

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT FAMILY HAS ON ASIAN AND HISPANIC STUDENTS' CHOICE OF MAJOR

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Introduction

- Student of color struggle with choosing majors and handling family pressure
- Asian Americans are overrepresented in some occupations (e.g. science, professional, technology) while being underrepresented in others (e.g., production, entertaining, social and humanistic) (Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999; Fouad, Kantamneni, Smothers, Chen, Fitzpatrick, & Terry, 2008)
- Asian Americans might choose their career based on the whole family's mission rather on their own interest or intention (e.g., Leong & Gupta, 2007).
- *Can add something about Latino Americans.*

Outline

- Defining the Asian and Hispanic Groups
- Understanding the main cultural values for each group
- Understanding how the cultural context from which Asian and Hispanic students come from impacts how they choose their majors
- Identifying how to best work with Asian or Hispanic Students to help them choose a major

Asian American & Diversity Within

- The most commonly used definition of *Asian American* is the U.S. Census Bureau definition of Asian, which includes individuals of East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian origin.
- There are 28 ethnic groups within Asian American populations (Nguyen & Huang, 2007)
- The term Asian American consists of Hmong who are relatively recent immigrants, while the term Asian American also consists of Japanese, many among whom are already the fifth generation or beyond in the U.S.

Population of Asian Americans in the US

- 15.5 million estimated in 2008
- Asians constitute 5% of the total US population
- 2.7% growth during 2007-2008
- Chinese-American (3.62 million), Filipinos (3.09 million), Asian Indians (2.73 million), Vietnamese (1.73 million), Koreans (1.61 million)
- Projected 40.6 million in 2050, 9% of population

Impact on Higher Education

- 50% of age 25 and older have at least a Bachelor's degree in 2008, compared to 28% of all Americans
- 20% of age 25 and older have advanced degree in 2008, compared to 10% of all Americans
- As of 2008, Asian Americans had the highest educational attainment level and median household income of any racial demographic in the country

Cultural norm & values



- ❑ Collectivism
- ❑ Relational orientation
- ❑ Family interdependency & Family obligation
- ❑ Filial piety
- ❑ Relative functionalism

Collectivism & Relational orientation

□ **Collectivism** is the tendency to place group needs and goals above the goals and desires of individual

□ **Relational orientation** is a cultural frame in which the self is defined in terms of its essential and continuing interdependence with others

Filial Piety



Obeying and honoring one's parents, providing for the material and mental well-being of one's aged parents, performing the ceremonial duties of ancestral worship, taking care to avoid harm to one's body, ensuring the continuity of the family line, and in general conducting oneself so as to bring honor and not disgrace to the family name. (Ho, 1994; cited in Okagaki & Bojczyk, 2002)

Family Obligation

- ❑ Family interests take precedence over individual member's interests
- ❑ Attitudinal and behavioral responsibilities
- ❑ Children are expected to show respect and affection for older family members
- ❑ Seek elder's advice and accept their decision
- ❑ Keep up with needed assistance to family
- ❑ Keep harmony in family

The Role of Birth Order & Gender

- ❑ Patriarchal arrangement means that men hold higher position than women
- ❑ Oldest son has the highest position in the family and the most responsibility
- ❑ Oldest son is expected to be a role model for the rest of the siblings
- ❑ Oldest son is given the most resources of the family members

Relative Functionalism

- The strategy used by Asian Americans to help them be successful in the US, proposed by Sue and Okazaki (1990)
- The need of mobility and survival among Asian Americans
- Educational attainments are greatly impacted by the opportunities present for upward mobility
- When mobility is limited, Asian Americans try to avoid these areas
- Choose to enter education-dependent occupations to have a higher chance of upward mobility

Societal factors

- ❑ Model Minority
- ❑ Perceived opportunity
- ❑ Discrimination

Negotiating between family mission and self interest

- In a recent study (Qin, Rounds, & Oakzaki, 2010), 7% students have their preferred occupations completely different from their majors
- 9.2% students reported that their parents want them pursue jobs have “high income, stability, social respects, and high status ”
- 19.3% students’ parents allow them to choose whatever.
- Compromise, but keep prestige level
- Six categories: follower child, rebellious child, compromised child, no clear idea child, supportive parent, conditional parent.

Who is Hispanic?

It is an ethnicity (sharing a common national origin or heritage; and language), not a race. Therefore, an Hispanic can be White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander or Native American.

According to the US Census Bureau, Hispanics are those individuals who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Spanish speaking countries of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

Retrieved from

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10-ff17.html on February 24, 2010.

Population of Hispanics in the US

- 48.4 million estimated Hispanics in 2009
- The nations largest ethnic minority
- Hispanics constitute 16% of the total Us population
- Hispanic are the fastest growing minority group

Retrieved from

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10-ff17.html on February 24, 2010.

Impact on Higher Education

- 13% Hispanics have at least a Bachelor's degree in 2009
- 935,000 Hispanics age 25 and older have advanced degrees in 2009
- 12% of college students in 2009 were Hispanic

Retrieved from

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb10-ff17.html on February 24, 2010.

Cultural Values of Hispanics

- Familism/Collectivism
- Marianismo/Machismo
- Personalismo

Collective



- ❑ Hispanics tend to view the needs of the group superseding the needs of the individual.
- ❑ An individual may have to sacrifice something for the good of the group.

Familism



- ❑ Familism can help protect the individual by providing a support system.
- ❑ There are strong feelings of identity, loyalty and reciprocity among family members.
- ❑ Dominant American culture may view familism as enmeshment or dysfunction, but it is normal in this cultural context.

Gender Role Expectations

Marianismo

Concept of self-sacrifice

Passivity

Caretaking

Duty

Honor

Sexual morality

Motherhood

Martyrdom

Machismo

Exaggerated Masculinity

Physical Prowess

Dominance

Patriarchal Hierarchy

Male Chauvinism

Personalism

- "formal friendliness," because the Hispanic culture places significant emphasis on personal relationships.
- This requires a give and take between the student and the advisor that involves respect and courtesy.
- failure to connect personally with a Hispanic student can mean a loss of trust, non-compliance, and that the student will not come back.

Application

- Help the student to understand the expectations of the outcomes in helping them to choose a major.
- Define your role as an academic advisor or career counselor. Do not assume the student understands your role.
- Clarifying expectations at the beginning of the relationship with the student can help avoid frustrations and misunderstandings later in the relationship. It can also help enhance a successful outcome.

Comparison and Highlights For Asian Americans and Hispanics

- Education is highly valued in both cultures
- Family obligation, perceived opportunity, generation status, acculturation level, order of birth impact career choice
- Gender differences exist

Level of Acculturation

- Acculturation is the cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; *also* : a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact.
- The student's level of acculturation will impact/determine your work with them.

Application

- ❑ Conduct a thorough cultural assessment of the student's background when helping the student to choose a major.
- ❑ Identify with the student what conflicts involved in choosing the major, if any, are resulting from the traditional collectivist values from the family versus the more individualistic American values commonly seen in university environments.
- ❑ Remember, that Asians and Hispanics vary greatly in traits, traditions, customs, acculturation levels, and immigration histories.

Potential Barriers to *Career* Success

- ❑ Lack of Financial Resources
- ❑ Limited Role Models
- ❑ Lack of Family Support
- ❑ Feelings of Isolation
- ❑ Marginalization
- ❑ Unaware of Resources
- ❑ Discrimination and Intolerance
- ❑ Lack of successful role models in their major

Cultural Conceptualization of Helping a Student in Choosing a Major

- Understand the student's concerns from their perspective and that of their culture
- Clarify all of the concerns
- Ask the student to explain how the problem evolved
- Identify factors contributing to the problems
- Potential resolutions for choosing a major

Cultural Dynamics

- ❑ Establishing a relationship to meet the students needs; for Hispanics it is personalismo and for Asian students it is expertise.
- ❑ Discussion around roles/careers the student has observed their family or community and how this has influenced their goals
- ❑ Identify the extent to which the student perceives barriers will prevent her from achieving her career goals
- ❑ Address academic skills, coping skills and social supports



Ideally



- The academic advisor/career counselor can help the student navigate the process to honor both her family obligations and her interests.

Resources



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Wellness Education

Career Services

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