

# THE CUPERTINO BUBBLE

TECHNOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND  
SOCIAL INFLUENCES ON STUDENT  
ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

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# OVERVIEW

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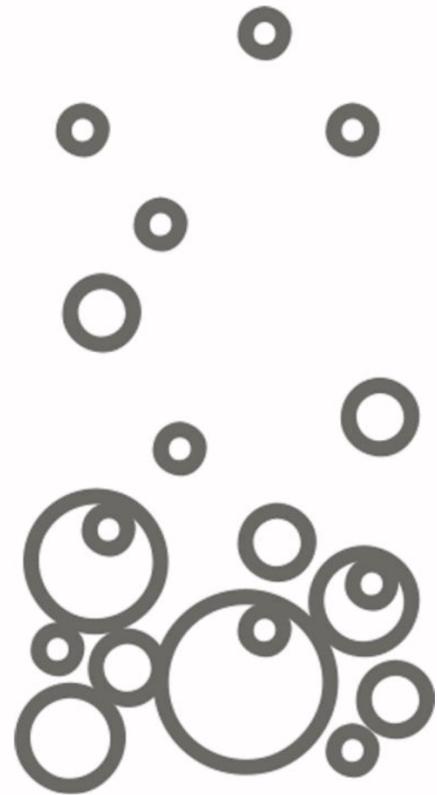
Acknowledgments



# HANNAH MOK

- 2nd-year Student at UCSB
- Pursuing B.A. Communication and B.A. Statistics & Data Science
- Grew up in Cupertino, CA
- Fascinated by the dynamics of how people interact with one another and the impact of these interactions on individuals

INTRODUCTION:  
A DEFINITION OF BUBBLE



An isolated environment  
of shared experiences,  
where like-minded members  
of the community share a  
common set of beliefs and  
attitudes.

# WHAT IS THE CUPERTINO BUBBLE?

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A micro-culture born out of three main factors

## ETHNIC ENCLAVE

Starting from the 1980's, there has been an influx of the Asian population in Cupertino. Today, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates a 67.8% Asian population.

## LARGE PRESENCE OF TECH COMPANIES

Cupertino is known as a high-tech hub in the "heart of Silicon Valley". The success-driven corporate mindset is highly woven into Cupertino culture.

## AMERICAN DREAM

Since the beginning of its history, Cupertino's community has been defined by its pioneering spirit, dominantly middle-class population, and quality schools.

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# EDUCATION AND THE BUBBLE

Past literature establishes that students' beliefs and attitudes about education are shaped by factors such as:

- Socio-economic status
- Parents' education
- Ethnocultural values
- Societal norms

These factors provide an organized method for identifying common experiences of students in Cupertino, in order to study its influence on their beliefs and attitudes about education.

Cupertino's specially curated environment is useful in examining:

- How different cultural contexts interact with each other
- How factors aggregately influence attitudes on higher education
- What consequences are produced from the amplified pressures to succeed

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RESEARCH QUESTION



- **8 UNDERGRADUATE/  
GRADUATE STUDENTS**

All must be pursuant of higher education in order to understand the nuances that affected their decision to pursue higher education.

- **EDUCATION**

Participants were required to have attended both Cupertino middle and high schools.

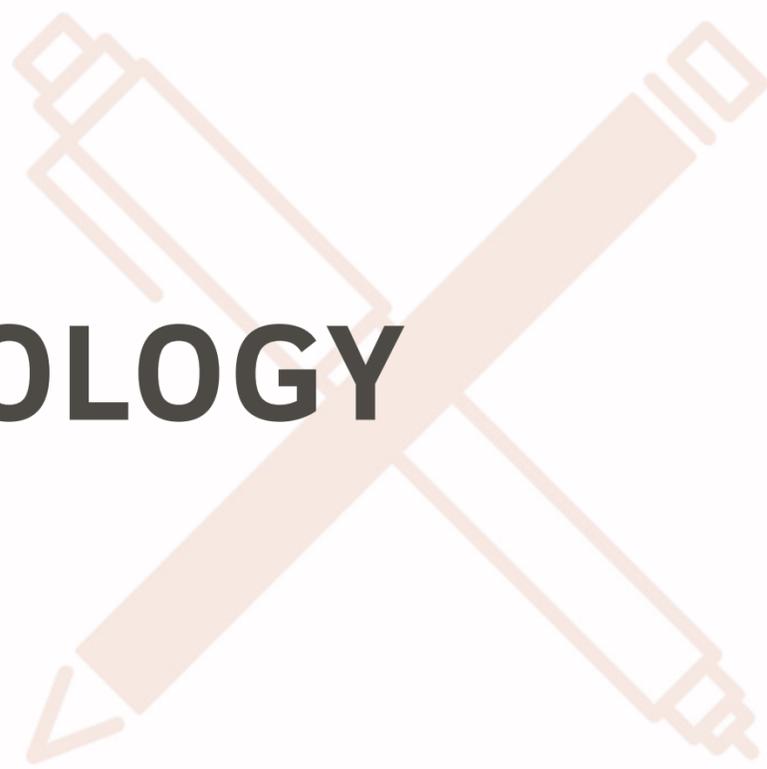
- **ASIAN ETHNICITY**

The two largest Asian demographics in Cupertino are Chinese and Indian. To represent this accordingly and narrow down the scope of this study, half of the participants are Chinese / Chinese-American and half are Indian / Indian-American.

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## Research Sample

A purposive sampling method was used by following these criteria.



# METHODOLOGY

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## 1) PRESURVEY

This was used to collect categorical data, such as: educational background, parents' highest education level achieved, parents' educational background.

## 2) IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

30-40 minute one-on-one interviews were conducted to understand participants' perceptions of their educational experience and habits, beliefs and attitudes toward higher education, and perceived influences on their education.

Participants ordinally ranked five factors from 1 (strongest influence) to 5 (weakest influence) on their views and attitudes on education. Each person was asked to elaborate on their chosen rankings in the subsequent interview.

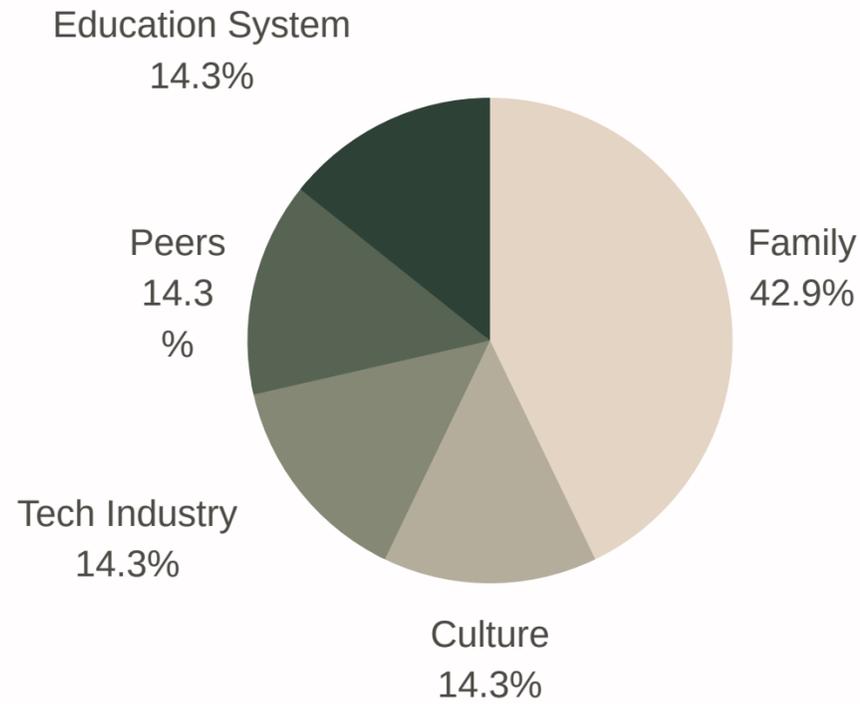
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Please rank in order the following factors from 1 (strongest influence) to 5 (weakest influence) on your views and attitudes toward education. Select each number 1-5 only once. \*

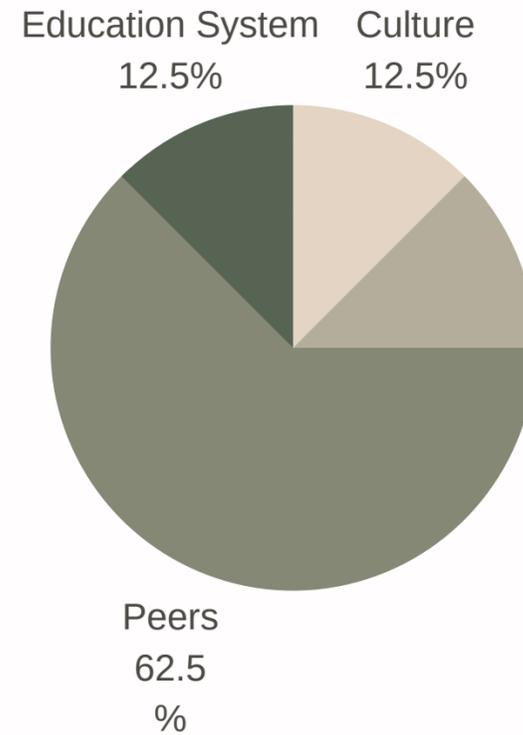
	1	2	3	4	5
Family	<input type="radio"/>				
People around you	<input type="radio"/>				
Presence of tech industry	<input type="radio"/>				
Ethnicity and culture	<input type="radio"/>				
Education system in place	<input type="radio"/>				

# RESULTS: MAJOR INFLUENCES ON VIEWS ON EDUCATION (STRONGEST TO WEAKEST)

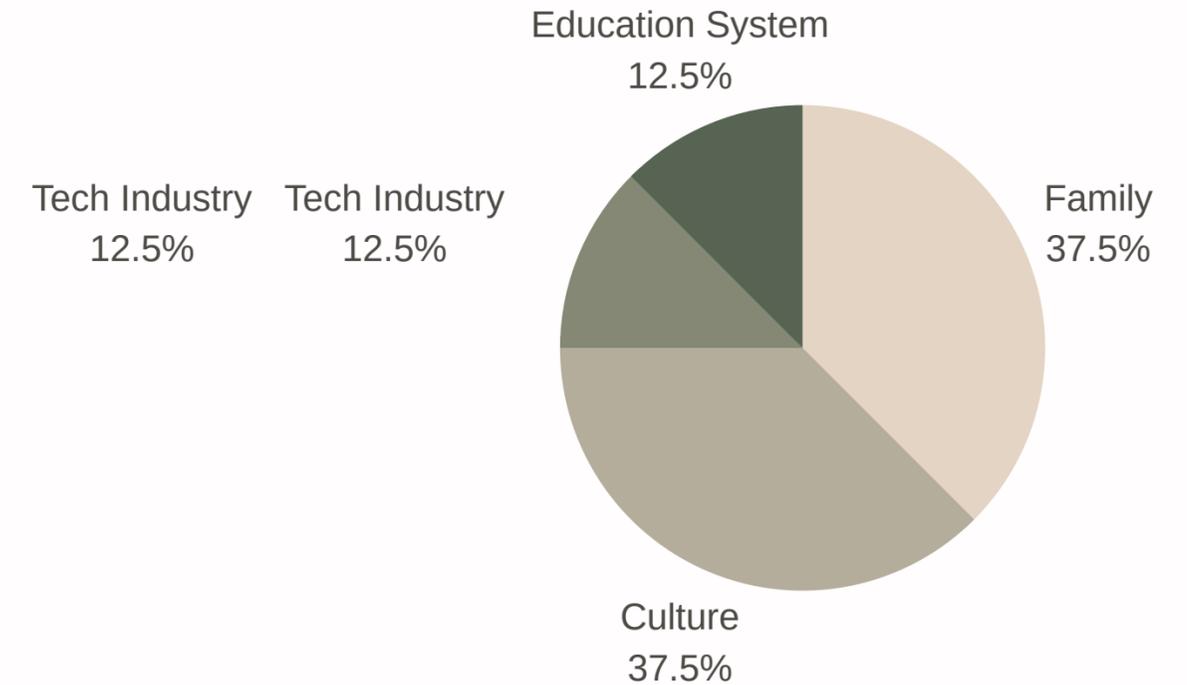
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**#1 INFLUENCE:  
FAMILY (42.9%)**



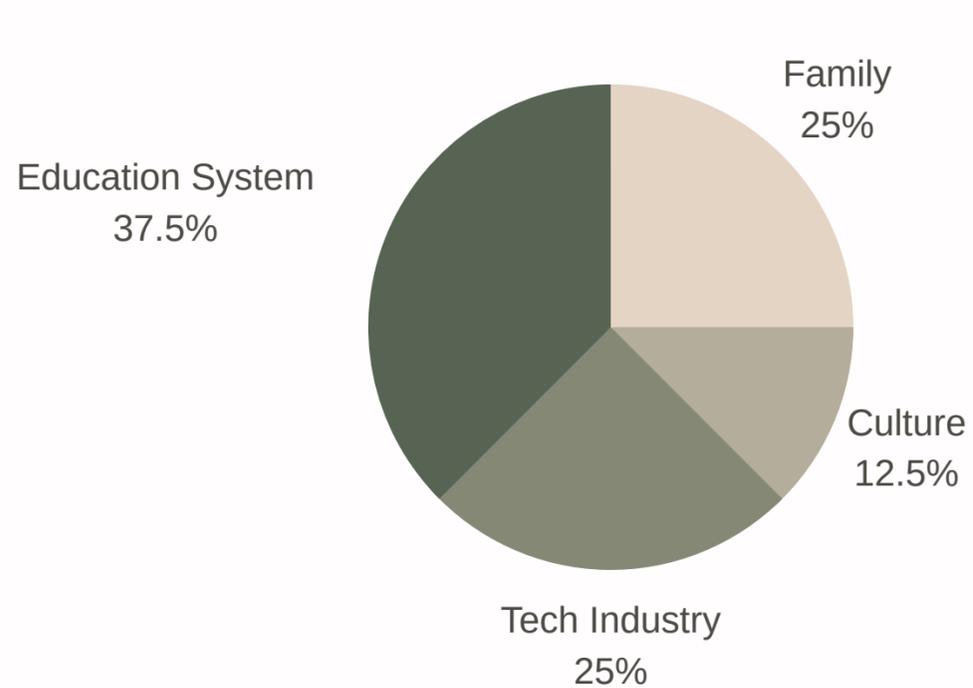
**#2 INFLUENCE:  
PEERS (62.5%)**



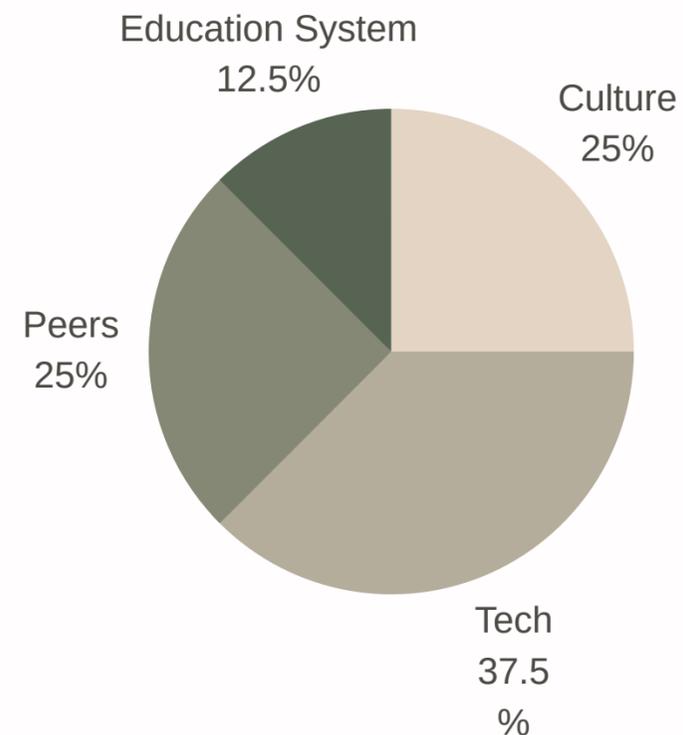
**#3 INFLUENCE:  
CULTURE (37.5%)**

# RESULTS: MAJOR INFLUENCES ON VIEWS ON EDUCATION (STRONGEST TO WEAKEST)

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**#4 INFLUENCE:  
EDUCATION SYSTEM  
(37.5%)**



**#5 INFLUENCE:  
TECH (37.5%)**

There is a clear majority opinion on the top two strongest influences: Family and Peers. Over a third of the participants ranked Culture, Education System, and Tech as the three weakest influences respectively.

## EDUCATION WAS ESSENTIAL

"For me higher education was kind of essential, it wasn't something that you thought about not doing."

## CULTURAL/FAMILIAL INFLUENCE

"It played a big role because if you said high school was it, for family back home they'd be like "Um, what are you doing, uh hello?"

## HYPER-COMPETITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

People want to be so high achieving... [I saw] how much people looked down on someone for GPA or something when they don't know it all.

## TECH INDUSTRY-CENTRIC

"We're in the middle of Silicon Valley- every other parent works at a tech giant... It influenced school culture a lot. Computer science and fields like that were looked up to."

# Common Themes

# IMPLICATIONS

These results provide an insight into how different influences affect students' attitudes towards higher education. The emphasis on pursuing education, hyper-competitive school culture, focus on the tech industry, and role of Chinese and Indian cultural values are shown to support and reinforce a common mindset toward education.

# IMPLICATIONS

There may also be consequences as a result of this attitude being reinforced through multiple influences. This is seen through several observations mentioned of unhealthy amounts of stress and mental health issues due to the strong focus and perceived need to succeed and do well in school. One participant mentioned wishing that they were able to "be a teenager more", as they spent most of their high school years only studying.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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