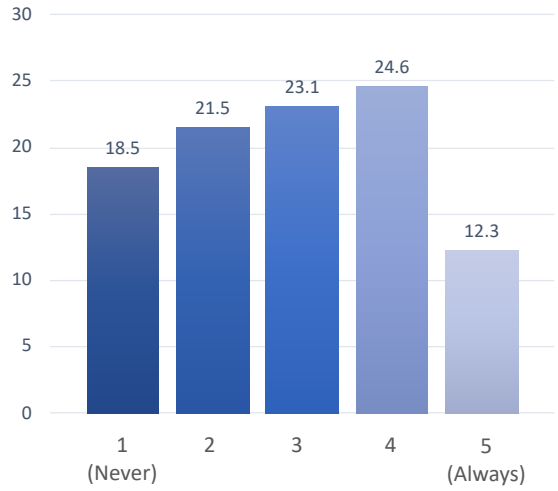


Figure 4.35: Perceived support received from parents regarding relationship problems

The next question asked respondents if they felt supported by their parents when they experienced challenges in their romantic relationship. There was a consistent (albeit gradual) upward gradient, suggesting that respondents felt increasingly supported by parents. The sudden drop in responses for point 5 may suggest that few felt consistently supported by their parents in this regard. 40% of responses were on the lower half of the chart (points 1-2 combined) and 36.9% were on the upper half of the chart (points 4-5 combined), suggesting that the number of responses towards both ends of the scale was almost equal. The most popular answer was point 4, suggesting that many respondents (24.6%) generally felt quite supported by parents at a rate that was more frequent than just 'sometimes' (point 3).

Figure 4.36: Perceived change in parents' approach to respondents' romantic relationships

Generally, it appears that parents had improved with their approach to respondents' dating lives since their first romantic relationships. Over half of respondents (53.1%) answered in the upper half of the chart (points 4-5), and significantly fewer (13.7%) suggested that their parents' approach worsened (points 1-2). One third of respondents selected the middle answer (point 3) which suggests that a significant number of respondents noted no change in their parents' approach towards their dating activity since their first romantic relationships.

The next question asked participants what they wished their parents did differently in terms of their approach to their early dating experiences. There was a total of 43 responses and a number of prominent themes that arose from the answers. One of these themes was respondents' desire for parents to be 'less judgemental' and 'more accepting' of their romantic activity. These respondents generally wished that their parents would be less disapproving of their relationships and simply accept the possibility of their child dating. Reasons included respondents' desire for engaging in romantic experiences before entering university life, and wanting parents to be understanding of the differences between themselves and their children.

Another prominent theme which overlapped with the concept of parents being 'more accepting' was the wish in respondents for parents to recognise that their children were autonomous individuals. A number of respondents wanted their parents to acknowledge the possibility of their children possessing beliefs that were different to theirs. As one respondent commented, "Your children are not to be lived vicariously through you". Respondents also wanted parents to understand that they were capable of facing the consequences of their actions. While they understood that their parents were trying to protect them from making mistakes, one response succinctly summarised, "It should be my decision to make, not theirs to avoid on my behalf". Multiple respondents indicated their desire for parents to place more trust in them and treat them as responsible adults. Under the theme of being 'less judgemental,' two respondents also wished that their parents would be "less racist" and accept their partners who were not of the same ethnicity. One of these respondents said that their mother opposed their relationship with a Kiwi and wished "she could just see past his culture and upbringing and see him for who he was".

The desire to have parents be more accepting was also connected to the notion that parents should be more open minded. This was another salient theme amongst the custom answers and primarily suggested that parents should be more welcoming of the cultural differences and the fact that teenage dating was a normal part of the host

culture. One respondent mentioned that they were “culturally more of a New Zealander,” and another mentioned that their parents’ close-mindedness in this regard compelled them to lie about their romantic relationship during high school. Being ‘more open’ also applied to the discussion of relationship-related topics, as respondents wished that their parents facilitated a comfortable environment where they did not feel hesitant to open up about their dating life. Three respondents in particular wished that their parents had initiated conversations about dating earlier in their lives and were open to the idea of them dating at a younger age.

The third prominent theme which arose from these custom answers was based around the topic of sex. One response in particular wished that their parents had promoted sex education instead of just abstinence, an ideal method which they believed would lead to less unwanted pregnancies. Another respondent touched on the topic of sex in the context of gender roles and standards, commenting that, “While the Asian Confucius values can carry a lot of valuable lessons, they can be really toxic when setting standards on sexual and gender roles”. Overall, these respondents expressed a desire for their parents to have a more proactive and less black-and-white approach to discussing sexual education, instead of treating it as a taboo subject. These participants believed that treating sex as a taboo matter added to its perception as an awkward topic that children should not ask about.

There was also a group of answers that focused on respondents’ desire for parents to offer more guidance, and particularly to “be clear between what their opinion was vs. what their advice was” or “go beyond their own religious and cultural upbringing to give advice”. Underlying these desires appeared to be respondents’ wishes for their parents to be genuinely supportive of their romantic relationships, and give realistic advice rather than following what their cultural or religious beliefs ‘should’ be.

Notably, a few respondents claimed that they sought no change towards their parents’ approach to their romantic relationships. These respondents could understand their parents’ perspective and did not desire for them to have done anything differently.

The final question was completely open-ended and asked participants to write any other comments they desired. Of the most notable, one alluded that their parents had a strong preference for their children to date a partner of the same ethnicity. Another respondent expressed resentment towards Asians’ often biased gender beliefs surrounding rape culture, victim blaming and the unfair expectation for women to

behave more sexually restrained than men. They called the culture ‘toxic’ for allowing men to have less dating restrictions than women.

4.3 Interview results

The findings from the in-depth interviews are presented in this section. There were eight interviews in total with participants ranging in age from 19 to 26. At the time of the interviews, six of the eight participants were in committed romantic relationships. All of the participants had previous experience with dating and romantic activity in their teenage years, except one participant, who had their first dating experience with their current partner at the age of 20.

Although there was rich data from the interviews with many nuances and detailed insights, the analysis could identify ten central themes that consistently appeared in the conversations with the participants. The first was the perception that parents generally viewed dating as a distraction from education. The second was an almost complete absence of a formal educational ‘sex talk’ from parents, followed by a sense that parents projected sex to be solely for procreation. Fourth, parents seemed to imply that sexual activity was inevitable when adolescents were left alone with their partner. The fifth theme surrounded parents’ projection that pregnancy would ruin an adolescent’s life. Theme six recognised the assumed importance of family, collectivism and reputation. Theme seven summarised participants’ habits of dishonesty regarding their dating activity. Theme eight exposed the apparent gender bias parents had through their differing treatment of sons’ and daughters’ dating activity. Theme nine showed how parents appeared to prefer intra-ethnicity dating. The tenth theme revealed the difference in parenting styles between New Zealand and Asian cultures, with a specific focus on cultural dating attitudes.

4.3.1 Dating is detrimental to education

A central theme from the interviews was that parents generally seemed to regard dating and romantic involvement as a distraction from school or university. It appeared that education, in the parents’ minds, should be children’s priorities in life at that age. Participants explained that their parents and most parents from their culture were worried that their child would spend more time with their partner than attending to their studies. The belief that dating was a distraction emerged to be a leading reason for many parents to refrain from showing active support of their child’s romantic relationship, or to outrightly express concern or apprehension.

Some interviewees judged this perceived belief in parents as unfair. P5 and P7 opposed their parents' viewpoints and strongly believed that romantic involvement and education were not mutually exclusive. In their view, it was entirely possible to prioritise both romantic involvement and educational responsibilities simultaneously. P5 recalled having to continuously prove to their mother that they could perform well in school despite their romantic involvement by showcasing their grades during the first few months of their first relationship. Once their mother saw that their grades were maintained, she slowly began to trust P5 and became less cautious about the situation.

> *My mom grew up different to how I grew up […] focusing on studies and 'no boys till I'm working', whereas I'm kind of doing both. […] I think she thought, "Oh, nobody can do both". […] So, I think it scared her. […] I would just reassure her I'm fine. Like, I'm on top of my studies.* (P5)

As did P5, some participants understood their parents' assumed reasons for prioritising education over relationships, namely that their own personal experiences and hardships likely guided the dating advice they projected onto their children. In a similar way, P4 appreciated that their parents' cautionary dating advice was based on the socioeconomic context of their home country.

> *We're Filipino and we moved here when I was 15. […] The economy and just the whole society there [in the Philippines] is very hard, financially and economically. So, I guess, you really have to prioritise getting a good education and getting a good job before being interested in romantic relationships.* (P4)

P4 alluded that in their culture, education was believed to help individuals advance in life, and it was particularly important for them to do so knowing how financially difficult life was in their parents' home country. In other words, they appreciated that their parents wanted to ensure they prioritised their education in New Zealand, which they considered a privilege, before pursuing love interests that may potentially distract from success as it was perceived by their parents.

However, not all respondents felt that their parents were pushing them hard to focus on their studies and refrain from dating. Respondents experienced various degrees of parental resistance to their dating activity; some were merely given verbal reminders to stay focused while others forcibly had their grades monitored by their parents. Nevertheless, all interviewees mentioned that their parents' focus on educational

progress over romantic involvement was a prominent phenomenon that was also evident in their own social circles.

4.3.2 Nobody got 'the talk'

A consistent observation by all interviewees was that none of their parents gave them 'the talk,' which refers to a formal parent-child conversation explaining what sex is, how it works, and how to safeguard sexual activity. Most participants recalled simply being told to 'be safe' with no further explanation of what 'safe' was supposed to mean. These participants implied that their parents seemed to assume they knew what 'safe' meant, and kept respective conversations from becoming more explicit. While these interviewees expressed that they indeed understood what their parents meant by 'being safe', they still expressed a desire for matters of sexual education to be discussed more explicitly. Aside from the health-related aspects of sex, respondents also observed a lack of education from parents regarding consent and boundaries. The term 'safe' was primarily understood by respondents as protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, but it was rarely associated with protection against non-consensual actions or unhealthy relationships. Interviewees felt that the topic needed more attention from parents, as they believed it was equally as important as the health-related aspects of sex education.

In general, most respondents had never even heard their parents utter the word 'sex' and avoided any conversation related to the topic. One respondent in particular emphasised their utter surprise when they first heard their parents make a vaguely explicit reference to sex. P7 recalled being so stunned when they heard their father say the word 'condom'. They were twenty years old at that time, and they said it was the first time their father mentioned anything related to the topic of sex. When asked why they thought their parents discussed as much or as little as they did about sexual education, all respondents had a clear sense that their parents probably felt too awkward to utter words about sex in a serious and explicit manner, and the topic was something they had never discussed before.

Some interviewees believed that a reason why their parents did not speak about sexual education was because they assumed that school programmes would do the educating for them. Though sex education in schools was not a focus area of this research, it was commonly raised by the interviewees. All the interview respondents recalled receiving some form of sex education in high school, but they noted a variety of key issues regarding the effectiveness and coverage of school delivered programmes. First, some interviewees thought that some schools presented sex

education ‘too early’ in students’ lives (at the age of 12-13). P2 and P6 believed that this timing of delivery decreased the effectiveness of the sexual education, as most students were not yet sexually active and thus less likely to take the content seriously. Second, those who attended religious schools believed they were given more biased or simplified sex education, compared to their peers from secular schools. While respondents from secular schools were educated on sexually transmitted infections and birth control, Catholic school respondents were primarily taught, and partially threatened, into abstinence through being shown graphic images of sexually transmitted infections. Third, some respondents recalled that sexual education lessons were usually one-off classes or a handful of sessions, which they did not consider comprehensive enough to adequately inform young adults and emphasise the importance of sexual responsibility. The shortcomings of school-taught sex education therefore reinforced, in the mind of the interviewees, the importance of parental communication about sexual safety. It may be useful for future research to further explore adolescents’ experiences of sexual education from school institutions compared to parents.

Another common observation interviewees shared was parents’ apparent assumption that their child would not be curious about sex as long as they would not mention it. Interviewee P1 expressed frustration and bewilderment at how some parents appeared to be so naïve and living in a “fantasy world”, where they seemingly chose to ignore the possibility of their child being sexually active. Numerous interviewees suggested that it was unrealistic for parents to continue having this belief, given that in their eyes, physicality and sexuality were fundamental and expected aspects of a romantic relationship.

4.3.3 Sex is for married couples and solely for procreation

In addition to respondents’ parents providing minimal information about the health and safety related aspects of sex, they also never mentioned that sex was a significant component of dating and had the purpose of providing pleasure or a deeper emotional connection with a partner. Interviewees’ parents mainly alluded to the general tenor that sex would lead to pregnancy, would be for the sole purpose of procreation and should only be done when couples were married.

> *They told me that having sex makes babies. Like, I knew that much. But in terms of people having sex for enjoyment as a regular thing, [that] wasn't really talked about.* (P5)

However, a few parents acknowledged that their child's generation may not uphold the same belief that sex should be saved for marriage. Respondents speculated that some parents may have realised that it might be unfair for them to enforce the same beliefs in their child, simply because it was what they themselves were raised to believe. For instance, a few parents eventually allowed their children to have sleepovers or trips away with their partners, or accepted when they were moving out of the family home to live with a partner. There seemed to be an implicit understanding between parents and some respondents that many young adults were no longer saving sex for marriage; parents just seemed to hope that they practiced safe sex and would not get pregnant.

Few parents acknowledged this generational difference verbally, such as P5 who recalled this interaction with their mother:

> *I remember my mum having this conversation with me saying, "I can tell that this [your relationship] is more serious now. Are you being safe? I don't expect you to save it till marriage now because I know kids these days aren't doing that. So I don't expect you to, I just want you to be safe".* (P5)

4.3.4 Sex happens when young adults are unsupervised

From interviewees' responses, there was a clear sense that parents seemed to assume that sexual activity would occur at sleepovers, on trips away, or when young adults were left alone together in their rooms. While some participants were allowed to have sleepovers with their friends, most interviewees' parents disallowed sleepovers with partners or individuals of the opposite sex. In contrast, parents would commonly have no issues with their child spending the whole day away or at their partner's house, but would still not allow them to sleep over.

> *I remember asking if I could stay over at my significant other's place, and they just would not allow that. […] That's a big thing that I don't understand. Because it's fine if I stay the whole day at their place, but I just can't sleep there.* (P1)

Respondents commented that, to parents, sleeping over entailed sleeping in the same bed, which inevitably would lead to sex. Some interviewees were perplexed that parents seemed to believe that banning sleepovers would prevent them from having sex, as if the only opportunity to do so was at night and at sleepovers. Similarly, parents also seemed to believe that sex was bound to happen if their child was left alone with their partner in a private room of the house. Some respondents were only

allowed to spend time with their partner in the communal areas of the house where their parents could see them. P5 recounted,

> *If he [my boyfriend] was coming over, then they [my parents] would be like, "Well, you're not allowed to be in your room alone together". They would say, "Make sure you're hanging out where we both can see you".* (P5)

P8 observed their parents treating their sister in a similar manner, by making her spend time with her boyfriend in the living room instead.

> *She took him home here and they were sitting on the bed and my dad got super protective and stuff like that. So, he's like, "Can you just come out of your room, please? And then hang out in the living room".* (P8)

Respondents' parents also sought to ensure their child was not left alone with their partner at events, sleepovers or road trips, to prevent them from being alone and potentially having sex. When leaving the house, P5's parents would regularly ask,

> *"Where are you going? Who else is going to be there? Is it just going to be the two of you?"* (P5)

P2 knew that they would be met with resistance from their parents if they revealed that they were going on a trip with their partner alone, or staying over at their partner's place. Like other respondents in a similar situation, P2 told their parents that they would be staying with their friends instead.

> *I always say I'm going to a friend's house who they knew of and trusted. […] I would always say I was going out with a friend.* (P2)

Using friends as a cover appeared to be a common practice amongst respondents. It was evident that their parents trusted their friends more than their partners, as they rarely asked questions and had little to no issues when respondents said they were going out with or sleeping over at a friend's place.

4.3.5 Pregnancy ruins a young adult's life

It appears that a primary concern for most parents was their child getting pregnant unexpectedly or too early in their lives. For most parents, it was apparent that 'too early' meant before their child had completed their education. Respondents indicated

that their parents wanted them to have children only once they had completed their studies, secured a stable job, were financially capable, and were with a suitable partner. P5 recalled asking their mother,

> *"Does it scare you that I'm doing that [having sex before marriage]?" And she said, "No, but I just want you to be safe". I just remember her saying, "just please don't get pregnant while you're studying".* (P5)

Other respondents had extremely similar interactions. P3's parents told them,

> *"Just don't get someone pregnant because that will ruin your life […] Don't get too drunk and end up bonking a girl".* (P3)

P2's father was extremely concerned about them getting pregnant, and they kept reiterating this fact throughout the interview. They said it was the main reason they were prevented from staying out too late or sleeping over at their partner's house. They recounted,

> *The number one concern that my father has […] is me getting pregnant. […] What ended up happening was I said, "What if I promise I won't get pregnant?" And he said, "Oh, then fine. I'll let you sleep over". It was just the most absurd compromise. And of course, I'm not gonna get pregnant. I don't even want children. […] He continues to remind me, […] as we [my partner and I] are leaving, he says the exact same thing to me. "Don't get pregnant. You promised me".* (P2)

P7, whose parents never explicitly educated them about sex, faced quite a different and rather self-contradictory set of rules from their parents. They told P7,

> *"Don't get pregnant. […] But if you're pregnant, don't get an abortion. We will raise the baby".* (P7)

P7 suggested that this all-or-nothing approach was based on their parents' Catholic beliefs, which strongly upheld both the sanctity of marriage and respect for human life. P7 found this attitude ironic, contradictory and counter-productive, implying that it was unrealistic to expect an adolescent not to get pregnant if parents did not give them any sex education. It was even more perplexing for them that their parents would want

them to keep the baby if pregnancy was supposedly something that would negatively affect their life.

4.3.6 Family collectivism and the importance of reputation

The assumption in parents that pregnancy would ruin a young adult's life appeared connected to their concern surrounding reputation. P4 narrated,

> *I guess the context of being scared of your children having sex is that eventually maybe they'll get accidentally pregnant. And then that will turn into a family shame. Like, "Oh, she got pregnant out of wedlock, how shameful". Like, "Oh, she's that promiscuous?" […] I think [their biggest concern is] just coming across as promiscuous, as well as being a low value woman.* (P4)

P4 felt that being overly concerned about their reputation as part of a family unit was typical of their Filipino culture. They observed that parents' judgement of being 'low value' through having casual pre-marital sex was degrading to a woman's reputation. P4 suggested that their parents thought it was disgracing to have proof of assumed promiscuity through having children out of wedlock. Dating someone who has children from a previous relationship was also considered by P4's parents to be undesirable.

> *Their main concern was also, just in general, being in a relationship that would be looked down by others in the community. Like, maybe if I date someone who had a bad past or has kids from a previous relationship. Maybe they would see that as less desirable or less ideal for their children.* (P4)

While it appears that P4's parents' desire was for their child to find a suitable partner, it seemed that much of their parents' requirements were based on the partner's reputation and appearance in the community. P4 explained that as a young Filipino woman, much of their internal conflict would arise from the knowledge that their decisions affected their personal reputation as well as that of the entire family. P4 clarified,

> *All of your decisions in life are always, "How would my family feel? And how would they think their friends would feel?" Because for some reason, they have a part in the equation. […] I think it's more because of that collectivist society, that everyone needs to be involved […] to help out in a way […] But on the same side, everyone kind of wants to be nosey.* (P4)

4.3.7 Dishonesty is a necessity

Data revealed a general tendency in respondents to lie to their parents about outings, social events and romantic relationships. All interviewees admitted to having been dishonest to their parents at some stage, though it was not always outright lying but rather an omittance of details. Outright dishonesty would tend to happen in cases when their parents asked them direct questions, such as who they would be going out with or where they would be going.

An example of lying by omission was respondents telling their parents that their friends would also be present on a particular road trip, but not mentioning that they would be alone with their partner for some of the time. A common lie was respondents saying they would be spending time with friends instead of their partner. Evidently, parents mostly trusted – or appeared to trust – their children's friends, and respondents were rarely questioned about friends who were familiar to their parents or known to be 'good' people (i.e., academically successful, financially stable, stayed out of trouble, or had a family with comparable values).

Interviewees reported that they usually knew their parents' stance on certain dating activities and, as such, could anticipate their responses. Thus, lying appeared to be a strategy to prevent parents from disallowing them to go out, hindering their plans, or asking too many questions, such as who else would be there and how they would be getting home. Some interviewees expressed that lying was more convenient and "easier" than telling the truth, because it saved time and unnecessary explanations. Participants recounted that they found lying easier as it helped avoid confrontation and potential arguments. Having a clear grasp of their parents' viewpoints, most interviewees preferred conflict avoidance over challenging their parents' beliefs.

> *When your parent is so anti-something, then you don't even feel like you want to press it. You just don't bother.* (P6)

> *I can't be bothered having a conversation with someone who's just gonna yell, because I think my dad is real hot headed, real stubborn.* (P2)

Respondents implied that it was challenging to raise their own viewpoints and negotiate with parents about their beliefs. Some participants mentioned that attempts to converse and debate rules with their parents would likely evoke conflict and "end poorly". When P2 would try to negotiate with their father, they explained that it would often escalate:

> *Having conversations where I completely disagree with his standpoint, it's just an avenue for him to yell at me and impose his like, 'I'm an elder, you should respect me' attitude […] "You're not allowed". And when I'd asked him why, he said, "Because I'm your dad and you're not allowed". And that's all I really ever got from him.* (P2)

Another reason for respondents to be dishonest with their parents was that they sought to avoid contradicting their religious viewpoints. Six of the eight interviewees stated that they had religious parents who, to some degree, upheld the belief that sex should be saved for marriage. However, all six of these respondents indicated that they did not share the same belief and that they had at least some experience with sexual activity. Two of the respondents explained that they consequently had to keep much of their dating activity secret. P3 expressed their internal conflict of feeling the need to explore their identity and sexuality, knowing this was a behaviour that their parents disapproved of. They justified that, in the end, their own happiness was more important, and it did not affect their parents lives as long as they did not know about it.

The interview data suggested that adolescents' dishonesty about their dating activities was not necessarily regarded by them as a selfish act, as it was sometimes done to protect parents from unfavourable emotional reactions. For instance, two interviewees said that they did not tell parents about first dates, because if the relationship did not succeed, they would have to explain why the relationship ended. Respondent P3 noted that their parents looked forward to them finding a suitable long-term partner. Thus, if they never told parents about early relationships in the first place, they would not have to endure conversations that were emotionally painful for them and simultaneously disappointing to their parents.

Some respondents suggested that their dishonesty was a reaction to their parents' monitoring and apparent lack of trust from the onset of their early dating activity. P2 and P5 wondered why their parents did not simply trust them, when they believed they had never done anything to cast doubt in their parents' minds. For instance, P2 believed they had always been an obedient child, as they maintained high grades in school, and had never done anything rebellious or disappointing, such as getting suspended from school or trying illegal drugs. Consequently, their mind was "boggled" about their father's strict rule against sleepovers, despite the duration and seriousness of their romantic relationship, and against the fact that their academic grades were maintained throughout. Since P2 explained that it was impossible to reason with their

parent for many years, they resorted to dishonesty for being able to pursue their romantic relationships with less opposition.

A few interviewees expressed feeling guilty about their dishonesty. One interviewee (P2) felt ashamed on one occasion when they needed their parents' help, but refrained from asking in order to keep their alibi straight. They fell ill at a party that they lied about attending, and were consequently unable to call their parents to ask for a ride home. This incident made P2 realise that their parents ought to know the truth about their life, as it would save them from compromised situations such as these. However, they understood that it was unrealistic to be completely honest with their parents regarding their dating activity, as they knew their values would be in disagreement. Thus, they ultimately continued to be dishonest where they felt it was necessary in order to progress with their romantic relationships.

4.3.8 Gender double standards: daughters are treated more strictly than sons

Male interviewees and female interviewees with brothers reported that their parents had generally more relaxed attitudes towards sons as compared to daughters. Some female respondents noted that they were treated differently from their brothers who had more flexible or non-existent curfew rules. P5 recounted,

> *My brother would be allowed to, not really allowed to, but they were more okay with my brother staying out late versus me. And whenever I asked why, their excuse is, "Ah, well, he's a boy. He's a man". Especially from my dad who was like, "You can't be out too late because you can be targeted". So, it's more of a safety thing that they were worried about.* (P5)

Their parents' key concern in this context was their children's safety. P5 considered the different rules unfair, but nonetheless accepted them knowing that their parents were worriers. P5 said that they would rather obey and placate their parents than have them stress out. While P5 handled the curfews with some acceptance, other respondents were far more outraged at the perceived inequality. In the context of sleeping over and preventing pregnancy, P2 explained,

> *My brother was allowed to stay at his girlfriend's, but I'm not allowed to stay at [my boyfriend's]. […] It was just him being real unreasonable and not willing to sit down and explain his reasons for not letting me. […] And I would ask him like, "Well, why don't you think my brother will have this [problem]? You've never had this issue with my brother, you've never talked to him about it". And*

> *he's like, "Well, Jack* is a boy". I went, "He has a girlfriend, and you've never had this conversation with him". It's just this double standard.* (P2)

P2 said that their parents were much more lenient with their older brother, who was never given any responsibility, pressure or warning about getting a girl pregnant, whereas P2 was consistently "nagged" about it. P2 commented that they were confused about this stance, as they felt certain that their father would be "just as upset" if he impregnated his girlfriend.

Some of the male respondents in the study acknowledged their relative privilege with respect to their parents' less restrictive expectations with their dating. P3 said that their parents generally *"don't really like to interrogate. They're kind of just like 'Oh, he's off to do his own thing'".* P6 explained how their sister, who was six years older than them, was treated more strictly throughout their life.

> *I'm a lot luckier because I'm a guy. […] My sister's treatment is a lot different and not in a better way […] I see the same for [my girlfriend], and I could make a generalisation that most girls experience that when they have male siblings, the rules for them are a lot different. […] I found that my mom was anti-boys for anything my sister was doing. My sister even now has a tough time hanging out with her friends, even when she lives on her own. She only got out of the house like two years ago, and she's 27.* (P6)

P2 explained that they experienced their parents' unequal treatment through the fact that their brother appeared to have no pressure, expectations or responsibilities when it came to partner selection.

> *My dad doesn't like my brother's girlfriend, but he doesn't care. He's just like, "Yeah, whatever, he's a boy, he can do whatever he wants". Whereas I feel this undertone of having to bring someone amazing home to them, otherwise they would just disapprove. I really make an effort to talk good about my partner and make sure that they are likeable to my parents, and that my parents get to know them. So, I feel like I have to work harder than my brother for them to be accepting of my relationship.* (P2)

P2 described that their father seemed unaffected by their brother's partner choice, while they themselves had to work much harder to seek his approval of a partner. In a

similar way, P4 highlighted the different treatment in terms of gender expectations, and the heightened importance of chastity in females in comparison to males.

> *We never had a talk about it [sex]. I guess the only extent to which I had that talk is already at this age, which is 26. They just told me, "Don't do it. You're the woman in the relationship so you'd lose more," without actually saying sex. […] And that's the extent of it. I think my interpretation is that in society, you are seen as less if you sleep with someone before you're married. Or I think your value as a woman is lessened […] when you do stuff like that.* (P4)

P4 described that parents and relatives in their community would equate "losing more" or "coming across as promiscuous" to being a "low value woman". They expressed that the expectation of daughters to care about societal perceptions and thus restrain their sexuality was unfair and burdensome to them.

4.3.9 Dating within one's own community is easier

Some interviewees explained that their parents were more accepting or less wary of their romantic relationships when their partner was of the same ethnicity. They indicated that they thought the key reason behind this acceptance was parents' assumption that both families would share the same cultural values and beliefs, which helped reassure parents that the partner was a suitable match. In the Asian context of this study, assumed shared values would include respecting elders, upholding collectivism, remaining chaste until marriage, and succeeding educationally. Based on common Asian standards of work ethics and life goals, respondents' parents appeared to assume that a partner of the same ethnicity would also have been raised to prioritise education, obtain a prestigious job, get married and then start a family.

While having a shared cultural understanding between both partners' families might reduce uncertainty for parents, it also appeared to make it easier for them to impose cultural principles onto their children. The interview data suggested that the values of 'remaining chaste until marriage' and 'safeguarding a woman's dignity' through behaving conservatively were commonly used for impressing cultural expectations on daughters. Two interviewees discussed how their parents would prevent their daughters from sleeping over at their partner's house or visiting often, because of the impression that their partner's family might develop. P8 retold how their mother approached their sister, who was also dating a Filipino.

> *I wasn't there when my mom ranted to my sister, but she [said something] like, "Since we're both Filipinos, you might lose some sort of your respect if you slept over". […] But yeah, they're just a bit more strict. There's more curfews. They're like, "Just try limit when you hang out with him," and, "You can't sleep over at his place". Maybe in the future they could [sleep over], but right now they just want his parents to get used to the fact that he's also in a relationship, because they were assuming that his parents were probably thinking the same thing.* (P8)

This is not to say that respondents' parents had something against their children's partners who were not of the same ethnicity; it simply took more time and adjustment to negotiate the cultural differences in multiple respects. One example surrounded the celebration of holidays and festivities, and how P4's family had to adjust to their Kiwi partner's customs. P4 described how they had to ask their parents to start the Christmas party slightly earlier, since their Filipino family usually started them late in the evening and continued into the early hours of the morning. P4's parents wanted to accommodate to their partner who was not used to staying up that late, so they agreed to the adjustment as well as other small adjustments over time.

These compromises and cultural negotiations were often effectuated by both parties as respondents' partners also did some adjusting to appease their partner's parents. Given parents' initial scepticisms when their child's partner was of a different ethnicity, there was a sense that some respondents' partners tried especially hard to gain their approval. For example, P5's Kiwi partner showed respect to P5's parents by agreeing to only spend time in the living room and trying the Filipino food they cooked. Similarly, P8 explained how their Kiwi partner visited their family home every week and took the time to know their parents, gradually building their trust in the process.

The respective interviewees felt that once their parents had accepted their partner being of a different ethnicity, there appeared to be no further scepticism. However, one participant noted how their parents observed the positives of the cultural difference in a rather odd way.

> *They did say one weird thing about my partner because my partner's […] a white Kiwi with blond hair and blue eyes. […]. It was when we had family friends over who are also Asian and Filipino. They're like, "Oh, your daughter is dating this guy now? It's like an improvement of the race" […]. It's like, "Oh, yes, our mixed grandbabies. They're gonna be good looking".* (P4)

This observation by P4 suggests that, in this particular instance, parents seemed to conflict their messages to their children by indicating that mixed-ethnic offspring would be an “improvement” to their entire race. In other instances, some participants’ parents would typically prefer their children avoiding partners of a different ethnicity due to the differences in their dating attitudes. However, it seemed in P4’s case that dating inter-culturally became to be seen from a ‘racial’ perspective and no longer from a cultural point of view. The comments by P4’s family friends reveal to some extent that there might be double standards attached to some parents’ takes on inter-cultural dating, in that it might be undesirable unless it produces a tangible advantage for the family, such as the here envisioned ‘improvement’ of their own race. This aspect would possibly warrant a separate study in its own right and cannot be pursued here, as it exceeds the scope of this study.

4.3.10 New Zealand’s culture is seen as more accepting

Interviewees noted the differences they faced as children of Asian immigrants, particularly in comparison to their New Zealander peers. They generally believed that their Kiwi peers were raised with comparatively more liberal values regarding their dating activity and independence in general.

> *I lived out east in a very white dominated school. So, you compare yourself to like, people having sleepovers, hanging out after school, whereas I didn’t have a single sleepover. I spent all of high school not hanging out with people. The only time I would is if I was meeting the same group of Filipino guys at school, because that's what my mom approved of. […] So it was really restrictive. […] That was just [her idea that] your son can’t get hurt if your son doesn't do anything.* (P6)

P6’s comment suggested that their mother was protective, and only approved of friendships with individuals of the same sex, seemingly as to prevent them from developing a romantic relationship. Their mother restricted their social activities, which made them feel that they were missing out on the regular social experiences that their Kiwi peers were having. In a similar way, P2 recounted,

> *I was 16 at the time, and you know everyone at that age has like, boyfriends and girlfriends. And all of my peers are just like, “I stayed over at Brian's last night, then we got up this morning and went to school together”. And I was like, what?! […] It's just so odd how accepting Western parents are of their children's*

> *partners at such a young age. Like it's so normal to them. But I also think it's a really good thing that, any partner of your child, you just accept and get to know. If they're a good kid, you should be happy for your child, you know? I was super, super jealous of a lot of people.* (P2)

P2 signified how ideal they thought it would be for parents to be accepting of their child's partner regardless of culture, religion or family background, as long as they were a decent person and made their child happy. They indicated that 'Western' or New Zealander parents seemed to be more open to dating as a teenager. P2 pleaded that Asian parents should accept dating as a normal part of emerging adulthood, as they thought this approach would make it easier for all children to experience their first dating activities regardless of their ethnic background. As a consequence of the broader acceptance of teenage dating, P2 suggested, adolescents of Asian families would not need to hide their relationships from their parents because they knew they would not be restricted.

Like P2's experience of being between two cultures, P4 discussed their inner conflict of maintaining Asian cultural values while navigating their dating life in New Zealand.

> *There's just so many intricacies, so many little microscopic things that you have to think about when you're Asian. […] If you're Asian, you're not fully independent. […] It's very interesting [living in New Zealand], because you have this much freedom in comparison to if you are still living in Asia. […] But at the same time, because you are Asian, you still have those old school values inside you, that are kind of saying like, "Oh, if I go on two dates in a week, does that make me a slut? What would people say if I date someone who's not Asian?"* (P4)

Aside from the heightened expectations of their Asian culture compared to New Zealand norms, P4 explained how challenging it was to tell their parents about moving in with their partner. Though this was assumed a normal practice for young couples in New Zealand culture, moving in while unmarried was an act that did not align with P4's parents' cultural and religious beliefs.

> *My partner and I started talking about maybe moving in together. And I was like, "Ah, shit. This is not gonna go well". Like, I want to, but also I want to think about how my parents would take this. Because this is definitely not the timeline in their minds. It's marriage first, then live together. But then I'm like, how am I*

> *going to convince them that we are in New Zealand, we've been here for over a decade […] this is the culture and way that I believe in now. […] So, it's kind of those negotiations that, like, I know [my parents] have expectations on how things are done, but we live in a more Western society, more liberal society, and a non-Asian society.* (P4)

P4 suggested that it was difficult to persuade their parents to accept the more 'liberal' New Zealand cultural beliefs, where it was commonplace for young adults to live with a partner without being married. P4 was not living in their parents' home at this time, and as such did not think they needed to seek their parents' approval about the decision. Nevertheless, and despite living far apart from their parents, P4 still respected their opinion and wanted to approach the topic delicately out of consideration for their parents' expectations.

> *Living away from my parents does grant me a lot of freedoms and privileges, you know, just being out of their house. But I still want to be close to them. Every weekend, I go over to their house, […] just to always keep the relationship close. And I would want to continue that, but I feel like the dynamics would shift if I do move in with my partner, because then they would see that, like, you're basically married if you do that, and it's just how they take it. […] I'm scared that if they take it negatively, they would cut me off [...] if they disapprove of that decision.* (P4)

Observing the differences between New Zealand's cultural approach to dating compared to their own culture of origin, all of the interviewees expressed a desire to parent differently with their own future children. In particular, they sought to have more accepting attitudes towards their children's romantic activity and foster open communication with them regarding topics of dating and sex. While most said they could understand the motives behind their parents' attitudes, it appeared that they would use their personal experiences to tailor their own parenting approaches in the future.

4.4 Summary

Results from both data sets suggested that 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders experience a range of complex challenges regarding their parents' attitudes towards their dating activity. Respondents perceived the common view by their parents that dating was a distraction as bothersome, making them feel untrusted in their ability to negotiate their priorities. The common absence of sexual education from parents was seen as confusing by many respondents, who alluded that the general silence on the

topic was rather counterintuitive for preventing them from having sex. In particular, the interview participants recounted that parents' monitoring attempts, restrictions, and avoidance of engaging with their children on the aspects of romantic relationships rather led them to dishonesty than obedience. Generally regarding New Zealand culture as more liberal than their culture of origin with respect to teenage dating, participants in this study expressed the pain and challenges of navigating the differing and often conflicting values of each culture.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter delivers a discussion of the key findings that were presented in the previous chapter and illuminates how the findings answer the overall research question. The discussions in this chapter are informed by the main themes that arose from the data analysis. The following sections structure the interpretation of the data with the aim of explicating the meaning of the rich details provided by the participants.

The first aspect of discussion indicates that young Asian New Zealanders think their parents consider dating as a prime distraction from a much more important educational pursuit. The second discussion point explores generational differences and acculturation gaps in sexual attitudes, as these were perceived by the participants. The third theme discusses some respondents' idolisation of and desire to live like their New Zealand peers, responding to their general perception that New Zealand's culture would be more accepting of dating than their culture of origin. The next section attends to parents' seemingly non-confrontational attitudes and high-context communication styles with respect to dating and sex. The following discussion point considers the apparently positive intentions that both parents and respondents seem to hold for each other, but which they may not express in a clear manner. The sixth discussion topic deliberates respondents' stated dishonesty about their dating activities, followed by a discussion that looks at respondents' desire to engage amicably with their parents. Discussion point eight explicates the perceived gender bias in parents, which was commonly experienced by participants in the form of stricter rules for females. Finally, point nine illuminates respondents' own expressed desires to foster a different type of communication with their own children in the future. A discussion of these aspects together, so is hoped, will deliver a sound understanding of how young Asian New Zealanders have experienced parents' responses to their dating activities while they grow up between two cultures.

5.2 Avoid dating while studying

One of the key findings of the study was that parents were commonly seen to deem dating as a distraction from what they believed should be their child's highest priority, namely succeeding academically and achieving top grades. Those survey respondents whose parents opposed their relationship understood that their main reason for doing so was a belief that dating would distract from studying. Similarly, all interview responses communicated their assumption that the underlying concern in parents was

ensuring their child's educational success above self-exploration and self-actualisation as sexual beings.

Responses from the young adults in this study suggested that the high level of importance that parents assigned to their children's education was, at least to a notable degree, rooted in their original motives for migrating to New Zealand. As previous studies have established (Lee, 2002; Mak & Chan, 1995; Ran & Liu, 2020; Young, 2018), Asian parents often care deeply about their children's future, and many have chosen to immigrate to countries like New Zealand in order to build a better life for themselves and their children. Several participants realised that their parents were likely concerned that their hard work to rebuild a life in New Zealand would be wasted if they were to fail in their educational goals. As P4 aptly put it, "The economy and just the whole society [in my parents' home country], it's very hard, financially and economically". Thus, P4's parents taught them to "prioritise getting a good education and getting a good job before being interested in romantic relationships".

Shifting one's entire life from one country to another often comes with great challenges, especially when the new host culture is unfamiliar (Kim & Hocking, 2016; Seiler, 1997). However, it appears that parents often willingly endure such ordeals to ensure their children may reap the physical, social, and educational benefits of the host culture (Bartley, 2010; Young, 2018; Department of Labour, 2010). Therefore, young adults may be constantly reminded by their parents about the perceived risks of dating – not necessarily because parents want to deny their children of enjoyable life experiences or because they may have problems with a child's potential partner – but because they fear that their child's focus on dating might negate their chances of living the style of life they had migrated to New Zealand for. It is possible that parents might, perhaps unwittingly, seek to remind their child of the sacrifices they have made to give them opportunities they themselves did not have. This observation coalesces with research conducted by Sung (1985), Nguyen (1998), Louie (2004), Kim and Ward (2007) and Yu (2007), who all found that parents' apprehensions of losing the very opportunities they had migrated for made them reject their children's dating attempts while they were still in school. Nevertheless, several interviewees could appreciate their parents' concerns, as they considered it natural for parents to care about their education and future. Some interviewees explicitly voiced gratitude for their parents' sacrifices and strived to succeed academically as a means of expressing this gratitude. This finding is supported by Mak and Chan (1995), who recognised that immigrant children sometimes viewed high academic achievement as a way to 'repay' parents for their hard work and provision.

In contrast to parents' fears with respect to their children's dating, the participants in this study were generally confident in their ability to balance dating with education. Only few reported rare occasions where they fell behind with their studies due to relationship-related activities. However, these participants voiced that momentary lapses in academic performance were not detrimental to their studies overall, and they considered it normal for any person to fall behind with work sometimes, whether due to dating-related activity or not. Thus, they generally did not view dating as a detriment to their schooling but believed that their parents should have more trust in their ability to not lose sight of education as their own priority.

Most participants felt that they knew their limits with extracurricular activities and hence could balance their studies with dating. Further, data indicated that not all pressures to succeed educationally originated from parents alone, as some respondents had self-imposed expectations for themselves regarding their education, career and future. These participants expressed that the desire to succeed was their personal goal and not just a parental expectation. This finding is cognisant of discoveries by Kao (1995) and Goyette and Xie (1999) which suggested that a high level of parental demands can lead children to have high expectations for themselves. In this case, it appeared that parents' messages and motivations regarding the importance of educational success had 'rubbed off' on the participants who sustained this mindset and strived for high grades for themselves. The self-driven desire to succeed academically also appeared to reflect findings by Bartley (2010), Ho and Bedford (2016), Ho et al. (1996) and Hillcoat-Nallétamby et al. (2006), who all suggested that Asian immigrants were generally viewed by society as skilled and desirable workers who set high standards for themselves educationally and occupationally. In essence, there may have naturally been external forces such as societal expectations or peer influence that also helped propel respondents' self-motivation. In this sense, many of the respondents accepted their parents' priority setting of education as a pathway to a 'better life', even if they themselves had little first-hand experience of a life outside the opportunities that New Zealand provided them. Thus, the tendency of parents to constantly remind their children to prioritise their studies seemed unnecessary in the eyes of the participants, as they believed they were already motivated to do so anyway.

Some respondents perceived parents' reminders to prioritise their studies as annoying and repetitive. For instance, P5 felt hurt when their parents did not trust them with their academic success and required them to regularly showcase their grades during the early stages of their first romantic relationship. Eventually, once P5's mother saw that

their grades were maintained, she stopped asking to see them and became less concerned with their relationship. Equally, Lau et al. (2009) found that some parents permitted and sometimes overlooked their children's romantic relationship so long as their academic grades were consistently upheld. P5's situation reflects this finding as their mother became less anxious about their relationship, knowing that their academic life had not been affected. However, it might suggest that their parents needed to first feel reassurance or see proof of academic upkeep before trusting them – which could be seen as an indicator that children's trust in their parents was perhaps overall higher than parents' trust in their children.

5.3 Generational differences and acculturation gaps in sexual attitudes

Both children and parents seemed to appreciate the relevance of both dating and education, albeit at varying levels. Interview results pointed to a disparity in perceptions and positions, which may reflect what Kao and Martyn (2014) identified as an inter-generational 'acculturation gap'. Respondents' parents were all born and raised in their Asian home countries and were perhaps more likely to hold onto their original cultural values even after they had moved to a different country and culture. However, because their children had spent most of their lives in New Zealand, they did not share the same lived experiences as their parents but were surrounded by the New Zealand culture where dating was more accepted as a part of emerging adulthood. Yau and Smetana (1996) and Stuart and Ward (2011) found that immigrant youth tended to accept new cultural values more easily than parents, which may consequently lead to 'dissonant acculturation' in a family and even conflict between the generations. In the context of this study, acculturation dissonance appeared to be reflected in the different types of dating activities each generation deemed acceptable. For instance, respondents generally accepted sexual activity as a part of the general dating process, but sensed that their parents believed that sex should be reserved for marriage, or at least for a stable, financially capable couple given the chance of pregnancy. Interviewees seemed generally comfortable with the idea of casual sexual experiences for the purpose of exploration, enjoyment, and self-actualisation, whereas their parents seemed to consider sex for reproductive purposes only. These findings exhibited those of Brotto et al. (2005), Lau et al. (2009) and Hahm et al. (2006), which suggested that increased acculturation amongst young adults would result in a decreased prioritisation of their family's original cultural values, as well as a development of less conservative attitudes towards sex.

The effects of acculturation on influencing respondents' dating and sexual attitudes was also evident in their accounts of the behaviours of their peers. As Bartley (2010)

posited, immigrant children become more acculturated than their parents through their immersion into the host culture via the education system. Thus, it makes sense that the social groups they are regularly exposed to play a major influential role on their sexuality (Trinh et al., 2014). Speaking to the aspect of the 'normalcy' of teenage dating, respondents indicated that it was common for their peers to be dating throughout high school and talking about their relationship experiences in daily conversation. From such observations, respondents learned that social and dating activities such as attending parties and sleeping over at a partner's house were a regular part of the New Zealand culture. Research participants felt that these activities stood in a stark contrast to their parents' cultural beliefs, imposed curfews, wariness of staying out late, and their disapproval of sleepovers. Consequently, exposure to the seemingly more relaxed dating attitudes of the host culture led some participants to idolise and yearn for the same treatment from their parents.

5.4 Desire to have their dating activity more accepted

The survey data indicated that respondents recognised a significant difference between their Asian culture's attitude towards dating compared to that of New Zealand's culture. The majority of survey respondents (68.1%) described New Zealand's cultural attitude as 'significantly more accepting' of dating as a teenager compared to their own Asian culture. Interview data expanded on this as respondents recalled comparing themselves to and sometimes envying their non-Asian Kiwi peers. Interviewees were constantly exposed to their New Zealand peers' seemingly more accepted dating activities, which included sleepovers at their partner's house and the ability to socialise with little to no questions about their whereabouts or time of return. Regarding this comparatively more laidback approach, P1 remarked, "The whole thing where it's like, white kids - parents don't care about where they go […] I could tell it was very apparent that that's how it was". Many respondents appeared to marvel at the way their Kiwi peers' parents seemed to be easily accepting of their dating activities and wished their parents would treat them in a similar manner. These findings may connect with the recognition that it is important for young people to feel similar to their peers of the host culture (Stuart & Ward, 2011), but it may be particularly challenging for immigrant youth as they must manage the task of maintaining their heritage culture while adopting host norms (Berry, 2001; Lau et al., 2009; Stuart & Ward, 2011). Being surrounded with such peer activity, it appeared that respondents strived to partake in the same dating activities, but were still bound to the desires and cultural expectations of their parents to an extent, such as following their curfews and having no sleepovers.

Participants generally observed that parents of Asian culture and New Zealand culture seemed to have conflicting attitudes when approaching their children's social and dating activities. Results suggested that Asian parents tended to be more protective and more likely to tell their children of their opinion on their dating activity, such as if they thought a partner was incompatible or if they thought their child's dating activity was jeopardising their studies. Conversely, New Zealander parents, from the perspective of participants, seemed to interfere significantly less by letting their child make their own life decisions, and continue dating partners of their choice so long as no harm was being caused.

> *It was just so odd how like, accepting Western parents are of their children's partners at such a young age. Like it's so normal to them. But I also think it's a really good thing that, any partner of your child, you just accept and get to know them. And if they're a good kid, you should be happy for your child, you know? Yeah, I was super, super jealous of a lot of people.* (P2)

P2 appeared to envy their Kiwi peers with more 'liberal' parents, who in their eyes had minimal dating restrictions and seemed to support their children's individual happiness by accepting their partners. Similarly, noting the differences between the two cultural approaches, P4 described,

> *Western parents, they would be more hands off with their children, and especially their children's relationships. They're like, "Who are you dating? Oh okay, cool". But I guess Asian parents are more invested in like, "Who is this person? Are they a good person?"* (P4)

While P4 generally perceived that having 'Western parents' would be much easier for children, they did consider the downsides and benefits of both cultures' approaches. P4 believed that the positives of the 'hands off' Western attitude included the increased freedom to do what one pleased and "take the relationship in whatever direction" they desired. However, they suggested that, "if something bad does happen, you have less of a safety net". P4 felt that these negatives of the Western approach were remedied by the Asian approach, saying, "being Asian, I know if I ever ended up in an abusive relationship, I will always have my family… Once you're really entrenched into like, a really collective society, it has its pros and cons". It seemed that P4 was suggesting that it is helpful that Asian parents are so invested in their child's partners, as it means that when things go wrong in the relationship, the parents may have more genuine concern, understanding and sympathy. Simultaneously, it was suggested that with the

‘hands off’ approach, children of Western parents were free to choose their partners but were also less likely to receive help from their parents when issues arise in the same ‘hands off’ manner.

It became evident that most respondents seemed to possess a rather polarised perception when discussing the differences between themselves and their Kiwi peers. These perceptions are not necessarily a reality but merely the personal viewpoints of these participants. The respondents tended to refer to non-Asian peers as the “White,” “Caucasian” or “Kiwi” persons who were consistently quoted to have less strict parents because they were able to date and socialise more ‘freely’. This othering and ‘black and white’ view was, however, transcended when a few respondents conceded that their parents indeed shared some qualities that they labelled ‘Kiwi’, such as permitting sexual activity before marriage, or eventually allowing sleepovers at a partner’s house. Nevertheless, and despite a more nuanced dynamic, many respondents still maintained the generalised perception that their peers were vastly different to them.

One of the interviewees, while still expressing envy of their peers, was nevertheless baffled that Kiwi parents seemed to have “no concerns” about their children’s romantic partners. P1, for instance, mentioned, “I knew other people had a lot of freedom, and I was like, wow, do their parents not even care?” Similarly, P5 recalled how their Kiwi partner once joked, “I wish my parents cared about me that much,” when P5 kept receiving concerned texts from their mother on a night out. In both situations, the comments were made in a light-hearted manner, indicating that the respondents did not truly consider Kiwi parents’ supposed ‘lack of care’ as a disadvantage or worse attitude than that of their own parents’. It can thus be concluded that respondents were aware of the complexity of their parents’ motives and responses to their dating, even if there seemed to be a tendency to polarise parents’ attitudes into unsupportive and undesired behaviour.

5.5 Non-confrontational attitudes and high-context communication

This study revealed that more often than not, neither the parents of the participants nor the participants themselves were confrontational with each other. Still, data showed that there was a considerable degree of tension between parents and adolescents with respect to respondents’ romantic activity. Interaction would often occur in a variety of avoidance methods by both parties, who appeared to tip-toe around the delicate topics of dating and sex. While the topic of sex is generally recognised as challenging for parents to discuss with their children regardless of cultural context (Afifi et al., 2008; Jordan et al., 2000), Asian families may find it even more difficult due to a taboo

attitude towards intimate and very personal topics (Kao & Martyn, 2014; Kim, 2009; Okazaki, 2002). Chung et al. (2005), for example, observed that many Asian families tended to avoid parent-child communication about sensitive topics in order to preserve a hierarchal family structure. The results of this present study generally reflected these findings, as interviewees commonly felt that their parents communicated rarely or only implicitly about sex when prompted. Consequently, respondents usually avoided initiating such conversation themselves.

5.5.1 Implicit communication

The data from this study indicated that the subject of sex was the most sensitive of the dating related topics for children but more so parents to address. This, however, did not mean it was rarely addressed, because parents alluded to the subject through nonverbal or indirect ways. All the interviewees indicated that they never received a 'sex talk' from their parents, and instead primarily observed their parents' attitudes towards sex through their passing comments. For example, some interviewees were regularly reminded of the dangers of sex in casual non-sensitive ways through phrases such as "stay safe" or "be careful", which were mentioned by parents in passing when they were about to leave the house. Other interviewees would be told to focus on their studies first or were instructed not to get pregnant while still studying. These findings reflect previous observations by Trinh et al. (2014), Chung et al. (2005) and Zhang et al. (2007) who discovered that parent-child communication about sex in Asian families was usually not entirely non-existent but varied in quantity and delivery. It was evident in the data that there was not an absence of parent-child communication regarding sex, as parents still communicated their perspectives on their child's dating, albeit infrequently and in a non-discursive manner. The way parents dropped comments about sexual activity usually did not invite a discussion or indicated that they wanted to know about their children's perspectives. Most respondents generally considered parents' communication styles as 'roundabout', vague, and consequently unclear and unhelpful.

Data indicated that many interactions between adolescents and parents were coded, i.e., adolescents were expected to assume the underlying meaning behind parents' implicit comments. This lack of clarity had a number of negative effects on the respondents. First, participants mentioned that they were confused about their parents' approach. They often found it unreasonable and even ridiculous that parents seemed to believe that remaining silent and imposing restrictions would prevent them from engaging in sexual activity. Reflecting findings by Aronowitz et al. (2007), Elliott (2010), and Flores and Barroso (2017), it seemed that parents feared that discussions about

sex might act as a ‘green light’ and permit or encourage children to partake in sexual activity. It appeared that for parents, openly permitting sexual activity was particularly problematic, as it may further lead children down a ‘path of distraction’ from their educational priorities. However, this study’s data suggested that the assumption of sexual education acting as permission was utterly untrue. Instead, participants regularly expressed that having an opportunity to openly talk with their parents about sex or receiving timely sex education would have helped them – rather than prevented them – from making healthy decisions. The ‘no talk – no do’ stance has been refused by Cornelius et al. (2009), who proposed that most adolescents would naturally be curious and seek out sexual information and stimuli regardless the level of open discourse (see also Conn, 1940; Freeman-Longo, 2000). Adding to these findings, respondents in the study suggested that parental restrictions or prohibitive messages were unlikely to effectively prevent young adults from partaking in sexual activity. For instance, some insinuated that there were opportunities to engage in sexual encounters outside of sleepovers or trips, and they could sometimes evade their parents’ restrictions anyway through dishonesty. Altogether, these findings indicate that it might be beneficial for parents to engage in mature sexual education discussion with their children, as they are likely to partake in sexual activity regardless of outside factors.

Despite parents’ overall lack of explicitness and clarity, the findings were congruent with Gravel et al. (2016) and Kim and Ward’s (2007) studies, which observed that adolescents in Asian families with high-context communication patterns nevertheless understood parents’ expectations regarding sex. This was because they were accustomed to their parents’ implicit cues and signals, such as comments on the romantic activity of relatives or the prohibition of sleepovers. As P6 put it, “It’s subconscious, you don't need to be told by your parents to know how they stand on a particular topic”. Though most interviewees understood their parents’ implicit messages, they suggested that a key problem with avoiding explicit and mature conversation about sex was the potential unfavourable consequences that were more likely to arise. Some respondents argued that keeping the communication implicit might increase the chances of children making poor sexual decisions or developing attitudes that contradicted their parents’ beliefs. Regarding the former, some suggested that the avoidance of discussion about contraception and the reinforcement of abstinence was unrealistic for young adults. Thus, they argued, the failure to address contraceptive methods might instead increase the chances of adolescents getting pregnant, impregnating someone else, or passing on a sexually transmitted infection. Given that unexpected pregnancy was a key concern for parents, most participants considered

the lack of communication risky and counterintuitive. As some respondents suggested, it would be ideal for parents to deviate from attitudes they felt they ‘should’ be possessing according to their traditional culture or religion, and instead teach what they believed to be more practical and realistic sexual education advice. Through implicit advice such as “stay safe” or “don’t get pregnant”, it was suggested that parents still wanted to protect their child even if they were partaking in activities that they disagreed with (i.e., having premarital sex). These respondents seemed to sense that their parents wanted to express their concern for their children’s safety, without ruining their image as an authority figure if they were to give outright 'permission’ to partake in sexual activity.

Parents’ continued use of implicit communication to convey their attitudes about dating may also lead children to develop their own beliefs that may contradict those of their parents’. One respondent (P4) noted how they were left to educate themselves about dating and sex through internet sources because of their parents’ lack of sexual education. Consequently, the beliefs they ended up developing favoured sexual liberation and exploration – principles which directly opposed their parents’ belief in saving sex for marriage. Had their parents clearly explained their principles on the sanctity of sex to them at a younger age, there may have been a chance for P4 to follow those principles too. However, since their parents provided no explanation, the possibility of developing independent beliefs from a blank slate increased significantly.

5.5.2 Monitoring and restriction

Another prominent way parents appeared to express their attitudes towards dating was through the actual restrictions they imposed on their children. These restrictions primarily included curfews, requiring other friends to be present at out-of-town trips, the forbiddance of sleepovers with partners, and permitting children to spend time with a partner only in the communal areas of the house where they could be watched.

Some respondents informed that they were upset with the implicit communication because their parents’ restrictions would sometimes impair their social and dating experiences. They were frustrated that their enjoyment was limited or that they missed out on experiences, seemingly for reasons that could have been negotiated if parents were comfortable with discussion. For instance, P5 found it “unfair” that they had to leave earlier than their friends on nights out. P1 and P2 were generally perplexed that they were not allowed to sleep over at a partner’s house, despite being able to spend the entire day with them. Participants expressed the desire for their parents to face the possibility that their children could be sexually active, and approach the topic in what

they considered a mature manner instead of enforcing preventative rules. Some participants could understand how difficult it may be for parents to accept that their child is growing up and becoming sexually active, a fact which is often challenging for parents to acknowledge (see, e.g., Deblinger et al., 2010; Meschke & Dettmer, 2012; Noone & Young, 2010). Hence, respondents understood if it took time for their parents to come to terms with the fact that their child was transitioning into adulthood and partaking in adult activities such as having romantic and sexual experiences. They could see from their parents' perspective why it may be difficult to lift these restrictions, but still believed that having more open communication would at least allow parents to hear how the treatment makes them feel. Even if parents did not lift the restrictions immediately or entirely, parents could perhaps realise how the rules affected their children's social and romantic lives. Results revealed that parents seemed to be unaware that their restrictions not only impeded on their children's dating, but detracted from experiences that respondents deemed commonplace in New Zealand culture.

Some responses elucidated that it was parents' lack of communication or sexual education that frustrated them more than their opposition towards dating or sexual activity. A few interviewees wondered how parents could remain silent or unclear about a topic that they considered highly important. Previous studies have provided some explanations for why parents of Asian families may be unwilling to communicate explicitly to their children about dating and sex. These explanations included the prevalence of high-context communication within these families (Gudykunst, 2001; Kim & Ward, 2007), the notion that discussion about sex would act as permission to partake in such activities (Aronowitz et al., 2007; Elliott, 2010; Flores & Barroso, 2017) or the widespread perception that sex is a taboo topic in many Asian cultures (Okazaki, 2002; Zhang et al., 2007). However, findings from this study suggest that it was important to children that their parents would consider the consequences of non-confrontational communication, such as its counterproductive and undesirable effects as mentioned by the respondents.

5.5.3 Outliers to high-context communication

While the majority of results from both data sets indicated that the topic of sex was often not or only indirectly discussed, there were a few exceptions. One interviewee said that their mother explicitly mentioned the topic of sex once, out of the blue, but then never spoke about it again. She apparently asked them if they ever had sex, and they replied 'yes' honestly. Since this interaction, there was no further conversation about the topic. Dilorio et al. (2003) and Lefkowitz (2002) found that the content and style of sexual education communication was more impactful than its frequency. In this

case, a single exchange was enough for P6 to interpret that their mother trusted them with their dating activity and no longer viewed them as an immature child. Despite being surprised about their mother's question, P6 recalled having an improved relationship afterwards, where they consequently felt more inclined to be honest. P6 thought that instead of viewing romantic activity as a threat to their education, their mother seemed to understand that they were mature enough to make their own life decisions.

P6 was 21 years old and had been living away from their mother for a year when this exchange occurred. They explained that they only answered honestly because they felt they had enough mutual respect with their mother to be upfront with them. This reasoning emphasises the importance of a parent-child relationship that has mutual respect and quality communication, which was found by Chung et al. (2005) to be associated with healthy sexual understanding and development. As a young teenager, P6 felt forced to hide their romantic involvements from their mother, whose strong religious beliefs made her opposed to their romantic relationships and even casual friendships with individuals of the opposite sex. The fact that she had eventually 'come around' might suggest that some parents' changed approach to their children's dating activity may depend largely on their perception of their child's maturity. This assumption is supported by some of the custom answers to the survey question that asked about the age their parents would permit dating. The range of custom answers altogether suggested that parents' acceptance of their children's relationships may have been dependent on various factors beyond simple age or graduation milestones. Instead, responses indicated that they needed to prove they had met their parents' criteria of maturity in order for them to be less judgemental of or oppositional to their dating life. Based on various participants' responses, these criteria of maturity appeared to depend on children's growing responsibilities such as obtaining a job, paying rent, moving out or balancing study with work and extracurricular activities.

Data revealed that there was a general hesitance from both respondents and parents in initiating conversations about dating and sex. The style of high context communication might be responsible for the rarity of discussions about sex in Asian families. This might be further aggravated in situations where adolescents and parents do not share core values and are therefore less able to discuss sensitive issues with each other (Chung et al., 2005). High-context communication was likely less prominent in children, as they were more immersed in the communication patterns of their host culture. Thus, there appeared to be an 'acculturation gap' between respondents and their parents not only with respect to viewpoints around dating and sex, but also about

how to discuss it. Consequently, discussion was difficult for each party to initiate, even if children otherwise freely talked about sex with peers. Having observed their parents' hesitance to approach the topic explicitly, most participants appeared to follow their parents' lead and steer clear of the topic themselves.

However, there were a few participants who said that they felt courageous enough to address the topic with their parents. For example, P2 recalled feeling brave when they confronted their authoritative father, as it was an unusual act given their rather traditional family hierarchy. While P2 experienced these conversations as difficult and temporarily inciting further conflict, they regarded the final outcomes positive in terms of their parents being more accepting of their dating activity. When P2 confronted their father about his strict rule against sleepovers, it challenged his authoritative reasoning that he should be obeyed because of his position in the family. After tears and a challenging argument, P2 eventually convinced him to permit sleepovers with their partner by promising that they would not get pregnant. Even though P2 had repeatedly agreed to this condition before, it appears that it required a tough conversation and some heartfelt emotion for their parents to realise how much these freedoms meant to their child. P2 reported that they were frustrated about the situation, because there was fundamentally nothing new about their assurance to not fall pregnant, yet their father seemed to lack trust and perhaps had not properly listened before.

5.6 Good intentions on both sides

Adolescents overall understood that their parents generally meant well and wanted them to stay on track with their lives, primarily in terms of their dedication to their education. This finding adds to previous research by Lau et al. (2009), where adolescents could appreciate that their parents desired for them to have a successful life and avoid jeopardising their opportunities through being distracted by a love interest. Respondents had sympathy for their parents' viewpoints, but it did not mean that their treatment, which respondents generally perceived as negative or unfair, was justified. In fact, understanding parents' viewpoints appeared to make a possible confrontation more complicated, as respondents knew it was likely to cause parents offence or distress.

Interview results revealed that there was significant goodwill from both children and assumingly from parents, who appeared to try and avoid hurting each other's feelings or cause tension in the relationship between them. Participants generally expressed a yearning to discuss important and difficult topics with their parents, such as independence, moving out and sexual health, but there seemed to be a barrier

preventing both sides from doing so. In a way, some respondents expressed a fear of failure that their messages would not be well received, or that they would not achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome. For instance, P2 explained how “stubborn” their father was, and anticipated that it would be extremely difficult to have a conversation that might change his perspective on their dating life. This perceived risk of initiating conversation may be related to the tendency in both parents and children to avoid discussing sensitive topics in hopes of preserving family harmony. As Chung et al. (2005) suggested, parent-child discussions in Asian households about sensitive topics can be considered disrespectful to elderly authorities, alongside the perception that sex is not to be discussed (Kao & Martyn, 2014). As it appeared in this present study, both sides would rather avoid explicit discussion to minimise potentially negative outcomes such as awkwardness, arguments or upsetting the other party. Few parents and respondents seemed willing to risk initiating a conversation for obtaining potentially positive outcomes, such as reaching a mutual agreement or having a clearer understanding of the other’s perspective.

One respondent elucidated that they only recently realised that their parents’ well-meaning intentions may have simply been poorly communicated. This was an explanation that they considered to be the cornerstone of the upset and confusion their parents had initially caused. P7 explained that their parents had always told them to focus on themselves and their career first, because dating could pose the risk of becoming too reliant on a partner. Hearing this at the age of sixteen, P7 interpreted that their parents were simply opposing dating because they were too young and should focus on their studies first. However, P7 eventually recognised six years later what their parents truly meant; their parents believed that focusing on a partner may leave no time for developing their own identity and interests, which were factors their parents deemed particularly crucial during emerging adulthood. Having passed their teenage years, P7 now completely understood their parents’ concerns. They theorised that their parents were unable to succinctly communicate their message at the time, so it was oversimplified into, “Just focus on your studies!” which they seemed to find overbearing at that age. Another possibility that P7 considered was that their parents’ intentions may not have been as eloquently delivered due to translation and language differences. Ultimately, their parents had always meant well, it just seemed that the respondent did not perceive the message accurately at the time. However, and regardless of later insights, it appeared in the reports by the participants that their parents may not have been aware of their oversimplifications and the effect they had on their children. The wish in children to be able to openly talk with their parents, even

if their perspectives stood apart, was stronger than their later appreciation of parents' good intentions.

5.7 Dishonesty

Previous studies have examined dating without parental knowledge among adolescents (Lau et al., 2009; Nguyen, 1998; Wright, 1982). Wright's (1982) study found that 30% of high school seniors dated without parental knowledge. Nguyen's (1998) research discovered that some Vietnamese American adolescents dated in secret, knowing that their partners would not receive their parents' approval. Lau et al.'s (2009) study found that dating without parental knowledge was based on young adults' desire to adhere to their family's traditional Asian values. This study elucidates new and alternative explanations for adolescents' dishonesty towards their parents regarding their dating and sexual activity.

Respondents indicated that there was, more often than not, some degree of dishonesty when telling parents details related to their dating activities. It also appeared that the dishonesty was more likely to increase when it was parents who asked questions, as opposed to respondents voluntarily revealing details about their romantic activity. Participants reported that they lied or omitted details having observed their parents' stance on dating and sex, and assumed that being honest about their dating activity would lead to criticism, punishment or unwarranted advice from parents. This finding reflects Lau et al.'s (2009) suggestion that parental disapproval of romantic and sexual experiences may encourage secrecy, as it did for Asian American adolescents in their study.

For the most part, it appeared that participants in this study would try keeping dishonesty to a lower level by omitting details rather than producing a full-fledged lie. Interviewees commonly admitted that they would omit information or lie about their social and dating life in terms of plans, whereabouts and the people they were going to be with. While dishonesty may typically be considered a negative act, it seemed that respondents did so out of perceived necessity, in order to bridge differences and avoid the awkwardness or conflict they anticipated if they told their parents the truth. It became evident that respondents did not think they lied for the thrills or intended to maliciously deceive their parents. Instead, they appeared to do so for maintaining an element of peace in the parent-child relationship. Multiple respondents expressed that they felt it was impossible or extremely difficult to negotiate with parents about their rules and beliefs, primarily because they seemed so different to their own. A potential explanation for these intergenerational differences is the notion that immigrant parents

tend to continuously enforce their traditional Asian beliefs on their children, because they may feel that they cannot rely on the host culture to raise their children with suitable values (Kwak, 2003; Stuart & Ward, 2011). Brotto et al. (2005), Huang and Uba (1992), Lau et al. (2009) and Yu (2007) suggested that the higher the acculturation level, the more likely children of Asian immigrant families were to adapt the values of their host culture, namely in the context of developing more liberal sexual attitudes. First-generation immigrants often expect their children to maintain their original cultural values while they grow up in the host culture, which can cause misunderstanding and conflict between children and parents (Farver et al., 2002; Stuart & Ward, 2011). Therefore, respondents sometimes lied to avoid conflict, with some also sensing that parents would view a negotiation or questioning of rules as a violation of respect for elders. This finding signifies Chung et al.'s (2005) proposal that parent-child communication about sex would typically be deemed an infringement of respect for elderly authority in Asian culture.

Alongside the avoidance of conflict, another key reason for respondents' dishonesty about their dating activity appeared to be their desire to pursue plans without interruption. As indicated, some respondents expressed that they felt their enjoyment was limited due to their parents' restrictions, such as having to leave social events earlier or go without sleepovers. In most respondents' eyes, dishonesty would minimise the possibility of their plans being questioned and potentially restricted by their parents who were likely to disapprove. This mindset appeared to be particularly prominent in respondents who felt that their parents had some power and control over them, despite the fact that they considered themselves old and responsible enough to make decisions regarding their dating lives. Whether they were older than sixteen, eighteen, twenty-five, or had already moved out of their parents' house, they still felt a sense of needing to appease their parents. This finding is congruent with studies by Chan (1986) and Xiong et al. (2005) which found that in many Asian cultures, it is a deeply engrained belief that children are expected to obey their parents without question. In this case, it was apparent that some participants still carried this sense of obligation to obey their parents' desires, even though they were adults who considered themselves capable of making decisions independently.

While dishonesty was somewhat of a regular occurrence for respondents, some commented that the decision to withhold details from parents was neither preferable nor straightforward, and often weighed on their conscience. One interviewee (P4), who was twenty-six and flatting in a different city, was apprehensive about telling their religious parents that they had plans to move in with their partner of three years. They

had a sense that they would be met with disapproval because their parents deemed living together as a practice that was only for married couples.

> *I feel like the dynamics would shift if I do move in with my partner, because then they would see that, like, you're basically married if you do that… I guess I'm scared that if they take it negatively, they would cut me off or just don't want anything with me or would stop contact with me if they disapprove of that decision* (P4).

Hillcoat-Nallétamby et al. (2006) held that socio-cultural practices in many Asian cultures are often preserved through living arrangements, and once a child leaves home, the influence of their cultural values may decrease but is rarely completely reduced. This sentiment appeared true for P4, who had moved out of the family home, but still strongly felt the expectations of their parents at a distance. In this case, it seemed that dishonesty took the form of prolonging the revelation of the truth.

Another reason for dishonesty appeared to be the concern over what one's family and relatives might think. P4 clarified that they were hesitant to tell their parents the news about moving in with their partner because their relatives might look down on them for living together before marriage. As they explained, their Asian culture would usually be inquisitive about relatives' lives, whether in a helpful or often times judgemental, prying, or outrightly nosey manner.

> *All of your decisions in life are always, "How would my family feel? And how would they think their friends would feel?" Cuz for some reason, they have a part in the equation.* (P4)

This inquisitive behaviour could be attributed to Asians' generally more collectivistic nature, which is characterised by interconnected extended family networks and the emphasis on social interdependence, conformity and harmony (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006; Ma et al., 2020; Stuart & Ward, 2011). These studies mentioned how South Asian culture traditionally upholds the image of the family unit, hence why it is considered important for children to make dating decisions that meet their parents' expectations. In this context, P4 expressed feeling troubled by their parents' preference to preserve the family image, but still felt a sense of needing to appease their parents. Hence, they ultimately chose dishonesty through delaying the news about moving in with their partner, because they appeared afraid of potentially tainting the family image. Ma et al. (2020) documented that Asian young adults are sometimes pressured to suppress their

individual interests for the sake of the family group, even though extended family members might not be directly affected by their decisions. For instance, P4's decision to live in with their partner would likely not affect the daily activities of an auntie or uncle, who might still have an opinion about the topic. The perceived responsibility of making decisions that appease their parents and the wider family, even though it was not what they personally desired, weighed heavily on P4. They concluded that having to factor the family image in all their decisions "really doesn't make sense, because that's my life, I'm an adult. But it's different if you're Asian – you're not fully independent" (P4).

Another example of dishonesty was refraining from telling parents early on about a date, and only disclosing relevant details once they were more certain about their relationship. In this context, some interviewees justified their dishonesty by saying they did not want to endure painful conversations in cases where their potential relationship might not work out. Through such reasoning, it was apparent that these children adhered to their parents' more traditional Asian beliefs that dating requires commitment, and experimenting through having casual sexual partners would not be preferrable (Kibria, 1993; Lau et al., 2009). Participants already knew that their parents would be curious and keep asking questions about potential partners, so they attempted to minimise any opportunities to do so by denying there was a potential partner in the first place. This finding suggests that respondents found it easier to lie than to explain the truth to their parents, because the truth would seemingly evoke a number of prying questions from parents. Relating to the previous chapter on each party's positive intentions, it appeared that overall, respondents sought to protect their parents from disappointment following failed relationships, while also protecting themselves from emotionally taxing conversations with parents.

5.8 Yearning for parental approval

As established in the previous section, some respondents felt that they could not tell parents about their social or dating activities for a variety of reasons. However, they indicated that it would be enjoyable and beneficial to keep parents updated about this aspect of their lives. It appeared that the main underlying reasons many participants were inclined to withhold information was the perceived awkwardness of discussing sensitive topics, the fear of being restricted or judged, and the avoidance of unsolicited advice.

5.8.1 Perceived awkwardness

One interviewee (P1) said that they considered it ideal to be able to share details about their social and dating activities with their parents, as it would keep them more involved with their life and help foster a closer relationship with them. At present, they claimed to feel quite separated from their family, merely interacting with them via small talk when entering the house before retreating back into their room. While their parents had previously tried to make conversation about their love life, they indicated that any recent attempts to converse about their dating activities would appear too sudden and uncomfortable. This was, they affirmed, because their parents had never inquired in a manner that showed support for their love life, and instead only asked teasingly or in a monitoring context. These experiences discouraged P1 from ever trying to share details about their dating experiences again, and they suggested that it would seem 'too late' for them to try building an authentic relationship with their parents in this manner at their age of twenty. The perception of being 'too late' to have this relationship was unfortunate in P1's view, as they wanted their parents to be involved but felt hindered by previous experiences that made them believe that their parents did not truly support their dating experiences. In essence, there was nothing actually preventing P1 from beginning to share these details with their parents, apart from their anticipation that it would be too uncomfortable for them to break those barriers for the first time. This finding indicates a type of cause-and-effect cycle, in which parents' initial approaches towards their child's romantic activity was not well received, and consequently led the child to remain uncomfortable about approaching the topic with them even years later. Based on similar interview responses, it emerged that open discussion about dating between adolescents and their parents could have occurred in a non-awkward manner, if only such discussion was normalised through parents conversing with their children during their early teenage years. Some participants expressed that they likely would have been more comfortable with sharing details about their dating activity with their parents, if their parents had set the precedent at an earlier age. Given that parents have been considered a key socialising agent for adolescents' sexuality (see Darling & Hicks, 1982; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Trinh et al., 2014), respondents expressed that parents' fostering of more open conversation would have encouraged the perception that dating as a teenager was normal, and that they could discuss dating-related issues with their parents. The normalisation of open discussion may have helped respondents feel more supported with this aspect of their lives, and more willing to initiate romance-related conversation with their parents in a more open manner. However, from what we know about the gap in acculturation between immigrant generations, it would be relevant to establish to what extent a

change in parents from high-context to open communication could realistically be expected.

5.8.2 Avoidance of judgement or unsolicited advice

Some interviewees expressed that they did not always seek or welcome practical advice from parents, as they sometimes just sought emotional support and to be listened to. While interviewees overall could accept that their parents wanted the best for them, they sometimes wished parents would sympathise, try to understand, and offer kind words of support instead of 'lecturing'. Such comments point to the finding that respondents expressed a deep yearning for the parent-child relationship to be more open and balanced than it often is in many Asian families, where children are generally expected to show respect towards elders and refrain from openly asking them questions (Chung et al., 2004; Kim & Ward, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder et al., 1998). A number of participants expressed the desire for parents to step out of their overprotective roles and listen to them more the way a friend or cousin might. However, having parents listen to their children in a more casual manner may be difficult to achieve, as the aforementioned authors had shown that the tradition of respecting elders in this manner is deeply engrained in many Asian cultures. Compound to this, avoiding uncomfortable topics would be a common approach to preserve the traditional hierarchal family structure (Gudykunst, 2001; Kim & Ward, 2007), which may explain why it can be particularly challenging for young adults to begin discussing details about their dating life with their parents. These findings suggest that the influence of traditional Asian cultures, which often favour hierarchal family structures, might create added barriers preventing children from negotiating their relationships with their parents to become less overbearing.

Some respondents wished that parents would realise that their actual influence on their children might be limited. Participants generally expressed a desire of and preference for making their own decisions, even if these were to result in mistakes. One survey respondent expressed the desire for their parents to give them "autonomy to make my own decisions and live with the consequences. Even if it was a mistake, it should be my decision to make, not theirs to avoid on my behalf". Similarly, P1 commented, "Most of the time [my parents] think I have poor judgement… I know what I'm doing, and if I make a mistake, I think it's for the best. I can grow from it". These respondents conveyed that they felt their parents were trying too hard to protect them, and they emphasised that they considered it impossible for their parents to shelter them from negative experiences such as danger or heartbreak. Thus, their advice, while well-meaning, often came across to them as overbearing, unnecessary and sometimes

preachy. In the eyes of some respondents, the perceived 'preachiness' was mainly based on and magnified through their parents' religious beliefs, which made advice seem even less genuine and effective. For example, P6's mother would try to regulate their dating activities by implying that premarital sex denies entry to heaven. P6 considered this approach as 'preachy' and patronising, and suggested it was ineffective for achieving their desired goal of chastity amongst young adults. They suggested that such scare tactics would discourage young people like themselves from obeying, especially when they did not share the same religious standpoints.

Some respondents wished that they could ask their parents for personal advice based on their own marriage and early dating experiences, removing the expectation for parents to be authoritative and protective as well as allowing some flexibility to the hierarchal family structure which is typical of many Asian families. Respondents accepted that it was normal for parents to strive to be role models by excluding stories from their past that may expose them of having made mistakes. However, some wished that parents would realise that sharing stories of their own unfavourable decisions would not be taken as licence for children to repeat their mistakes. Rather, they suggested that sharing details of their own dating experiences would add validity to their advice through helping children realise that they had experienced the same struggles themselves. Respondents suggested that communicating openly might facilitate an improved relationship, and may in turn reduce the rigidity of the traditional Asian family hierarchy (Chung et al., 2004; Kim & Ward, 2007) by treating their children as adults on equal terms who are worthy of discussing topics maturely.

5.9 Gender bias

The results highlighted some perceived differences between parental treatment of daughters and sons. Females in this study who had male siblings commented that their brothers were generally treated with fewer rules and restrictions, with parents being less concerned about their whereabouts and who they were dating. The male participants in this study recognised that parents' gender-based rules were unfair for females, and conveyed that they felt fortunate to consequently have less restrictions on their dating and social life because they were male.

Participants expressed that their parents never acknowledged the inequity of the differing treatment of their sons and daughters. Respondents issued that their parents' reasoning was that their sons were 'boys,' therefore they were less likely to be harmed, were physically more capable of protecting themselves, and could not get themselves pregnant. While female respondents recognised their parents' concern for their

daughters' safety, most still found it unfair that their brothers would rarely be questioned while they felt obliged to give parents comparatively greater details of their whereabouts and time of return. One participant (P5) sometimes felt guilted into coming home early by their mother, who often sent multiple texts saying she would not be able to sleep until they had returned home safely. P5 commented that these requests were undesirable, but they usually obliged as they did not want their mother to worry. Overall, it appeared that females felt less resistant to parents' concerns, as they assented that it was based on matters of personal safety. Their irritation seemed to primarily stem from the fact that their brothers were treated differently and with fewer restrictions solely on the basis of gender. Some respondents expressed that it was as if parents were unaware that males were also susceptible to the same risks that they feared for their daughters, namely drink-spiking, assault or rape. Several participants believed that placing greater responsibility on females to protect their safety was an old-fashioned perception that partially perpetuates victim-blaming. In this context, victim-blaming suggests that it would be the female's fault if they were harassed, because they were not enacting enough caution to protect themselves. The belief of victim-blaming fails to place responsibility on the, presumably male, perpetrator and rather teaches that females should not act in a manner that might invite an assault. Refraining from acting in a manner that might invite assault seemed to overlap with parental virtue values, and appeared to justify parents' concerns in their own eyes, even if perhaps subconsciously so. Overall, there was a sense that the female respondents were not particularly upset at the restrictions themselves, as they understood these to be in the name of their safety. Rather, it became apparent that they were more upset about the inequality of the rules based on gender and on some level of stereotyping gender roles. They shared in the interviews that they would feel less upset if parents treated their children with generally equal restrictions and responsibilities, regardless of gender.

Compound to assumptions that males were more capable of protecting themselves against danger, females in the study also observed unequal rules and expectations surrounding their reputation, dating activity and partner choice. When implicitly told not to have sex, P4 recalled their parents saying,

"You're the woman in the relationship, so you'd lose more". (P4)

From this comment, P4 interpreted that their parents actually meant,

> *In society, you are seen as less if you sleep with someone before you're married […] or your value as a woman […] is lessened by that.* (P4)

Similarly, one survey respondent commented,

> *There are times when I resent my culture for how they treat romantic relationships, especially as a teenage girl and as a young woman. There are so many rules imposed by my culture on how you should act and behave as not to give the "wrong" impression, which really is to be labelled 'a slut'. And this leads to many other (and very prevalent) issues such as rape culture and victim blaming. […] My friend's family is a great example. Her oldest sister was not allowed to date until after she graduated university, and still to this day her partner has not been 100% accepted after being together for 10 years. In family trips, they still cannot get a room together. Whereas neither of her parents have ever restricted or controlled when and who her older brother dated. The culture is toxic.*

The responses above demonstrate the participant's resentment of the unfair gendered teachings of their culture. Similarly, P2's story demonstrates how they had to fight and beg their parents for the same privileges and freedoms their brother was effortlessly given. P2 expressed how they felt a greater onus to date someone who would be exceptionally respectable for impressing their parents and obtaining their approval. In contrast, their parents seemed to have no criteria or concern for whom their brother dated. Overall, responses indicated that females felt that they had a greater burden to uphold a virtuous reputation and be more careful with their partner selection in order to meet their family's expectations. Female respondents found this responsibility unfair as their brothers had essentially no expectations in this regard.

5.10 A desire to do better as future parents

When asked what they think they would do differently as parents themselves, multiple survey responses and all interview responses mentioned that they would discuss topics of dating and sex more openly, and would strive to ensure that their children felt comfortable initiating these conversations with them. Such a response was unanimous and immediate from all interviewees, which might suggest that the aspect of parent-child communication about dating was the one they felt most strongly about**.** On one hand, this finding may be considered slightly contradictory given that some respondents preferred that their parents did not explicitly teach them about sex. However, these respondents indicated that their rejection of sex-talk was based on

their experience or assumption that these conversations would have been rather awkward, given that their parents had never communicated about the topic explicitly leading up to their teenage years. They suggested that if their parents were visibly open and comfortable discussing those topics from the onset (i.e., the beginning of puberty when adolescents begin to develop and express their sexuality), they would have been very grateful to receive that information from them. Respondents' desire to discuss the topics of sex and dating more openly with their own future children might reflect Bennett et al.'s (1995) and Hillcoat et al.'s (2006) findings with respect to cultural adaptation, and the tendency for successive generations to progressively distance themselves from the original cultural traditions of their families. In this case, it appears that respondents had embraced teenage dating as normal in New Zealand culture, and consequently wanted to shift away from imposing norms typical of their Asian origins on their own children. Respondents appeared to possess a desire to raise their children with cultural values closer to those of New Zealand, where, in their minds, it was more common for parents to accept dating as a normal part of emerging adulthood and discuss it more openly with their children.

5.11 Summary

The findings of this study suggested that 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders had complex experiences regarding their parents' treatment of their dating activities. There was a number of new findings which emerged from data in this study, which had not yet sufficiently been recognised in previous research. It was discovered that participants generally believed that parents should have greater trust in their ability to keep their education a priority while they also engage in romantic relationships. Additionally, most participants felt independently motivated to succeed educationally, and therefore did not think parents' constant reminders were helpful.

In terms of generational differences, the concept of 'acculturation dissonance' appeared most prominent in the different types of dating activities each generation deemed acceptable. Respondents commonly perceived that parents of Asian culture and New Zealand culture had conflicting attitudes regarding their children's social and dating activities.

The implicit parent-child communication regarding dating and sex proved to present an array of issues. Respondents advised that parental restrictions or prohibitive messages were likely to be ineffective in promoting chastity or sexual responsibility in young adults. Results indicated that it would be beneficial for parents to engage in mature sexual education discussion with their children, as they were likely to partake in sexual

activity regardless of parents' prohibitive attitudes. Further, some results indicated that it was parents' lack of clear communication that frustrated respondents more than their oppositional or restrictive attitudes towards their children's dating or sexual activity.

Considering the misunderstandings between parents and children, it was revealed that parents' well-meaning intentions were likely to have been inadequately communicated. Perhaps it was a maturing in the participants that allowed them to see parents' positive intentions at a later stage, but this however did not mitigate against their experience of feeling restricted and unsupported by their parents during their early romantic experiences.

The study brought light upon a form of cause-and-effect interaction, in which parents' initial approaches towards their child's dating activity was not well received, consequently leading some respondents to remain unwilling to approach the topic with their parents in the years following. Respondents suggested that the normalisation of discussion about dating during the initiation of puberty may likely help children feel more supported by their parents with this aspect of their lives.

Respondents regularly chose to be dishonest about their dating activity out of perceived necessity in order to avoid conflict, which they anticipated might arise upon revealing the truth to their parents. While dishonesty was not an uncommon practice amongst the respondents, some expressed that it was neither simple nor preferable, and weighed heavily on their conscience.

In terms of gender bias issues, it was revealed that female respondents felt a significantly greater burden than males to be careful with their sexual attitudes and partner selection. Additionally, female respondents did not feel particularly upset at the restrictions themselves, which they understood were imposed by parents for safety reasons. Rather, they were upset that males were not treated with the same restrictions and responsibilities.

The majority of participants expressed with enthusiasm the desire to discuss matters of dating and sex more openly with their own children. The unanimity of similar responses may suggest that implicit and unclear parent-child communication about sex was the issue that respondents desired to change the most.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This research was designed to explore how the dating activity of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealander young adults was affected by their parents. An online survey was conducted to gather predominantly quantitative data from the demographic, and subsequent in-depth interviews provided more fine-grained qualitative data. This chapter provides the answers to the research question, presents the implications of the research and acknowledges the study's limitations. It also offers some recommendations for future research.

6.2 Answering the research question

The study posited the research question, "How do 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders experience their parents' influence on their dating lives and romantic relationships?"

The aim of this research was to shed some light on the lived experiences of young Asian New Zealanders with respect to their parents' influence on their romantic relationships. The overall observation was that there was a generational, culturally influenced disconnect between parents' and children's perspectives, where parents primarily appeared to have their children's safety and wellbeing in mind, while young adults sought to make independent decisions regarding their dating activity. It seemed that there was an overall absence of direct communication about children's dating activities, which generally seemed to increase misunderstandings between both parties. One major way that parents seemed to affect the dating lives of their children was through their belief, as perceived by their children, that dating would be a distraction from much more important pursuits such as education. This attitude led respondents to feel that their parents viewed them as immature or living in the risk of sacrificing successful futures due to having what parents considered the 'wrong' priorities. Some children had to apply additional effort to prove to their parents that good educational standards were maintained before they gained their trust and permission to date.

Seemingly different levels of acculturation between parents and children appeared to play a role in their attitudes towards dating. Congruent with previous research, findings in this study revealed that parents held onto and sought to enforce their traditional cultural beliefs on their children, resulting in disagreements and conflict. Parents' traditional beliefs of saving sex for marriage or dating solely for marriage generally

clashed with respondents' more 'liberal' dating and sexual attitudes, as developed through acculturating with the host New Zealand culture. This clash resulted in mostly unspoken conflict or pent-up emotions, which children often could not discuss with parents in fear of disrespecting them or causing arguments.

Parents' tendency to communicate via implicit non-verbal cues also caused confusion, frustration and misunderstanding in respondents. The lack of open communication or education about sex was particularly perplexing for respondents, who deemed parents' silence counterintuitive to safeguarding children's sexual activity. The precedent that parents set by remaining silent on these issues led respondents to believe that sex was disapproved of. It also led respondents to educate themselves through other sources and develop their own beliefs, which often contradicted those of their parents.

Respondents' interpretation of parents' silence as disapproval of dating or sex led many to be dishonest about their romantic activity. Respondents often expected parents to oppose their behaviour, become upset or impede on their plans if they knew the truth. Consequently, they considered lying a necessity to pursue dating activities and behaviours that were normalised amongst their New Zealander peers. Additionally, dishonesty acted as a peace-preserving tactic for respondents, who predicted that a conversation with obstinate parents would likely end in conflict. In reality, respondents wished that they could simply be honest with their parents about their dating activity and yearned for a level of acceptance and friendship with them. Parents' enforcement of traditional Asian beliefs, such as respecting elders or preserving sex for marriage, established an environment where respondents felt hesitant to share details about their relationships or ask questions about their parents' attitudes.

Parents were perceived to possess unfair attitudes regarding their treatment of sons' versus daughters' dating activity. Females in the study felt upset and deprived of freedom, considering that they viewed males to have far less parental restrictions, rules and expectations regarding their romantic relationships. Male respondents generally acknowledged their privilege in this regard. Respondents found it particularly toxic and old-fashioned that parents had heightened expectations for women's chastity and partner selection, which they believed reinforced negative concepts of victim-blaming and gender stereotypes.

As a result, all respondents expressed a desire to do better as parents themselves, primarily by facilitating open conversations about sensitive topics. Respondents sought to create an environment where their children felt comfortable enough to raise matters

of dating, relationships or sex, without feeling like they would be met with disapproval, distrust or conflict.

6.3 Significance of the study and implications of findings

The contribution of these findings to the study of acculturation and inter-generational communication in Asian immigrant families in New Zealand is substantial. A greater awareness of the lived experiences, emotions and behaviours of young Asian New Zealanders with regards to their parents' treatment of their dating activity may assist educators, community researchers, as well as the general public and those part of the demographic. This study has shown how highly conflicted young Asian New Zealanders often are between their desire to acculturate into the mainstream culture while simultaneously respecting their parents and remaining a positive member of their immigrant family.

The findings benefit the participants by validating their personal experiences and showing that they are not alone. Having contributed to an academic research study may help respondents feel that they have played a worthy role in helping to advance knowledge about the struggles of the 1.5 immigrant generation as they grow up in the host culture. The findings also benefit the wider New Zealand society, particularly groups or associations that are involved with mixed-ethnic Asian communities. These may include high schools, universities, youth groups, church groups and other community groups. Providing a deeper understanding of these young adults' feelings, attitudes and motives for behaving in certain ways may provide a foundation for devising solutions that can be taught and applied in community contexts. For instance, the findings could be used to teach in community groups supporting migrant parents or immigrant families as they transition into life in New Zealand. The findings may also be utilised in counselling contexts for both parents and young adults. The findings may be used to benefit current and future Asian New Zealander parents, by inspiring them to better understand their children and provide adequate support as they transition into adulthood and experience their first romantic relationships. Moreover, the findings may provide some credible insight for those outside the demographic, such as non-Asians or New Zealand born parents and young adults who may have affected friends and would like to understand them better.

6.4 Limitations of the findings

It should be mentioned that this study has some limitations, particularly in terms of its sample size, the societal context and perspective of the research. The study was explicitly undertaken in an Asian New Zealand setting with participants who came

forward willingly to share their experiences. Thus, the study was never meant to speak beyond the scope of data, and the findings should not be generalised to other communities or even the Asian New Zealand community overall.

This research deliberately focused on participants' experiences and attitudes alone and did not aim to gather data from both parties, as doing so would be beyond the scope of the research and would risk detracting focus from young adults' experiences. Parents did not have any contribution to the research; the data is based on respondents' observations and interpretations of their parents' attitudes. Here is where findings might be limited due to a risk that respondents, at least so potentially, might have misread or misinterpreted parents' communications, intentions and attitudes based on their own biases. It is important when interpreting the data to remember that the leading concern of the study was the perceptions in young adults with respect to their parents' responses to their dating, and not how parents actually might have felt or responded to their children. Thus, research from the parents' perspective could be valuable in future research projects, particularly in terms of their perceptions and motives for reacting to children's dating activity the way they do. Similarly, a potential limitation is the fact that only Asian New Zealander youth were surveyed and interviewed. Again, this focus was intentional as the study did not aim to compare individuals' experiences with those of non-Asians. However, it may be interesting to include and compare non-Asian perspectives in future research, such as experiences of Caucasian New Zealander youth in relation to the topic.

Another possible limitation was the potential bias the researcher may have had with the topic. Being part of the demographic helped the researcher apply their foreground knowledge and also acted as a driving inspiration for them to pursue the study. However, it may have also created some biased opinions throughout the data analysis process. While the researcher tried their best to remain neutral and unbiased, it may be inevitable for the researcher to naturally apply aspects of their insights throughout the writing process. As with most works, the researcher may have some innate connection to the study, and while not necessarily a limitation, the idea should be disclaimed.

A further limitation is recognising that this study analyses a brief moment in history, looking specifically at the experiences of young Asian New Zealanders in 2021. The 18-34 year old participants in this study are still among the first 1.5 generation Asians in New Zealand, based on New Zealand's immigration policies since 1986 and their parents' immigration thereafter. More recent generations such as younger families who

have only migrated within the last 5-10 years may have very different experiences and responses.

Finally, this is a relatively small research project that is among the first of its kind outside of the main 'Western' countries studied in previous literature. Existing studies on the topic were helpful, relevant and provided a base for the research, but primarily focused on specific Asian ethnic groups or were conducted in dominant Western countries such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. This study may not be enough to compare differences between experiences of young 1.5 generation Asians in New Zealand with those of other 'Western' countries.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

There is significant potential for further research around this topic. Some initial recommendations include larger scale research, comparative studies with other demographics and studies specific to prevalent themes.

First, future research may be conducted at a larger scale in order to gain a better understanding of how the findings can be generalised to the wider Asian New Zealand demographic. An advantage of a larger scale study would be the ability to compare differences in individuals' experiences across a broader range of responses, therefore generating richer findings and improving the accuracy of significant themes.

Second, it may be beneficial for future studies to analyse both Asian and non-Asian demographics. For instance, inquiring into the way non-Asian New Zealanders' parents affect their romantic relationships would generate data that could be used for comparison with Asian centric studies. These findings may add validity to Asian New Zealanders' observations of their peers' dating activity as affected by their non-Asian parents. Additionally, it may be beneficial to ask non-Asian New Zealanders about their opinions and observations of Asian peers' romantic relationships and how they appear to be affected by their parents. These findings may further validate Asian young adults' experiences through confirmation from outside parties.

Similarly, it would be valuable to study the parents' perspective on the topic and inquire into their motives for having certain attitudes or imposing certain rules regarding their children's romantic activity. These results would contribute to a richer pool of data in various relevant genres (such as immigrant parents and families, Asian parenting styles and parent-child communication regarding dating and sex). In a similar way that the current study may help parents or others outside of the demographic understand

their experiences, parent-focused studies may help young adults better understand their parents' viewpoints.

Given the prominence of certain themes within this small study, these themes have the potential to form the basis for future research. Therefore, it may be useful to conduct research specific to certain key themes in a New Zealand context, such as dating being a distraction from education, parents' non-confrontational communication, or young adults' dishonesty about their dating activity. The further exploration of these themes would provide valuable data that can add to existing research on the topic of adolescents' dating behaviour.

Studies in this field could also be developed and contributed to by focusing on particular groups of society, for example through investigating how these phenomena specifically affect children whose parents do not live in New Zealand, individuals who are already parents themselves, non-heterosexual/LGBTQI+ individuals or those living in rural areas of the country. Studying these specific demographics may provide data that could be compared to non-specific studies, drawing attention to respondents' different experiences and providing a source for better understanding their viewpoints.

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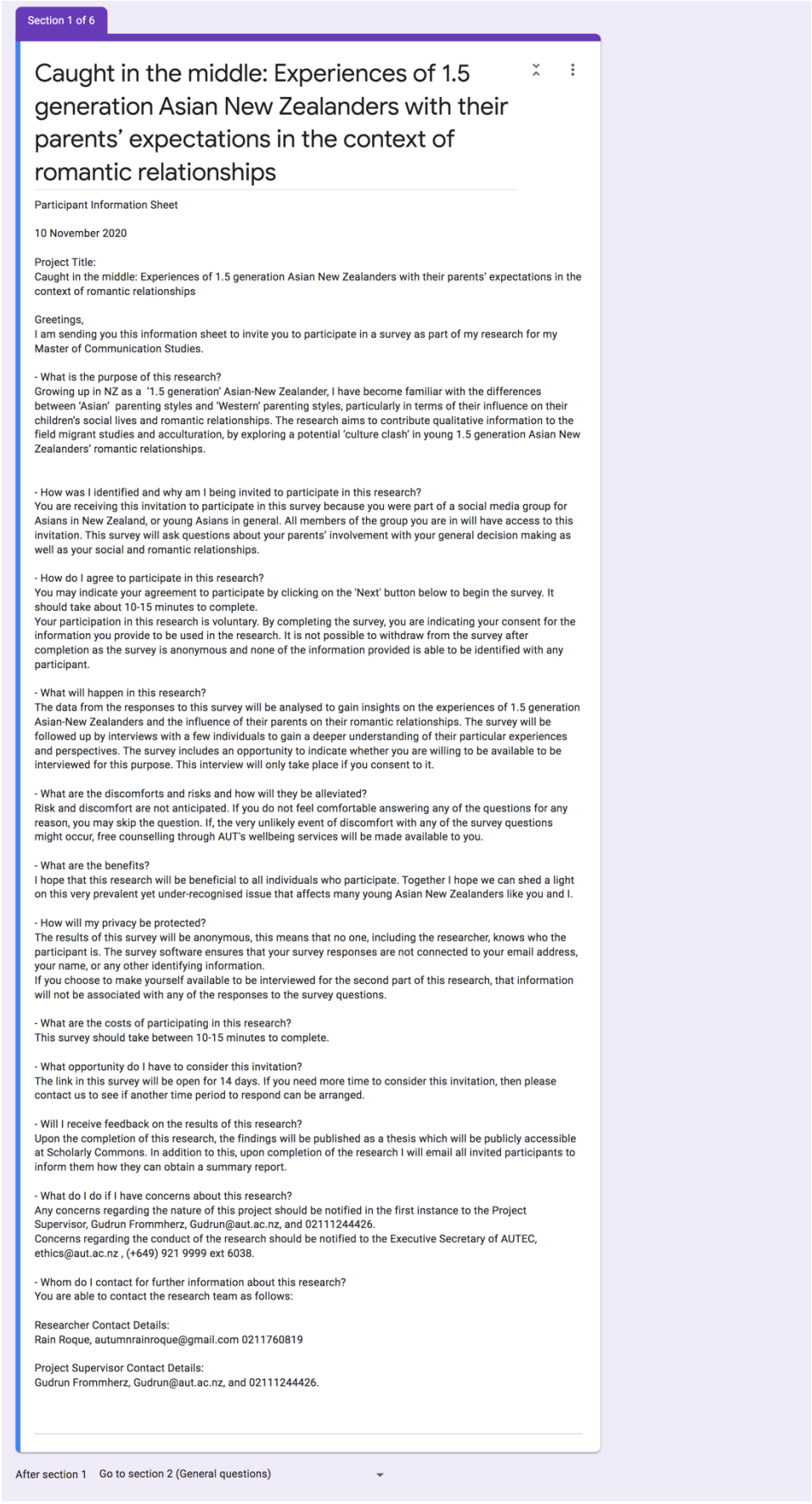
Appendices

Survey Questions



Section 1 of 6

Caught in the middle: Experiences of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders with their parents' expectations in the context of romantic relationships

Participant Information Sheet

10 November 2020

Project Title:
Caught in the middle: Experiences of 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders with their parents' expectations in the context of romantic relationships

Greetings,
I am sending you this information sheet to invite you to participate in a survey as part of my research for my Master of Communication Studies.

- What is the purpose of this research?
Growing up in NZ as a '1.5 generation' Asian-New Zealander, I have become familiar with the differences between 'Asian' parenting styles and 'Western' parenting styles, particularly in terms of their influence on their children's social lives and romantic relationships. The research aims to contribute qualitative information to the field migrant studies and acculturation, by exploring a potential 'culture clash' in young 1.5 generation Asian New Zealanders' romantic relationships.

- How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?
You are receiving this invitation to participate in this survey because you were part of a social media group for Asians in New Zealand, or young Asians in general. All members of the group you are in will have access to this invitation. This survey will ask questions about your parents' involvement with your general decision making as well as your social and romantic relationships.

- How do I agree to participate in this research?
You may indicate your agreement to participate by clicking on the 'Next' button below to begin the survey. It should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.
Your participation in this research is voluntary. By completing the survey, you are indicating your consent for the information you provide to be used in the research. It is not possible to withdraw from the survey after completion as the survey is anonymous and none of the information provided is able to be identified with any participant.

- What will happen in this research?
The data from the responses to this survey will be analysed to gain insights on the experiences of 1.5 generation Asian-New Zealanders and the influence of their parents on their romantic relationships. The survey will be followed up by interviews with a few individuals to gain a deeper understanding of their particular experiences and perspectives. The survey includes an opportunity to indicate whether you are willing to be available to be interviewed for this purpose. This interview will only take place if you consent to it.

- What are the discomforts and risks and how will they be alleviated?
Risk and discomfort are not anticipated. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of the questions for any reason, you may skip the question. If, the very unlikely event of discomfort with any of the survey questions might occur, free counselling through AUT's wellbeing services will be made available to you.

- What are the benefits?
I hope that this research will be beneficial to all individuals who participate. Together I hope we can shed a light on this very prevalent yet under-recognised issue that affects many young Asian New Zealanders like you and I.

- How will my privacy be protected?
The results of this survey will be anonymous, this means that no one, including the researcher, knows who the participant is. The survey software ensures that your survey responses are not connected to your email address, your name, or any other identifying information.
If you choose to make yourself available to be interviewed for the second part of this research, that information will not be associated with any of the responses to the survey questions.

- What are the costs of participating in this research?
This survey should take between 10-15 minutes to complete.

- What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?
The link in this survey will be open for 14 days. If you need more time to consider this invitation, then please contact us to see if another time period to respond can be arranged.

- Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?
Upon the completion of this research, the findings will be published as a thesis which will be publicly accessible at Scholarly Commons. In addition to this, upon completion of the research I will email all invited participants to inform them how they can obtain a summary report.

- What do I do if I have concerns about this research?
Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Gudrun Frommherz, Gudrun@aut.ac.nz, and 02111244426.
Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, ethics@aut.ac.nz , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

- Whom do I contact for further information about this research?
You are able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:
Rain Roque, autumnrainroque@gmail.com 0211760819

Project Supervisor Contact Details:
Gudrun Frommherz, Gudrun@aut.ac.nz, and 02111244426.

After section 1 Go to section 2 (General questions)

Section 2 of 6

General questions

Description (optional)

1. What is your age?

Short-answer text

2. What is your gender?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Gender-diverse
- ○ Do not wish to state
- ○ Other...

3. Which of these ethnic groups do you identify with most? (If you are of mixed ethnic origin, please select the one ethnic group you associate with most.)

1. Afghani
2. Anglo Indian
3. Bangladeshi
4. Bengali
5. Bhutanese
6. Burmese
7. Cambodian
8. Chin
9. Chinese (mainland)
10. Cambodian Chinese
11. Hong Kong Chinese
12. Malaysian Chinese
13. Singaporean Chinese
14. Vietnamise Chinese
15. Eurasian
16. Fijian Indian
17. Filipino
18. Indian Tamil
19. Indonesian
20. Japanese
21. Karen
22. Korean

23. Lao
24. Malay
25. Malaysian Indian
26. Maldivian
27. Mongolian
28. Nepalese
29. Pakistani
30. Punjabi
31. Sikh
32. Sinhalese
33. South African Indian
34. Sri Lankan Tamil
35. Taiwanese
36. Thai
37. Tibetan
38. Vietnamese
39. None of the above (Other/Don't want to state)

4. Have you been or are currently in a romantic relationship?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

5. How long have you lived in NZ?

1. Born here and lived here since
2. Less than 3 years
3. Between 3 and 4 years
4. Between 4 and 5 years
5. Between 5 and 6 years
6. Between 6 and 7 years
7. Between 7 and 8 years
8. Between 8 and 9 years
9. More than 9 years

6. How long have your parents lived in NZ?

1. Less than 2 years
2. Between 2 and 4 years
3. Between 4 and 6 years
4. Between 6 and 8 years
5. Between 8 and 10 years
6. Between 10 and 12 years
7. More than 12 years

7. At what age did you move out?

1. I still live at home with parents
2. 16
3. 17
4. 18
5. 19
6. 20
7. 21
8. 22
9. 23
10. 24
11. 25

After section 2 Go to section 3 (Specific Questions)

Section 3 of 6

Specific Questions

When answering these questions, think about your first/earliest romantic relationships

8. Generally speaking, how much were your parents involved in your daily activities? (e.g. picking you up from school, asking about your plans for the next day)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	A great deal

9. What kind of daily/regular activities were your parents normally involved in? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Regular commuting
- [ ] Grocery shopping
- [ ] Physical exercise
- [ ] Study/Assignments
- [ ] Socialising
- [ ] Dietary decisions
- [ ] Social media use
- [ ] Watching TV
- [ ] Music choices
- [ ] How to observe festivals/holidays
- [ ] Other...

10. Generally speaking, how much were your parents involved with your life choices?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	A great deal

11. What kind of life choices were they involved with? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Choice of school subjects
- [ ] Choice of university courses
- [ ] Career decisions
- [ ] Accommodation
- [ ] Friendships
- [ ] Romantic relationships
- [ ] Out-of-town travel
- [ ] Buying a car
- [ ] Buying a house
- [ ] Other...

12. How comfortable did you feel discussing your general emotions with your parents?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Extremely uncomfortable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely comfortable

13. How much did you tell parents about your casual friendships?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Nothing at all	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	A great deal

14. What details would you tell your parents about your casual friendships? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] How I met a friend
- [ ] What we do when we go out
- [ ] Where we go
- [ ] What their ethnicity is
- [ ] What their socio-economic status is
- [ ] What their religion is
- [ ] What their profession/career path is
- [ ] What their family background is
- [ ] What their personality is like (hobbies, interests, talents etc.)
- [ ] Other...

15. How comfortable did you feel telling your parents about your emotions in regards to your romantic relationships?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Extremely uncomfortable	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely comfortable

16. How much did you tell parents about your romantic relationships?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Nothing at all	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	A great deal

17. What details would you tell your parents about your romantic relationships?

- [ ] How I met a partner
- [ ] What we do when we go out
- [ ] Where we go
- [ ] What their ethnicity is
- [ ] What their socio-economic status is
- [ ] What their religion is
- [ ] What their profession/career path is
- [ ] What their family background is
- [ ] What their personality is like (hobbies, interests, talents etc.)
- [ ] Other...

18. If you spoke with your parents about your romantic relationships, why did you tell them these details?

- [ ] I felt like they have a right to know
- [ ] I felt like they generally should know
- [ ] I felt obliged to/have a duty to tell them
- [ ] They asked me
- [ ] I like to build trust with them
- [ ] I wanted them to be involved
- [ ] I wanted them to know in case I needed their help (practical, e.g. in case your car breaks down while your o...
- [ ] I wanted them to know in case I needed their advice (emotional, e.g. you are having issues with your partn...
- [ ] Other...

19. If you did not tell your parents about your relationships, what were your reasons?

- [ ] They would judge me
- [ ] They would restrict me
- [ ] They would ask too many questions
- [ ] They wouldn't care
- [ ] It would be weird/We never talked about those things
- [ ] Other...

20. Did your parents ask about your dating life?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	Always

21. What did your parents ask about in terms of your dating life? (Tick those that apply)

- [ ] Partner's personality
- [ ] Partner's ethnicity
- [ ] Partner's age
- [ ] Partner's religious affiliation
- [ ] Partner's job
- [ ] Partner's study path
- [ ] Partner's hobbies
- [ ] Partner's income
- [ ] Partner's appearance
- [ ] Partner's family
- [ ] Partner's upbringing
- [ ] Partner's location/accommodation
- [ ] How you met
- [ ] How often you see each other
- [ ] How long you have been together
- [ ] How serious your relationship is
- [ ] Partner's gender or sexual orientation
- [ ] How physical your relationship is
- [ ] How 'safe' you are being in terms of sexual health or unwanted pregnancy
- [ ] Your thoughts about or feelings in the relationship
- [ ] Other...

22. Did your parents order or imply that dating was not allowed?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

23. If yes, when did they say it would be okay to date? (If no, go to question 24)

- ( ) After 16
- ( ) After 18
- ( ) After a certain age they set
- ( ) After finishing school
- ( ) After finishing uni
- ( ) After getting a job
- ( ) After moving out
- ( ) Other...

24. Did your parents ever oppose your romantic relationships?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

25. If yes, how did they express their opposition? (Tick all that apply). (If no, go to 26)

- ☐ Tried to talk me out of it
- ☐ Did not allow me to bring my partner to our house
- ☐ Did not let me see my partner
- ☐ Grounded me
- ☐ Threatened punishment if my grades dropped
- ☐ Imposed a curfew
- ☐ Checked my phone
- ☐ Took my phone away
- ☐ Tracked my phone
- ☐ Asked for my passwords
- ☐ Limited my car use
- ☐ Got people to spy on me
- ☐ Talked to partner's family
- ☐ Other...

26. Why do you think they opposed? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ My parents did not consider my partner suitable (career, income, ethnicity, religion)
- ☐ They did not want me to be distracted from my study
- ☐ They did not want me to be distracted from my career
- ☐ They thought I was too young
- ☐ They feared I might become a parent unwanted/too early
- ☐ They did not trust my judgement
- ☐ They disapproved of my own or my partner's sexual orientation
- ☐ They thought I'd become involved in more 'dangerous' activities like truancy, drugs or alcohol
- ☐ They were trying to protect me
- ☐ They thought my partner was a bad influence
- ☐ They had their own negative dating experiences in the past which they wanted me to avoid
- ☐ Their parents also had the same oppositional attitudes about their romantic relationships
- ☐ Other...

After section 3 Go to section 4 (Cultural differences)

Section 4 of 6

Cultural differences

Description (optional)

27. How would you describe NZ's cultural attitude towards dating as a teenager, compared to your own Asian culture's?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Significantly less accepting	○	○	○	○	○	Significantly more accepting

28. How integrated would you say your parents are to NZ culture, in terms of general attitudes towards dating as a teenager?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	Completely

After section 4 Go to section 5 (Part 4)

Section 5 of 6

Part 4

Description (optional)

29. How did you respond to your parents' reaction about you having a romantic relationship?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Felt more rebellious/distant	○	○	○	○	○	Felt more co-operative/trusting

30. If your parents opposed your romantic relationship/s, how did you respond?

- [ ] I had a proper conversation with them about it
- [ ] I broke up with my partner
- [ ] I defied them and continued to see my partner/date
- [ ] I continued to see my partner/date in secret
- [ ] I continued to see my partner/date but lied and said they were just a friend
- [ ] Other...

31. Did your parents ever encourage your romantic relationships?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

32. If yes, what reasons do you think they had for encouraging your romantic relationships? (Tick all that apply). (If no, click 'next')

- [ ] Partner is of the same ethnicity
- [ ] Partner is of a different ethnicity
- [ ] Prospect of long term relationship (including civil union or marriage)
- [ ] Partner's social/professional standing
- [ ] Partner's family
- [ ] They wanted you to 'settle down' soon - e.g. be in a stable relationship, get married/have a civil union, have...
- [ ] Other...

After section 5 Go to section 6 (Part 5)

Section 6 of 6

Part 5

Description (optional)

33. Compared to your peers, did you feel like your parents gave you more or less 'freedom' to GO OUT as a teenager?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Significantly less	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Significantly more

34. Compared to your peers, did you feel like your parents gave you more or less 'freedom' to DATE as a teenager?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Significantly less	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Significantly more

35. Were you ever dishonest to your parents about the following topics? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Where you are going
- [ ] How long you would be out for
- [ ] Who you are meeting with
- [ ] How many people you are meeting with
- [ ] That you are in a romantic relationship
- [ ] Who you were in a romantic relationship with
- [ ] How long you had been in a romantic relationship
- [ ] Other...

36. How frequent was the dishonesty?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rare	○	○	○	○	○	Very frequent

37. How would you describe your overall relationship with your parents at the time of your first romantic relationship? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Trusting
- [ ] Remote
- [ ] Respectful
- [ ] Balanced
- [ ] Unfair
- [ ] Hierarchical
- [ ] Inconsistent
- [ ] Other...

38. Did your parents speak openly to you about romantic relationships (in terms of e.g. what qualities you should expect in a partner, overcoming differences, navigating arguments, love languages etc.)?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	Always

39. Did your parents display affection to each other in front of you (i.e. saying 'I love you' to each other, holding hands, kissing each other before leaving to work, making each other food, watching a movie together)?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	Always

40. Did your parents speak openly to you about sexual education (in terms of e.g. consent, knowing your boundaries, how to stay safe against STDs, safe sexual practices, unwanted pregnancy etc.)?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	Always

41. What factors do you think guided your parents' attitude about discussing sexual education with you? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Religious considerations
- [ ] Cultural upbringing
- [ ] Their own experience
- [ ] A sense of responsibility and/or protection
- [ ] Topic is not considered a parental task
- [ ] Other...

42. Did you view your parents' romantic relationship as a role model for your own?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	Completely

43. When did you tell your parents about a romantic relationship?

- ○ As soon as it started
- ○ Only once I am sure about it
- ○ Only after my partner and I were 'official' (e.g. calling each 'partner/boyfriend/girlfriend', being exclusive wi...
- ○ Only when they asked me about it
- ○ I did not tell them at all
- ○ Other...

44. Did you feel supported by your parents if there were any problems in your romantic relationship?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	Always

45. How has your parents' approach to your dating life changed since your first/earliest romantic relationships?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Worsened	○	○	○	○	○	Improved

46. What do you wish your parents did differently in terms of their approach to your early dating experiences and romantic relationships?

Long-answer text

47. Any other comments?

Long-answer text

Interview Questions

Category 1

1. How did you gauge your parents stance on your dating life and romantic relationships?
2. Why do you think your parents reacted this way?
3. Can you describe a typical interaction between you and your parents with respect to your romantic relationships?
4. What do you think your parents wanted for you in a romantic relationship?/ What were your parents' genuine concerns when it came to your dating life? How valid did you find them?
5. What was a significant experience/s that happened between you and your parents once you stated dating?
6. How did you negotiate differences between yourself and your parents with respect to your dating life?
7. What was the most difficult thing about your parents' reaction to your dating life?
8. If your parents opposed your relationship and tried to talk you out if it, what were your parents' rationale for doing so?
9. Why do you think your parents had this stance/these reasons for encouraging your relationship?
10. Do you think that your parents' general stance towards dating matched the way they treated your romantic relationships?/ Were there any contradictions?
11. How did your parents' treatment of your dating life change your relationship with your them?

Category 2

1. How did your partner react to your parents stance on your relationship?
2. How did your parents' stance and treatment of your romantic relationship change your relationship with your partner?

Category 3

1. Did you compare yourself to your siblings or peers in terms of how much ‘freedom’ they had to go out/socialise and date?/ How their parents treated their dating and social life?
2. (If applicable) Did your parents treat your siblings differently? If so, in what ways and why do you think there was this difference?

Category 4

1. How and why did your parents teach you as much or as little as they did about sex?
2. Why did they do so in that way? / What do you think they were thinking at that time?
3. Where did you turn to get further guidance and education on sexual health etc?
4. How would you have wanted to learn about sexual health, pregnancy etc?
5. Why were your parents as open or as distant as they were when it came to discussing your emotions/feelings in relation to your dating life?
6. Who did you turn to discuss these emotions and get advice about dating?
7. Would you have wanted more or less emotional support and discussion/involvement from your parents?

Category 5

1. How would you describe your experience dating as a young Asian in New Zealand?
2. How big of a role do you think culture plays in this whole situation?

Category 6

1. How would you have wanted to learn about relationships and dating?
2. Were there times when you realised your parents were right with their stance on your romantic relationship?
3. Could you understand where your parents were coming from? Or could you only see their perspective in hindsight (e.g., when you grew up and saw things from a different perspective yourself, or you broke up with someone and saw your parents were right about them etc). Or do you still struggle to see what they meant?
4. What do you think caused your parents’ change of attitude towards your dating life and relationships?

5. What did you learn from all your experiences (navigating your parents' stance on your romantic relationships?)
6. (If you plan on having your own children) What would you do differently?
7. Any other aspects you would like to mention?