

Finding the Critical Influences that Foster Resilience for Southeast Asian American Students in Higher Education

Jaine Park, M.S. in Counseling and College Student Personnel - California Lutheran University, Department of Counselor Education - Festival of Scholars, April 22nd, 2021

The Problem

Although there are “fifty-seven distinct ethnic groups” within Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), less than 1% of these research articles focus on AAPIs (Museus & Vue, 2013). The data also show a high number of Southeast Asian American (SEAA) students struggle to graduate secondary education, and only a few students continue their educational journey to higher education (Maramba, 2011). These are the leading questions to guide this study:

- ❖ How do first-generation SEAA college students reconcile their ethnic and social identities, such as being a first-generation college student, being an immigrant, and/or being SEAA, with their student identity?
- ❖ What are the factors that promote resilience in first-generation SEAA to persist in higher education?
- ❖ What type of college outreach process can help first-generation SEAA students to transition and adjust in higher education?

Results

- Student expressed a **direct outreach** from student organization or an easy access to find information helped them navigate higher education easily.
- Students find a sense of belonging when they feel **accepted of their cultural and religious backgrounds** through student organizations or conferences.
- Understanding immigration/refugee process of students’ family background help outsiders to recognize **misconception of model minority stereotypes**.
- Finding **educational and career goals** help students build resiliency to push further in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to better understand the specific needs of first-generation SEAA students in the higher education setting. Currently, many higher education institutions lack support programs designed to meet the needs of SEAA students. This is because of the misconception of the model minority stereotype that most Asian American students excel academically (Wallitt, 2008). When advising and examining students’ needs, this deficit-based mindset must be re-examined when advising and examining students’ needs (Yosso, 2005). Therefore, this study strives to understand the background of SEAA undergraduate and graduate students, the challenges they face, and examine what factors assist SEAA students in building resiliency to persist in higher education.

Understanding immigration/refugee process

Effects of model minority stereotype

Transparent outreach and easy access

Culturally accepting environment

Methodology

- The study was conducted with a Qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach by interviewing a total of five SEAA undergraduate and graduate students about their experiences of higher education journey.
- Data collection process includes:
 - Criterion, maximum variation, and snowball sampling methods.
 - 1:1 virtual interview with each participant.
 - Open-ended, semi-structured interview questions about family, culture, educational goals, and higher education journey.
 - Researcher journal.
- The interview was transcribed verbatim to analyze patterns of students’ experiences of higher education. The analysis was used to measure student’s resiliency by recognizing how they cope with adversities. Moreover, Tara Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Model (2005) was utilized as a theoretical framework to understand types of cultural capitals that students are aware of and utilized to understand how students navigate adversities.

Implications

The results of the study strives to :

- ❖ Provide insights into SEAA support programs
- ❖ Broaden the policy and practices serving SEAA students
- ❖ Review future AAPI educational data and research with analytical perspectives.
- ❖ Cultivate culturally accepting campus climate and organization on campus for various religious and ethnic groups of SEAA students to find voices and sense of belonging.