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SPLINTERS FROM THE BAMBOO CEILING: UNDERSTANDING THE
EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN AMERICAN MEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of Leadership Studies
Organization & Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Jerald L. Adamos
San Francisco
December 2019

ABSTRACT

Splinters from the Bamboo Ceiling: Understanding the Experiences of Asian American Men in Higher Education Leadership

Asian Americans continue to confront perceptions connected to the perpetual foreigner and model minority concepts which challenges their acceptance as leaders in mainstream American culture. Asian men have recently been able to attain higher levels of education that opens doors to higher level positions and organizations yet still face barriers to career advancement opportunities. In consideration of the American higher education system, Whites continue to exceed their proportional representation in areas of the institution while Asian Americans do not. The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. This qualitative, phenomenological study involved recruiting 13 participants through purposeful sampling processes and snowball sampling, identifying Asian American men in American higher education leadership or managerial roles with a minimum of 10 years of experience.

Various findings emerged as each primary question was analyzed. Themes that include: (a) isolation, (b) overcompensation, (c) added responsibility, and (d) continued discrimination assisted to uncover any advantages or disadvantages that come with identifying as both Asian American and male in higher education leadership. In addition, themes such as: (a) unconscious use of privilege, (b) race as an added layer, (c) assertiveness, (d) queerness, and (e) understanding barriers for women, illuminated how characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of the participants. Continually,

concepts such as: (a) bamboo ceiling, (b) invalidation as a racial minority, (c) anti-blackness, and (d) geographic location were all indicated as aspects connected to racism experienced by the participants. Finally, in understanding how Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education the following topics were shared: (a) mentorship, networking, and sponsorship, (b) education, (c) professional development opportunities, (d) negotiating authenticity, (e) combatting stereotypes, (f) determining fit, and (g) perceptions of multicultural affairs.

The data collected in this study revealed the prevalence of White supremacy and hegemonic masculinity and their influences on the leadership structures in higher education. For Asian American men, their racial and gender identities compound themselves to create different forms of discrimination that are not as understood within conventional ways of thinking about racism and male privilege.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Jerald L. Adamos

Candidate

November 19, 2019

Date

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales

Chairperson

November 19, 2019

Dr. Danfeng Koon

November 19, 2019

Dr. James Zarsadiaz

November 19, 2019

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Asian American men who shared their time and authentic truths about their leadership experiences over the years with me. Your willingness to participate helped make this work possible. Recognizing the many Asian Americans who have given my generation the strength and persistence to exist, I hope to inspire the next generation of Asian Americans to continue this important and ever-evolving work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation was a labor of love, validation, and resilience. In this acknowledgement, it is almost impossible to illustrate the significant amount of gratitude and pride I possess from knowing how much my community has raised and uplifted me throughout this process, but the completion of this degree and study would not have been possible without your constant love and support.

My parents came to this country with a dream to have their children be successful and like many Asian families, they hoped to have at least one of their kids become a doctor. I am thrilled to help make their American dream a reality. Thank you, mom and dad, for always being proud parents of who I am and what I do. I know it is hard to support a kid who experienced life differently than you but it was more than enough because it helped us get here today. I love you both so much and hope to always make you proud because you both earned it.

To Kuya Jeff, Kuya Jovin, and Marie – You’ve taught me so much through the years and have put me in my place so many times, but the consistency of your presence has always been appreciated. Thank you for being such a powerful influence on me. I hope your little brother has made you proud.

To Jasmine and Jojo – You don’t know how much my absence in your life killed me through the years. I missed out on watching you both become the beautiful young adults you are today but whenever I came home to you, it never felt like we lost any time together. I hope you understand the importance of my work someday and that it aids in making your futures better than the ones we live in today. I can’t wait to see the next steps you take in your lives. I love you so so much.

To my JJD brothers and my BUDS – Growing up in our community wasn't easy for me as I explored who I was. Fast forward to now, I can't thank you enough for your consistent friendship through the years. I know too many people today that grew up without that kind of support and if I'm being honest, your acceptance probably saved me from some harmful decisions. Our relationships withstood the test of time and I know Jasmin is blessing us with her love from above.

To the One and Only Vegas Crew – You are the impetus that created this pathway for me. The work we did as leaders on PAC Modern in the dance community during our generation not only brought us together, but we also helped transform and influence the dancers that came after us. Without you all, I wouldn't have found my passion. We've all moved forward in our lives but our collective winnings have always grounded us, making it so easy to appreciate and celebrate heavily together. I am forever grateful for the friendship we've continued through the years and am sure it can only grow stronger.

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To my mentors, colleagues, and both former and current students – This work is hard, but it is because of all of you that I continue to stay in this field and try to make a difference. You have all shaped me into the professional I am today and even with the

many bad times, we had so many good times to share. To Cindy and Latana – you have been such a dream team to work with and I could not have done it without your support, especially when things spiraled for me, which was very often. I am so proud of our leadership and am even more grateful for the time you’ve invested on me.

Thank you to my committee – Dr. Danfeng Koon and Dr. James Zarsadiaz for pushing me to make my study useful for my community. I have so much pride in what we’ve accomplished, and you never let me settle for anything less. Lastly, I wanted to give a special thank you to my chair, Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales – you’ve pushed me to face my ignorance and because of you, I cannot unsee the world through what you’ve taught me and you’ve given me such a big responsibility to make the world a better place. I hope I do you justice.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Workplace diversity allows an opportunity for a greater range of talent to provide insight into the needs and motivations of all stakeholders, not just those who have been historically served (Shemla, 2018). Considering the numerical growth of people of color in the United States (US) in particular, this concept would seem simple enough to adopt yet achieving it in practice has been a difficult goal for organizations, especially in the field of higher education, an industry that was not built on inclusion (Arnett, 2018; Shemla, 2018). According to a brief released by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR), eight percent of higher education administrative positions were held by Black staffers, three percent were held by Latinx individuals, two percent were held by Asians, one percent was held by someone who identified as another race or ethnicity, and 86 percent were held by white staffers, indicating the significant underrepresentation of communities of color in college and university leadership (Seltzer, 2017). Strengthening diversity efforts is both ethical and strategic and it is important to have diverse leaders to guide organizations through periods of transformation of increasingly multifaceted populations that will shift the culture of higher education for years to come (Harvey, 2011; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015; Battin, 1997).

The United States Census Bureau predicts that the nation's white population will become the minority in the year 2042 (Chang, 2014). In Figure 1, the Asian American population in the United States grew 46 percent between 2000 and 2010, faster than any

other racial group nationwide, including Latinos and have been establishing communities

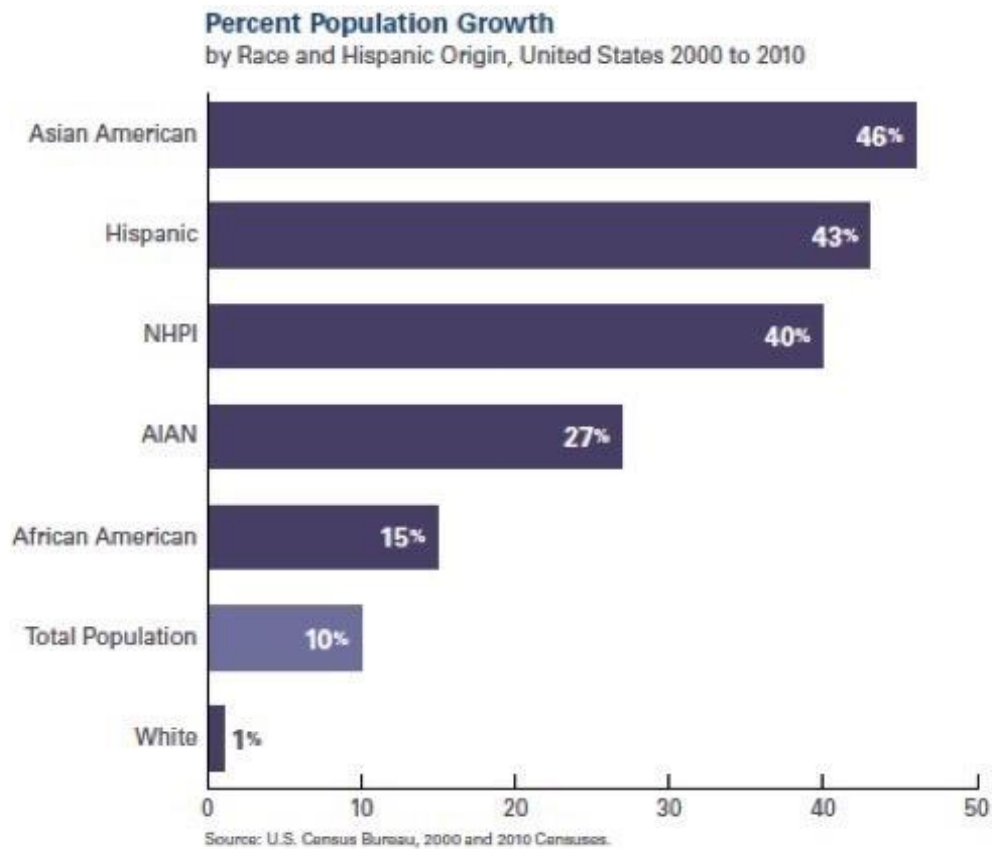


Figure 1: Percent of Population Growth by Race and Hispanic Origin in the United States, 2000 to 2010. Derived from the US Census Bureau. Retrieved from www.census.gov

in historically less diverse states such as Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, and North Dakota over the past decade (Census, 2010).

Within the field of higher education, white individuals still however dominate senior administrator roles on various college campuses. In consideration of the American higher education system, whites exceed their proportional representation in other areas of the institution while Asian Americans do not. In Figure 2, the number of management positions at degree-granting postsecondary institutions held by white men total 89,887, 35 percent of the total management employee number and white women total 106,697 or

42 percent, while Asian men total 4,284 which is only 1.7 percent of the total management employee number (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Looking at the most current data on the California Public Higher Education system, Asian and Pacific Islanders make up about 15 percent of the community college student population and only eight percent of community college CEOs are Asian (Community College Colleague of California, 2015). For the University of California system, 34 percent of the students identify as Asian Pacific Islander but only two of the ten Chancellors are of Asian descent (University of California, 2016). Asian Pacific Islander students make up 16% of the undergraduates in the California State University system and 17 percent of their Presidents identifying as the same (The California State University, 2016).

Considering the growing number of Asian Americans in the United States and the impact that they would have on the diversity on college campuses, the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in higher education leadership is a significant concern. This lack of diversity is detrimental to the persistence and retention of students of color who seek role models with whom they share a common experience and can humanize their educational experiences and hardships and also proactively connect them to resources that will assist in ensuring educational personal success (Museus & Mueller, 2018).

With more research validating the need for more racial and gender diversity in leadership positions to match the ever-changing student demographic, there has been a shift for women and people of color in the general workforce as their respective numbers have increased that then allows more opportunities for upward mobility towards top

leadership positions (Census, 2010; Burns, Barton, & Kerby, 2012). While the chances to

Table 314.40. Employees in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, employment status, control and level of institution, and primary occupation: Fall 2015

Sex, employment status, control and level of institution, and primary occupation	Total	White	Minority								Two or more races	Race/ethnicity unknown	Non-resident alien ²
			Total	Per-cent ¹	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
All institutions	3,915,918	2,622,408	951,426	26.6	376,829	268,862	237,142	7,346	20,256	40,991	155,532	186,552	
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	1,551,015	1,113,061	310,451	21.8	105,743	72,490	109,504	2,844	7,037	12,833	75,046	52,457	
Instruction	1,436,342	1,051,739	285,977	21.4	101,819	67,925	94,948	2,746	6,671	11,868	69,853	28,773	
Research	87,142	41,726	18,253	30.4	2,062	3,004	12,191	65	205	726	4,053	23,110	
Public service	27,531	19,596	6,221	24.1	1,862	1,561	2,365	33	161	239	1,140	574	
Graduate assistants	369,590	175,051	65,011	27.1	14,752	18,075	24,720	370	1,034	6,060	21,419	108,109	
Librarians, curators, and archivists	42,627	33,152	8,124	19.7	3,129	2,094	2,068	70	251	512	1,058	293	
Student and academic affairs and other education services	171,551	116,087	47,488	29.0	21,863	14,735	6,617	471	1,456	2,346	6,088	1,888	
Management	256,888	196,584	53,385	21.4	25,259	14,462	9,850	326	1,232	2,256	5,841	1,078	
Business and financial operations	203,890	140,390	56,842	28.8	22,850	16,830	13,135	415	1,101	2,511	5,297	1,361	
Computer, engineering, and science	231,957	155,071	59,155	27.6	14,539	14,718	25,869	370	1,038	2,621	6,413	11,318	
Community, social service, legal, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	174,694	124,975	41,912	25.1	19,649	12,776	5,672	509	1,012	2,294	6,689	1,118	
Healthcare practitioners and technicians	121,135	77,468	35,583	31.5	12,943	8,103	13,001	165	397	974	4,662	3,422	
Service occupations	243,833	131,002	102,906	44.0	55,314	34,737	8,354	587	1,804	2,110	7,731	2,194	
Sales and related occupations	13,873	8,664	4,789	35.6	2,348	1,533	459	47	84	318	391	29	
Office and administrative support	441,222	283,460	142,665	33.5	67,678	49,648	16,010	999	2,860	5,470	12,125	2,972	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	74,041	54,521	17,192	24.0	7,713	6,664	1,380	131	774	530	2,104	224	
Production, transportation, and material moving	19,602	12,922	5,923	31.4	3,049	1,997	503	42	176	156	668	89	
Males	1,777,823	1,195,694	395,209	24.8	140,014	113,057	113,416	3,491	8,652	16,579	74,058	112,862	
Faculty (instruction/research/public service)	788,829	569,867	149,129	20.7	42,064	35,818	60,660	1,578	3,309	5,700	37,126	32,707	
Instruction	724,943	536,912	136,595	20.3	40,451	33,694	52,499	1,529	3,169	5,253	34,393	17,043	
Research	50,788	23,544	9,709	29.2	891	1,413	6,958	33	80	334	2,194	15,341	
Public service	13,098	9,411	2,825	23.1	722	711	1,203	16	60	113	539	323	
Graduate assistants	194,570	86,674	30,201	25.8	5,807	8,428	12,631	166	449	2,720	11,094	66,601	
Librarians, curators, and archivists	12,540	9,913	2,190	18.1	706	753	521	16	53	141	335	102	
Student and academic affairs and other education services	55,534	37,729	14,793	28.2	6,479	4,826	2,180	181	460	667	2,211	801	
Management	114,090	89,887	20,886	18.9	9,251	5,798	4,284	159	518	876	2,781	536	
Business and financial operations	55,128	38,974	13,920	26.3	5,111	4,489	3,245	121	270	684	1,730	504	
Computer, engineering, and science	140,883	97,332	32,741	25.2	7,900	8,817	13,501	258	651	1,614	4,007	6,803	
Community, social service, legal, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	78,292	57,310	17,253	23.1	8,883	4,911	1,912	235	422	890	3,212	517	
Healthcare practitioners and technicians	34,231	20,657	10,126	32.9	2,835	2,328	4,505	58	108	292	1,606	1,842	
Service occupations	141,152	79,982	55,518	41.0	29,897	18,532	4,490	361	1,072	1,166	4,554	1,098	
Sales and related occupations	4,874	3,119	1,612	34.1	789	554	131	23	18	97	133	10	
Office and administrative support	73,481	42,718	26,824	38.6	11,284	10,031	3,705	181	478	1,145	2,856	1,083	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	67,951	50,639	15,253	23.1	6,669	6,081	1,219	117	694	473	1,876	183	
Production, transportation, and material moving	16,268	10,893	4,763	30.4	2,339	1,691	432	37	150	114	537	75	

Figure 2: Employees in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, employment status, control and level of institution, and primary occupation: Fall 2015. Derived from the National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov>

advance in careers are more widely apparent for white women, the opportunities to secure senior levels of leadership for men of color do not come without its challenges, many of which include tenets of racism and discrimination (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). The fact-finding report issued by the Glass Ceiling Commission indicated that despite having more formal credentials, Asian Americans are able to access high paying leadership roles and industries but earn 8 percent less than whites and receive fewer promotional opportunities (US Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Kim &

Nakamoto, 2010).

It was not until 1974, that Fujio Matsuda became the first Asian American university president of the United States at the University of Hawai'i (Kodama-Nishimoto & Nishimoto, 1996). Although being the ninth of 14 individuals to serve as the university president, Matsuda remains to be the only non-white individual to hold this position in the history of this university which resides in the only state where 57 percent of its residents identify as Asian American, the only state in America where the majority of its population is non-white (Kodama-Nishimoto & Nishimoto, 1996; Census, 2010). Shortly after Matsuda took office, Sacramento City College appointed Jack Fujimoto in 1978 and became the first higher education institution on mainland United States to appoint an Asian American college president (Andrade, 1997). Although these historical milestones took place only 40 years ago, the current state of higher education leadership has made some changes over the years but not at a rate comparable to racial growth of the US population (Census, 2010). In Figure 3. the 2017 American College President Study conducted by the American Council on Education that provides the most comprehensive source of information about the college presidency and higher education leadership pipelines indicated that the percentage of minority college presidents have only slowly increased over the past 30 years (American Council on Education, 2017). In Figure 3., 17 percent of college presidents were minorities with African Americans being the most represented at eight percent, Latinx individuals represented at four percent, Asians at two percent, and Native Americans, Middle Eastern/Arab Americans, and multi-racial individuals at one percent each while white Americans represented 83% (American Council on Education, 2017).

In comparison to whites, and to a lesser degree other minority groups, Asian

Demographics: College Presidents, by Race/Ethnicity

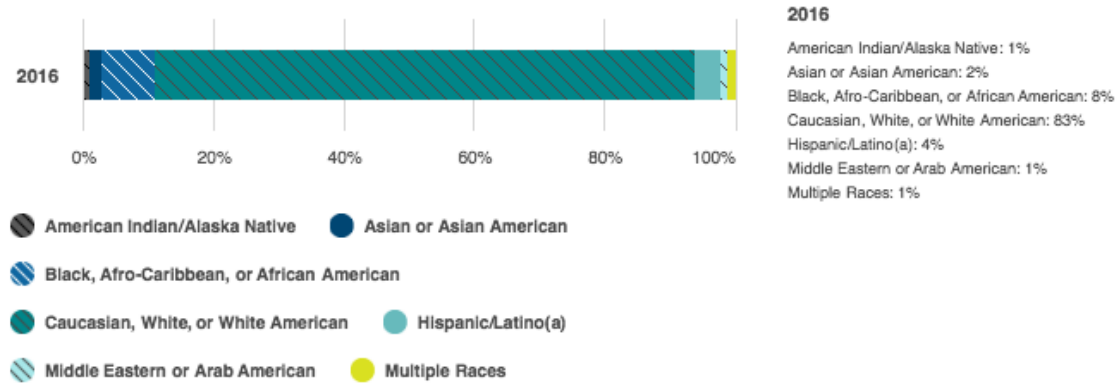


Figure 3: College Presidents, by Race/Ethnicity: 2016. Derived from the American Council on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.aceacps.org/minority-presidents/#demographics>

Americans continue to combat stereotypes associated with the concepts of the perpetual foreigner where must confront the perception that they are never truly American while at the same time also experience aspects of the model minority concept by being used as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the America (Ahuna, 2009). These qualities have been explicitly and implicitly used “since the mid-1960s when it was first constructed, to chide African Americans and other racial minorities for their alleged failures to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps” and uses Asian Americans as a comparison community model for success (Neilson, 2002; Lee, 1999; Palumbo-Liu 1999; Takaki, 1989). Asian men, in particular, are not seen in many visible leadership roles and those that are able to reach that level of authority, still fully do not have full authority to make enough change or possibilities for others that

look like them. Cheng (1996) suggests that “whites see Asian American men as being unfit for management, because they are stereotyped as passive and weak”. Furthermore, “at the intersection of race and gender, Asian American men find themselves with male privilege which they do not recognize, and devalued by majority culture because of their race” (Ahuna, 2009).

Due to racial stereotyping, Asian Americans continue to experience occupational obstacles. Zeng (2004) found that Asian and Asian Americans were receiving lower earnings than their white counterparts despite having similar educational attainments and experience. In particular, Asian men have been able to attain high levels of education that provide them with more access to higher paying positions and organizations but still face barriers to their own career advancement, most referent to the bamboo ceiling (US Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

With current research confirming that diversity is beneficial to the learning, growth, and development of college and universities as a collective, the leaders of higher education must challenge themselves to look at diversity beyond superficial representations (Brown, 2004). It is not enough to add people of color within various positions throughout the institutional structure as a means to ameliorate the decades of historical oppression caused by racism but it is important to recruit, embrace, cultivate, and retain their talent to shift the culture and processes of American higher education (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). It is also imperative that colleges and universities check their biases and assumptions about the qualities needed to be leaders of their institutions and that leadership should reflect the student body that they accept to allow more success and abilities to thrive in a competitive market, including Asian American men who are often

viewed as meek and overlooked, therefore unsuitable for management (Cheng, 1996; Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009; Arnett, 2018).

Background and Need For the Study

With the influx of Asians immigrating to the United States over the past 50 years, more research on Asian Americans has been conducted to understand the lived experiences of this population with most of the current literature focused on college student success and identity development. In the same regard, most research done on gender has focused on the experience of women and their history of marginalization and inequality. In consideration of the research of men of color, there have been a rising amount of comparable studies on the experiences of Latino and Black males and research in the past 20 years or so that focus on the experiences of Asian and Asian American males. However due to the cultural barriers that Asian Americans experience in the workplace, literature on the experiences of Asian American males in leadership positions is not as well developed and through this study, this study aims to contribute to this area of research and provide another viewpoint of realities of this community. The following studies, though not exhaustive, have been able to expose the existing phenomena of Asian American males and the workplace.

A recent report from the Ascend Foundation, a non-profit Pan-Asian organization for business professionals in North America analyzed the leadership pipelines for San Francisco Bay Area technology companies through public data collected between 2007 and 2015. The companies included in this analysis each have 100-plus employees and are required to file reports with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that identified workforce compositions by job category, race, and gender. This

report was able to highlight the career advancement challenges for Asian, Black, Latinx and minority women. As a result, the analysis indicated that race was a significant factor that barred individuals from career advancement. White men and women have been the most successful at reaching executive levels and that Asians were the most likely to be hired but the least likely to be promoted to managerial or executive levels despite being the largest minority group to be hired.

Ching (2009) conducted a study to understand Asian American men and their career developmental issues in their pursuit of advancement in the United States corporate finance industry. The study included assessing areas of cultural conflict between Asian and western values and the perceptions of the bamboo ceiling in dealing with leadership and executive decision-making. Ten Asian American males of various ethnicities in corporate finance were interviewed and exposed that a bicultural identity was prominent amongst the participants. Most of the participants indicated that they had strong Asian values but felt the need to adapt to western expectations of the job environment, peers, and supervisors to fit in with the group. In addition, most participants frequently faced stereotypes and institutional racism due to the lack of other Asian American males being represented in their field, which impeded their opportunities, and all have felt that they had to work harder amongst their peers to be able to advance in their careers.

Literature on Asian American administrators, in particular in the area of Student Affairs, is extremely limited. Park (2005) created an online survey as part of her research to collect data on the demographic, administrative, educational, career development, work satisfaction, career characteristics, and experiences of 518 student affairs

administrators that were members of higher education professional associations – the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE). Suh (2005) showed that Asian American student personnel administrators were primarily focused in certain minority function areas, had less supervisory and financial responsibilities, and were most present at large research universities. Her study also indicated that Asian Americans held less senior level positions than Whites and other communities of color, and the few that were in senior level roles had less experience in student affairs than any other racial group.

Neilson (2002) also conducted a study that explored the career paths and mobility of ten Asian American senior administrative positions in American public and private higher education institutions to uncover the tenets of their journey from the classroom to their current executive role. Of the ten participants, only one reported having a direct plan to become an administrator, nine reported having mentors to help guide them in their process, seven followed occupational career paths to their current role while the other three followed organizational career paths. Through this study, influences of Asian and Asian American cultural values were also uncovered that helped sustain their motivation to their role. These influences were identified as working hard as means of honor, legacy and moral obligation; collaborative connection with the few others in the field; and taking risks to ensure a better future for the next generations.

Each of these studies have added a great deal of knowledge that can and has been used to understand the challenges of Asian Americans and while they can be translated to understand the current experiences of Asian American men in higher education, there

seems to be a lack of direct and current understanding of this specific population. While the report created by the Ascend Foundation helped provide a comparative across races and genders, the report focused on participants in the technology field of a specific region of the United States that would be different from the experiences of those who work in higher education. Ching's (2009) study provided a great analysis of the experiences of Asian American males and career advancement in corporate America but similarly, those obstacles may not be the same for those who work in a different field. Neilson's (2002) study focused on the experiences of Asian Americans in higher education however did not examine the gender differences amongst the participants and the current challenges of Asian Americans may look different from when the study was first conducted. Suh's research provides the strongest incite to the experiences of Asian Americans in student affairs administrative roles and being able to build upon this study to understand the experiences of Asian Americans, in particular males, in today's American society is an aim that this study seeks to provide.

Asian American men are a minority community amongst higher education administrators since the field is still dominated by white Americans. In addition, amongst the few Asian American men that are in the field, the ethnic diversity may be limited and not representative of Asian America today. Most participants may have roots to East Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea but may also lack in South and Southeast Asian countries.

This study is needed to examine the barriers and issues that Asian American men face in leadership acquisition. Talusan (2016) states that problematic stereotypes about Asian Americans such as the model minority myth, have classified this population to not

need support due to the aggregation of the needs of the community, which has resulted them from being excluded in research studies. With the intersection of gender and race, Asian American men and their experiences have been unexamined and it would be important to understand the realities that are faced by this community and provide an opportunity to claim an identity that is both honest and truthful.

This study is also needed to encourage organizations to rethink their structures and processes in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse staff. With the rapidly growing needs of Asian American students, effective and empowered role models that reflect the changing racial and gender demographics should be visible and accessible (Neilson, 2002; Ponteretto, 1990). With culturally sensitive and competent services needed to support the diversity of the nation's students, Asian American male students are still underserved and by having Asian American men in positions to have the power and decision-making influences that of senior leaders, they would be better equipped to understand the cultural hardships of this population and have the ability to allocate adequate resources to make an institutional change (Neilson, 2002).

In addition, this study is needed to provide another viewpoint on how race and gender can impact interactions and relationships between individuals and various groups. More research on race relations are continuing to surpass the Black and White paradigm and are including the experiences of other racially marginalized communities. However, each of these connections are not so simple. The way White and Black men interact with one another is different than how they would interact with Asians. These connections influence how each community treats one another and by focusing on the experiences of Asian American men, this study may inform how this group makes social and behavioral

decisions in a specific environment.

Lastly, as organizations continue to struggle to achieve workplace diversity, this study is needed to provide another lens for organizational leaders and policy makers to understand how certain barriers, challenges, and exclusionary practices are created and accept their responsibility to make a change (Harvey, 2011; Arnett, 2018; Shemla, 2018; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015; Battin, 1997).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. This study will investigate Asian American men's perception of the bamboo/glass-ceiling and opportunities for advancement. This study will also examine male Asian American perceptions of Asian ethnicity, gender identity, and values of leadership and workplace culture. In order to gather this information, this study will apply a phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis in order to explore the lived experiences of this sample.

Theoretical Rationale

Very little research has been done to examine the experiences of administrators of color and there is also even less research on Asian Americans. With this consideration, most of the common conceptual frameworks center the white American experience which would not align with the racial and cultural challenges that Asian Americans and other minority higher education leaders face (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009). Therefore the use of nontraditional conceptual and theoretical frameworks that might be used in this study

may be less known to other researchers who are used to more mainstream methods of research.

This study will examine Asian American men's perceptions of Asian ethnicity, gender identity, and values of leadership and workplace culture to understand their career development experiences within the field of higher education through three theoretical lens: (1) Whiteness (2) the Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans and (3) Intersectionality. In addition, this study will also utilize Queer Identity as additional lens to help understand any nuanced experiences of the participants. Through this theoretical framework, this study will shed light on the realities of the participants and their career advancement journeys.

Whiteness

According to Frankenberg (1993) "whiteness...is the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage" (p.236). Ideologies of Whiteness consistently relegate and vilify non-Whites even if it has been known to promote the perceived interest of some groups over others, such as the perceptions of Asian Americans that are consistently affected by the model minority myth (Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2018). As Whites continue to hold the majority of University and college leadership roles, the ideology of whiteness may impact the experiences and opportunities of Asian American as it centers the priorities that Whites value which may not align marginalized communities.

The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans

Kim (1999) argues that through racial triangulation theory, Asians are racially

positioned differently relative to Blacks and whites along multiple dimensions of a certain plane, which results in a unique racialized experience for Asian Americans. Asian Americans in particular have been “triangulated vis-à-vis whites and Blacks in a ‘field of racial positions’” (p. 106). This field is comprised of two dimensions: the “superior/inferior” axis refers to the process of racial valorization, by which groups are ranked hierarchically based on cultural and/or racial grounds and the “insider/foreigner” axis that refers to the process of civic ostracism or to what extends a group is consider to be unassimilable as opposed to being consider acceptable by white Americans (Kim, 1999; Xu & Lee, 2013).

The racial structure of Asian Americans suggests that racial stratification is complex and that a racial group can be rated high on one cultural aspect and low on another (Xu & Lee, 2013). Due to the deep roots of racial stereotypes, most individuals evaluate Asians as “inferior” to whites and “superior” to Blacks on cultural grounds such as work ethics or family commitment, but they also rate Asians relatively low in terms of civic acceptance (Xu & Lee, 2013, Kim, 1999). Concepts such as the “model minority” and the “perpetual foreigner” further perpetuate these claims on Asian Americans whi assists in separating this community from discussions beyond the Black and white racial spectrum (Espiritu, 1997; Shek, 2006; Kim, 1999; Ahuna, 2009). This concurrent process of valorization and civic ostracism of Asians, along with the subordination of Blacks, assist in preserving systemic whiteness (Poon, Squire, Kodama, Byrd, Chan, Manzano, Furr, & Bishundat, 2015; Xu & Lee, 2013, Kim, 1999).

Through this study, the racial triangulation of Asian Americans will be applied to understand how Asian American men may experience barriers as they approach career

management. Given that white leadership prevails in higher education, Asian Americans can be simultaneously racially or culturally valorized and ostracized in the workplace, thus complicating their experience.

Intersectionality Theory

Rooted in Black feminism and Critical Race Theory, Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the term *intersectionality* as a description of exclusion of Black women in the second-wave feminist discourse and subsequent consequences (Crenshaw, 1989; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, & Tomlinson, 2013; Sun, Crooks, Kemnitz, Westergaard, 2018). Intersectionality theory conceptualizes various categories of social identities, privileges, and oppression concurrently as they co-exist and are interdependent in an individual's everyday experience (Sun et al., 2018; Cole, 2009). From its inception, intersectionality theory has historically examined a particular social intersection – race and gender (Nash, 2008).

Primary scholarship on intersectionality theory has historically focuses on the experiences of Black women as the original intent was to address the marginalization of Black women within not only antidiscrimination law but also in feminist and antiracist theory and politics (Carbado et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2018; Nash, 2008). Several criticisms have perceived this focus to be a limitation, however recent scholars have been able to expand the theory to broadly look at various intersections of race, gender, and other categories as a jumping off point to illustrate the larger point of how identity categories compound themselves to create obstacles that are not often understood within conventional ways of thinking about social justice (Cho, 2013; Carbado et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2018).

Most of the literature on men of color focuses primarily on their needs specific to academic support, with some attention to culture (Lewis & Middleton, 2003). Beyond race, there are issues of gender, and beyond gender there are issues of race, however there is little research considers the intersection of race and gender (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Zinn, & Denissen, 2015; Person, Dawson, Garcia, & Jones, 2017). Identity formation occurs in this intersection and includes both what it means to be male and what it means to be a man of color in a heteronormative and White-dominated society (Hondagneu-Sotelo et al., 2015; Person et al., 2017). For the purposes of this study, the social meaning of an “Asian American male” is different from and is not the cumulative sum of identifying as “Asian”, “American”, and “male”. Intersectionality theory will therefore be applied to specifically examine the identities of Asian American men and how they affect their career experiences.

Queer Identity

Queer theory challenges widely accepted beliefs and norms and posits that “heteronormative culture renders queer lives unlivable (Lee, Learmonth, & Harding, 2008). This causes many gay men of color to become “outsiders among outsiders” due to their multiple marginalized identities within a White-dominated society and often times, White-majority gay community (Bui, 2014; Aguilar-San Juan, 1998; Otalvaro-Hormillosa, 1999). Queer Asian men then not only feel isolated from Asian American communities, but also feel distressed from the queer community through the exotifying idea that Asian men are hypersexual desired beings. With focus of this study on the experiences of Asian American men, participants of this study may identify as queer and may also provide other insight to their experiences as queer Asian American leaders in

colleges and universities.

Research Questions

Few studies have been focused on Asian Americans and career advancement, let alone men particularly in higher education roles. Therefore, to build the literature on Asian American men and professional advancement, this study will focus on a sample of self-identified Asian American men in higher education leadership roles to understand the career development experiences and examine their perceptions of Asian ethnicity, gender identity, and values of leadership and workplace culture. My primary research questions that drive this inquiry include:

1. What advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements?
2. In what ways do characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders?
3. In what ways do Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development?
4. How do Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education?

Limitations/Delimitations

This study is designed to focus on how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. The research is designed such that there are certain limitations and delimitations, which are stated as follows.

Limitations

Throughout the development of this study there are several limitations that present unique challenges. This study focuses on the experience of male Asian Americans in higher education management roles, which requires obtaining a sample of participants that meet the requirements to participate in the study. The first limitation of this study is identifying male Asian American individuals in a leadership position, who are considered a “leader,” and are willing to participate in the study. Due to the typically limited number of male identifying Asian Americans at the manager level in higher education, locating professionals that are willing to participate in the study is a significant limitation.

Most research done on higher education administrators have focused on white Americans and there is little research done to examine the experiences of administrators of color, there is also even less research on Asian Americans. With the limited amounts of studies that exist, some limitations may be considered for this study.

American higher education systems are also diverse, providing various post-secondary degrees, certificates, and programs for different types of students. Considering this study, the experiences of higher education administrators may differ between those who work at private and public institutions. The expectations of public university employees could be influenced by their state government who fund most of their operations, whereas private colleges do not receive funds from state legislatures, thus may affect how they see the functions of their job (Jacobs, 2013).

Asian America represents a diversity of regional representations with over 40 countries identified and over 200 languages and dialects spoken (Census, 2017). In

regards to this study, it would be difficult to obtain the perspectives that represent all cultures. Each community, whether it primarily identified as being East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, or Middle Eastern would have different cultural aspects that are unique in their own way. In addition, each individual of the study would not serve as the sole representative of their community and speak for everyone who identifies as such.

This study also aims to get the specific perspective of men. Given that gender identity is not binary, each individual of this study would need to self-identity as a male or a man but their definition of what being a “man” or “male” may differ depending on a number of factors. Some participants may also identify as being transgender, gay, straight, cis-gender, bi-sexual, a-sexual, as part of their identity of being a man which may provide a unique perspective.

To get a stronger sense of the career journey experience, this study will focus on male Asian American professionals that have more than 10 years of experience working in higher education. Their understanding of male identity along with their race and ethnicity may differ from one another depending on their access to such educational resources that were present in their formal education as a student in their respective time and as a life-long learner as they got older.

Considering that larger Asian American communities continue to rapidly grow in California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas, the experiences of Asian Americans may differ geographically (Census, 2017). Those who hail from states or regions, such as the coasts, that have more Asian Americans or more diversity may bring a different experience from those that are coming from less diverse states such as those in the Midwest.

In addition, due to the long history of Asian immigration into the United States and how much one's family has integrated into western culture, the participants of this study may be in different stages of their own ethnic identity. Based on Kim's Asian American Identity Development Model (1981), participants may be at different stages of their ethnic identity, whereas some may be just starting to explore their ethnicity and some could be on the further part of the spectrum of incorporation where one is comfortable identifying as an Asian American.

Delimitations

The scope of this study is specifically focused on male Asian American individuals, which were identified as the target population. This study will not include members of the Pacific Islander community due to the limited access to this specific community and the unique challenges that this community faces that are different from other Asian communities in the workplace, which deserves its own study in order to provide adequate data collection and analysis (Davis & Huang, 2013).

An additional delimitation to this study is the exclusion of individuals working in U.S. Territories. This study will only target individuals that are working at 4-year, 2-year, private and public American institutions in one of the contiguous United States, Alaska, or Hawaii. This study will also not include employees working abroad in American Universities. The customs and culture of the host country of the American institution may affect the environment of the employee; therefore this study will only focus on colleges and universities that are part of the United States.

Although this study will recruit participants employed at higher education institutions, this study will not include faculty or administrative staff and will only

examine professionals in traditional student service roles. The ability to focus solely on the experiences of leaders that specifically deal with student affairs will provide a narrower focus to explore the findings of this study.

In addition, to get a stronger sense of one's individual journey in higher education career advancement, this study will focus on the experiences of male Asian American professionals that have more than 10 years of experience working in higher education. This requirement is used as a qualifier to indicate ones readiness to take on positions that are classified as managers or above and will allow participants to reflect on various aspects of their development including challenges, successes, and strategies they have developed over the years.

Significance of Study

By exploring the experiences of Asian American men in higher administrator roles in colleges and universities, this study will provide voice to a community that has been not been thoroughly researched. Not only are Asian Americans, in general, under-researched but the intersection of the male and Asian American identities have been rarely examined, especially in terms of leadership. As a result of the model minority stereotype, a common misperception in academia is that Asian Americans do not need to be studied. Therefore this study will validate the lived realities of this community and possibly unearth narratives that have not been examined to give attention to current Asian American issues.

With the growing numbers of Asian Americans entering higher education, this study may help senior administrators to understand how to achieve adequate representation of Asian Americans in higher education to better reflect the growing

diversity of our nation. With this, this study would shed light to the experiences of Asian Americans of different genders and various ethnicities to explain their unique challenges and issues that they face when working towards higher leadership roles.

This study is also significant to higher education leaders who are concerned about their current and future experiences of their subordinates and colleagues, especially those who identify as Asian American men. With Asian Americans being the fastest growing racial group in the nation, it would be to the advantage of the leaders in higher education to recruit, prepare, and retain leaders of diverse backgrounds who can work effectively with students of similar backgrounds (Census, 2017).

This study may also contribute to the field of Ethnic or Asian American studies by providing another perspective of ethnic Americans. With more research indicating that students succeed more when they see themselves in the curriculum, this study could possibly reduce stereotype threat that Asian American male students experience in colleges and assist in their retention and persistence towards graduation (Donald, 2016). By contributing to the body of research on Asian American men, this study could assist in identifying stressors and challenges that educational environments may have overlooked.

In addition, with the low representation of Asian Americans in higher education leadership, this study could expose how Asian Americans have been able to contribute to the field of education through their leadership and possibly encourage a new generation of leaders to emerge into a new vocation.

Key Terms

The following terms can be defined in many ways, however for the purposes of this study, these definitions are intended to assist the reader with the contexts of this proposal:

Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific American: Inclusive terms that unify Asian and Pacific Island communities and at the same time hide the distinct strengths and challenges that each specific community faces.

Asian American: A political and social identity that gained momentum as Asians from different communities came together to politically organize and create an avenue for pan-Asians to address social injustices (Espiritu, 1992; Talusan, 2016).

East Asian: Individuals who ethnically identify with Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea.

Southeast Asian: Individuals who ethnically identify with Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, East Timor, Brunei, and Christmas Island.

South Asian: Individuals who ethnically identify with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives (South Asian Americans Leading Together, 2015).

Pacific Islander: Individuals who ethnically identify with the 20 distinct pacific islands through the 2010 U.S. Census which include: the Polynesian group – Hawaii, Tokelau, Samoa, American Samoa, Tahiti, and Tonga; the Micronesian group – Mariana Islands, Saipan, Guam, Yap, Chunk, Marshall Islands, Kosrae, Kiribati, Pohnpei, and Palau; and

the Melanesian group – Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea (Hixon, Hepler, & Kim, 2012).

Glass Ceiling: “Promotional barriers that inhibit the professional advancement of racial minorities and women” (Neilson, 2002).

Culture: The learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people; these shared qualities of a group make them unique (Northouse, 2013).

Leadership: A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013).

Masculinity: Anthropologically defined as anything that men think and do; as anything that men think and do to be men; a quality some men inherently or by ascription are considered “more manly” than other men; and anything that women are not” (Guttman, 1997).

Middle Management: The leadership level below the officer that has routine contact with all parts of the organization (Morris, 1981).

Mid-Level Professional: Practitioners with at least 5 years of experience, who supervise full time staff members and are primarily responsible for several functions on a campus (Ackerman, 2007)

Student Affairs Managers: An individual who is classified at the manager level based on institutional type and region.

Model Minority: Being viewed as intelligent, industrious, middle-class, satisfied with the status quo, non-confrontational, and willing to suffer second class citizenship in silence (Neilson, 2002).

Race: A concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies (Winant, 2000).

White space: An environment in which blacks are typically absent, not expected, or marginalized (Anderson, 2015).

Summary

Asian Americans must confront the perception that they are never truly accepted into mainstream American culture while at the same time used as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the America (Ahuna, 2009). In particular, Asian men have been able to attain high levels of education that provide them with more access to higher paying positions and organizations but still face barriers to their own career advancement (US Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). In consideration of the American higher education system, whites continue to exceed their proportional representation in other areas of the institution while Asian Americans do not. The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. Research pertaining to Asian American issues has grown over recent years with most of the current literature focused on college student success and identity development. In the same regard, most research done on gender has focused on the experience of women and their history of marginalization and inequality. In consideration of the research of men, there are studies

on the experiences of Latino and Black males but there is very little studies on the experiences of Asian or Asian American males. This study will examine Asian American men's perceptions of Asian ethnicity, gender identity, and values of leadership and workplace culture to understand their career development experiences within the field of higher education through the theoretical lens of Whiteness, the Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans, Intersectionality and Queer Identity. In the following chapter, the research will examine the current research to provide a contextual understanding of the lived experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Restatement of the Problem

The practice of workplace diversity has been a difficult goal for organizations to achieve (Shemla, 2018; Arnett, 2018). The United States Census Bureau predicts that the nations White population will become the minority in the year 2042 and indicates that the Asian American population in the United States is the fastest growing racial group nationwide, increasing in population by 46 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Chang, 2014; Census, 2010). In consideration of the American higher education system, Whites exceed their proportional representation in other areas of the institution while Asian Americans do not (NCES, 2015). Further, Asian Americans must confront the perception that they are never truly accepted into mainstream American culture while at the same time used as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the America (Ahuna, 2009). In particular, Asian men have been able to attain high levels of education that provide them with more access to higher paying positions and organizations but still face barriers to their own career advancement (US Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). This lack of diversity is detrimental to the persistence and retaining of students of color who need role models whom they share a common ground with and can humanize their educational experiences and hardships and also proactively connect them to resources that will assist in ensuring educational personal success (Museus & Mueller, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of Asian American

men in higher administrator roles in colleges and universities. Research pertaining to Asian American issues has grown over recent years with most of the current literature focused on college student success and identity development. In the same regard, most research done on gender has focused on the experience of women and their history of marginalization and inequality. In consideration of the research of men, there are studies on the experiences of Latino and Black males but there is very little studies on the experiences of Asian or Asian American males. Due to the cultural barriers that Asian Americans experience in the workplace, literature on the experiences of Asian American males in leadership positions is not as well developed and through this study the investigator seeks to contribute to this area of research and provide another viewpoint of realities of this community.

The primary research questions that drive this inquiry will examine the advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements; the ways characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders; the ways Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development; and how Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education.

Overview of Review of Literature

With the rapidly growing needs of Asian American students, effective and empowered role models that reflect the changing racial and gender demographics should be visible and accessible (Neilson, 2002; Ponteretto, 1990). With culturally sensitive and competent services needed to support the diversity of the nation's students, Asian American male students are still underserved and by having Asian American men in

positions to have the power and decision-making influences that of senior leaders, they would be better equipped to understand the cultural hardships of this population and have the ability to allocate adequate resources to make an institutional change (Neilson, 2002). Through this chapter, the researcher will provide a foundation for understanding the factors that contribute to the experiences of Asian American male leaders in higher education. The literature reviewed in this chapter is not exhaustive but has met content and database search saturation that the researcher regards to be appropriate to support this study. With respect to the specific area of knowledge that this study seeks to contribute to, the thematic sections of the literature review intends to provide context to the career development experiences of Asian American male leadership in higher education and their perceptions of Asian ethnicity, gender identity, and values of leadership and workplace culture.

This review will examine three major themes within the literature:

- Asian American Racial Identity
- Asian Americans in Higher Education
- Asian Americans and Masculinity

In this chapter, the literature review will explore important studies, theorists, and concepts that inform this body of work. This chapter will begin with an examination of the literature opening with an overview of Asian American racial identity with a focus on the experiences of Asians in American the effects of the model minority concept. This chapter will then continue to explore Asian Americans in higher education through understanding the experiences of Asian American students in higher education, Asian American student and their choices for college majors, Asian Americans as Student

Personnel Administrators, the glass ceiling phenomenon, and higher education workplace issues for Asian Americans. The subsequent section will then examine the effects of masculinity in the Asian American community and the implications of Asian American queer identity. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an exploration of the primary theoretical frameworks, starting with Whiteness as a broad concept, then Racial Triangulation Theory of Asian Americans and ending with Intersectionality Theory to inform the analytical methods of the collected data for this study.

Theoretical Framework

Whiteness

White privilege is a manifestation of whiteness (Nkomo & Ariss, 2014). W.E.B Du Bois is claimed to be one of the earliest writers for Whiteness Studies and indicates that concept of whiteness only came into being in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and that the concept is not just a matter of phenotype or skin color but is more so about power and privilege (Du Bois, 1920; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014). According to Frankenberg (1993) “whiteness...is the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage” (p.236). Frankenberg (1993)’s study of 30 White women was conducted to understand how the role of race plays in their lives and found that the formation of Whiteness has a “set of linked dimensions” and describes them as:

“First whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a “standpoint,” a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, “whiteness” refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed (p.1)”.

The “standpoint” that is mentioned refers to the way White people see Whiteness not as the problem but that problems regarding race are about not being White. These

ideologies of Whiteness consistently relegate and vilify non-Whites even if it has been known to promote the perceived interest of some groups over others, such as the perceptions of Asian Americans that are consistently affected by the model minority myth (Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2018).

In racial discourse, Whiteness also becomes the default category which is problematic because it can “exacerbate White supremacy by putting White and whiteness at the center again” (Doane, 2003; Clark & O’Donnell, 1999, p.5). However, when Whites are asked to define or describe their experience being racially White, they are usually not intellectually or politically prepared to reflect on their realities, thus acknowledging their privilege to accrue power but are less interested to demystify it (Doane, 2003; Leonardo, 2018; Clark & O’Donnell, 1999).

The emotional responses from Whites in discussions around racial issues have provided valuable insight on the ways Whiteness and White privilege have lessened racial politics (Leonardo, 2018). These White emotions have been characterized as a “gaslighting” mechanism to label people of color who resists or speak against White supremacy as abnormal, “thereby turning their substantive claims about injustice into superficial complaints about life’s random unfairness” (Leonardo, 2018, p.372; Davis & Ernst, 2017).

The presence of and meaning of Whiteness dates back to the era of industrialization where processes and practices that unfolded during that time led to the marginalization of racial minorities and a racialization of the workplace (Nkomo & Ariss, 2014). As Whites continue to hold the majority of University and college leadership roles, the ideology of whiteness may impact the experiences and opportunities of Asian

American as it centers the priorities that Whites value which may not align marginalized communities.

The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans

The rapid immigration trends of Asian and Latinx communities into the United States in the 1960s pushed scholarship on race relations to go beyond the Black and White paradigm which ultimately pushed researchers to adopt two broad approaches that unfortunately did not fulfill their mandate. The first approach alludes to Omi & Winant (1994) racial categories method in which race is characterized and categorized as an open-ended, variable-based process that plays out different for each group (Kim, 1999; Omi & Winant 1994; Lai, 2012). However, the problem with this approach is that the racialization process defines a group separate from others as if Asian Americans have not been isolated from other and their group identity has been defined through interactions with Whites, Blacks, and other communities of color (Kim, 1999). The second approach leads scholars to the create racial hierarchies, “ordering groups into a single scale of status and privilege with Whites on the top, Blacks on the bottom, and all other groups somewhere in between” and positioning Asian Americans as a “racial bourgeoisie” in the mix (Kim, 1999, p. 106; Matsuda, 2016). The gap with this approach is that not only is this path denigrating but it also positions Whites to arrange the order of other racial groups which historically has privileged Asian Americans above Blacks in certain ways and less privileged than others (Kim, 1999).

Conceived from the 1990 cases of Black-Korean conflict in New York City, Claire Jean Kim theorize U.S. race relations and Asian American status within them and developed the racial triangulation of Asian Americans (Lai, 2012). Rather than seeing the

American racial order as a "simple hierarchy" with white and Black as the two poles, Kim (1999) described this racial order as a "field of racial positions" where different groups are racialized with respect to each other and with respect to multiple social parameters (p. 107; Lai, 2012).

Kim (1999) argues that Asian Americans have been and continue to be or "racially triangulated" vis-à-vis both African Americans and Whites in the field of racial positions (p. 106). Using Stephen Jay Gould's interpretation of "racial geometry", Kim (1999) claims that the voices of major opinion makers such as White elected officials, journalists, scholars, organizational leaders, and so on, creates a field of racial positions in a given time and place which then influences how racial groups and their statuses are perceived and defined (p.107). This "racial power" thus portrays Blacks as an inferior minority group and pathologizes Black culture as a "culture of poverty" and their politics as militant, whereas Asian Americans have been positioned as an ideal minority group or whose success is due to their culture, hard work, and non-confrontational demeanor (Lai, 2012; Laguerre, 1999; Lee 1999; Kurashige 2008). Since the racial position field consists of a plane with at least two axes – cultural superiority or inferiority and perceived foreignness, it accentuates that groups become comparably racialized with one another and that they are racialized differently (Kim, 1999). This field reinforces White superiority and privilege as it normatively shapes the opportunities, constraints, and possibilities that other racial groups confront (Kim, 1999).

In Figure 4. Kim (1999) also argues that Asian Americans have been racially triangulated in the field of racial positions with reference to Blacks and Whites through two types of simultaneous, linked processes: Relative Valorization – Where dominant

group A (Whites) valorizes subordinate group B (Asian Americans) relative to subordinate group C (Blacks) on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to dominate both groups; and Civic Ostracism – Whereby dominant group A (Whites) constructs subordinate group B (Asian Americans) unchangeably foreign and unassimilable with Whites on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to ostracize them for body politic and civic membership (p. 107).

Considering this model, although Asian Americans might be perceived as inferior to Whites and superior to Blacks, they also are portrayed as foreigners to America (Lai, 2012).

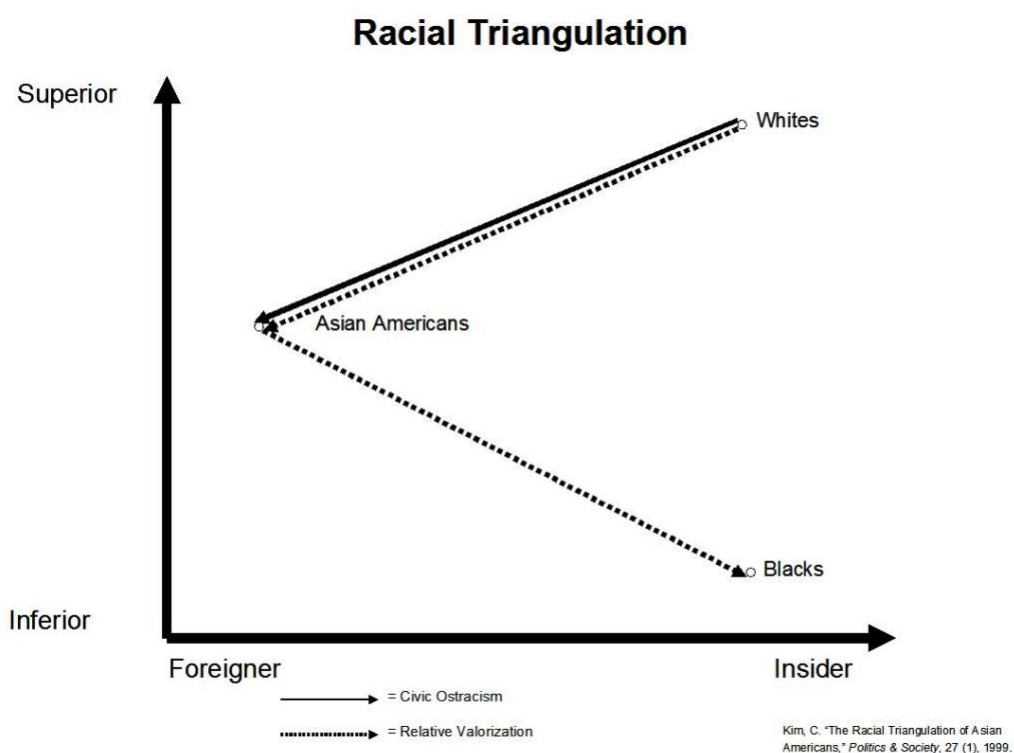


Figure 4: Racial triangulation of Asian Americans. Adapted from "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," by C. J. Kim, 1999, *Politics & Society*, 27, p. 108. Copyright 1999 by SAGE Publications. Retrieved from https://cliffordchen.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/racial_triangulation1.jpg

This lens offers an alternative framework for looking at the specific and related histories and geographies of these racialized communities as it promoted Cold War politics, denounced 1960s activism, and reduced civil rights achievements in the 1980s, consequently using Asian Americans to ridicule Black and the Latinx communities (Kim 1999; Lee 1999; Palumbo-Liu 1999; Kurashige 2008; Lai, 2012). The racialization of Asian Americans continues to be a process and it is important to critically understand the positionality of this community in relation to the broader society and shed light on their realities. When considering the application of the Racial Triangulation Theory of Asian Americans to this study, it is important to note that White superiority and privilege continue to be a dominating factor in higher education leadership which ultimately shapes the opportunities, constraints, and possibilities that other racial groups confront. The dominant White group who decides how valid or undesirable they are to Blacks then still controls the identity and power of Asian Americans.

As Figure 4 indicates, White leaders determine the positionality of Asian Americans when compared to Black leaders, therefore controlling the narrative of Asian American experiences in a social context. Considering the movements of many American higher education institutions wanting to and championing diversity, White leaders still get to determine what diversity looks like, how it should be institutionalized, and who gets access and power to make these decisions. With racial triangulation in mind, Asian Americans could then be compelled to take on stereotypical traits of the model minority concept to become more valorized by the dominant White group, thus positioning themselves higher towards Whites and against other communities of color in order to succeed. Being portrayed against other communities of color could give the impression

that Asians are more exceptional as they have the ability to be accepted by the dominant group, however it is unclear how absolute their acceptance is to Whites.

More so, it is also unclear how cognizant Asians are to the racial power that Whites have in influencing their experiences and relationships. As Asians navigate these positions, a choice is made as to how they may be accepted by one group and disregarded by the other. Regardless of the outcome, racial triangulation complicates this phenomena because it is difficult to identify the level of consciousness and intent one makes in those decisions.

The participants of this study will identify as Asian American leaders in higher education, a field that has low racial diversity in leadership. Analyzing the realities of the participants of this study through the lens of Racial Triangulation Theory will provide context and understanding to how this group of individuals perceives their racial identity as leaders of college or university.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory will serve as another foundation of the theoretical framework used in this study to explore how identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of Asian American men who are and in the process of taking on higher administrator roles in colleges and universities. Multiple features that consist of a person's identity such as race, gender, class, age, and ethnicity have been studied as separate issues, typically standing alone and independent from the other (Berger & Guidroz, 2009). More recent research has indicated a need to consider how these characteristics intersect and overlap in relation to individuals' roles within a social context. Through the lens of intersectionality, it becomes possible to "socially locate

individuals in the context of their ‘real lives’” (Berger & Guidroz, p. 1). Given this framework, an intersectional way of thinking would be helpful for exploring the experiences of Asian American male leaders in colleges and universities. McCall (2005) claims that rather than focusing solely on the singular attributes that make up a person’s full identity detached from one another, intersectionality allows the opportunity to consider how the relationship between one’s disparate identity traits precisely reflect their very own “lived experiences” (p. 1780).

According to McCall (2005), “intersectionality arose out of a critique of gender-based and race-based research for failing to account for lived experience at neglected points of intersection – ones that tended to reflect multiple subordinate locations as opposed to dominant or mixed locations” (p. 1780). Around the 1970s, with the Combahee River Collective's A Black Feminist Statement (1983), feminist women of color began criticizing the feminist movement for focusing only on white, middle-class women who were formally educated and failed to understand the unique and overlapping identities that complicate the experiences of women of color in America (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 2007; Shields, 2008). In addition McCall (2005) also indicates intersectionality became a particular point of interest as a result of a critique on research specific to race claiming, “It was not possible, for example, to understand a Black woman’s experience from previous studies of gender combined with previous studies of race because the former focused on white women and the latter on Black men” (p. 1780). The critiques of feminist writing became pressured to evolve and “acknowledge the intersections of gender with other significant social identities, most notably race” (Shields, pp. 302-303).

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw is claimed to have been the first individual to introduce the term “intersectionality” (Berger & Guidroz, 2009). Crenshaw’s (1993) work centers on how race and gender intersect to expose the real experiences Black women face in the workplace and the way in which antidiscrimination laws ignore their particular experiences as women and as women of color. She reveals the injustices that exist when race and gender are viewed as separate categories and how they distort discriminating experiences around race and gender, specifically Black women. Crenshaw (1989) sheds light on the constant battle Black women face with respect to both race and gender oppression:

Black women are regarded either as too much like women or Blacks and the compounded nature of their experience is absorbed into the collective experiences of either group or as too different, in which case Black women’s Blackness or femaleness sometimes has placed their needs and perspectives at the margin of the feminist and Black liberationist agendas. (p. 150)

Black women are thus forced to struggle with discrimination within not just one of their identity categories, but two or more, which makes it difficult for those who experience oppression at a lesser degree to fully recognize and understand (Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality acknowledges that people consist of many different types of identities with multiple layers which are created from past experiences, social relations, and varying power structures (Carbado et al., 2013). Shields (2008) describes how this approach also truthfully declares that it is possible for people to serve as members of multiple different communities with it being possible to simultaneously know and have experienced both oppression and privilege as a result of the intersections among identities:

Being on the advantaged side offers more than avoidance of disadvantage or oppression by actually opening up access to rewards, status, and opportunities

unavailable to other intersections. Furthermore, an intersectional position may be disadvantaged relative to one group, but advantaged relative to another (p. 302).

Intersectionality thus becomes a complex issue as various identities can lead to both oppression and privilege.

Today, feminist researchers consider intersectionality the most critical addition to feminist theory in terms of how gender is to be perceived and understood (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality indicates that individual's social identities profoundly influence one's beliefs about the experience of gender (Shields, 2008). In addition, critical race theory scholars have elaborated on the concept and "tried on" intersectionality as a method to see if it could be applied to other combinations of social identities and, respectfully in turn, proved to be a very useful theoretical and analytical tool (Carbado et al., 2013; Cho, 2013). According to Cho (2013), "race and gender intersectionality merely provided a jumping off point to illustrate the larger point of how identity categories constitute and require political coalitions" (p. 390). In this study, participants identify as Asian American male leaders in higher education. As men negotiate their gender identity, Asian American men are compelled to live up to the different masculine expectations, complicating their identity and behavior amongst their community and workplace environment. Using intersectionality as a framework, the researcher intends to understand the how race and gender identities are compounded to create the truthful experiences of Asian American males in higher education leadership.

Thematic Review of Literature

Asian American Racial Identity

Asian America

Asian Americans come from various ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, social,

and political backgrounds. Asian American subgroups have varying migration histories and connections with the United States, including but not limited to political asylum, colonization, government-sanctioned internment, exclusion, and perceived elevated status (Talusán, 2016). Though these experiences greatly differ between ethnic groups, assumptions, and stereotypes continue to affect and often times harm Asian Americans by ignoring the diverse realities of these communities.

As a way to organize politically in the late 1960's, "Asian American communities, despite their differences, contributed to the development of a pan-ethnic Asian American identity, particularly on college campuses" (Espiritu, 1992, p. 31). As the political and social identity of Asian Americans gained momentum, a collective Asian consciousness was created to allow Asian Americans to address social and racial injustices. In times of need, the Asian American community has been able to mobilize and unite as a pan-ethnic social and political group, and in most recent cases have been able to unite and advocate for the need to disaggregate ethnic data in order to address the diverse needs in the pan-ethnic Asian American community. Data on Asian Americans are usually aggregated in reports that make it difficult for researchers to understand the issues of sub-communities and perpetuates the idea that this entire group of people is monolithic. In addition, data on Asians in particular are usually reported in comparison to their white counterparts and mostly focus on the successes and affirmations of their experiences. The model minority myth has been a prevalent stereotype for the Asian and Pacific Islander community where pressure is built on the assumption that all Asian Americans excel academically and face no obstacles (SEARAC, 2017). According to a 2012 report from the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, "when compared to 85.3%

of the overall U.S. population, disaggregated data reveals that only 61.5% of Cambodian, 61.7% of Hmong, 62.5% of Laotian, and 70% of Vietnamese Americans aged 25 and over hold a high school degree or higher”. Understanding the history and intent of creating an Asian American consciousness while also acknowledging the specific and unique differences that each ethnic community experiences is vital to this study.

Model Minority Myth

The myth of the model minority can be traced back to the early Cold War period and heavily noted in the Immigration Act of 1965, a policy that eliminated the ethnic quotas that stopped Asian immigration into the United States and enforced selective criteria for entry (Kim, 2013). Under the newly devised immigration policy, Asians eligible for entering the United States were educated and wealthier “skilled workers” such as graduate students, professionals, and technicians (Yen, 2000). As a result, many Asian immigrants at the time were filtered separately from other immigrants of the past who had come to America to fill hard labor positions in the railroad and agricultural industries (Yi, 2003). In time, the post-1965 influx of educated and wealthy Asian immigrants influenced the public perception of the Asian American community and in turn was thought to be “America’s Super Minority” (Ramirez & Loos, 1986).

During this time, praise towards Asian Americans were on the rise while simultaneously, poverty and crime rate among African Americans and Latino Americans continued to be a growing concern (Yen, 2000). In addition to instilling that all Asian Americans were intelligent and industrious, the model minority stereotype assumed Asian Americans as docile and a purveyor of sorts for white racial privilege (Teshima, 2006). Asian Americans were posited as the “good” and reticent minority that did not

disrupt social disorder or stage protests (Teshima, 2006). With this in mind, it became easier to assume that Asian Americans could quietly achieve success within the confines of the current system and when juxtaposed with other racial minorities, this stereotype led many to believe that they too could overcome the lack of resources and opportunities in their communities through sheer hard work and self-reliance (Yen, 2000; Teshima, 2006). This idea also helped strengthen anti-affirmative action policies and further limitations on government assistance while at the same time alleviating white Americans of their responsibility to fix the conditions that caused such problems (Yen, 2000; Teshima, 2006). Asian Americans then became “models” for the other minority groups proving that any marginalized individual or community could easily overcome adversities and achieve social mobility by emulating the Asian American work ethic (Teshima, 2006; Kim, 2013).

In addition to being primarily used as a racial wedge political tool against other minority groups, the concept of the myth has been so prevalent that it has racially framed and harmfully and erroneously defined Asian Americans (Hune, 2002; Suzuki, 1977, 2002, Poon et al., 2015). As early as the 1980’s, the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported that Asian Americans were already victimized by the ‘model minority concept’:

The data studies reviewed...do not support the assertion that Asian Americans are uniformly successful. The stereotype of their success that has developed since the sixties does not convey an accurate portrayal of members of these groups (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1989, p.11).

The Commission’s report continue to reveal that there are three reasons why Asian Americans have been the victim of success imagery: (a) it portrays a false homogeneity in the Asian American population by hiding its diversity in terms of socioeconomic

status, ethnic background, and origins; (b) the emphasis on prosperity ignores the large number of Asian Americans who live in poverty or suffer from class-related discrimination; and (c) the report showed several ways in which statistical data are manipulated to make false claims.

In the area of socio-economic status, for example, the comparison of incomes between Asians and Whites in aggregate national data fails to recognize factors that are specific to Asian American populations. According to the United States Census Bureau, Asian American reside in states such as Hawaii, California, New York, New Jersey, and Washington that tend to have higher income levels and higher costs of living than the national average and they have also been establishing communities in historically less diverse states such as Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, and North Dakota over the past decade (Census, 2010). The uncritical use of median family income data has also been very misleading because Asian American families tend to be intergenerational, with many individuals, including grandparents, parents, children, and sometime even unmarried aunts and uncles all contributing to the household income (Xia, Do, & Xie, 2013). In 2011, the Pew Research Center published the findings of a study on Asian Americans entitled “The Rise of Asian Americans” that noted that Asian Americans in the aggregate were the most educated and had the highest median household income and ignored the tremendous social and economic diversity within the Asian American community. The remarkable longevity of the model minority myth has necessitated similar critiques that continue to be asserted through the present day (Wu, 2002; Ancheta, 1998; Lee, 1996).

Being defined as a model minority has had an affect on the well being of Asian

Americans. Societal problems remain a controversial topic to address by policy makers and due to the lack of leadership, Asian Americans are not considered underrepresented minority or defined as underprivileged which imposes additional limitations when seeking opportunities for employment or education (Astin, 1982; Museus & Kiang, 2009; McGirt, 2018). Decisions about hiring, service provisions, funding allocations, and admissions at the level of both policy and daily practice can be problematic and inequitable if decision-makers do not recognize that the Asian America population is deeply stratified (Nielson, 2002).

Specifically within higher education, Asian Americans continue to feel the affects of the model minority myth with the belief that attending college, or more specifically an elite university, will lead them to a successful career but at the same time are some times met with by an informal quota system where Asian Americans are compared to each other rather than the rest of the applicant pool (Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2018: Golden, 2017). At all eight Ivy League schools, white enrollment indeed declined as Asian enrollment increased however in recent years, Asian American enrollment has decreased at some schools pushing some Asian-American students to believe that they are being held at a higher standard (Ashkenas, Park, & Pearce, 2017). These issues complicate current issues of affirmative action in higher education and at times has become a divisive tool that pits Asians against other minority groups and refocuses the energy on aspects of affirmative action that are untrue. However, in addition to these enrollment numbers at elite institutions, a much larger number of Asian American graduates earn degrees from less selective colleges and universities (Chang & Kiang, 2002). According to the Fall 2016, Digest of Educational Statistics of the National Center for Education

Statistics, the number of Asian/Pacific Islander students increased by 29% from 2000-2010, however from 2010-2016, enrollment remained relatively unchanged despite the growing number of Asian Americans in the total population.

The stereotypical assumption that Asian Americans are doing well educationally and economically has limited the development of programs and support services for low-income and recent immigrants who struggle with cultural adjustment, and along with the opportunities to access fields of study such as the humanities and social sciences where Asian Americans are under-represented as students and professionals (Wang & Teranishi, 2012; Nielson, 2002). Steele (1999) indicated that stereotypes can influence the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of members of the targeted group as well as individuals who do not necessarily believe those stereotypes and those who invoke them as a justification for their conduct. In regards to communities of color, the power of racial stereotypes adds pressure to the target group to succumb to the assumptions bestowed upon them and become internalized while also perpetuating a divide between Asian Americans and other racial minorities (Museus, 2008; Teshima, 2006).

The model minority concept creates a misconception for others but it also affects how Asian Americans view themselves. Asian Americans often internalize the ideas of being smart, diligent, focused, quiet and technically competent which are traits that make desirable employees, but not desirable leaders (Lee et. al., 2018; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998; Kiang, Witkow, & Thompson, 2016). These instances discourage full development and perpetuate the status quo.

Given the created landscape that allows for the model minority stereotype to thrive in our society, this section of the literature review has indicated that much of the

research on Asian Americans and the model minority myth have attempted to counter the prevalent monolithically hardworking racial group definition rather than how the concept itself is used to uphold White supremacy (Poon, et al., 2015). In an effort to influence future researchers to reframe their positioning of Asian Americans, (Poon, et al., 2015) conducted a prolonged project that critically reviewed over 100 studies on Asian Americans in higher education and found that most scholarship incompletely addressed the implications of the concept by focusing on four interconnected limitations: (a) simply defining the stereotype but not recognizing its implications to discipline minoritized groups and uphold Whiteness; (b) reinforcing and reproducing deficit thinking of Asian Americans; (c) unintentionally reify the hegemonic ideologies of the model minority concept; and (d) maintaining the centrality of the concept as the primary point of concern rather than what the actual experience is of the community. As the investigator of this study, it will be important to consider the complexities of the model minority concept and not fall prey to simply countering, and ultimately centering its racist functions, but to focus on the real lived experiences of the Asian American male participant in this study and how they contribute to higher education leadership.

Asian Americans in Higher Education

Asian American Students in Higher Education

More recent studies on Asian Americans in higher education have been conducted to inform institutions with power on how to understand and provide support for this community, yet many organizations have yet to properly consider and act on these recommendations. Contemporary frameworks have based the experiences, outcomes, and representation of Asian Americans in relation to Black and Whites; this Black-White

paradigm has “contributed to a precarious positioning of the Asian American educational experience” (Teranishi et al., 2009, p 889). In an effort to provide additional research addressing race and ethnicity in higher education beyond the Black-White dichotomy, Museus (2014) focused research on Asian Americans states “the time has come for institutions of higher education to develop more holistic and authentic understanding of this significant and rapidly growing population” (p.xiv). Additionally, the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) included that research on Asian American populations must take into consideration the differences in socioeconomic, ethnic, language, and immigration backgrounds; the impact of stereotypes and perceptions of Asian American students on educational policy, practice, and research; as well as intersections of race with class, gender, immigration status, religion, and language (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, 2008). According to a CARE brief report created that focused on key indicators for the mobility and life of Asian American boys and men, Asian American males that graduate from high school do not have clear pathways in succeeding in higher education. In California, Nevada, and Hawaii, states that have a significant Asian American population, 50-60% of Asian American men attend community college and less than 15% of those students earn a degree or transfer to a four-year institution (CARE, 2015). While many colleges and universities have made declarations to serve the diverse student populations through institutional and organizational initiatives, Asian American voices are often overlooked or marginally considered on our campuses (Teranishi, 2002; Chew-Ogi & Ogi, 2002; Green & Kim, 2005; Inkelas, 2006). Limited research exists on the campus experiences of Asian

Americans, adequately disaggregated data for Asian American subpopulations, or looked at Asian Americans in different institutional contexts (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, 2010).

The oversimplified assumptions of this community often perpetuate misunderstanding and misinformation and often leads to “continuing policies and practices in higher education that are at worst, detrimental toward and, at best, silent about the complex and pressing realities of Asian Americans” (Chang & Kiang, 2002, p. 138). To support these assumptions, Chang and Kiang (2002) reviewed significant studies on Asian Americans in higher education and found that most research tend to fall, broadly, into five categories: (a) national demographics and profiles that indicate the inadequate information available regarding Asian Americans; (b) research on Asian American contemporary issues, in particular focusing on race and affirmative action issues across K-12 and higher education; (c) case studies from particular campuses that analyze different groups or comparative studies including Asian Americans; (d) curricular and pedagogical practice in the field of Asian American studies and student development; and (e) personal narratives of Asian American students and faculty, related to the themes of persistence and survival in education.

Recent research continues to examine the diversity in the collective Asian American population, and is surfacing a strong foundation to engage in deeper inquiry about how Asian American students negotiate and navigate their social identities (Buenavista, Jayakuamr, & Misa-Escalante, 2009; Chen, LePhuoc, Guzman, Rude, & Dodd, 2006; Nadal, 2011). Museus and Chang (2009) provided several crucial obstacles to increasing the general knowledge about Asian Americans. One example shared is that

there are consistent connections connected to existing assumptions, such as the model minority myth, that place burden on justifying the rationale for including Asian Americans in research on equity, outcomes, and educational experiences. There are also significant financial resource limitations that support research on Asian Americans due to their exclusion in categories such as “underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities” or “at-risk populations”, despite existing studies that have been able to indicate the disparate educational attainment rates of many ethnic subgroups. There have also been policy shifts to consider Asian Americans as a non-minority group, impacting access to scholarship or support programs for higher education. These barriers shed light on the challenges Asian American experience as communities in need of attention and the research needed to support their realities. With the growing numbers and complex identities of diverse student populations, this study on Asian American leaders in higher education can shed light on how institutions are acting and reacting to the unique needs of Asian American and other marginalized students.

Asian Americans in the Education Discipline

In the United States, the field of education grants about 10% of all bachelor’s degrees, 25% of all master’s degrees, and 15% of all doctorates to students and awards the largest number and largest percentage of minority doctoral recipients (Richardson, 2006; Golde, 2006; Talusan, 2016). Although Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing racial minority groups, a relatively small number of Asian Americans pursue majors and faculty careers in the field of education (Census, 2010; Kim, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2008), only 1.9% of Asian American college undergraduates majored in education. In consideration of

graduate studies, Asian Americans represented the smallest number graduates with 12.8% receiving a master's degree and 3.9% at the doctoral level (NCES, 2008).

Wang & Teranishi (2012) propose that the lack of Asian American representation and limited number among teachers and administrators could be the result of “an inadequate effort to encourage students to major in education fields” (p. 10). In an effort to understand undergraduate major decision trends, Chang, Park, Lin, Poon, & Nakanishi (2007) collected survey information on first-year Asian American college students regarding their career aspirations and found that in 1971, only 2.2% of male Asian American frosh and 7.1% of female Asian American frosh chose education as a potential college major. In 2005, that percentage declined to 1.5% for male Asian American frosh and 4% for female Asian American frosh. This drop in the education discipline interest may have influenced the pipeline and shortage of Asian American teachers, including college and university faculty, staff and administrators on college and university campuses (Wang & Teranishi, 2012, p. 12).

Another way of explaining this decline is through Rong & Preissle (1997) social-demographic data study where they compared decennial census data between 1970-1990 to analyze the causes of shortages of minority teachers across varying groups. After looking at traditional patterns of recruitment, they found that Asian Americans may avoid teaching altogether, and instead choose careers in which they are well represented in order to avoid discrimination and racial conflict that come with being underrepresented in a field such as business, sciences, engineering, and other health-related majors (Rong & Preissle; Wang & Teranishi, 2012). In addition, Rong and Preissle (1997) outlined four factors that possibly influenced the imbalanced number of Asian Americans educators:

occupational orientation, discrimination, parental influences, and institutional characteristics of the teaching profession. In consideration of this study, the limited number of Asian Americans in the field of education creates a boundary for Asian Americans to fully succeed as leaders and impact the lives of diverse students, thus creating a cascading effect that denies future Asian American students to consider the field of education as a priority career choice.

Asian Americans as Student Personnel Administrators

With Asian Americans being one of the fastest growing racial minority groups, the number of Asian American students is increasing each year, however the number of Asian American college administrators is unknown (Suh, 2005; Census, 2010; Kim, 2009). Most of the knowledge on Asian American student affairs practitioners is extrapolated from research done on minorities in higher education and from study findings from other disciplines so the “who, what, where, why, how, when, and why “ of these professionals has been under examined (Suh, 2005, p .86). The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) is one of the leading professional associations for the advancement health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession and serves students and professionals who provide programs, experiences, and services that cultivate student learning and success that accentuate the mission of various colleges and universities (NASPA, 2018). Using the NASPA membership database, Wang & Teranishi (2012) examined the membership make up of student affairs professionals and found that of the 7,762 membership records, 61% of members were Caucasian, 16% African American, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), and 1% Native American (p.19). This study will

draw upon the limited size of the community as a factor to how participants succeed with little models and resources available.

Glass Ceiling

The Glass Ceiling term was first introduced by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy D. Schellhard in their 1986 article in the Wall Street Journal entitled “The Glass Ceiling: Why Women Can’t Seem to Break the Invisible Barrier That Blocks Them from the Top Job” where they analyzed the experiences of working White women that work in workplace environments that were heavily dominated by White men (Woo, 2000; Quast, 2011). The phenomena refers to “those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization in to management-level positions” (U. S. Department of Labor, 1991, p. 1). As minorities started entering the workforce, the tenets of the Glass Ceiling concept were shared as well (Woo, 2000). The concept is drawn from theoretical perspectives that explain the negative effects in the labor market and the expense that women and racial minority individuals pay (Lee, 2002). Through the lens of dual labor theories, as competition for preferred jobs grew, institutional barriers were created to segregate racial minorities and White women from core sectors and once these exclusionary obstructions were in place, their effects endured and expanded despite being deemed illegal and made the absence of these marginalized groups in the primary job market common place (Cheng & Bonacich, 1984; Doeringer & Piore, 1970; Feagin & Feagin, 1986; Lee, 2002). In addition, although dual labor theories explain why labor markets are segregated by gender and race, they do not explain why gender and racial characteristics are the factors for labor market differentiation (Lee, 2002).

Asian Americans are likely to experience the glass ceiling phenomena because of their history and status as racial minorities. Hyun (2005) coined the term “Bamboo Ceiling” to center the experiences of Asian Americans and to acknowledge the obstacles that are faced in the workplace along with how cultural barriers can impede career advancement opportunities. In recognizing these barriers, Hyun (2005) also adds that in efforts to combat these problems, Asian Americans often create internal barriers that limit their behaviors, attitudes, and performance in various social and professional settings, which allows them to operate through a deficit belief.

In an effort to “eliminate artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities and to increase the opportunities and developmental experiences of women and minorities to foster advancement of women and minorities to management and decision-making positions in business”, Congress passed the Glass Ceiling Act in 1991 and a bipartisan federal commission was created to lead these charges (Woo, 2000, p. 44). The 21-member Commission accredited 18 research papers, conducted five public hearings nationwide, surveyed 25 chief executive officers from White and minority owned businesses, facilitated group interviews of six racially homogenous focus groups, drew out views of focus panel groups, and began several analyses of United States Census Bureau data (Woo, 2000). In 1995, the Commission released the results of its research and found that despite progress for minorities and women into executive, administrative, and managerial positions over the previous two decades, non-Hispanic White males held 95-97% of all management positions within the private sector (Woo, 2000). Asian/Pacific Islander Americans occupied “less than one one-hundredth of one percent of all corporate directorships “ compared to women in general, who occupied

three to five percent of senior positions (Woo, 2000, p. 44).

The Commission's (1995) research concentrated on identifying distinct corporate barriers among racial minorities and women and found that some barriers directly affect managerial-level preparedness which included the lack of mentoring, management training, and career development opportunities. Prior to this collection of studies, little research was conducted on the glass ceiling in general and mobility issues among Asian Americans were practically nonexistent and it became the responsibility of Asian American community organizations to initiate and create their own comprehensive reports (Woo, 2000). In 1986, Chinese for Affirmative Action published a series of descriptive reports on the glass ceiling in city civil services and in 1992, the Organization of Chinese Americans created a glass ceiling brief report. The Asian Americans for Community Involvement (1993) conducted the first broad survey of Asian Americans in Silicon Valley and suggested that the corporate sector is viewed as having the worst promotional opportunities for Asian Americans were inadequate. The survey of white-collar employees reflected the belief that Asian Americans are underrepresented at a managerial level: lower-level management positions (49%); middle-management (64%); and upper-management (80%) (Asian Americans for Community Involvement, 1993).

Although very little glass ceiling research exists, in an effort to fill the gap in the literature regarding Asian Americans and the glass ceiling, researchers have started to examine these relationships in various work environments. Tang (1993) compared the career histories of over 12,000 White and Asian engineers between the years 1982 and 1986 and found large disparities in earnings but even more so in managerial representation and upward mobility suggesting that Asian Americans still have not

reached occupational equality with Whites. Fernandez's (1998) analysis of the experience of college-educated Asian Indians in the private sector found that Asian Indians are disadvantaged in their opportunities for promotion to management, however Asian Indian women show a higher disparity in attaining management opportunities and earn even less than their White counterparts.

Yamane's (2012) recent analysis of the 2000 United States Census Data examined the earning rates and managerial opportunities between Asian American men and women and their White counterparts. East and Southeast Asian American men with doctorates were estimated to earn three to five percent less than White men with the same credentials and appeared to be 32.7% less likely to be promoted to the manager level. For East and Southeast Asian American women, 31% showed that they were less likely to be promoted into a managerial positions compared to White women and 41.2% less likely than White men. The study also indicated that doctoral level Asian American women in general are earning comparably well to White women but are significantly less than White men with a doctoral degree.

Although the number of minorities and women has been increasing over the years, Asian Americans are still significantly underrepresented in higher levels of management in various organizations. In regards to this study, it would be important to understand the pathways that the Asian American male participants experience as they aspire for next level management opportunities.

Higher Education Workplace Issues and Asian Americans

Due to the effects of the model minority concept, the literature on workplace discrimination has paid little attention to the experiences of Asian Americans and most of

the research on American workplace racial issues rarely go beyond the Black and White racial paradigms (Dipboye & Colella, 2005; Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999; Lai & Babcock, 2013). Within the past 10 years, some research has been able to shed light on the job application processes of Asian Americans that showcased significant challenges. An interesting phenomenon in this area that was explored is “résumé whitening”, a circumstance that provokes racial minorities to conceal or downplay racial cues in job applications to avoid anticipated discrimination (Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016). Kang et al., (2016) interviewed 29 Black and 30 Asian job seeking college students and found that that when employers present values of diversity in their job descriptions, minorities submit more racially transparent résumés but still participate in tactics of résumé whitening such switching their names to a more “American-sounding” name and/or omitting their extra-curricular activities that may signal a minority status to improve their chances of getting a job (p. 475). These implemented strategies indicate the conscious or subconscious awareness that Asian Americans unjustly face when seeking out job opportunities.

Another way of looking at this issue has been captured through the perceptions of the hiring employers. In an effort to understand the struggling experiences of immigrants, Oreopoulos (2011) implemented a study that randomly manipulated and sent out 12,910 résumés to various job postings that plausibly represented candidates from China, India, Pakistan, and Britain and found substantial discrimination across a variety of occupations based on perceived language fluency, multinational firm experience, educational attainment. The study found that “résumés with English sounding names were 39 percent more likely to receive callbacks than résumés with Indian, Pakistani, or Chinese names”

and that resumé that listed educational attainment from foreign countries were less likely to get a callback for a job posting (Oreopoulos, 2011, p.160).

In another study, Lai & Babcock (2013) investigated how White male and female evaluators perceived Asian American and White job candidates when hiring and promoting. After recruiting 104 White men and 78 White women, each participant was given a set of resumé to review to hire two positions. In the set, two identical resumé were included except the last names of the candidates were changed to “Wong” and “Smith” to connote a racial difference and found that White female evaluators were less likely to select Asian than White candidates for the positions (Lai & Babcock, 2013). This bias indicates a barrier for many Asian Americans to enter the job market.

Within the field of education, although the number of Asian Americans is small, Goodwin, Genishi, Asher & Woo (2006) found that those who choose to work in the field of education may also experience invalidation that excludes them from becoming full members of the institution. Using a sample of 21 Asian teachers in New York City, Goodwin et al. (2006) found that the teachers believed that they are a marginal minority, invisible in school, and that the school curriculum does not adequately include Asian American life experiences and culture.

In addition the American Council on Education (ACE) is the major coordinating body for the nation’s colleges and universities representing nearly 1,800 college and university presidents and the executives at relations associations and is the only major higher education association to represent all types of accredited, degree-granting institutions in the United States (ACE, 2018). Based on the results of a roundtable of 25 Asian Pacific Islander American leaders of various colleges and universities across the

country, a brief was created to examine the experienced barriers to advancements for these leaders. Several barriers including subtle discrimination, racism, the glass ceiling, stereotypes, and the lack of training and mentorship were all identified and discussed amongst the participants (Davis & Huang, 2013). Teranishi et al. (2009) noted that poor representation of Asian Americans in higher education leadership positions is threefold: (a) at universities with high concentrations of Asian American/Pacific Islander communities, there is not representation in senior leadership and therefore students are not being exposed to role models who are also Asian American/Pacific Islander; (b) the Asian American/Pacific Islander student population is growing, and the lack of leadership at institutions means issues affecting AAPI students will continue to receive a lack of attention to the challenges they face; and (c) a lack of AAPI leadership is in contrast to the demographic changes of AAPIs increasing the population (p. 65). Despite demographic growth, the absence of Asian Americans within university administrative ranks has been overlooked; for those who persist in the field, many state they faced hostile work factors such as tokenism, a glass or bamboo ceiling, and isolation (Suh, 2005). The absence of a culturally engaged campus environment and culturally competent hiring practices impacts how Asian Americans are discriminated against and will affect the experiences of the participants targeted in this study.

Asian Americans and Masculinity

Masculinity

Masculinity research was heavily influenced by the biologically grounded male sex role theory until 1970 (Smiler, 2004). Within this theory, masculinity was conceptualized as a polarized construct placing masculinity on side and femininity on the

opposite side (Pleck, 1981). Males who engaged in more feminine characteristics, or hypo-masculinity, were considered to have poor mental health and after World War II, hyper-masculinity became problematic and led to maladjustments such as aggressive behavior (Pleck, 1981; Smiler, 2004). During the 1970s, Bem (1974) and Spence and Helmreich (1978) posited masculinity and femininity as separate unipolar constructs and androgyny as the ideal psychological well-being. These perspectives challenged the ideas that gender was solely biological and demonstrated that gender roles were learned and acquired, gender was still measured as an essential phenomenon occurring within individuals (Smiler, 2004). The sex role theory of masculinity has since been criticized for creating an artificial distinction between men and women and to minimize the power men exercise over women. (Connell, 1993; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Sex role theory was historically useful to describe the masculine traits and attitudes of individual men but misses the realities of what the attitudes are about.

Through sex role theory, masculinity as a trait can describe what a man is whereas masculinity as an ideology can prescribe what a man should be (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1998). In addition, masculinity ideology allows an individual to endorse and internalize a cultural belief system about masculinity and male gender that could also be connected to negative psychological outcomes in men (Pleck, 1995). In one study that measured the mental capacities and processes of masculine norms, men who endorsed traditional masculinity ideology such as having a desire to have muscular bodies, had significant and negative attitudes towards psychological help seeking, and social desirability also indicated having high levels of psychological distress, social dominance, and aggression (Mahalia, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried, & Freitas, 2003). Pleck et al. (1998)

found no significant difference between problematic behaviors and masculinity ideology among adolescent Black, white, and Hispanic male racial and ethnic groups but also suggested that masculinity ideology associated with male behaviors have negative after effects. Masculinity ideology studies provide examples of how for all men, regardless of racial or ethnic background, endorse prescribed cultural beliefs of masculinity and how it may relate to negative psychological outcomes such as decreased mental wellness, undesirable social traits, and problematic behaviors (Levant, Richmond, Inclan, Heesacker, Majors, Rosello, Rowan, & Sellers, 2003; Mahalik et al., 2003; Pleck et al., 1998).

Another aspect of masculinity studies is the male gender role strain paradigm that examines the tensions between what a man is and the expectations of what he should be (Pleck et al, 1998). Gender role strain paradigm also describes role disfunction as the successful fulfillment of male role expectations that are harmful to an individual or those around him (Pleck, 1981). Through the viewpoint of normative masculinity as a psychological construct, Goldberg (1976) also adds that certain aspects such as risk-taking and emotional distancing were considered to be dysfunctional. Pleck (1981) continues to acknowledge that a significant proportion of men deviate from the traditional male gender norm and therefore experience disparate forms of gender role strain. Through this lens, masculinity was able to move beyond simple traits but also acknowledge the various ways men react to traditional male gender norms. One study developed scales to assess gender-role attitudes, behaviors, and conflicts in specific gender-role conflict situations and found positive associations between gender role conflict and anger, anxiety, and homophobia (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, &

Wrightsmann, 1986; Pleck, 1995). Adapting a similar instrument, another study was conducted to investigate aspects of social gender roles and mental health and found that gender role conflict was associated with depression and anxiety (Zamarripa, Wampold, & Gregory, 2003).

The gender role strain paradigm allowed male and female gender roles to shift in definition and be seen as socially situated and facilitated challenges to gender role ideals (Connell, 1993; Smiler, 2004). The gender role strain paradigm also recognized that gender roles could vary across different racial populations (Connell, 1993). Although the paradigm has added much to the masculinity studies, the gender role strain paradigm has received criticism for neglecting within-cultural group variation and presenting a one-point perspective that focuses only on individual agency rather than working within the context of larger social structures (Connell, 1993).

Hegemonic masculinity is another concept that most research in masculinity studies is framed from and is the practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, and other marginalized ways of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept of hegemonic masculinity articulates that men of color may embody some traits of what is considered to be desirable in an American social context, but cannot attain the same social status as white American men because whiteness is one of the key characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in the United States (Chen, 1999; Connell, 2005). In addition, research also indicates that very few men, regardless of race, truly fulfill the prescribed ideals needed to be a definitive hegemonic man (Chen, 1999; Goffman, 1963; Pleck, 1995).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is susceptible to historical shifts and consequently what is considered to be hegemonic masculinity for a given socio-political context (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Because the model of hegemonic masculinities is not self-reproducing, the behaviors of what is considered characteristics of a hegemonic male does not always necessarily look the same, nor does the race or cultural background of its representation remain constant (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Maintaining a relational approach, especially in comparison to women and femininity, is also central to this concept (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pleck, 1995; Pleck, Sonestien, & Ku, 1993). Understanding the tenets of masculinity will be an important point of interest to this study as we examine how the intersection of race and gender affect the experiences the male Asian American leader participants.

Asian American Masculinity

Masculinity within the Asian American community can be traced back to the mid-1800s when the first big wave of Asian immigration to the United States developed where laborers consisted primarily of men who came for the California Gold Rush, worked on the Hawaiian plantations, and worked in the South after the abolition of slavery (Espiritu, 1997; Takaki, 1990). With the rise of Asian laborers, employment opportunities became more competitive and White workers saw Asian men as a threat not only to their jobs but also to White women (Takaki, 1990). Shortly after the first wave of Asian immigration, the United States government passed legislation that limited immigration of Asian women such as the Page Law in 1875 (Espiritu, 1997; Takaki, 1993). Realizing that Asian men would want to intermarry with White women since there were now limited opportunities to make a family with Asian women, anti-miscegenation

laws were created to revoke citizenship of any White woman who married out (Chua & Fujino, 1999; Espiritu, 1997; Takaki, 1993).

In addition to these institutional barriers, cultural forms of oppression against Asian men followed suit (Okimoto, 1994). Asian American men became depicted as both hypermasculine and effeminate (Shek, 2006). The hypermasculine image of Asian American men was heavily propagandized through the Yellow Peril image after the bombing in Pearl Harbor, where Asian American men were painted to be a strong foreign threat, and in conjunction with the perpetual foreigner concept, allowed the opportunity to question their loyalty to the United States and ability to assimilate to American culture (Espiritu, 1997; Shek, 2006). On the other hand, as a method to prevent mixed-raced marriages, messages of Asian men as sexual deviant, asexual, effeminate, or luring White women with opium also became prevalent (Chan, 2001; Espiritu, 1997; Shek, 2006). As a ploy to further weaken the masculine image of Asian American men, employment opportunities became more limited, pushing Asian American men to work in areas that were considered to be more feminine such as laundry service, housekeeping, cooking, and restaurant work (Takaki, 1993).

Asian American Masculinity became a concept that has been mostly externally defined (Chan, 2001; Chan, 2008; Espiritu, 1997; Shek, 2006). Because it is primarily controlled externally, the expectations set by others often lead Asian American men to create negative self-evaluations that are often associated with racism and racialized gender identity (Shek, 2006). Through the concept hegemonic masculinity, Asian American masculinity traits are then considered subordinate, similar to those among men of color and non-heterosexual men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Shek, 2006). Some

studies have explored this aspect of Asian American masculinity. An example of this is Chen's (1999) qualitative study with Chinese American men that set out to understand how they achieve masculinity in the face of harmful stereotypes. Through this study, the Chinese men saw aspects of their own masculinity not living up to White ideals of hegemonic masculinity and used four strategies as a means to grant them some social privilege. Chen (1999) claimed this phenomenon as hegemonic bargaining which occurs when a Chinese American man's gender strategy involves consciously trading on, or unconsciously taking advantage of, the privileges of his race, gender, class, generation, or sexuality for the purposes of elevating his masculinity. The first strategy used is compensation, which is meant to undermine negative stereotypes by meeting the ideas of hegemonic masculinity. Deflection is used when trying to divert attention away from self-perceived stereotypical behavior. Denial is another method that rejects the existence of stereotypes or their applicability to the individual. The last strategy is repudiation where one does not find his masculinity to be inferior to White hegemonic ideals.

Another way of looking at this is through Chan's (2001) study that found that Asian American male students were more likely to adopt hegemonic masculinity instead of aligning themselves with other marginalized groups because of the social benefits they would receive. Through the existing portrayals of Chinese American men, Chan (2001) explored the alternative to hegemonic masculinity in an effort to understand the options presented to Asian Americans. By examining popular images of Chinese American men, Chan (2001) found that stereotypical images that exhibited both hypermasculine and hypomasculine simultaneously were used to separate Chinese American men into a lower social status than other groups. Chan (2001) then argued for a new construct of

masculinity to challenge the patriarchy, fear of feminization, and homophobic characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and challenged Asian American men to create alternative models that are defined by them and notes:

When White American men are used by popular culture as standard bearers of masculinity, Asian Americans are forced to accept the racial hierarchy embedded in the discourse of American manhood. In effect, Asian American men are given a false choice: either we emulate White American notions of masculinity or accept the fact that we are not men (p. 156; Shek, 2006).

Given this idea, the Asian American male college students in the study unfortunately did not have the skills or resources to construct a new model of masculinity since the patriarchal benefits were inaccessible and due to their race which caused Asian American masculinity to be another reproduction of American stereotypes.

With most of the literature on Asian American masculinity focused on hegemonic masculinity, another layer that affects this phenomenon is the White perspective power that typically depict Asian American men as effeminate and asexual while at the same time patriarchal and autocratic (Chan, 2001; Chan 1998; Cheng, 1996; Chua & Fujino, 1999). One study that was conducted examined how college-age Asian American and white men express their masculinities, how Asian American and white women perceive Asian-American masculinities, and how Asian-American men negotiate their gender expectations. Through quantitative analysis of surveys, Chua & Fujino (1999) found that U.S. born and immigrant Asian men view their masculinity as distinct from white hegemonic masculinity. White male students saw themselves as sexually exciting, physically attractive, outgoing, and social. Asian men born in the U.S. who were indicated their willingness to do domestic tasks and immigrant Asian men constructed the least distinctive self-concepts and indicated commonalities to U.S. born Asians and white

men. Women viewed Asian-American men as having more traditional gender roles and being more nurturing, in contrast to their views of white men, which matched White norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Deciding how to behave and act is another aspect that masculinity weighs on Asian American men. For example, Chen's (1999) study with Chinese American men set out to understand how they achieve masculinity in the face of harmful stereotypes. Through this study, the Chinese men saw aspects of their own masculinity not living up to White ideals of hegemonic masculinity and used four strategies as a means to grant them some social privilege. Chen (1999) claimed this phenomenon as hegemonic bargaining which occurs when a Chinese American man's gender strategy involves consciously trading on, or unconsciously taking advantage of, the privileges of his race, gender, class, generation, or sexuality for the purposes of elevating his masculinity. The first strategy used is compensation, which is meant to undermine negative stereotypes by meeting the ideas of hegemonic masculinity. Deflection is used when trying to divert attention away from self-perceived stereotypical behavior. Denial is another method that rejects the existence of stereotypes or their applicability to the individual. The last strategy is repudiation where does not find his masculinity to be inferior to White hegemonic ideals.

To add to these complexities, Lu & Wong (2013) examined how Asian American men experience masculinity and the stressors that are attached to their experiences through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, stereotypes, and mental health. Using the questionnaire responses they received from participants from professional associations, public online groups, and four public universities, Lu & Wong (2013) found two aspects

of masculinity-related stress. Participants struggled to portray an ideal man who is tough, attractive, unemotional, and heterosexual because they lacked Whiteness and felt disadvantaged by stereotypes and White ideals. In addition, in regards to work-related role identities, participants strongly identified as achievers and providers. Participants envisioned themselves as workers and emphasized success, which ultimately causes them to stress over the expectations to focus on their careers. At the same time, the participants believed that without work, they could not properly provide care and support for the family. Through this study, Lu & Wong (2013) found that Asian American men receive overused and generic praise that contradict possible positive self-concepts and perpetuate overcompensations beyond hegemonic masculinity and causes high levels of stress.

For the purposes of this study, the participants would identify as Asian American men who may have been influenced by the pressures of hegemonic masculinity to belong within the institution. In an empirical study on masculinities in organizations, Cheng (1996) observed college students in how they selected leaders for their group projects and what characteristics they determined were needed to be successful and found that their decisions were based on hegemonic masculinity. The students selected mostly white men and white women who could mimic masculine behaviors to be the leaders for the group projects and ranked Asian American men to be the least likely to be chosen amongst all of the other gender and racial groups. The students argued that their decisions were based on merit but upon further analysis that if the decision was based solely on merit than the Asian American men were more qualified than the selected leaders for each group. Cheng (1996) also found that the students found their Asian American male peers to have both masculine and feminine traits that were tied to cultural values thus

provoking their decisions.

Asian American Queer Identity

Another aspect of gender studies that revolves around the subject of masculinity and male identity is queerness. Queer theory challenges widely accepted beliefs and norms and posits that “heteronormative culture renders queer lives unlivable (Lee, Learmonth, & Harding, 2008). This causes many gay men of color to become “outsiders among outsiders” due to their multiple marginalized identities within a White-dominated society and often times, White-majority gay community (Bui, 2014; Aguilar-San Juan, 1998; Otalvaro-Hormillosa, 1999).

Masculinity within the Asian American community is an apparent difficult intersection to manage and feel connected to a community. One study that provided a new perspective on Asian American masculinity was through Kumashiro’s (1999) qualitative study focused on the experiences of three queer Asian American men. The study found that Asian American men experienced additional oppression when masculine and sexual identities intersected. Kumashiro (1999) argued that the homophobic tendencies within Asian communities perpetuate and privilege heteronormativity and associates queerness with Whiteness causing supplemental forms of oppression on top of the existing racism and queerphobia (Shek, 2006). Thus, queer Asian men not only feel isolated from Asian American communities, but also feel distressed from the queer community through the exotifying idea that Asian men are hypersexual desired beings. The pressures exemplified in this study showcase the contradictions of privilege and marginalization within both the Asian American community and queer community. With focus of this study on the experiences of Asian American men, participants of this study

may identify as queer and may also provide other insight to their experiences as queer Asian American leaders in colleges and universities.

These contradictions of Asian American men assist in upholding cultural and institutional racism and at the same time confuse Asian American men in defining their identity (Chan, 1998; Espiritu, 1997; Shek, 2006). With this study seeking to understand the experience of Asian American males in higher education leadership, it would be of great interest to see how participants are positioned based on their perceived masculine features defined by White administrators who have positional power.

Summary

This study seeks to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. This chapter examined historical and current research, theorists, and studies around the topics that are pertinent in understanding the context of its participants along with the lens to understand their experiences and assisted to identify three thematic backgrounds that provide the social and political influences of the participants - Asian American racial identity; Asian Americans in Higher Education; and Asian Americans and masculinity. In addition, this chapter introduced the Racial Whiteness, Triangulation Theory of Asian Americans, and Intersectionality Theory as the theoretical framework that will inform the data analysis and final report of this study. By understanding the population and factors considered for this study, this chapter assists in guiding chapter three to develop the protocol needed. The following chapter will describe the researchers methodology which will include the design of the study; research setting; population and sample; sample procedures;

instrumentation; data collection procedures; data analysis; ethical considerations; summary; and researchers background.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter on methodology will present the design of the study and methodologies for data collection and analysis. This qualitative study is designed through a phenomenological approach, centered on capturing the career development experiences of Asian American male managers within the field of higher education. It is important to utilize a qualitative approach to deepen the understanding of the lived experiences of male Asian American higher education leaders beyond quantitative data that has misrepresented and underrepresented the Asian American community (Museus, 2009; Teranishi et al., 2009). Most of the current quantitative studies on Asian Americans have aggregated data into one racial group which ultimately denies the ethnic diversity of people who are often underserved and under-represented. In addition, due to the lack of existing literature that on Asian Americans in higher education leadership roles, a qualitative approach allows an opportunity for male Asian American higher education leaders to share their personal stories and truly capture the lived experiences that are not often represented in current research practices. Specifically, a phenomenological approach was selected because “the researcher [is] able to gather information from the participants’ perspectives and gain a better understanding of the lived experiences” (Soeker et al., 2015, p. 177). This research is guided by the intention to continue the research and understanding of how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities.

The experiences will be analyzed through the lenses of the racial triangulation of Asian Americans and Intersectionality in order to create a new perspective in looking at the participant's experiences. This study will select participants through a criterion sampling procedure due to the specific conditions that participants are required to meet (Creswell, 2015). As race and gender are complicated and socially constructed identities, this study will be open to higher education managers who identify as male Asian Americans. Through one-one-one interviews, the researcher will conduct the interviews with participants, via audio recording device, where they will discuss in-depth experiences of the phenomenon following an interview protocol designed specifically for this study. During the data analysis phase, coding, memoing, textural writing, and structural writing will be used to derive the essence of the lived experience for the participants in this study. This chapter will have the following sections: restatement of the purpose, research design, research setting, research questions, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations, summary, and researcher background.

Potential participants for this study will be located through a variety of methods, which will ensure that the most appropriate fit the criteria for this study. A majority of participants will be contacted via an introduction from members within the professional associations of the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community, and the American College Personnel Association, Asian Pacific American Network that have professional networks with Asian American male leaders. The approach for selecting individuals primarily through professional connections of

members within these higher education professional organizations allows for a purposeful, homogeneous sampling; however, additional means of participant selection will also be incorporated into this study. Participants may also be contacted via a personal status posting on Facebook, a social networking site that will request interested persons to contact the researcher via Facebook Groups and the direct messaging tool to gather more information about the study and selection criteria. In addition to the utilization of professional connection through professional associations or Facebook, participants may also be contacted through the researcher's personal network of contacts, which will be accessed through phone or e-mail to discuss the study and identify their potential willingness to participate. Once the initial selection of participants for the study are selected, additional participants may be identified through snowball sampling from within the current study sample. Additionally, snowball sampling will be utilized to further develop the pool of potential study participants – acquiring candidates through recommendation of other study participants. Participants in this study will be limited to the residents of the United States of America in order to control for social and political factors that vary from country to country. During the initial screening survey process, participants will be asked to identify their country of residence, not disclosing their immigration or citizenship status, which will be used as a factor to determine eligibility to participate in this study.

This chapter will have the following sections: Research design; Research setting; population and sample; sample procedures; instrumentation; data collection procedures; data analysis; ethical considerations; summary; and researchers background.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. The primary research questions that drive this inquiry include: How do Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education? In what ways do characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders? In what ways do Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development? What advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements?

Research Design

In hopes to understand how identity influences leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities, qualitative research will be instituted in this study with a phenomenological approach to analyze the lived experiences and understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Sokolowski, 2000; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Nielson & Suyemoto (2009) state that the reality that Asian American leaders encounter a glass ceiling suggest that culture and race play a role in the experiences of higher education administrators and supports the notion of differences in the experiences of white and Asian American professionals in higher education. The narratives gathered from these male Asian American higher education leaders will help this community feel that their stories are important and that they are heard and in turn serve as data to help explain the phenomena of this study (Creswell, 2015).

Phenomenology is the discipline that studies the truth. Sokolowski (2000) insists that the phenomenological approach:

“stands back from our rational involvement with things and marvels at the fact that there is disclosure, that things do appear, that the word can be understood, and that we in our life of thinking serve as datives for the manifestation of things” (p. 185).

Sokolowski (2000) continues through Starks & Trinidad (2007) that:

“phenomenological statement, like philosophical statements, state the obvious and the necessary. They tell us what we already know. They are not new information, but even if not new, they can still be important and illuminating, because we often are very confused about just such trivialities and necessities” (p.1373).

This qualitative methodology will therefore allow an opportunity for participants to share their personal stories and truly capture the lived experiences that are not often represented in current research practices.

Outlined by Creswell (2013), the researcher will follow the phenomenological principles indicated and will focus this study on a group of male Asian American higher education leaders in American colleges and universities, and at the same time remain neutral in thought during the interviews (p.78). The following suggestions as outlined by Creswell (2013) will be included in the design and serve as a procedural map for this study:

1. Ensure that the focus of the research is most appropriately studied through a phenomenological approach;
2. Correctly identify the central phenomenon to be studied;
3. Researcher brackets out in order to view the phenomenon as it exists, without regard to the outside world;

4. Through in-depth and multiple interviews with participants, the research collects data about the experience; and

5. The interview protocol is focused on four broad questions, followed by more detailed questions that seek to understand the phenomenon as the participants have experienced it. (P. 81).

In addition, this study will follow an adaptation to the three-interview series method of interviewing suggested by Schuman (1982) in Siedman (2013). The foundation of the three-interview approach includes an initial interview to establish context of the participants experience, followed by a second interview to allow the participants to reconstruct the details of their experience, and end with a third interview to encourage participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences (Siedman, 2013). With this in mind and in respect of this format, the researcher will adapt this model and instead conduct a single 1-2 hour interview that will focus on the life history of the participants, the details of their current experiences, while also allowing for reflection of how their experiences led to where they are today which will still allow control for the direction and not lose the power of logic and the benefit from it (Siedman, 2013). As the interview is conducted, the sessions will follow an interview protocol and be voice recorded for the purposes of transcription and record keeping. Immediately following each interview, the researcher will write a reflective memo regarding his initial thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and review of the interview.

Each of the interview transcripts will be analyzed to identify common statements, which will lead to creating a list of common themes. With a series of themes identified, the researcher will then construct textural and structural descriptions of the experience,

which will provide the context for explaining what and how the participants, as a group of people, experiences the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Through this design, this study will uncover the career development experiences of Asian American male leaders within the field of higher education.

Research Setting

Potential participants for this study will be located through a variety of methods, which will ensure that the most appropriate fit the criteria for this study. A majority of participants will be contacted via an introduction from members within the professional associations of the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community, and the American College Personnel Association, Asian Pacific American Network that have professional networks with Asian American male leaders. The approach for selecting individuals primarily through professional connections of members within these higher education professional organizations allows for a purposeful, homogeneous sampling; however, additional means of participant selection will also be incorporated into this study. Participants may also be contacted via a personal status posting on Facebook, a social networking site that will request interested persons to contact the researcher via Facebook Groups and the direct messaging tool to gather more information about the study and selection criteria. In addition to the utilization of professional connection through professional associations or Facebook, participants may also be contacted through the researcher's personal network of contacts, which will be access through phone or e-mail to discuss the study and identify their potential willingness to participate. Once the initial selection of participants for the study are

selected, additional participants may be identified through snowball sampling from within the current study sample. Additionally, snowball sampling will be utilized to further develop the pool of potential study participants – deriving candidacy through recommendation of other study participants. Participants in this study will be limited to the residents of the United States of America in order to control for social and political factors that vary from country to country. During the initial screening survey process, participants will be asked to identify their country of residence, not disclosing their immigration or citizenship status, which will be used as a factor to determine eligibility to participate in this study.

Phenomenology seeks to address the “essence” of what it means to be human and to contextually attain a focused understanding of shared human experience (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Valle & King, 1978; Lyons, Dorsch, Bell, & Mason, 2018). With this in mind, the researcher will conduct interviews via in-person or virtual conferencing, determined by the location of the participant during the data collection phase of this study. It is the intent of the researcher to conduct the interview in-person which may require travel to the location of the research participant. Regardless of the format of the interview, in-person or through video conference, each interview will be conducted in a quiet location that will ensure the participant and the researcher are able to clearly hear one another and for the voice recording device to clearly pick up each person’s voice. If the interviews are conducted in person, a safe, neutral location that is agreeable for both the participant and researcher will be selected - ensuring an optimal interview. Based on the potentially sensitive nature of the research, I anticipate that in-person interviews will take place outside of the workplace, and potentially their home (Rumens & Kerfoot,

2009, p. 771). In the study by Soeker et al., (2015), the participants were interviewed in a location that was familiar to them based on their daily routine, which ensured that the participants were comfortable - leading to their cooperation in the interviews and increasing the potential for more honest, in-depth responses to the interview questions.

Population

This study is particularly interested in individuals who identify as male Asian Americans and are serving in higher education leadership roles. According to the Fall, 2015 Digest of Educational Statistics of the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of management positions at degree-granting postsecondary institutions held by male Asian total 4,284 which is only 1.7% of the total management employee number (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). This population will draw from male Asian American managers of varying managerial level positions, institutions, institutional types, Asian ethnicities, regions of the United States, and countries of origins, and have been in the field of higher education administration for more than 10 years. Participants who have at least 10 years of experience are likely to have moved beyond inexperienced administrative level positions and have had time to acclimate as working professionals with higher education administration experience in various higher educational environments. This population will be limited to those who are employed in higher education institutions throughout the United States in order to control for unique differences in the social and political contexts that impact higher education environments in the United States, which may be different in other countries.

Sample

The participants for this study will be recruited using a purposeful sampling

method by selecting at least 5 and no more than 25 individuals that have experienced a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Although diverse samples might provide a broader range from which to distill the essence of the phenomenon, data from a few individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and who can provide a detailed account of their experience might suffice to uncover its core elements (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Each participant will be selected via criterion and snowball sampling procedures until enough data is obtained to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. Qualitative research should aim to attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Creswell (2013) recommend that the appropriate sample size for participation to achieve saturation in qualitative research should be 5-25 and with respect to the traditions of this approach, this study will aim to interview 8-15 individuals who meet the specific criterion. In addition, to ensure that the analysis of the male Asian American experience is inclusive of different experiences, the researcher will also aim to gather participants from several geographic regions in the United States with at least four participants from two different geographical regions – one being on the West Coast and one on the East Coast.

Each “participant in the study [will] need to be carefully chosen and to be individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon in question” in order to ensure that the study yields a “common understanding” of the participant’s experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). Participants will be identified through purposeful sampling, which Creswell notes, “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (2015, p. 205). Further deriving the sample for this study, the

participants will also be considered a homogeneous sampling, which is a purposeful sample “of individuals based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics,” which, in this study, would be the subgroup associated with male Asian American individuals (Creswell, 2015, p. 207). In order to select participants reflective of a purposeful, homogenous sampling, the following criteria must be met:

Individuals must be residents of the United States of America;

Individuals must identify as male;

Individuals must identify as Asian American;

Individuals must have been previously, or currently be, employed in a higher education leadership role classified at managerial level based on their institution type;

Individuals must have at least 10 years of experience working in an American higher education institution;

If a participant does not fulfill the mentioned criteria, then they will be unable to continue with the study. Participants for this study will be selected on the basis of their willingness to tell their stories. Tripp (1994) states, “it is not possible to separate people from their lives, and the investigation of people’s lives is necessarily the investigation of people themselves (pp. 74-75). Due to the risk factor which Tripp defines as the “politics” of exposure,” the openness and willingness of these administrators to share their life stories is significant in their selection. The risk of exposure is significant and often frightening for any participant. Given the potential difficulty of garnering interested participants for this study, Creswell (2015) recommends, “in certain research situations, you may not know the best people to study because of the... complexity of the

event” (p. 208). As a result of the researcher’s inability to locate the ideal number of participants for the study due to the difficulty of locating individuals it may be necessary to implement “snowball sampling, [which] is a purposeful strategy used during a study to follow up on specific cases to test or explore further specific findings” and can be used to identify additional participants for the study through the recommendation of current study participants (Creswell, 2015, p. 208).

Sampling Procedures

Participants in this study will be selected using a criterion sample process and snowball sampling, where each participant will be recruited to the study through various methods. First, potential participants will be introduced to the researcher via members within the professional associations of the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education; the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community; and the American College Personnel Association, Asian Pacific American Network that have professional networks with Asian American male leaders. The researcher anticipates that introductions to participants via the association members will take place via e-mail correspondence, which will enable the researcher to connect with the participant in a timely manner. Once the introductory e-mail is sent from the association members, information regarding the study will be supplied in the follow-up e-mail, along with a request to speak via telephone or video conference to discuss the details of the study. Additionally, participants may be recruited for the study via Facebook, an online networking social media platform. The ability to connect with potential participants via Facebook provides the added benefit that the researcher can account their work position and institution, ensuring it is a higher education leadership

role, and verify their employment. The researcher will connect with potential individuals via Facebook direct message feature, similar to that of e-mail - allowing for direct contact regarding participation in the study. Information regarding the study will be supplied in the initial e-mail, along with a request to speak via telephone or video conference to discuss the details of the study. In addition to direct recruitment for the study, the researcher will also post a status update in Facebook Groups with key points of the study included, along with a request of interested participants to contact the researcher via a university e-mail address.

As study participants are identified through the criterion sampling and recruitment through social media, the use of snowball sampling will be employed, which will utilize participants in the study to recommend other potential participants for the study, which the researcher may choose to contact. Snowball sampling will be an important aspect of the sampling process due to the diversity requirements of this study. Following the initial conversation via telephone or video conferencing to discuss in detail, the purpose, background, and problem being addressed in the study, expectations of study participants, the researcher will send an online survey (Appendix A) that will assess key eligibility to participate in this study, which will be stored in a secure online survey tool. Some potential participants may respond to the newsfeed solicitation to participate in the study, which will prompt them to complete the initial screening survey as a method to express their willingness to participate. The researcher will review all survey responses from all interested study candidates to determine which participants will meet the criteria of the study sample. This initial conversation and survey tool will be used to gauge the interest and willingness of the individual to participate in the study. Neilson (2002) found that,

“there might be important differences in perspectives and experience between U.S.-born and Asia-born, and different disaggregated cultural groups” (p. 56). In addition, larger Asian American communities continue to grow rapidly in California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas so the experiences of Asian Americans may differ geographically (Census, 2017). It is the goal of the researcher to include participants for a variety of Asian ethnicities, countries of origins, institutions, institutional types, and regions of the United States in order to increase the perspectives of the phenomenon being studied. Selecting participants for this study will present the challenge of balancing between forming a diverse sample of participants within a small period of time. As a drive to maximize the diversity of the participants in the study, individuals that are screened and qualify to participate will be compiled in a list that will then be used to select the sample of participants based on the purposeful, homogeneous sampling requirements.

To ensure a diverse sample of participants, this study will require active recruitment of participants from outside of California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas and also participants who identify as Southeast Asian or South Asian. Active recruitment for individuals from outside of California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas, along with individuals that identify as Southeast Asian or South Asian will ensure adequate representation of Asian Americans men until theoretical saturation is achieved in this study.

The participants that are selected will be sent a welcome e-mail that will include an informed consent form, timeline of the interview process, and a request for individual availability that will be used to schedule the interview. All participants will be asked to participate with the expectation they would provide an in-depth interview lasting

approximately 90 minutes each. Once the individual returns the informed consent form signed and agrees to the day/time of the first interview, the interview process will commence.

Instrumentation

Based on the primary research questions and theoretical framework of this study, a set of interview questions will be created to be used as possible interview and probing questions. Questions will focus on the participant's life story as a male Asian American and their process upon entering and advancing in the field of higher education administration, the details about their experience, and their understanding of what their experiences means to them (Seidman, 2013). The researcher plans to conduct the interview in a semi-structured format that will allow for the participant to follow through the interview by using the interview protocol as a guide that encompass other pertinent information.

The interview protocol was developed by reviewing each of the research questions guiding this study and designing questions that would tease out specific details to ultimately inform each research question. The interview questions cover a significant range of content themes in order to fully encapsulate the intention of the research questions. The questions (Appendix B) will be asked during the initial interviews with participants and focus on the life history of the participants, the details of their experiences, and their reflection of how their experiences led to where they are today.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to learn about the lived experiences of the participants in this study, the researcher will conduct one-on-one phenomenological interviews. Seidman (2013)

indicates that “a phenomenological approach to interviewing focuses on the experiences of participants and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 16). To provide the rationale and the logic for the structure Seidman (2013) identified four phenomenological themes: (a) phenomenology stresses the transitory nature of human experience; (b) through interviews, researchers strive to understand a person’s experience from their point of view; (c) this approach focuses on the “lived experiences” of human beings; and (d) interviewing emphasizes the importance of making meaning of the experience.

Following the recommendations set by Creswell (2013), the process of collecting data will begin with the creation of a demographic survey that will be circulated and collected to select participants. The demographic information collected will be used to pull together a list of potential participants that the researcher will select for the study. Based on the criteria needed, the participants will be contacted initially by email to establish rapport, understanding of the study, and how their contributions to the study will look like. Participants will also be sent the Informed Consent Form, details of the study, and a request for the interview. Once the interview date is indicated, each participant will receive a confirmation email outlining the date, time, and location of the interview and will also be asked to consider an alias that they will use for the entirety of the study to obscure their identity. Each interview will be conducted in person, through a video conferencing tool, or by phone and be recorded for review during December 2018 - April 2019. The interviews will follow a set of questions and allow for offhand inquiries to clarify and or further probe into an experience that will help provide a more accurate understanding of the context and experience being shared. The interview will draw upon an adapted version of the three-series method and focus on establishing context of the

participants experience, allow the participants to reconstruct the details of their experience, and reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. Seidman (2013) asserts that goal in this set of interviews should allow the participants to intellectually and emotionally connect to their work and life and look at the factors that brought them to their present situation. Seidman (2013) suggests that “given that the purpose of this approach is to have the participants reconstruct their experience, put in the context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning, anything shorter than 90 minutes for each interview seems too short” (p.24). Prior to each interview, the researcher and participant will agree on the length of time that can be provided.

After the conclusion of interviews, the researcher will transcribe the dialogue and provide each participant with a copy to review for member checks to ensure the intentions of their responses were captured accurately. Follow up interviews may be offered and scheduled between the researcher and participant to ameliorate any found issues.

Sokolowski (2000) states that:

“Phenomenology also examines the limitations of truth: the inescapable “other side” that keep things from ever being fully disclosed, the errors of vagueness that accompany evidence, and the sedimentation that makes it necessary for us always to remember again the things we already know. (p. 185).

By allowing participants to review the transcriptions of each interview, they will be able to better understand what their truths are and verify if they were appropriately captured prior to analysis. Once approved, the collected transcriptions will be available for the researcher to analyze. The researcher will also practice memoing throughout the interviews which will include a personal reaction reflection written immediately after each interview. Memoing allows a different opportunity for the researcher to explore and

dissect hunches, ideas, and thoughts and create a footprint of reactions on what the data means and how they relate to each other (Creswell, 2015; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The collected transcriptions, recordings, and memos of each interview will be used as part of the data that will be analyzed for this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) described the process of qualitative analysis as “working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145). The data analysis for this study will utilize a multiphased approach (Creswell, 2013). Prior to data analysis, Creswell (2015) stated, “Initial preparation of the data for analysis requires organizing the vast amount of information, transferring it from spoken or written words to a typed file and making decisions about whether to analyze the data by hand or by computer” (p. 245). In an effort to organize the copious amount of data collected, this study will utilize the tool Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software packaged produced by QSR International.

The data analysis process will begin with a transcription of the collected data. The researcher will transcribe the field notes and memos collected during the interview process and also hire a third-party transcriptionist to assist in transcribing the audio recordings. The data will then be uploaded into Nvivo to be further analyzed. Once transcriptions are completed and uploaded, the researcher will reread the data in order to get a sense of the content provided by the participants and begin formulating an understanding of the phenomenon shared through the interviews.

During the data collection and analysis phases, the researcher will practice reflexivity and institute a process of bracketing to identify and set aside biases that may disrupt to truly understand the experiences of the participants rather than manipulating their stances to fit the researchers points of view. By utilizing a qualitative approach, it is important for the researcher to explore their own biases and preconceived notions before and during the study in order to maintain validity in the research (Soeker et al., 2015). In an effort to keep the researcher accountable, the researcher will take memos throughout the entire research process, which would include the data collection, analysis, and finalizing the research report to check for points of biases that could influence the data collected.

Once the data is transcribed and reviewed, the researcher will initiate a coding process that will include labeling areas of the transcriptions with codes, examining the codes for repetitiveness and overlap, and collapsing the codes into broader themes to assist the researcher to hone in on the most relevant data (Creswell, 2015). Several cycles of coding will be implemented to enable the researcher to focus the findings from broad themes into a list of codes that then will be truncated into five to seven themes that emerge from the data (Creswell, 2015). After the primary themes are identified, the researcher will construct a written description of each finding of what the participants experienced and the contextual environment that influenced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

To conclude the data analysis phase of the study, the researcher will follow Creswell's (2013) three description steps. First, the researcher will create a textual description of the phenomenon and record specific examples of the participants

experiences that were recorded in the interview that help to explain a certain aspect of the phenomena. Next, the researcher will describe the contextual environment that caused the phenomenon to occur. Lastly, the researcher will combine both the textural and structural descriptions and write out a composite description to “represent the culminating aspect of the phenomenological study” (p.194).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher will develop an informed consent form for the participants to sign before engaging in the research. The participants will have the right to refuse to participate and withdraw at anytime. The informed consent form will be submitted to the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board (IRB) in November 2018 to ensure that no inappropriate questions or intentions will be present in the documents or procedures. All data collected be kept confidential. Interviews with the participants will be recorded with the use of a digital audiorecorder and the transcriptions will be kept in a locked and secure location in the researcher’s home office. The participants will remain anonymous throughout the study and beyond and will be given aliases to protect their true identities. Confidentiality of the participants will also be protected as far as possible under the law, however, participation in the study may mean a loss of privacy.

All participants in this study were voluntary. The researcher provided the participants with the consent letter, informed-consent form, and research subjects’ bill of rights. All paperwork informed participants of the following: (a) the purpose, background, and procedures of the study, and the results and likely social consequences it would have on their lives; (b) that the research was voluntary and that the participants could refuse to participate in the research or withdraw at any time; (c) that the

participants had the opportunity to choose their pseudonyms; their anonymity was protected; and (d) that there was no cost and no direct benefit for participating in the research, however, the participants' stories and experiences were to be used to help better understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities.

Summary

The data in this study will be collected through a phenomenological approach to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. The researcher will administer a designed set of interview protocols that include one-on-one interview with open-ended research questions that will be approved through the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board (IRB). Interview questions are designed to focus on the participant's life story as an male Asian American and their process upon entering and advancing in the field of higher education administration, the details about their experience, and their understanding of what their experiences means to them. Data analysis of the interviews will include transcribing audio recordings, coding to discover prominent themes, along with textural, structural, and composite writing to describe the collective participant experiences in this study.

Researcher Background

The researcher is a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco School of Education in the Department of Leadership Studies in San Francisco, California. Currently he serves as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Associate Director of

the Asian American Activities Center at Stanford University. The researcher also served as the inaugural Program Associate for Fraternity and Sorority Life and Self-Operated Row Housing in Residential Education. Prior to his work at Stanford, the researcher also served as the Assistant Coordinator for Greek Life, the Multicultural Leadership Center, and Career Center at California State University, Fullerton in Fullerton, California, where he also completed his Master of Science degree in Higher Education Administration. He also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Education and Certificate in Administration of Campus Recreation and Student Services from the California State University, Long Beach in Long Beach, California where he also served as the Beach Pride Center Campus Coordinator. The researcher was also working on a teaching credential in English Education prior to his career in Higher Education Student Affairs and worked for various educational organizations.

The researcher is a second generation Pilipinx American and the son of immigrant parents from the Philippines. He grew up in a diverse community in Southeast San Diego, California where the majority of the population is Latinx, African American, Pacific Islander, and Southeast Asian American, predominantly from the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The researcher became interested in educational leadership at a young age where he noticed that all of his K-12 teachers were either white men or women and the only non-white employees were the janitorial staff or guidance counselors. He knew that it was an issue that none of his first institutional role models looked anything like the people in their community and were not teaching them anything about their identity, history, or contributions to the American world.

After applying to many Universities, he ultimately decided to attend a California

State University school in Southern California due to financial constraints, to be close to family that he continued to support, and because he did not know how to utilize his resources to fully understand the decision he was going to make. As a first-generation college student from an under-resourced high school, the researcher struggled to connect with the academic expectations of a University and almost dropped out after his first year. Throughout his time in college, an aspect that kept him motivated to stay enrolled was due to his immense extra-curricular involvement in both the Pilipino Cultural student organization - Pilipino American Coalition and the competitive collegiate dance team, PAC Modern.

Through his leadership on PAC Modern, the researcher found joy in organizing and training his peers to compete and perform around the world. He was also aware of the socio-economic issues that his community faced in supporting artistic endeavors as many of the children in the community did not share their passions for the arts openly with their families because they were expected to use their finances on educational endeavors instead. Noticing this trend, he created more opportunities for low-income youth to have access to dance training while also promoting higher education in hopes to create a pipeline for more kids to aspire towards graduating. It was through this experience that he gained attention at the University who offered him his first paid position in student affairs and desire to obtain more education and experience to become a professional in the field of higher education administration.

In reflection of the lack of diverse representation in his K-12 leadership experiences, combined with the unequal access his community had to resources, and desire to work in an educational environment, he became fascinated with multicultural aspects of higher

education and focused his career trajectory to support students of marginalized backgrounds in hopes to alleviate some of the stressors that he faced as a first-generation, low-income, student of color. Not seeing him reflected in the educators that taught him along with and not being taught his own history, the researcher enrolled in a doctoral program focused in Organization and Leadership in hopes to prepare himself for career advancement as one of the few Asian Americans in the field of higher education administration.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of male, Asian American higher administrators in American colleges and universities. This chapter focuses on the data collected that followed the procedure outlined in chapter 4 and begins with a review of the primary research questions that guided this study. Next, I provide an overview of the participants by creating profiles to provide context to the viewpoints they share. Then, based and organized by each primary research question, I present the evidence gathered to inform the intentions of each guiding question.

Research Questions

The primary research questions that drive this inquiry include:

1. What advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements?
2. In what ways do characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders?
3. In what ways do Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development?
4. How do Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education?

Participant Demographics

This study identified 13 participants who were able to participate in one semi-structured interview between March 2019 and April 2019. The participant in this study

Table 1:

Participant Demographics

	Number	Percentage
Ethnicity		
East Asian	4	31
Mixed Race/Mixed Asian	3	23
South Asian	2	15
Southeast Asian	4	31
Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation		
Straight Cis-gender Male	9	69
Gay Cis-gender Male	4	31
Age Range		
35-44	8	62
45-49	2	15
50+	3	23
Generation Status		
1.5 Generation	3	23
2 nd Generation	7	54
3 rd Generation+	3	23
Region		
East	2	15
Midwest	3	23
West	8	62
System Type		
Private	4	31
Public 2-Year	7	54
Public 4-Year	2	15
Level of Leadership		
Director	2	15
Assistant Dean	2	15
Dean of Students	3	23
Vice Chancellor/President/Provost	6	47
Years of Experience		
10-15 Years	4	31
16-20 Years	4	31
20+ Years	5	38

all come from very different backgrounds and experiences. They are directors, assistant deans, deans of students, vice chancellors, vice presidents, and vice provost at private, public 2-year, and public 4-year higher education institutions on both east and west coasts and in the Midwest, ranging between 10 and 40 years of leadership experience. They are all gay or straight cis-gender men who also ethnically identify as Khmer American, Desi American, Chinese American, Native Hawaiian, Indian American, Japanese American, Korean American, Lao American, Pilipinx American, South Asian, Vietnamese American, mixed-race, and multi-ethnic.

Participant Profiles

The participants in this study each provide a particular perspective on their experience as a male Asian American higher education administrator. Understanding the participants backgrounds helps connect the findings in this study to the lived experiences of each individual, providing context to what is discovered.

Anthony

Anthony is a Southeast Asian senior administrator for a private institution in the mid-west. He has 20 years of experience working in residential life and academic affairs at various institution across the country. Anthony is originally from the west coast and identifies as a gay, cis-gender man.

Arley

Arley is an East Asian senior administration for a community college district on the west coast. He has over 20 years of experience working primarily in equity,

leadership, and employment management and served at institutions only on the west coast. Arley also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Ben

Ben is a Southeast Asian senior administrator for a private institution on the east coast. He has 20 years of experience working primarily in residence life, student activities, assessment, and equity and served at institutions in the Midwest and on the east coast. Ben immigrated to the United States at a young age and also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Daniel

Daniel is a mixed-race, multi-ethnic Asian and Caucasian senior administrator for a public 4-year institution on the west coast. He has over 20 years of experience working in multicultural affairs and student success at various institution in the Midwest and on the west coast. Daniel is originally from the Midwest and identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Dexter

Dexter is an East Asian senior administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has over 20 years of experience working in financial services, multicultural affairs, and student employment services prior to his senior leadership role and served at institutions only on the west coast. Dexter also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Jonathan

Jonathan is an East Asian senior administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has over 20 years of experience in student affairs, academic affairs, and

as a faculty member and served at institutions only on the west coast. Jonathan identifies as a gay, cis-gender man.

Jose

Jose is a Southeast Asian administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has 11 years of experience primarily in student success and served at institutions only on the west coast. Jose immigrated to the United States at a young age and also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Justin

Justin is a multi-ethnic Asian and Pacific Islander senior administrator for a public 4-year institution in the Midwest. He has 16 years of experience working in first-year experiences and student success at Midwest institutions. Justin is originally from the west coast and identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Leon

Leon is an East Asian senior administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has over 20 years of experience working primarily in residence life, multicultural affairs, and student conduct prior to his senior leadership role and served at institutions only on the west coast. Leon also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Omar

Omar is a Southeast Asian senior administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has 20 years of experience working primarily in financial aid, student conduct, academic advising, student success, and career services and served at

institutions only on the west coast. Omar immigrated to the United States at a young age and also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Ray

Ray is a mixed-race Asian and European senior administrator for a community college on the west coast. He has 14 years of experience working in residential life and multicultural affairs at various institution across the country and internationally. Ray is originally from the South and identifies as a gay, cis-gender man.

Ryan

Ryan is a South Asian senior administrator for a private institution on the east coast. He has 10 years of experience primarily in education consulting, graduate education, and academic affairs and served at institutions on the east coast. Ryan also identifies as a gay, cis-gender man.

Vincent

Vincent is a South Asian senior administrator for a private institution on the east coast. He has 15 years of experience primarily in multicultural affairs and equity and served at institutions across the country. Vincent also identifies as a straight, cis-gender man.

Research Question Findings

This study aims to answer four primary research questions that when asked to participants, would provide insight to the experiences of male Asian American leaders in higher education. This next section presents the evidence gathered from the interviews

and reflection process that is associated with and supports the intentions of each research question.

Research Question 1 Findings

RQ1: What advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements?

The intent of this question is to understand if there are any perceived benefits or detriments that Asian American males face as leaders in higher education. Four main concepts emerged as a result of analyzing the responses collected from the interviews: (a) isolation, (b) overcompensation, (c) added responsibility, and (d) continued discrimination. Below is a summary of these concepts articulated by the participants.

Isolation

Of the study participants, a range of reflections captured a sense of isolation due to the sheer lack of Asian American men represented in higher education leadership.

This sense of isolation allowed many participants to uncover how this intersection of their identities has been underexamined. Notably, Jonathan commented:

I had convened some random meeting...and there were four of us from different parts of the institution that were there and all four of us were males [of the same ethnicity]. And I had never experienced this. And I thought well why is this so notable. That it's you know, I'm still thinking about this because this is what other people have every day of their life...But this is still so notable because it's still kind of rare. And it and it is not the Asian-American part that's rare, it's the gender part. That makes it rare and especially in combination. You put those things together and it's like we're this new species that somebody just discovered (Jonathan, April 8, 2019).

Jonathan's experience highlights his realization of how uncommon it is to have four individuals of the same non-White identity work on an initiative together. At the same time, his experience also exposes how the intersection of being a man and

racialized as Asian American has been highly unexamined or explored. This also highlights the unconscious socialized acceptance of Whiteness as a norm whereas having an all non-White team of leaders is considered unique and unheard of. Ben adds to this sentiment and stated that, “there is so much unknown about Asian-American men because we very typically are just quiet hardworking you know do it all people” addressing that due to the tenets of the model minority concepts of Asian Americans compounded with male privilege, many assumptions could be made to justify why this population has been underexamined (Ben, March 28, 2019).

Due to the lack of representation and general misunderstanding of this community, many of the participants also shared experiences of loneliness and tokenization. Ben continues and shares, “I find it lonely because we are underrepresented but it's also it's also a tremendous responsibility, and it is a tremendous honor because it just goes without saying it's a very it's it's lonely all the time. There's a lot of micro aggressions when somebody speaks about you” (Ben, March 28, 2019). Being underrepresented not only supports that sense of isolation but also provokes many individuals to take on additional responsibilities that come with being tokenized.

Omar shares another similar situation:

My experience as an Asian-American man at times it's lonely. I think at that time it's lonely because sometimes I would walk into a room and I would be the only Asian-American person in the room. And and at times. They were also anything with Asian American. They expect you to be the expert (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Omar's experience of being tokenized reinforces his feeling of being responsible to represent his entire racial community and to teach others about their experiences.

Anthony also shares his views on the impact of the intersection of his racial and gender identity in that “the perception, stereotypes, expectations, are placed on you when you're

an Asian-American man and in a context where you're one of the very few” indicating the weight of the conditions put onto him by others and being the sole representative of his community (Anthony, March 13, 2019). Anthony continues sharing how his intersecting identities has shaped his experience and cognizance:

early on I was always very aware of how I might I might be perceived, interpreted as an Asian-American man or Asian-American person. You know I've always I always wonder, especially in my current context where there are very few of us, I wonder what do they (non-Asians) know about Asian-Americans in general? I wonder about that. And you know, am I being contradicting to their expectation? the perception? their stereotypes? Like I think I feel like a lot of White individuals can forget their White identities or their White race as they're interacting with the world. But it's something that I'm always conscious with you know, for us, especially in predominate White spaces (Anthony, March 13, 2019).

Anthony experience sheds light on his thought process as being perceived as someone who comes from an underrepresented background. His reflection also helps indicate the lack of general knowledge regarding Asian American racial identity beyond the common model minority and perpetual foreigner stereotypes that are more highly popularized. With the most prevalent assumptions of Asian Americans being externally defined by non-Asian members, this also highlights the normalcy and centering of Whiteness in that it continues to put pressure on participants like Anthony to perform in a way that does not disrupt their acceptance from Whites and to escape from being further marginalized. In the researcher's interview with Ben, he also adds:

I think there still is a disadvantage though because we don't have significant representation...we're still tremendously underrepresented and yeah as a result that is a disadvantage because we still are having these stereotypes...because when people look at us they still don't know what to think of us (Ben, March 28, 2019).

Through his experience, Ben's shares how the dominance of Whiteness in the leadership positions of his field along with how Asian stereotypes have impacted his

interactions with non-Asian people and that these instances reaffirm his belief on how being an Asian American man can be a disadvantage.

Many other participants have also shared this similar attitude when it comes to leadership in higher education and the lack of representation. Omar shares, that “because there might be other Asian American males in executive level leadership positions but normally there's not more than one of them in the same institution” noting the racial quotas that continue to exist at institutions and that having more than one of the same ethnic minority in a senior level management position may be considered unnecessary as it could possibly jeopardize the dominance of Whiteness. (Omar, March 29, 2019). In reflecting on his job search experience and wanting to find an institution that values diversity, Leon shared:

I was just talking to this guy who worked at a community college recently. He's like 'there's no Asian-Americans in the manager level at all'. He's like 'Dude they need you' right. And so part of me feels like there's opportunity there right. Like if an institution recognizes that piece and understands the importance of representation then it might get me a job. It might. But then there's some pieces of me thinking I'm hitting my head against a bamboo ceiling because there isn't a lot of APIs in the managerial world. No one is an Asian-American male. And so there's you know a lot of precedence for people who are hiring us to have an image of Asian-American males as an upper level leader. So yeah. So I feel like. It's that implicit bias discrimination (Leon, April 19, 2019).

Leon's example indicates the racial biases that exist in leadership opportunities and shows how some institutions that give the perception of valuing diversity, only value certain types of diversity, which often does not include Asian Americans and are defined by the priorities of Whites.

Another theme that many participants discussed alongside their experiences of isolation is the lack of access to culturally competent mentors. Justin shares that “a disadvantage would be that there's not very many of us to be able to then call upon for

mentorship...the sheer lack of representation of people that understand what it's like to be us", noting how the lack of Asian American men in leadership make it difficult to visible the specific issues faced in this community (Justin, April 16, 2019). Similarly, Daniel shares his frustration as a mixed-race Asian American in his interview:

I really don't think there are a lot of Asian American men in leadership, I you know maybe maybe I would tell you that it's been very difficult to find a mentor who is like me... I don't feel like I ever really found that [mentorship], I can't tell you that there is a person who I've met that is similar to me in any way, ethnically or racially, that that's in the field that was trying to support my growth in the profession. I just don't they existed. So I think that I think that that's a gap (Daniel, March 25, 2019).

Daniel's experience illuminates the diversity that exists within the Asian American community and how there are more underrepresented identities. These unique challenges make it strenuous to relate to others whose experiences and challenges might be similar, but not exactly the same.

Overcompensation

Another aspect that participants experienced as Asian American men was the mentality to work twice as hard to validate their ability to be a leader. Vincent shares:

I mean basically in order for me to get the job I had to be I had to work twice as hard, hustle twice as hard, and have twice as dope a resumé as a peer that had come up through the quote unquote leadership tracks. But that's the burden of being a minority, the individual that chooses to work with communities that are historically devalued within our industry (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Given his experience, Vincent understands how many minorities are undervalued in the field of higher education leadership and takes us through his excessive process of preparing for positions that he believes will already discriminate against him. Jose shares his experience with similar stressors and recalled:

You cannot mess up. So you have to you have to walk on eggshells and generally people are a little bit more distrustful I guess...as Asian males kind of get

characterized as being effeminate and at the same time, at the same token, if you're effeminate then you're passive as it puts you in a position where you have to do more for people to see you as the type of leader or leadership style you want to embody. I think for me, being an Asian male, it just takes longer because people have that expectation of you (Jose, March 28, 2019).

These added stressors that Jose uncovers in his experience reaffirms that there are still many assumptions about Asian American male identity perpetuated by the racist concepts connected to the model minority and perpetual foreigner that prevent participants from being fully validated as leaders. These examples also indicate how Whiteness plays out in leadership experiences, whereas these pressures are placed on these Asian employees from individuals who assimilate to White notions of what leadership should look like, and in these instances, translates to an emotional and psychological tax upon the participants as they navigate through the White ideologies of connected to their job and environment.

Added Responsibility

Throughout the interviews, many participants also uncovered the additional responsibility that they believe were tied to both their privilege of identifying as a man but also being racialized as an Asian American. One way some of the participants see this responsibility is when topics of diversity are discussed with White colleagues. Ryan shares his experience:

being Asian-American has been I think interesting because though I'm not African-American or Latino where and that's where a lot of the diversity conversation is happening and the need to diversify are articulated. Being Asian-American puts me in this interesting space between white and black and Latino that has been really helpful. It allows me to both you know build up some credibility with with white folks around understanding some of the issues associated with being a person of color. But it also allows me to build sort of camaraderie or allyship with folks of color who see me as someone who you know, better positioned than your average white person to speak to issues of diversity and understand some of the complexities. I think that's been a real

advantage. At the same time I think there are still some of the stereotypes about Asian-American men being passive and I think those also play out here in terms of how I'm perceived within the institution. I wouldn't say those are. I think there's sort of an undercurrent of that (Ryan, April 18, 2019).

Ryan's experience how as an Asian American, he is racially triangulated and causes him to be relatively valorized as an acceptable minority that his White colleagues would take listen to on topics regarding diversity issues but at the same time, still undervalued as a true leader because they are not White themselves (Kim, 1999).

Similarly, Ray shares other perceived benefits of his identity:

I think you can speak to challenging institutionalized racism in often less threatening ways. You know I think that stereotype of the model minority myth also has some benefits as well. People sometimes will look at us, like and that we when we say things sometimes that can be viewed as more legitimate or informed just because of the nonsense model minority myth. And so probably if I quote some researcher, people will think I actually know what I'm talking about versus if a black person or a black woman quotes a researcher they'll be like I don't know if she read that right. I know that's the sad reality but it definitely is a privilege that as API men specifically do get in the workplace (Ray, March 19, 2019).

Ray's experience accentuates Ryan's experience of being racially triangulated but also illuminates the anti-black sentiments that remains a constant issue. Ray's identity as an Asian man can be both perceived as a benefit and simultaneously make other leaders of color who are just as credible, feel collaterally devalued.

Another aspect that participants shared was how much they had to mentally prepare themselves in different situations. Anthony reflects on the psychological impacts of his identity as he navigates White spaces:

Thinking about some of the assumptions that are out there about Asian-American men and how when I walk into spaces, your idea, your self-concept is something that you think about or anything about anything about. Whenever I walk into a room and I'm attending a meeting I'm typically the only one given my my current context and so I'm sometimes subconsciously or consciously aware of my identities and wondering you know how am I presenting and what are other folks

ascribing to my identity just because of how I present, or how I am, or how I'm perceived (Anthony, March 13, 2019).

Anthony's example sheds light on the excessive thoughtfulness that he must go through to ensure he is perceived in a way that is not going to be inaccurate. In addition, being the only non-White leader on a predominantly White team may also lead him to acculturate to the dominant White ideologies of how to behave, thus again centering Whiteness and deeming it as normative. During the interview with Arley, he discussed his angst regarding his responsibility to the broader Asian American community:

There are politics in education. You know you could be you could be a top one day and tied to the wrong thing the next day. And so I think for me because I've never experienced that, was really kind of figure out who who am I. And is it something that I'm willing to fight. How would I fight it? What's the right thing to do? And even in the way I think you know what action should I take to challenge the ordeal because this would affect other people if it stayed on course. Right. Meaning administrators in the department, APIs, how people see APIs, whatever (Arley, March 26, 2019).

Through his reflection, Arley articulates how his actions and inactions could have larger ramifications for the broader Asian and Pacific Islander community if he does not take the time to think through what he does.

Continued Discrimination

One phenomenon that was shared with all of the participants in various ways was how they all have continued to be discriminated against and how their racial identity as an Asian American negated the assumed entitlements tied to their male identity. Daniel reflects on his perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of his intersecting identities and states:

I mean the advantages just come with being a male. I actually think that you probably have advantages of being a male but I think that there are disadvantages of being Asian-American or Asian. I think that in general some of the stereotypes that come along with being Asian. Some inferiority complex that people feel, or

that is perceived, or that is you know, for some form of discrimination by others, I guess to me that's real and it's unfortunate. But I do think it impacts whether someone would believe an Asian-American male has the capacity and ability to be an effective leader and do the job (Daniel, March 25, 2019).

Much of Daniel's reflection mirrors the Bamboo Ceiling phenomena that explain why Asian Americans experience cultural barriers that are faced in the workplace but it also draws attention to the fact that Whiteness still remains to be the premier ideology that is socially accepted (Hyun, 2005). In many of the interviews, the participants continued to share how their identity continued to be externally defined by others and simultaneously still be limited as a leader. Jose shared his struggle in that "even though the administration bumped me up to like the [next level]. They still had reservations of like what you can or cannot do. And I think gender, male, Asian, all played a role" noting that although he was afforded an opportunity, he was still not fully trusted (Jose, March 28, 2019). This then becomes another example of how Whiteness affects the experiences of Asian Americans, where they decide how much their leadership their leadership would be valued or not as someone who is not White. In the same regard, Justin shared his viewpoint of others with similar identities:

They [Asian American men] have been niche and pigeonholed as really good researchers. So like at Universities, you'll see a ton of Asian-American professors in STEM and in a lot of these fields who are hired from India who are hired from you know a number of Asian countries who have basically been told 'Hey you're a great researcher but you're still not administrative material'. And so I even then I don't think that's an advantage. I think it's an assumption of a certain skill set. But then I'm quickly going to pigeonhole you in a certain way. So yeah I see no advantages (Justin, April 16, 2019).

Justin's example shows how Asian American men are valued for certain skill sets but are still subjectively discriminated against for higher level leadership roles.

Another way that participants felt discriminated against as Asian American males was in the way they are perceived to practice their leadership. Omar shared that “sometimes they think that we're not strong enough leaders, that our collective values and our collective culture seems to go against the culture of individualism” noting that Asian cultural values are not considered as much of an asset in American higher education institutions as it goes against White ideologies of leadership (Omar, March 29, 2019). These responses provided by the participants assist in understanding the perceived advantages and disadvantages of leaders who identify as both male and Asian American.

Research Question 2 Findings

RQ2: In what ways do characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders?

This question focused on how gender constructs and masculinity impact the experiences of Asian American men as higher education leaders. Five main concepts emerged as a result of analyzing the responses collected from the interviews: (a) unconscious use of privilege, (b) race as an added layer, (c) assertiveness, (d) queerness, and (e) understanding barriers for women of color. Below is a summary of these concepts articulated by the participants.

Unconscious Use of Privilege

The majority of the responses from participants indicated a lack of awareness or attention to their own male privilege. Male identity in general seems to be largely unexamined however many have experienced the benefits of its power. Vincent notes, “my gender identity as a man, outside of the tremendous privilege it bestows on every experience I have in the world is not that salient to me right now. I don't feel the need to

prove that I'm a man" (Vincent, April 12, 2019). acknowledging the special advantage of navigating the world without having to question a part of his identity and the benefits it comes with. This ownership of privilege is also indicative of the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity that legitimizes men's dominant position in society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Similarly, Jonathan adds, "I don't think about it that much. That's also a privilege of being a man" indicating how his manhood is not a noticeable issue in his daily life (April 8, 2019). Jonathan also reflects on how male identity is impacted in his work environment, "I mean it's interesting in [our division] we don't have grand conversations about this [male identity], so it is something I'm aware of but honestly I couldn't articulate it for you in a really smart way (April 8, 2019). This reflection indicates not only the lack of exploration of the impact of male identity in work settings but also how this identity has been largely unexamined which thus prevents him to develop an appropriate way to explain the privileges that come with identifying as a male.

Justin continues to illuminate the benefits of identifying as a man in that "my gender identity has afforded me unfairly of access to administrative opportunities, leadership development opportunities" which acknowledges the special rights access opportunities that seem to be limited to others (Justin, April 16, 2019). In this example, hegemonic masculinity mirrors similar ideologies connected to Whiteness, focusing on the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage, which ultimately upholds male identity above others (Frankenberg, 1993).

Overwhelmingly, the participants struggled with reflecting on their male identity. While acknowledging their awareness of systemic privileges that they benefit from being a man, it became apparent how this aspect of their identity has gone underexamined but extremely utilized. Similarly, to the experiences of Whites when they are asked to define or describe their experience being racially White, these male participants found it difficult to intellectually or politically reflect on their realities of their male identity, thus acknowledging their privilege to maintain their power without challenging it for the benefit of others or purposes of equity (Doane, 2003; Leonardo, 2018; Clark & O'Donnell, 1999). This is not to say that they behave in this way to purposely enact harm, but that they've been socialized to understand the benefits of this phenomena and to accept it as normal.

Assertiveness

Through the concept hegemonic masculinity, Asian American masculinity traits are considered subordinate, similar to those among men of color and non-heterosexual men and when Asian men see aspects of their own masculinity not living up to White ideals of hegemonic masculinity, certain strategies become implemented. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Shek, 2006; Chen, 1999). One strategy or skill that came up multiple times was the idea of assertiveness and being reminded to make sure to have confidence in all that you do. Dexter shares his experience mentoring other professionals in the field and states, "if you don't take credit for the work you've done, I know a white man who will take credit for your work regularly. That's it", noting that if you allow yourself to be perceived as passive, regardless of how good the work is you produce,

someone else will claim it as their own to benefit themselves and leave you with nothing (Dexter, April 5, 2019).

On the other hand, Jose provides another experience:

I think that my gender has been used against me at times. So for example, if I'm a little bit more assertive that's when I've heard you know a couple of them say 'wow you know that's that male kind of role' you know. And you know I'd say there are times but I'll check myself to see if that's really true. I think I'm pretty equal opportunity (Jose, March 28, 2019).

Jose's example indicates an aspect of hegemonic bargaining in that when he's being perceived as doing something against the stereotypes connected to his racial identity, instead of getting validation, he still continues to experience feelings of doubt.

Queerness

Another layer to gender identity was how queerness affected their perceived leadership and identity as a man. Kumashiro (1999) found that Asian American men experienced additional oppression when masculine and sexual identities intersected. For the participants who identified as queer or gay, it became clear that those whose gender expression were perceived to be more effeminate, they would experience sentiments of subordination. In providing more education and research about the experiences of queer API men, Ray commented:

we wrote around queer API men as leaders in student affairs, and I think that even at that point when I was a director, but I became a director when I was [young] plus I'm small, and femme, and Asian, and I think all of those layered on top for people to treat me like a child (Ray, March 19, 2019).

Ray's experience being perceived as someone who does not have physically masculine traits affects his ability to be treated as a full leader. This deviation from the traditional male gender norm then aligns Ray experience with the gender role strain paradigm and create a tension between popular perceptions of what a man is and the

expectations of what he should be (Pleck, 1981; Pleck et al, 1998). With this in mind, Ray's cognizance allows him to move away from characteristics of hegemonic masculinity so he can be his true authentic self but because of the pervasiveness of patriarchy and its social acceptance, it becomes apparent that heteronormativity is still the most acceptable and ideal way thinking what a man should be like. Ray further elaborates on his experience:

I think that there's this feminization of Asian men or Asian people plus I'm queer identified. Plus I was already kind of younger a lot of times in these jobs where I felt like people always or never took me seriously. I think especially this has come out in interviews...I felt like I had to be super hardcore especially when it comes to things like the tangibles like budgets and assessment because in addition to working in like my identity, working in multicultural LGBTQ stuff, people always act like we all we can do is like wipe tears away. So I feel like I have to prove that I was a strong administrator. Then sometimes people told me that I intimidated them because I was too aggressive with other things, Like oh my God I'm too weak and passive and then I'm too aggressive like I don't really know what to do. (March 19, 2019)

Ray sheds light not only the oppression he experiences as a femme Asian man, but also how complicated it is for one to express and perform their gender roles.

In the interviews with the participants, many of the queer participants seemed to be very careful in how they discussed their identity as Asian men in leadership. In this way, it could be seen that they may be affected by the gender role strain paradigm as they negotiate their identity as a man of color that goes against White ideologies of masculinity (Connell, 1993). In this way, Whiteness again affects their male identity as it continues to be the seen as the normative way of thinking of manhood in American society. Being one of the few non-White men in leadership at these institutions where Whiteness is centered may impact their mental health as they negotiate what it means to be a racialized male leader.

Complicated by Race

In addition to acknowledging the male privilege possessed by the participants, many also indicated how having intersectional identities that are more marginalized, have impacted their experience. In regard to leadership, men still hold a significant amount of privilege but being racialized seems to provide another layer. In Leon's reflection, he shares that "I think because males are traditionally seen more as leaders, because of our dominant identity as males, like there's probably more openness and normalization as a male to be seen as a leader. Probably more than the Asian American piece" (Leon, April 19, 2019). Mirroring this sentiment, Ben adds, "It's probably easier as a male to assert myself in a leadership, or authoritative manner, and not and not have to face too much backlash. Can that be kind of like crossed out a little bit by the stereotype that I'm supposed to be timid? Sure" (Ben, March 28, 2019). In both Leon and Ben's reflections, there seems to be an understanding that being a male has inherent social advantage yet at the same time, the aspects connected to Asian stereotypes counteract their realities, limiting them from experiencing full assumed privileges. These examples also indicate the unearned privilege connected to their male identity and at the same time how Whiteness significantly still impacts the experiences of people of color. By understanding the power of Whiteness, these participants are able to see both the normative male and marginal racial experiences as men of color and negotiate the privileges and disadvantages connected to each.

Recognizing barriers for women of color

One of the most significant themes articulated across the interviews was how participants understood their own male identity and privilege by comparing their

experiences to how the women in their lives, in particular women of color, were being marginalized. Vincent comments, "as an administrator I see all the time how me being a man shapes the way people listen to me and the way that women of color in similar roles have to fight twice as hard to be seen as an expert and an authority", noting the additional burden that women of color face to be legitimized as a leader (April 12, 2019). Providing another example, Ray shares:

Two of them are women of color and neither of them are very comfortable or knowledgeable about talking about things like this [racial justice issues], and so often times I'll be in meetings with women I know that they're really struggling to kind of get out the words to say what they mean. And sometimes I can jump in and I caught myself a few weeks ago, I cut off this Latina woman who's a V.P. and kind of like interjected this whole long spell and I was like, oh my gosh I'm sorry I totally just cut you off. And so I think that that's important for me as it's easy to focus on my marginalized identities, of being API, being queer-identified, for being younger, for being femme. I'm still a man (March 19, 2019).

Ray illuminates his understanding that even when women of color have positional power and real-lived experiences to share, he himself has to check his own unconscious biases as a man and how men in general, can very easily interject and take credit for situations. Long time mentor and senior administrator, Dexter adds "and women of color especially, you're doubling down. You're a woman and you're a person of color. So if you're a woman of color. If you don't take pride in the work you do and speak about your work. I guarantee you a white man will take your job", noting how from personal experience, white men have easily taken advantage of situations with individualistic action to benefit themselves (Dexter, April 5, 2019). In addition, this also signals the recognition of the power that both Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity has in the field, acknowledging that White men continue to utilize their privilege for personal gain and to access more leadership opportunities.

Another theme that was emerged when comparing the participants experiences against women of color is the understanding of how black women continue to experience an additional layer of inequity. Vincent continues:

I mean that's the sort of like triple burden that black women face in higher education is that you literally can never lose your cool even in the slightest, Otherwise you fall into this trope of angry black women. There isn't a trope of Angry Asian Man. So because there isn't a trope shaping the precognitive reflex of how white people respond to my anger, my anger is actually seen as an individual expression of something. And often what I get is a lean in. Tell us more. Boy what a privilege right. (April 12, 2019)

Vincent illustrates the effects of stereotypes that both black women unfairly experience and how Asian men are then treated when the dynamics in a social group are changed. Knowing that stereotypes are externally defined, this example also highlights the dominance that Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity have on people and women of color noting that Asians are more acceptable to Whites than Blacks and how not being a man places women in a subordinate position. These perceptions also perpetuate the concepts connected to the Model Minority myth where Whites place a positive value on Asians to be used as a racial wedge against other communities of color. These statements collected from the participants help illuminate how characteristics of masculinity affect Asian American male leaders in their careers and how Whiteness continues to be a factor that implicates the male identify for these Asian American men.

Research Question 3 Findings

RQ3: In what ways do Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development?

This question focused on the racial dynamics between Asian American men and non-Asian men who are higher education leaders and how that might affect their own

opportunities for leadership. Based on the interviews, every participant indicated that they have been impacted by stereotypes such as the perpetual foreigner concept where they have been perceived as someone who is not American; and the model minority myth that posits Asian Americans as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the United States (Ahuna, 2009). Arley reflects on these concepts and shares that, “we do have an image or stereotype that people do tend to believe in right. you know are we going to be strong enough as a leader? You know in terms of how we articulate ourselves, do we have that look? you know” noting the weight of these expectations and how we navigate through them (Arley, March 26, 2019).

In further examining this phenomenon, as a result of analyzing the responses collected from the interviews, four main themes emerged: (a) bamboo ceiling, (b) invalidation as a racial minority, (c) beyond the black and white paradigm, and (d) geographic location. Below is a summary of these concepts articulated by the participants.

Bamboo Ceiling

Many of the participants shared their experiences and perspectives of how people of different racial identities have interacted and treated them as Asian Americans. Considering Kim’s (1999) Racial Triangulation Model of Asian Americans, she argues that Asian Americans have been and continue to be or “racially triangulated” vis-à-vis both African Americans and Whites in the field of racial positions (p. 106). Throughout the interviews, many of the participants provided different examples of how this paradox has affected their experiences. Vincent thought back and shared his perspective on how the model minority concept has affected his Asian American identity:

In the 10 years that I spent trying to become a leader locally and nationally with a Multicultural Student Affairs as a subfield I was the wrong race. Because in the hierarchy of people of color, Asian-Americans count the least...and model minority typology positions us as honorary whites (Vincent, April 12, 2019)

Here, Vincent introduces his description of Asian Americans as “Honorary Whites”, noting how Whiteness remains to be the norm and how certain White communities have socially accepted Asian Americans much more than other communities of color but at the same time, are still considered at the bottom of a perceived racial hierarchy. These polar opposite concepts that are simultaneously being experienced help to uncover the complexities associated with how Asian Americans are seen as racial minorities.

In reflecting on his younger years in the profession, Omar shared:

Because the majority of my colleagues were White, and my supervisors were White. I don't think when I was younger, they saw me as a leader. They just saw somebody as someone who works hard, who doesn't complain. And if they wanted somebody to stay late they would ask me. They wanted something to be completed. I mean they trusted my ability to do that work. But I don't think they saw me as a leader, they saw me as a worker (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Being the only non-White employee in his organization is indicative on how Omar was given an opportunity that other non-White employees did not receive highlighting the power that Whiteness has in his organization as its stakeholders are primarily White and they get to decide which non-White members will receive opportunities. Omar's reflection sheds light on how he was perceived more as a hard worker than a leader from his White colleagues and superiors who dominate the majority of leadership opportunities at his institutions. Omar continues and shares how this experience has impacted his future opportunities:

I applied for this position at one of my past institution and I was a program manager...So the job opened up six months to a year prior to develop an

orientation program. So I went out of my way and pretty much did the whole thing, develop that on my own, not getting paid. And when I came to apply for the job, I was a finalist. And I was informed that I didn't get the job because I didn't go above and beyond and I was like wait a minute, I don't understand, I did this work for you for free. The whole orientation program, but I didn't go above and beyond it? It's on top of my current job (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Omar's example mirrors that of Kim's (1999) argument in that his White superiors valorized his ability to create a project but continued to subjectively ostracize him for not exceeding their expectations, limiting his upward mobility despite his great results. In these ways, Whiteness continues to affect the experiences Asian Americans in the career setting as they use the skill set of these individuals to produce and reproduce their of dominance and keep people of color in the margins. Similarly, Dexter shares another experience being the only non-White employee on an executive leadership team:

I'm sitting down with the former dean who just became Vice President for Student Life and the Executive Vice President and I was the Associate Dean thinking I would have a chance to become the Dean and they were telling me they're going to they're passing me up for the job and I hadn't even applied yet and so I asked why and they said you're just not aggressive enough and you lack motivation (Dexter, April 5, 2019).

The subjective judgements that Dexter received as being perceived as less aggressive and without motivation are connected to stereotypes of the model minority concept along with not having the characteristics aligned with the White values of hegemonic masculinity and was placed upon him even before he submitted his application for the role.

Anthony shares another angle working with a White colleague:

I remember getting an e-mail from a colleague. I was in a meeting and he is a white male, he made a comment about something and I disagreed with him. And I was, I openly disagreed with him. And I received an email from him after the meeting saying you know; you were rude and I can't believe you did that in the meeting. You know in terms of openly disagreeing with me and, you know I don't recall the specifics of how I disagreed with his comment or position but there was

a part of me that wondered, I wonder if he expected me, as an Asian man, to not voice any disagreement with him (Anthony, March 13, 2019).

The experience that Anthony shares illuminates how his White colleague creates subjective expectations for him to follow and centers his White male viewpoint as the norm, positing that although there isn't a hierarchy between the two of them, the White colleagues still sees himself as more superior than Anthony.

Invalidated as a Racial Minority

Through the interviews, many participants shared further perspectives on how their racial identity as an Asian American was being externally defined and impacting the specific perspectives from other people of color. Vincent shares:

I just had constant racial battle fatigue and it wasn't about white people it was about other people of color pretending that or saying that you aren't a leader in this space. You can't say things about racism, you don't even have an oppression, you don't I mean like completely deracinating me in the space (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

In regard to issues of race and equity, the Black and White paradigm still seems to be prevalent and as Vincent experienced, his Asian American identity instantly becomes invalidated as a marginalized identity from other racial minorities. Vincent continued to share another time where his Asian American identity did not seem to fit within the Black-White paradigm:

You go to NCORE as an Asian American and people wouldn't give you any mic time, like literally I couldn't even get into the space you know, because it was completely a black-white binary in terms of what race matters and black folks as leaders. And that's not to say that that black people shouldn't occupy a very special and significant place within the American racial landscape ...I want to pay homage and credit to all of that all the time. But Honorary Whiteness and model minority-ness is toxic, racist, and divisive (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Here, Vincent calls out the negative effects that accompany the model minority myth and how even at a conference that centers and educates others on race and ethnicity, Asian American racial identity is still not as valued as those who are Black or White.

In another instance, Jose reflected back on his experience working with a staff of color group at his institution:

We have a group of staff of color at the college...But for that group, they weren't happy with me either because...they believed there was a way to help the student population that I was working with and they had their beliefs. I was even ostracized from that group even though my outcomes for the students of color far exceeded like anything out there. It was really it was a weird space to be in because from that group it would be like 'oh that the Asian guy who is just now going along with these white you know white status quo'. For the status quo group it was like no he's student-centered, etc.. It was like two different messages from both sides. It was really it was really I. It was like it was very stressful (Jose, March 28, 2019).

Jose's example provides another lens of how Kim's (1999) Racial Triangulation Model affects how Asian Americans are perceived. Here, even though Jose identifies as a person of color, his other colleagues of color do not credibly see him as being able to work with students of color because of his Asian identity and only see him as someone that is acceptable to Whites. These examples highlight perceptions and definitions of Asian Americans are externally defined by Whiteness and how it affects not only how Whites characterize Asians, but also describes the racial wedge phenomena that pins Asians against other communities of color. These interactions are influenced by Whites and their ideologies to keep them in the dominant racial position above other communities of color.

Beyond the Black and White Paradigm

Another way that concepts such as the model minority myth and racial triangulation has affected the experiences of the participants was in their opportunities to

advocate for equity. Many participants noted that most of their institutions only thought about diversity issues within a Black and White paradigm, excluding the experiences of other marginalized communities that fell outside of that spectrum. Leon reflected and shared:

But we do have two Asian-American folks on the [executive] board. So. And I still really think that even my institution is really diverse but when it comes down to conversation on equity and inclusion it's mostly black and white conversation still (Leon, April 19, 2019).

Regardless of having more than one Asian American in senior leadership, the majority of the leadership of Leon's institution only saw value in diversity issues within the Black and White Paradigm, which leaves out a number of marginalized communities who also need assistance and support.

Thinking about the effects of racism, Ray also shared his thoughts:

Yes I faced racism as a API person, as a multiracial API person, but it's not the same type of racism that shows up for black people or darker skinned people...I think what racism looks like for me is often discarding, discrediting, devaluing, ignoring, excluding, but not violence towards me as an API person. (Ray, March 19, 2019).

Here, Ray shares his experience of being discriminated against as a racialized minority and the mutual struggle that is shared with the Black community while at the same time, acknowledging that his treatment and mistreatment from others is very different as an Asian American. This example sheds light on the perceived racial Olympics that pin marginalized communities against each other due to perceived societal treatments from Whites. Ray continues to share another aspect of how this shows up in his work as a higher education leader:

What I think about a lot is with hiring. You know the perception of if I'm hiring too many Asian people like or knowing the conversations in higher education is still deeply about anti-black racism, which is very real, and very intense, and

almost every conversation I am in around race API people get left out. And so it's like OK I feel like I need to bring this up for my job because they're excluding specifically Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asian people. But when I bring that up it is looked at as like I was only bringing that up because I'm API. And so, as I try to broaden that perspective for them sometimes it gets interpreted as anti-black (Ray, March 19, 2019).

Even as a leader who has the opportunity to diversify his employees, Ray shares his challenge of expanding beyond the Black and White Paradigm and when attempted, is considered to be racially motivated against the Black community.

Geographic location

Some of the participants indicated that their understanding of their own Asian American racial identity and treatment as an Asian American varied depending on where they lived in the United States. In particular, those that live in areas with higher concentrations of Asian Americans afforded more racial acceptance whereas those who were in places that had low diversity, such as the Midwest, experienced more challenges. Daniel shares, “certainly in the Midwest, from my experience, I think in most places other than California there is, it's very binary concept so what race relations is all about - people of color and white people”, noting that due to the lack of diversity, Asian Americans were able to build more coalitions with other people of color because collectively, there are less of them in the Midwest (Daniel, March 25, 2019). In addition, Vincent also acknowledges the lack of diversity and provides another perspective on how it affected his experience:

There's not a lot of emphasis on the Asian American experience in the Midwest. And so I really felt like trying to move into campus level leadership around Diversity and Inclusion issues in the Midwest. I just wasn't the right complexion (Vincent, April 12, 2019)

Being Asian American in the Midwest still came with its own challenges since issues around diversity still seemed to be framed within the parameters of being Black or White and anyone outside of that identity, were deemed as not as valuable. Along the same lines, Ray shared his experience working in the South:

I think when I was in the south for sure there was pretty intense micro-aggressions like on a regular basis and probably beyond that I remember on one campus where you know students would bow at me, or they would call me Sensei, or even one time, I guess this is probably kind of a hate crime, You know these students, when I was on my rounds at the residence hall threw Chinese food at me and said "ding, ding, dong, ding, dong" stuff like that. I was like ughh, I need to leave this place (Ray, March 19, 2019).

On the other hand, many of the participants identified having experience working on the West Coast, which assumes a greater diversity however still does not come without it's challenges. In thinking about how the Asian American identity is experienced, Jonathan reflects on his time on the West Coast and shares:

We don't have those rich conversations about Asian American identity here because it is so built into the daily existence though. That's both good and bad right. It's great because I don't have to think about it after having to think about it every moment of every day. I don't think about it as much, which is a real privilege. On the other hand, we don't have great discourse about it either (Jonathan, April 8, 2019).

Jonathan's example highlights the benefits and challenges of having diversity in that it becomes easier for Jonathan to exist as himself without having to constantly explain his actions but at the same time, acknowledges how much they take the existing diversity for granted and not be educated about certain issues. These responses gathered from the interviews help spotlight the unique challenges connected to the racial stereotypes and perceptions that Asian Americans face. The experiences shared are highly complex and provide an opportunity to explore racial identity beyond the popular Black and White paradigms.

Research Question 4 Findings

RQ4: How do Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education?

This question focused on how Asian American men navigate their experiences in their careers as higher education leaders. Six main concepts emerged as a result of analyzing the responses collected from the interviews: (a) mentorship, networking, and sponsorship, (b) education, (c) professional development opportunities, (d) negotiating authenticity, (e) combatting stereotypes, (f) determining fit and (g) negotiating length of tenure in multicultural affairs. Below is a summary of these concepts articulated by the participants.

Mentorship, Networking and Sponsorship

One area in which participants utilized to navigate barriers in their careers is having strong mentor relationships. The majority of the participants indicated that having mentors, in particular mentors who are culturally different, has been integral in their success as college leaders. In thinking about his mentor relationships, Arley shares:

I've had a lot of informal mentors along the way you know and I had to say it's not been limited to API but you know across all color lines. And I think that's also been really important in terms of how I've been able to move forward. Right. Because you need other opinions and things that you couldn't see to be part of your part of your decision making (Arley, March 26, 2019).

For Arley, what has made him feel stronger as a leader is having a network of folks that can broaden your perspectives. Similarly, Jonathan also shares:

I think it is possible to to shape a kind of a professional trajectory by being mentored by people who are not necessarily from your own community. And I know that was not intentional, I did not do that by design, that it just happens to be who I worked for. But I have learned so much from people who are completely unlike me. And those people have challenged me to think about my identity... I have this whole fleet of colleagues that I can call that aren't here. I really

appreciated that community of folks that I can draw upon that really...I need these other people to really help me. So I think that that again it is really that network of people that community people is really important...And those are not people that I see on a daily basis. But that's my community. Are these people that are in other places and they're not like me at all. They're people that I have a relationship with that's established, and I really value their input. And we we have continued to call on each other throughout the decades, really throughout the years. And I'm thankful for that (Jonathan, April 8).

Jonathan's experience with mentoring allows him to feel stronger as leader throughout the many years he's been in leadership noting that regardless of who they are or where they are, he has been able to build a foundation of people who they can rely on to help each other out.

As many participants noted that having a diverse pool of mentors helped them become stronger leaders, it was also clear that having White mentors provided an additional benefit. In Omar's reflection he states:

I deliberately network purposely. And also I think one of the things I'm one of the major factors played a role in my career is having mentors. Having mentored of color are great you know cus you can connect with, but also having mentors that who are white who can open more doors. Because some mentors you probably can't open some doors for you because of different challenges (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Omar indicates that having a purposeful network has been extremely helpful and at the same time, recognizes that the lack of diversity that exists within senior leadership. Having White mentors in his network has afforded him opportunities that other mentors of color might not have access to and has aided in his professional success. As noted in the literature, this lack of racial diversity in senior leadership perpetuates the centering of Whiteness and acknowledges their power and privilege over other racial communities. This then reinforces the idea that colleges and universities are White spaces that people of color must navigate through to succeed and survive. The dominance of Whiteness forces

Omar to believe that race is an important characteristic of the types of leadership positions he desires to obtain and knowing that he does not have this trait, he must rely on his connections to various White leaders to help him achieve.

In thinking about his experience in job searching, Vincent shares another angle of his experience with mentorship:

none of these mentors are Asian American right. So these are largely white people, maybe one black person, because there are so few Asian-Americans in leadership, particularly in the Midwest right. So my my mentors above me in rank were not Asian-American and so I'm like, What am I doing here? I'm qualified for these jobs, I'm not even getting a phone call, and they're like, well tell us about your process. And I'm like well I put together my amazing written materials, and then I put them in, and I had forgotten the reality that it's people that make things work for you and not really good materials. And I got slapped back down to earth by my mentors who lovingly were like you're being a fool (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Vincent's experience aligns very similarly with Omar in that he too recognizes the lack of diversity at the level above him but also indicates that beyond meritocracy and relative experience, having a network that can connect you with others is just as important, or even more so. Vincent continues:

So is this really humbling moment of realizing that my mentors and sponsors are different. And like most people of color I was over mentored and under sponsored. And like 95 percent of the Asian Americans, I was over-mentor and under-sponsored...the network matters immensely and as an Asian American, the networks don't come naturally to us. And as you move up you cannot just having an Asian-American network, there's not enough of us. So you have to be comfortable getting sponsors who are racially different than yourself (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Here, Vincent is able to illuminate the difference between mentorship and sponsorship and that without having both, one may be limited on where they can move towards. His example also indicates how networking is a concept that can be foreign for many Asian Americans and that developing this skill would be an advantage.

Another perspective that was shared was the responsibility of mentoring others. As many have previously indicated, the lack of diversity that exists in senior leadership creates a barrier for Asian Americans to receive culturally competent mentoring and sponsorship in the field. This leaves the few who are currently at that level with the responsibility to provide opportunities to follow in their footsteps or help them create their own pathways. This responsibility mirrors the findings in Lu & Wong's (2013) study in that these Asian men add the role of being the provider for the community which in turn gets tied to their masculine identity and at the same time becomes an added stressor to consider. Arley shares that "I always try to make time for mentorship because they [mentors] have been intentional in helping me all along. And I have, I have dedicated my life and my career to make sure that I'm always available. If I can't be available then we'll figure it out" (Dexter, April 5, 2019). With the understanding of the power that mentorship had on his career, Dexter articulates that providing what was given to him to others is something he takes seriously and believes can be helpful. Along the same lines, Arley adds, "I think it's just my ongoing contributions in terms of just mentoring and being there for other APIs. That's the thing that makes me feel the richest. Just having this group of folks around me noting that not only is mentorship helpful to others, but it also adds personal value to his own experience (Arley, March 26, 2019).

Education

Another common theme that emerged was the impact that education had on the experiences of rising leaders. In various ways and at different stages of their lives, participants indicated that education helped shape their perspectives and provided

opportunities for them to advance. In thinking back to his younger years, Omar shares his reflection:

I really started getting a sense of what it means to be an Asian American, what it means to be a [Southeast Asian] American when I started taking ethnic studies classes because in my high school you know you don't. I've never had the opportunity to take Asian American Studies, so I did not understand that the history was traditionally based on from the white perspective that from the history book, and from the pedagogy of the White savior. It helped form the identity that that I was proud to be Asian American or that I can still speak the language
“(Omar, March 29, 2019)

Omar's opportunity to take ethnic studies courses allowed him to become validated as a racialized minority in the United States where often times speaking another language could create a dangerous environment to be in. His example also indicates how his own education has centered around Whiteness up until he had the chance to take these courses in college. In addition, this also signals how education systemically centers Whiteness as an ideology and normalizes White ideologies, histories, and customs that people of color must negotiate. Considering the ages of the participants, ethnic studies were most likely not offered before their college experience nor were they mandated when they went for higher learning so the limited exposure to the histories of people of color would also most likely still be presented from the White perspective to uphold their privileges. Having a framework for understanding his own identity through an American context may have given him tools to understand the value of diversity and equity as a higher education administrator.

Another way that education has been utilized as a tool to overcome barriers to career advancement is obtaining higher levels of formalized education. More than half of the participants have received a doctoral level degree and have indicated various ways of

it affecting their career. Leon shares his experience with a doctoral degree working at a community college:

It's more common for people to have doctorates working in Student Affairs at the four-year, it's less common in the community college. So as an example, like at the executive cabinet level here, there's only two with a doctorate - the president and the Provost. None of the other Vice Presidents have a doctorate. And then when you go down to the dean level. Dean and director level sure the academics they all have doctorates right, they all do. But within student affairs, not so much, like I'm one of the only... it's rare to have a doctorate within the student affairs realm in the community colleges, it will help you. (Leon, April 19, 2019)

Though Leon may be the only one in his area with an advanced degree, he believes that it will still be a benefit for the future of one's career despite the type of institution one is at.

As Ryan reflects on his decision to make this significant shift in his life, he questions himself and shares:

Should I really be leaving that job? And all these other people that are trying to get this job so have I made the right decision? But I knew that for kind of the long term it was going to be important for me to get the key Ph.D. And that that experience and credential and so I kind of decided to take this step to the side because I knew that it would be best and it would be something that I wouldn't necessarily need for my next job but it was an investment in something further down the road. And so it was worth sort of stepping off of that pathway I was onto to get that experience so that I could, you know, have a higher trajectory at a future point (Ryan, April 23, 2019).

Ryan's reflection sheds light on the risk he needed to consider in leaving a stable and sought-after career to obtain something that he believed would yield a stronger investment in his future. Getting this advance degree was not an easy decision that he came to. Similarly, Omar adds:

So I actually went back after about twelve years after my master's and finished that [doctorate degree] so that's if you really want to go to senior level is that that doctorate is almost a must because you don't want to strive to be the exception. Usually the exception goes to White folks. For Asian folks like us, it's very difficult to get that (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Here, Omar indicates his understanding that after a long period of debating on obtaining a higher education, an advanced degree would help get him in higher levels of leadership. At the same time, Omar also shares his perspectives on the privileges that his White colleagues receive in that getting an advanced degree is a necessary step for people of color whereas for White people, seems to be viewed more as an option.

Professional Development Opportunities

Many of the participants shared that their involvement in professional organizations and programs have assisted in their own development as leaders. For some, taking part in such organizations has been a resource to broaden their networks for other opportunities. Ryan shares that “I've also been trying to raise my kind of visibility and profile so that organizing panels either on campus or at national conferences and kind of bringing together people to serve on the panel”, noting that his involvement assists in building his professional identity (Ryan, April 23, 2019). For others, they see their involvement as opportunities to develop not only the individual but also the profession. Arley states:

Personally, I think it's very difficult to hire someone just for bringing in diversity because you're not doing that institution justice or that person because when you make a mistake you know this world is very unforgiving. You know I think it's important. That's why I'm so invested in programs and training to get people prepared so they are the best person you see that and I do find it problematic when people hire people because of how they perceive needs and people. So yes it's it's there (Arley, March 26, 2019).

Arley not only shares the value of professional development but also indicates how he has come to realize that regardless if leaders of institutions make decisions to hire people based on what they may look like or represent, those individuals that are chosen can still have the opportunity to be set up for success.

Another aspect about participating in professional organizations that seems to be a benefit is participating in culturally-based aspects of the organization. Many participants indicated that specifically participating organizations that support and provide culturally relevant and racial support such as the Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community (APIKC) of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE), the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE), and the Leadership Development Program for Higher Education (LDPHE) have been the most transformational. Dexter reflects on one of his first experiences and shares:

So that was my first exposure to APAHE, where the opening keynote speaker that day had just been appointed that spring to become the chancellor of a [large public institution]. So, he comes up and he walks in. A standing ovation. And I remember getting goose bumps...and tearing up thinking that a foreign-born Chinese man is going to be Chancellor. Talk about galvanizing your racial identity feelings (Dexter, April 5, 2019).

Organizational involvement provided an opportunity for leaders like Dexter to believe that people who looked like him could be validated as a leader in the field of higher education. Dexter also helps reveal that as a person of color, he subconsciously ascribes to ideologies of Whiteness, assuming that only Whites at the time can only achieve senior and prestigious levels of leadership which is of no fault of his own because he is socialized to see this as normal. Justin provides a similar experience that aided in his transformation as a leader:

I went to LDPHE that summer training program and that was the first professional development program I had ever experienced where I was sitting amongst people that got my cultural narrative in a very real way and that were coaching me within that cultural narrative... it[LDPHE] dramatically changed the confidence I had to be able to one day, step into a vice presidency, or even one day, presidency, if that's what I want to do (Justin, April 16, 2019).

Noting that the experience of being invested in and validating his cultural background allowed Justin to believe that who he is and represents adds value to leadership that goes against the White ideologies of the environment he's in and that he too could become the leader that he envisions to be needed. Ray also adds:

So, I kind of got familiar with NASPA. I never did anything until probably I was three or four years into my career when I got to be a part of the APIKC. So, I think for me that was very affirming for my own personal identity. I think it helped me connect with professionals at schools across the country. It gave me direct experience to translate across to different functional areas in student affairs. And it gave me opportunities to publish, to present (Ray, March 19, 2019).

Joining such organizations provided Ray a multitude of ways to develop both personally and professionally which ultimately broadened his experience. Ben shares a similar sentiment about a different organization stating, "At that time NCORE was cathartic. It was absolutely cathartic, rejuvenating to surround myself with Asian-American professionals and other professionals of color just so we could just breathe", noting the impact that attending a conference had a positive influence on his mental health as an administrator of color (Ben, March 28, 2019).

Although many participants shared positive experiences with professional organizations, some participants also shared other opinions. Leon reflects on his early stages of his career, stating, "I didn't connect to NASPA because back then, you know the stereotype right, back then of it being a white male manager type of group. It really showed back in the mid to late 90s" (Leon, April 19, 2019). The profession has evolved over the years but this perception may still be a perception that prevents other people of color to participate as it also reinforces the idea University and college leadership heavily favors Whiteness. Jonathan also shared a similar comment, "I have never wanted to have a job where I couldn't be who I am and I think it is part of why a lot of the sort of

leadership programs are not real interesting to me because I worry often that there is a mold that is sort of expected” where he also recognizes how certain frameworks shared in the profession may not be as inclusive of people who come from differing backgrounds (Jonathan, April 8, 2019).

Negotiating authenticity

One phenomenon that some of the participants faced was negotiating their authenticity. Similar to Ching’s (2009) study in which most of the participants indicated that they had strong Asian values but felt the need to adapt to western expectations of the job environment, peers, and supervisors to fit in with the group, many of the participants of this study experienced conflicts with showing up as their true selves or performing to a specific audience. In reflecting on a job interview experience, Ray shares:

So, I interviewed for that job and I didn't get it. It was a whole hot mess and I think there were a lot of other layers. I was very Queer-people-of-color-focused and even a white lesbian on the committee told me 'you talk a lot about race, you know that most of our students are white right?'. The job got handed from one white lesbian to another white lesbian who was her friend (Ray, March 19, 2019).

In this example, Ray notices that he does not sacrifice his values of centering marginalized communities and how that decision may have jeopardized his chances of getting hired. At the same time, he also illustrates his understanding of certain social in-group dynamics and biases that may have caused his interview to be more difficult as a queer person of color who is going up against an insider for the same job.

Another way that this phenomenon shows up was through Vincent’s experience on his personal stances that he publicizes and states:

So for me, in the calculus of having to be strategic around where I represent what kinds of politics, I have been willing to tone down how I show up on certain political issues in order to put myself in a position to make real structural and systematic change for vulnerable communities. (Vincent, April 12, 2019)

Here, Vincent understands that he must compromise an aspect that is important to his personal and professional identity and by doing so, provides an opportunity to make a different type of change in the near future. This negotiation is a conscious decision that benefits from Whiteness to gain some of its privileges.

One skill that some participants indicated that they developed to cope with these types of negotiations is code-switching. This skill allows participants to alternate between differing cultures to fit in at any given time. Ryan shares:

I think the people, particularly folks of color and LGBT people, are in some ways better able to lead because they have been translating across groups for years they've had to sort of whether it's code switching, or being adaptable, or trying and figuring out what certain people want to hear or want to see there. They're more malleable and adaptable in their in their leadership (Ryan, April 18, 2019).

Ryan perception of this skill indicates how his communication skills have to be tailored to specific audiences has enabled him to be perceived as a stronger leader. This again is an acknowledgement the pervasiveness of Whiteness and the strategies that are needed to thrive in environments that are not as diverse. Vincent shares another angle and commented:

I have enough code-switching capital to know how to win in every room I'm in. So, I'm in a role that requires me to code switch 100 times a day and so I don't show up the same way that I used to show up in my 20s... I'm also code switching so much more effectively that I'm wearing ten cloaks over the course of the day. And that helps me not get the pushback that I would be getting as a person of color, and as an Asian-American, and a man of color, in this, you know, white elite institution because I'm doing the labor internally to be successful (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Vincent's example highlights the frequency and amount of energy it takes for him, as a man of color, to survive and be successful in his work environment. He also

indicates that code-switching is a skill that takes time to develop and make it more habitual. Omar extends these ideas by sharing:

I love what I do in my professional world leadership role. I bring my authentic self and yet at same time we have to code switch. And we have to really act in the Western leadership style in a way. But then when you go home you you can be yourself and when you are amongst your community and your friends you are who you are. And so for me it's important to identify that way because I don't want to lose the roots of where I'm from and I think there's a part about, you know it's my culture. It's the food the language you know the. Value of family. The value of extended family. The value of what my parents instilled in me. That's what they gave us. (Omar, March 29, 2019)

Omar's ability to compartmentalize the different versions of himself with the varying audiences throughout his day indicates that the field of higher education is still heavily based on White values which inadvertently pushes people to act in certain ways in different environments.

Combating Stereotypes

Stereotypes for Asian Americans also continued to affect the participants in the study. Concepts such as the model minority myth that posits Asian Americans as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the United States and the perpetual foreigner image that depicts Asian Americans as never truly being accepted as Americans have largely impacted the experiences as leaders in colleges and universities. In thinking about his community, Justin shared:

My fellow Asian-American colleagues that are in higher ed in [my state]...First of all none of them are in senior administration. These are faculty and staff members. But because of accents, because of they aren't speaking up and in meetings...They really that a number of them are first generation immigrants. So they and they have accents and what not and I've seen them not advance because people have perceived them to be either not not have the chops, they're not going to speak truth to power, or they're not going to challenge you as academics do, you know, we're supposed to challenge each other in academia and tear each other a part. And you know and their niceness, their respect for the opinions of others, but their relative quietness. And look they're older than me. They've been around. They

have not moved up. They've tried. They've applied for jobs. I've been a reference or a letter of recommendation writer and they haven't gotten the job. And. And part of that. I can't honestly I can't attribute it to anything else but people's perceptions that they don't fit the mold of an administrator, they don't fit the mold of somebody who's always going to have an opinion about something, somebody is going to speak up and even in a way that challenges somebody else. And I think some people, I know for a fact, some people just can't get past the accents and what they perceive to be Oh is that accent going to represent the university well and this or that (Justin, April 16, 2019).

Justin's reflection on the disadvantages he perceives his colleagues undergoes is an example of how these stereotypes unfairly impacts their opportunities for leadership. In addition, this also supports the civic ostracism concept of Kim's (1999) racial triangulation of Asian Americans whereas the dominant White leaders perceive their Asian American colleagues as unchangeably foreign and unassimilable to their White ideologies of leadership. In this case, Asian accents then becomes a foreign skill unaccepted by Whites, thus limiting their opportunities for advancement. Knowing this, many participants have become aware and educated of the negative effects of Whiteness may cause and have been able to combat them in different ways. Justin continues:

I've been given a pass in certain ways because I can articulate my story and so there's certain times when I don't fit the mold that some people might say...in a public setting where I'm like shoot I'll speak my mind all I'll chime in or I'll do this or that. And definitely not the docile Asian-American that's gonna be sort of like oh I'll just wait for my one wise moment to to chime in, that some people perceive for the Asian American administrator right. I'm somewhat you know I'll raise my hand and I'll formulate my thoughts as I'm thinking I'm speaking and what not so (Justin, April 16, 2019).

Noting that articulation and having the confidence and ability to speak up has helped Justin see beyond the confines of Whiteness and break perceptions of what an Asian American leader should act like. Ben also adds:

because of my role...in the division, I don't really have to do much following, I'm highly expected to lead. But at the same time I'm I'm not an enabler. I'm very much about the power of it. I'm very much about pushing my staff to step up. So I

do. And you know a lot of times you know initially I think you know some of them said you know that they weren't expecting that from a person like me. But it's a learning moment. You know there are conversations and moments you start talking about unpacking those sites of socialization and things like that. And if anything I know that I'm not doing what their preconceived notions were of Asian Americans (Ben, March 28, 2019).

Ben's example indicates his cognizance of stereotypes that exist for people with his shared identities and how he feels responsible to be a leader and model the change that's needed to challenge those perceptions that limit Asian Americans from opportunities to reach their full potential.

Determining Fit

Another barrier that many participants faced was deciding if the fit of the environment that they were in matched what they needed to thrive. In most cases, participants shared their need and desire to have a diversity, however that was not always afforded in every situation. In thinking about his job interview experiences, Omar reflects:

Well when I applied for VP jobs I knew right away when I walked into the interview. Everybody was white. I was pretty much like I'm not getting this job no matter how I do in the interview. You know, so there's ways that you could pretty much tell right away. Like there's no way to hide this. Everybody on the committee was White (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Noticing the lack of diversity in the interview process was an indicator of how his values would be a mismatch to the environment that he would be working in. The dominance of Whiteness and Whites in this particular environment caused him to feel foreign and unwelcomed and signaled how he would not be accepted or well-received. Omar continues:

I can feel it at a couple institutions ago that this is a very white institution. They talk about equity and inclusion, but I don't see any evidence of it. So that really conflicted with my values. And I knew that all I knew that I'm not I was not going

to stay at that institutions for that long. And I was looking for a way out already (Omar, March 29, 2019).

Here, Omar also identifies the false ideals of diversity that the institution promotes but is not reflected in their practices as Whites continued to be the dominant stakeholders, thus upholding White ideologies. This ultimately forces him to find an institution that matches better with his value and needs.

Jose provides another way at how he interprets if an institution is a good fit:

I think what's challenging is that we know we want diversity. I think the opportunities to move us can be limited. Let's say Asian folks, if you know, you go to an institution, if you have one person who is already up there, as far as the leadership for administration, your chances are, at that same institution, your chances for moving up, it is going to be very difficult. I would say that that's true (Jose, March 28, 2019).

Like many people of color, Jose looks for institutions that value diversity but often times respond to that value with diversity quotas which provides opportunities for a select few. This perception then becomes alienating that could lead other people of color to feel limited on what they could actually do at that institution.

Sharing a different angle, Daniel reflects on a more positive experience:

And then just kind of being in the right place at the right time and having the luck. I mean I think that everyone who advances to serve at a certain level is lucky too right. They're just this is this is the kind of person that someone's looking for in a position and you happen to fit all of those right. It's not you're better than someone else or another race (Daniel, March 25, 2019).

Daniel illustrates how the concept of luck has played in his favor for most of his situations leading him to new institutions or departments. He also shows that timing plays a key role in making things happen as well.

Perceptions of multicultural affairs

Almost all of the participants mentioned getting their start or spending a good amount of time working in multicultural affairs at various higher education institutions across the nation. These particular experiences provided a personal investment to the work as this focus area allows individuals to center their social identities and build connections to communities. However, many of the participants indicated that they experienced difficulties with many higher-level administrators and their perceptions of multicultural education. In preparing for this next leadership role, Vincent shares his experience working with a recruitment agency:

she said 'Well to be honest with you', here this is a white woman over the age of 60 right. She said 'you know you spent your whole career in multicultural student affairs and that's not really leadership track. And so you might want to make a lateral move into being like a director of a conduct department, or a director of a leadership department, or director of fraternity and sorority life because it'll be easier for you to move up there. I was devastated...And I I don't think that that person was giving me malevolent or toxic advice. I think that they were actually trying to help me from the way that they understood the world you know. And they did it from a place of care and concern and the like let me be honest with you because other people might not be so I wasn't mad at that right, I'm mad at the system that produced that logic right and that that the system inside our field that says that if you come up in diversity that you can't do these kinds of crossover skills (Vincent, April 12, 2019).

Vincent's example sheds light to the unfair perceptions of the work and people who lead efforts in multicultural affairs which are often led by individuals from historically marginalized communities. In addition, the statement also illuminates the underlying systemic values of certain focus areas of higher education administration that privileges those who work in certain areas outside of multicultural affairs and unfairly places this sector at the bottom of that hierarchy. Because of this phenomenon, many of the participants had to rethink their strategies to leadership positions and eventually decide

how long they would stay within multicultural affairs and if and when they should pivot into a new role or service area.

Multicultural affairs tend to be the service area of colleges and universities that support students with marginalized identities and are led by people with similar backgrounds. The continued lack of support and disrespect to those in these departments are absolute indicators of how Whiteness, along with hegemonic masculinity, continue to be supreme in the American educational system.

Though limited in numerical representation in the field of higher education administration, the data collected from the Asian American men in this study assist in providing insight on how they navigated their career experiences as higher education leaders..

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the findings organized in association with each of the research questions. In all, the participants were able to provide unique insights into their experiences and challenges faced as male Asian American higher education leaders. For each primary research question, Various themes emerged as each primary question was analyzed. Themes that include: (a) isolation, (b) overcompensation, (c) added responsibility, and (d) continued discrimination assisted to uncover any advantages or disadvantages that come with identifying as both Asian American and male in higher education leadership. In addition, themes such as: (a) unconscious use of privilege, (b) race as an added layer, (c) assertiveness, (d) queerness, and (e) understanding barriers for women, illuminated how characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of the participants. Continually, concepts such as: (a) bamboo

ceiling, (b) invalidation as a racial minority, (c) anti-blackness, and (d) geographic location were all indicated as aspects connected to racism experienced by the participants. Finally, in understanding how Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education the following topics were shared: (a) mentorship, networking, and sponsorship, (b) education, (c) professional development opportunities, (d) negotiating authenticity, (e) combatting stereotypes, (f) determining fit, and (g) perceptions of multicultural affairs.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion section that allows the researcher to interpret the findings of each research question presented in Chapter 4. Then, the researcher provides a set of conclusions derived from the findings of the study as they connect to the research questions. Recommendations are then provided for further consideration and best practices.

Restatement of the Problem

The practice of workplace diversity has been a difficult goal for organizations to achieve (Shemla, 2018; Arnett, 2018). The United States Census Bureau predicts that the nations White population will become the minority in the year 2042 and indicates that the Asian American population in the United States is the fastest growing racial group nationwide, increasing in population by 46 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Chang, 2014; Census, 2010). In consideration of the American higher education system, Whites exceed their proportional representation in other areas of the institution while Asian Americans do not (NCES, 2015). Further, Asian Americans must confront the perception that they are never truly accepted into mainstream American culture while at the same time used as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the America (Ahuna, 2009). In particular, Asian men have been able to attain high levels of education that provide them with more access to higher paying positions and organizations but still face barriers to their own career advancement (US Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). This lack of diversity is detrimental to the persistence and

retaining of students of color who need role models whom they share a common ground with and can humanize their educational experiences and hardships and also proactively connect them to resources that will assist in ensuring educational personal success (Museus & Mueller, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to understand how the intersection of racial and gender identity has influenced leadership through the experiences of Asian American men in higher administrator roles in colleges and universities. Research pertaining to Asian American issues has grown over recent years with most of the current literature focused on college student success and identity development. In the same regard, most research done on gender has focused on the experience of women and their history of marginalization and inequality. In consideration of the research of men, there are studies on the experiences of Latino and Black males but there is very little studies on the experiences of Asian or Asian American males. Due to the cultural barriers that Asian Americans experience in the workplace, literature on the experiences of Asian American males in leadership positions is not as well developed and through this study the investigator seeks to contribute to this area of research and provide another viewpoint of realities of this community.

The primary research questions that drive this inquiry include:

Research Questions:

1. What advantages or disadvantages come with identifying as both Asian American and male in obtaining higher job responsibilities or career advancements?
2. In what ways do characteristics of masculinity affect the experiences of Asian American leaders?

3. In what ways do Asian stereotypes affect Asian American males in their professional development?
4. How do Asian American male leaders navigate barriers to career advancement in higher education?

To answer these questions, a total of thirteen participants who self-identified as male, Asian American, and with at least ten years of relevant experience participated in a single two-hour in-person interview. The interview protocol focused on the participant's life story as a male Asian American leader in the field of higher education administration, the details about their experience, and their understanding of what their experiences means to them. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher took time to reflect, write analytical memos, and continued to refine the interview process to ensure that the responses provided by the participants assisted with uncovering the intentions of the study. Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher analyzed the lived experiences of the participants to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Sokolowski, 2000; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974).

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1 Discussion: Racism counteracts the privileges of being male

Asian American men straddle a unique power dynamic in possessing both a dominant identity as a man and a marginalized racial identity. At the same time, due to concepts of the model minority myth, they are also positioned against other communities of color in various situations but always below Whites. Considering these dynamics of both the privileges and challenges of where these two social identities intersect in Asian American men, the participants in this study seem to indicate that they continue to be

marginalized due to the prevalent ideologies of Whiteness and their racial identity. At the same time, the participants also experienced absolute social privilege from their male identity but also struggle with fully understanding their definitions around manhood as a racialized minority as it misaligns with the White ideologies connected to hegemonic masculinity.

Due to the limited access to senior leadership positions, there are few Asian American men in the field of higher education and even less exist in higher management positions. Because of this absence, this then creates a sense of isolation and loneliness for the remaining Asian American men as it becomes difficult to build community. Many participants shared that their sense of isolation caused them to constantly question their abilities and identity as an Asian American man as they created their own pathways to leadership as participants Omar, Ben, and Jonathan have shared. Without cultural relevant and culturally sensitive mentorship and without having any models that they could identify with, many of the participants experienced significant amounts of stress for themselves, and at the same time, confused many of their peers because their existence at that level of leadership never appeared. The absence of diversity is indicative of how Whiteness continues to be upheld in the field of higher education. Higher education leaders continue to systemically support the ideologies connected to Whiteness even with the understanding of the power that diversity has and the positive change it can make for its stakeholders and environment, yet diversity then becomes seen as a threat to White supremacy rather than a benefit to all.

This lack of representation is also indicative of the racial quotas that exist within higher education leadership. As participant Omar discusses his feelings of isolation, he

accepts the unlikeliness of having another person of the same racial identity at his level because he fulfilled that allotted portion which again is persisted by White privilege as Whites continue to dominate roles with authoritative power and create these types of limits to positions. These added stressors also caused them to perform their leadership at a higher rate in fear of not being considered legitimate by their White peers. How this phenomena is socially accepted seems to be caused by the ideologies to uphold Whiteness in higher education leadership roles whereas instead of hiring the appropriate people to make the changes needed for all people, the system is then set up for only White men to thrive and succeed in.

The model minority concept also adds to the stressors of Asian American men by giving them the responsibility to toggle between racial communities. Since Asians are considered to be less threatening than Black and Brown communities, they are able to work with Whites on issues of diversity and equity in a way that could be better received than other communities of color could yet because they are not White themselves, they still have limits placed upon them that prevent them from assuming their full potential as leaders. One particular aspect that continues to affect their full acceptance as American leaders is their perceptions of being perpetual foreigners that are not from this country and because of that, they are not deemed to be able to lead in American organizations. Their physical traits that are not White, and in some cases, their accents, all trigger a sense of foreignness that limit their leadership opportunities, dismissing any credentials or meritable actions that would normally be socially accepted if they were White men.

Although this added responsibility of working cross-culturally between people of color and Whites is important in advancing equity for communities of color, many Asian

Americans continue to get type casted as being able to provide only certain types of leadership but not all. With this in mind, this phenomenon again reinforces a perceived racial hierarchy, pinning people of color against each other in an effort to appease the dominant White culture and not threaten the prevalence of Whiteness in the field of higher education. This also shifts the focus of their leadership whereas it is no longer is about equity and inclusion for historically marginalized communities but is instead about how to keep the right White people on your side to allow you to do what you think is best. This then becomes another ploy of centering Whiteness that gives the perception to people of color that they can indeed do work around equity and diversity but only to the extent of which can be understood and approved by the dominant White culture and not threaten the prevalence of systemic Whiteness.

For Asian American men, their racial and gender identities compound themselves to form a different type of discrimination that are not as understood within conventional ways of thinking about racism and male privilege. The prevalence of Whiteness and White supremacy continue to marginalize this community regardless of the perceived privileges that comes with their Asian racial identity along with their inherited male identity. The experiences of Asian Americans continue to be externally defined and are more so influenced by the ideologies of Whiteness. As these ideologies aim to uphold Whiteness, the definitions of Asian Americans in the aggregate thus continue to align with the stereotypes connected to the model minority myth and perpetual foreigner concepts which negatively affect this community as a whole. Systemic Whiteness then reinforces these inaccurate perceptions of Asian to be socially accepted, causing a mental and emotional strain for the individual Asian American to negotiate what they're being

socialized to understand and what they're actually experiencing, while at the same time socializes others that Asians do not belong and are not enough. Asian American men continue to be disadvantaged and experience nuanced challenges that need to be further examined as a unique experience, not just as a racialized individual or just a man.

Research Question 2 Discussion: Male identity is underexamined and complicated by race

The concept of hegemonic masculinity legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, and other marginalized ways of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Men of color cannot attain the same social status as White American men because whiteness is one of the key characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in the United States (Chen, 1999; Connell, 2005). Since male identity is considered a dominant social identity, many of the participants struggled with understanding this aspect of their identity as a racial minority. The best ways that they could understand their male identity was to compare their experiences as racialized men to each other as Asian men and to others.

For participants Jonathan and Justin, their gender identity was not salient enough for them to truly understand how it affected their daily experience. Being a part of this dominant culture never gave them any reason to explore what it means to be a man because they often benefitted from it without needing to do anything. This is not to say that they were unaware of the power of male privilege but because patriarchy perpetuates a system that supports the predominance of men, their gender identity caused little negativity in their interactions with others, thus their maleness naturally became easier to accept. More so, this phenomenon reinforces the fact that the field of higher education is

still highly patriarchal because it privileges men and standardizes their experiences making it difficult for anyone who identifies differently to be their authentic self and be seen as leaders.

When examining their male privilege through a marginalized aspect of their identity, participants were then able to unpack the effects of their masculinity. Kumashiro (1999) found that Asian American men experienced additional oppression when masculine and sexual identities intersected. For participant Ray, his queer identity and femme gender expression became identities that were equally salient for him as his racial identity. Although he possesses male privilege, the additional oppression that he experiences as being racial minority, femme, and gay seem to counteract the benefits that are assumed with his male identity. Being femme allows Ray to express himself in a way that goes against the common perceptions of masculinity and to dismantle the toxicity associated with being a man. However, as a current executive leader at his institution, he also recognizes that he still benefits from patriarchy but in a more challenging manner because of the way his physical and personal characteristics misalign with the toxic hegemonic masculine trope. The life he leads in his true self becomes a radical form of expression that goes against patriarchal norms, which ultimately means that as a leader in a highly patriarchal profession, he is constantly putting himself at risk of being ostracized for being a different type of man who is capable of leading.

For the other queer-identified participants, they all had an understanding of that they did not reap the full benefits connected to their male identity and that they did not align with the same traits connected to hegemonic masculinity but were able to adopt some characteristics to gain enough social acceptance, similar to experiences of the

participants in Chan's (2001) study. In addition, all of the queer participants were represented in each of the different regions of this study and although they mention being "out" as a gay man, not all had the same comfort in discussing their experience being a queer man of color. In various ways they shared some of their experiences but the commonality between them all was that they did experience discrimination and hatred but that they are now at an age where they have accepted this aspect of their identity regardless of others perceptions. In this way, it becomes apparent how powerful hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy are as the participants are socialized to accept its normalcy, noting that their queer identity is something that they have negotiated and come to terms at a later time in their life as it is still not socially acceptable.

In the most notable way that the participants realized their male privileges was when they recognized the continued mistreatment of women in their communities. Women have a long history of marginalization and since patriarchy is built on the systemic oppression of women, they unfortunately are still experiencing this unequal treatment. Over the course of the interviews with the participants, it became clear that they were highly aware that women of color, and black women in particular, experienced more hardship and injustice than any of their male counterparts. This phenomenon signals that maleness, or specifically White maleness, continues to be the standard of thinking and behaving, thus creating a perception that men continue to be seen as more valuable than women and superior (Johnson, 2005). By recognizing this unequal balance of power, it becomes important to understand that although the Asian American men in this study experience certain barriers due to racial discrimination, women continue to be treated the most unfair, with black women experiencing the most social inequity.

In addition to the recognition of inequity issues between men and women, it also highlights the privileges connected to hegemonic masculinity that the participants may be unconscious to. As men of color, the acknowledgement of the unequal treatment of women continues to legitimize their male dominance in society and justifies the subordination of women since this unfair practice continues to exist in higher education leadership and in the broader society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Many of the participants have used their leadership to limit and stop the mistreatment of women but may be struggling to unlearn the hegemonic masculine ideologies that they have subconsciously been socialized to accept.

As indicated previously, the participants suffered from various levels of isolation being one of the few Asian American representatives at their institutions and sometimes the only Asian male in leadership. Considering the low diversity that exists in higher education leadership, the participants are also people who endured discrimination but were not dissuaded from staying in the profession. As they continued to receive mistreatment for their Asian racial identity, they may still be benefitting enough from their male identity to receive certain opportunities that make their experiences more manageable making them complicit to aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

Throughout the study, it became clear that male identity has gone largely unexamined and is a privilege for both queer and straight cis-gender men. This may be due to the prevalence and power of patriarchy and how it institutionalizes maleness and hegemonic masculinity as a standard. Queer Asian men continue to negotiate their identities that align and misalign with hegemonic masculine ideologies but as men, still benefit from the production and reproduction of the dominant male identity which may

impact their mental health in higher volumes. All of the participants were not formally educated about their male identity but instead had the unearned privilege to define it for themselves in various ways. Similar to Whiteness, hegemonic masculinity continues to be seen as the normative ideology to define manhood in American society, thus marginalizing women and other communities that are different. The inherent benefits that come with this identity allow the participants to focus on other aspects of their identity that are more salient such as their race, sexuality, or a combination of both or with other identities. Regardless of the inherent benefits that are attached to male identity, as racial minorities, the participants in this study continued to experience various levels of oppression since Whiteness continues to be a key feature of absolute male privilege that separates them from men of color. Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity continue to be the most socially accepted ideologies in American culture, complicating the ways in which the participants interact with others and each other.

Research Question 3 Discussion: Model minority concept as a tool to perpetuate White supremacy

Stereotypes of Asians continue to negatively impact the experience of the participants in this study. Many of these stereotypes stem from the xenophobic perpetual foreigner concept that perceives certain minority groups as non-Americans and the model minority myth that posits Asian Americans as an exemplar immigrant population that can start at the bottom and rise to success in the United States (Ahuna, 2009). For many of the participants like Omar, Dexter, and Anthony, perceptions connected to their racial identity as Asian Americans were used as a scapegoat by their White colleagues to prevent them from advancing in the field of higher education. In various ways, the

participants shared that when they began to work towards reaching higher levels of leadership in their careers, many of their White colleagues and supervisors would make subjective, and sometimes inaccurate excuses that blocked them from attaining higher levels of leadership. These examples shed light not only on the ways Whiteness continues to be perpetuated in the workforce but also on the cultural barriers and obstacles that Asian Americans face in the workplace that impede their career advancement opportunities, also known as the bamboo ceiling concept (Hyun, 2005). The participants all were given chances to work hard on their responsibilities in order to be recognized and be offered an opportunity to advance further but were halted because of the assumptions connected to their racial identity. This is how Whiteness continues to marginalize people of color to uphold its dominance and keep Whites in power.

Considering Kim's (1999) Racial Triangulation Model of Asian Americans that argues that Asian Americans are and continue to be "racially triangulated" vis-à-vis both African Americans and Whites in the field of racial positions, many of the participants fell victim to this model by being racially valorized due to their ability to work hard. However, at the same time, regardless of their diligence, they were still never fully offered any further opportunities because they were not White (p. 106).

Because of the influence that their White supervisors have over these Asian American men, the relationship between the participants and their other peers of color becomes complicated. With the perception of being "Honorary Whites", Asian Americans are then thought of as being the competitor for various leadership positions against other people of color. As the participants receive more opportunities to advance in the profession than their colleagues of color, aspects of the model minority myth start

to become more apparent. This causes their colleagues of color to believe in the stereotype and start connecting Asian Americans to Whiteness, even though they are not White and also not advancing beyond that specific opportunity that was just given to them. These complicated interactions between Asian Americans and other communities of color are designed by Whites to uphold the ideals of Whiteness and keep Whites as the dominant in-group.

With the model minority concept and perceptions of honorary Whiteness at play, colleagues of color start associating Asians with Whiteness which then invalidates their membership as a racially marginalized community. For participants Vincent and Jose, this phenomenon becomes very real as they become invalidated by other communities of color because of their Asian American identity and its perceived connection to Whiteness, yet because they are not White, they then feel completely ostracized.

These relations between Asian Americans, Whites, and other communities of color then become complicated. However, because the model minority concept is externally defined by Whites, the stereotype then becomes a tool that perpetuates White Supremacy. With this in mind, Asian Americans then becomes a mechanism that creates a perceived racial hierarchy creating a racial wedge against other communities of color. As Whites continue to be the dominant racial group with the most power, they decide that Asians are more hard-working than other racial groups and give them opportunities for some leadership without fully accepting them as one of their own, similarly to Kim's (1999) Racial Triangulation Model of Asian Americans. Further, from the stand point of other communities of color, this also gives off the impression that they are perceived to be ranked above other brown and black communities, which then negates their

membership as a racialized minority, thus leaving communities of color, including Asian Americans, to fight against each other for opportunities while Whites remain at the top with the dominant power.

Regardless of how Asian Americans are positioned on such perceived racial hierarchies, it is important to understand that stereotypes such as the model minority concept are externally created by Whites and is used as a method to place this community below them and against other communities of color. This phenomenon then assists in perpetuating systems of White Supremacy that prevents any non-Whites from achieving full leadership and protecting the dominance of systemic Whiteness as many of the participants in this study have experienced.

Research Question 4 Discussion: White Supremacy as the root of issues

There were several ways in which participants navigated barriers to career advancement as higher education leaders. As Asian American males, the overarching barrier that the participants faced were largely due to aspects of White supremacy how many of their institutional environments lacked the support and knowledge to recruit, retain, and promote people of diverse backgrounds. With this influence, many of the participants developed various strategies to manage through these instances of not being recognized as a leader and gain legitimacy.

Stereotypes of Asian Americans continue to plague the experiences of participants. With roots from the model minority myth and perpetual foreigner concepts, participants Justin and Ben continued to experience further marginalization based on unfair and preconceived perceptions of who they are and represent. These stereotypes have externally defined Asian Americans and have often been enforced by the dominant

White culture. The effects of these judgments have barred Asian Americans from being envisioned as American leaders and allow the ideologies of Whiteness to prevail in higher education leadership.

To combat these stereotypes, another strategy that participants developed was code switching which is a developed skill that lets one alternate between differing cultures to fit in at any given time. For participants Ryan and Omar, this skill became important to own in order for them to thrive in White spaces. The act of code switching is indicative of how people of color must adjust themselves in order for the dominant White environment to accept them. For many of the participants, this may perpetuate an internal conflict between their cultural values and the values of their work environment, which are often based on Whiteness. Due to this conflict, many of the participants may also feel forced to perform or do things that are not aligned with their cultural values, similarly to Ray as he discussed in his job search experience, or Vincent with his view on politics, as having to decide on compromising their values to be accepted by the those Whites who have the authoritative power to advance them in their careers. This conflict could lead individuals to question their authenticity as a racial minority and morality in the profession.

Another strategy that participants developed was the ability to analyze environments. In his interview, Jonathan mentioned that “you receive subtle cues about where are welcome and where you're not” which aided in his understanding of which types of institutional environments were going to be supportive of not just what he did, but also who he was (Jonathan, April 8, 2019). With this type of mentality, it becomes obvious that higher education institutions continue to value Whiteness as many

employees of color continue to decipher if who they are can fit into the structures that were not meant for them to succeed in.

As shared with many of the participants, education remained to be a valuable tool that provided a longer range of impacts in their career. For participants like Omar, he found value in taking courses in ethnic studies early in his educational career to understand how his racial identity is impacted through the lens of being American. His experience taking such courses assisted in his understanding of how systems in the United States perpetuate Whiteness. Ethnic Studies courses are still not widely offered in the American education system which then limits opportunities for racialized minorities to formally understand their identities against Whiteness. Instead, western civilization, which historically associates with European history and the colonization of others, becomes standardized and leaves out people of color or other marginalized communities. If ethnic studies were more valued and afforded to more to students, this could be an opportunity to better understand the racial relationships between people in the United States and allow for more equitable opportunities for people of color. However, considering the state of Ethnic Studies across the nation, it becomes questionable if institutions are purposely not supporting these types of courses as it pushes against White supremacy, which is the basis that most college campuses are created from.

For participants Ryan and Leon who received an advanced educational degree, they also saw credentials as a socially accepted tool to help them advance in their career. Although their degrees have been viewed differently, there was a common belief that although their formalized education may not have instant impact, it would assist in opening doors to leadership sometime in the near future. Thoughts as such could indicate

that education is also a highly valued commodity for Whites who continue to have the power and authority to provide opportunity. As Whites see education as a credible product, advance degrees become a reliable asset for non-Whites to obtain in order to gain opportunities for upward mobility. At the same time, it is also important to note that higher education in today's American society is not easy to achieve as they are expensive, includes an arduous process to complete, and does not guarantee job security, which ultimately can still leave many individuals divided against other Whites who are advantaged with resources.

For participants like Arley, Ray, and Dexter, professional organizations such as NASPA provided opportunities to help them develop in their career field that they would not receive at their institution. In addition, organizations that focused on their social identities or provided support specific to their identities such as the APIKC of NASPA, APAHE, LDPHE and NCORE, provided more than just professional development but an opportunity to be validated as a person of color in a predominantly White profession. These spaces and programs provided meaning-making opportunities that specifically centered their racial identities. In these spaces the participants were able to network, learn, and be in community as their true authentic selves. These organizations and programs therefore assist in validating that the profession of higher education administration is still heavily dominated by Whiteness and how important these created spaces become for non-White administrators to exist within the profession.

For participants like Arley and Jonathan, one strategy that shared was about the power of mentorship and networking and how it helped them understand the field of higher education. As Asian American men, they specifically shared that it was important

for them to not only have people who identified similarly to them but to also have people in their networks that were also different from who they were. Their comment signals their belief that Asian Americans have limited power as leaders who can help navigate their pathway towards higher leadership. This is not to say that Asian Americans do not have the skill set to do so, but because of the lack of Asian Americans represented at senior leadership, there are so few to be able to properly mentor and open doors for others because they themselves are still trying exist and thrive as a higher level administrator. This leaves few opportunities to learn from leaders of the same identities and causes individuals to learn from those who are different from them who have had opportunities for upward mobility more frequently. These individuals tended to be people from other ethnicities, primarily those who identified racially as White and were more open to issues around diversity and equity. These examples highlight how Whiteness again gets centered and upheld not only by Whites but from people of color as it becomes socially acceptable to seek out the viewpoints from White individuals and dismisses the experiences of people of color who are negotiating their existence as leaders of color in a predominantly White profession.

In addition to having a racially diverse network of mentors, participants like Vincent found it important to not only have people to help guide you on your career journey, but it was equally just as important to have people who have the ability sponsor and influence others who have decision-making power. Vincent shares that having a network of people who only identified as Asian American was helpful but in order for him to move up, he needed people who were racially different from him to help him advance in his career. This key distinction between mentorships, networks, and

sponsorship has been an important aspect for upward mobility but also uncovers a significant challenge. With the field of higher education administration dominated by Whiteness, in order for someone of color to be seen as a leader, they still need to have someone from the dominant culture to vouch for their abilities to be seen as credible. This then becomes a signal that regardless of merit or experience, it is more important to have White colleagues with the right power to help you achieve higher levels of leadership, which ultimately creates a sense of reliance on Whiteness to be successful, thus again upholding and forcibly subjecting others to the dominance of Whiteness.

Considering that participants shared their values for education and also networking and sponsorship, a conflicting aspect between that relationship is the value of meritocracy. Although many participants indicated that an education could get you far, having a network of sponsors, regardless of what one actually achieves, seems to have great value in helping one get further in their career.

Another conflict that arises from this study is the systemic perceptions of multicultural affairs work within higher education. As participant Vincent shared in his experience working with a recruitment agency, he was told that his work in multicultural affairs would be seen more as a hinderance than a strength if he were to choose to move up in the leadership ladder. In addition, he was also advised to switch over into a new area that may be seen more congruent with being a leader in higher education so that he could be considered for positions. With this in mind and considering that mostly every participant had some aspect of multicultural affairs work in their portfolio, there seems to be a conflict that exist between how institutions and its leaders' value and interpret diversity.

There seems to be a more recent trend that many higher education institutions claim diversity to be a top priority. Often times these claims are supported by instituting statements that value equity and inclusion, showing graphs of how many non-White students exist at predominantly White institutions, and depending on the priorities or resources, some institutions create units that provide support services for historically marginalized communities. These created spaces tend to be the strongest entry point for many students of color to feel that they belong and can contribute to the institution and possibly consider a career in higher education. Many of the participants in the study indicated that they spent a number of years in this particular service area as a rising student leader or working professional and have had success in their roles to influence policy and advocate for students. However, regardless of the success of their leadership abilities, these Asian American men are not seen as capable in the institution more broadly. Often times, people of color are recruited to work in these offices where they can showcase and center their social identities but then when it becomes time to think about who is actually going to provide the leadership for the institution, Asian American men are not considered as serious contenders.

This contradiction is in essence of what is wrong with the way colleges and universities think about diversity and how the field of higher education systemically and systematically functions to support and uphold the ideals of White supremacy. It seems to be more commonplace to state demographics to show the different types of people who exist on college campuses but when it comes to actually making decisions for the institution and leading, those who represent diverse perspectives are not given those opportunities and are not seen as valid leaders. With this perspective, Multicultural

Affairs then becomes a tool created to give the perception of advancing marginalized communities and creating equity so long that it does not disrupt the dominance of Whiteness. In these ways, White supremacy influences the perception that multicultural affairs as a rundown section of higher education administration and forces these leaders out into other areas that are more socially accepted by Whites or to be stuck at this level of leadership where they continue to be marginalized. With this in mind, colleges and universities continue to remain as culprits in upholding White supremacy.

As a result of analyzing this primary research question, all of the skills and strategies developed for the participants to succeed as higher education leaders revolve around navigating the prevalence of Whiteness. The structures that are in place, the models that are used, and the people who have the authority to make changes all benefit from White supremacy which provides a challenge for any non-White individuals to be successful and authentic.

With consideration of this study focusing on the experience of male, Asian American leaders in higher education, it becomes clear that there are both advantages or disadvantages in the participants' strategy development to overcome barriers. All of the advantages stem from the dominant male identity aspects connected to patriarchy and all of the disadvantages come from the prevalence of Whiteness and the inequities caused by hegemonic masculinity. The dominance and centering of both Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity is indicative of the difficulty it takes for any person who is different from these ideals to exist as higher level administrators of American colleges and universities and to make any changes towards equity.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS

Through the interviews collected in this study, the participants shed light on the experiences of male, Asian American leaders in higher education. Because of the implications that the model minority concept has on Asian Americans and who they interact with, it becomes clear how inaccurate many of the preconceived notions of the stereotypes are false. The experiences of Asian Americans are far more complex than the general public may assume, and it is important to validate their experiences and learn about how they are treated and mistreated. Asian American men continue to struggle to understand their gender identity and gender expression in a field that is dominated by patriarchy and White supremacy. Being Asian American does not mean you are less than or necessarily foreign, but they are different, full of culture, values, and experience hardships as a racialized minority that is different from other communities of color. All people of color experience discrimination and mutual struggle in some way and Asian Americans are a part of that phenomenon but are often dismissed due to inaccurate perceptions of privilege connected to assumed Whiteness.

Another implication found in this study are the imperfections of higher education. As many colleges and universities get touted for diversifying their student body to be less dominated by White students and with more women and queer people being accepted at higher rates, as a system it still perpetuates and upholds White supremacy and patriarchy in so many ways. The mere fact that higher education institutions pride themselves on their racial and gender facts signifies that their infrastructure and culture is still centered on Whiteness and patriarchy and it is the responsibility of those in leadership to dismantle

these systems to provide an equitable experience for those that have been historically marginalized.

As a profession, it is still important to promote and recruit students of color to diversify the field, however it is also important recognize how Whiteness and patriarchy are dominant. As many graduate programs and professional organizations such as NASPA and ACPA continue to groom students from marginalized communities to be the upcoming professionals in higher education, it is important to see them not just as employees but possible executive leaders who are more than capable and not a deficit. In addition, it is important to review the negative biases connected to multicultural affairs and the effects that Whiteness still has on centering Whites and their experiences navigating concepts of marginalization, rather than the actual people experiencing racism and sexism. The people leading these charges to create equity on campus are those who work in this service area and should be seen as leaders fit to run entire university and college organizations. As someone who currently works in this area, there have been countless times where campus partners have leaned on my colleagues and I to assist with issues of diversity and inclusion yet when it comes to recognizing our leadership, we are never met with the proper accolades or resources and are often overlooked as people who can lead our institutions or are deemed too radical and/or different from traditional considerations.

It is also absolutely apparent how patriarchy is a prevalent system both in the field of higher education but also in the American society. All of the participants could talk more easily about the challenges they faced as a racialized minority but struggled with understanding the effects of their male identity. Patriarchy has been so standardized that

it has gone underexamined and thus perpetuated. With ethnic studies and feminist/gender studies providing opportunities for marginalized communities to understand their histories and phenomena, it is equally important to have education about the effects of patriarchy and White supremacy has on our society.

The power of the prevalence of White supremacy and hegemonic masculinity on American socialization is absolutely alarming. The external definitions of the Asian American experience and the subordination of women and queer people have prevailed so much that it became apparent that not just Whites but even some marginalized people have become unconsciously or subconsciously complicit to the ideals of Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity. Americans have been socialized to behave and understand the world through these frameworks and it becomes difficult to unpack and unlearn these concepts and change behaviors.

Asian American men in leadership are a unique community and have been wildly underexamined. Being a racialized minority with patriarchal privilege offers another perspective of how people are treated and act around other and it is important to give notice to the nuances of how different social identities intersect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study illuminated many implications. The following section are recommendations provided by the researcher to assist various stakeholders to consider in providing a more equitable experience for the future.

For rising or current Asian American male leaders

Understand that your experience is real

Through Crenshaw (1989) theory of Intersectionality, she reveals the injustices that exist when race and gender are viewed as separate categories and how they distort discriminating experiences around race and gender. Beyond race, there are issues of gender, and beyond gender there are issues of race, however there is little research considers the intersection of race and gender (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Zinn, & Denissen, 2015; Person, Dawson, Garcia, & Jones, 2017). Identity formation occurs in this intersection and includes both what it means to be male and what it means to be a man of color (Hondagneu-Sotelo et al., 2015; Person et al., 2017). Much of what Asian American men experience in life is complicated as a racialized minority with perceived male privilege. With that, it is important to also important to understand the effects of Whiteness and its continued power to externally define the experience of Asian Americans. To prevent further marginalization, Asian Americans should start taking control of their own narratives and define their experiences for themselves.

Continue to build your networks of mentors and sponsors

As mentioned by the participants, for Asian Americans that are looking for upward mobility as leaders in higher education, it is important to realize that there are not enough of other Asian Americans that exist in senior position. With this understanding it would be reasonable to find comfort in looking for leaders of different racial backgrounds to help mentor and sponsor you into different roles. By no means does this mean that you cannot have a network of Asian Americans as that can be powerful in many ways, but it is a reminder that the field of Higher Education remains to preserve Whiteness at its core and to navigate through the system successfully will require White allies and people who have worked at predominantly White institutions.

Get involved with culturally sensitive support networks

Professional organizations and programs that are culturally based proved to be a significant source of support and validation for staff of color. For many who did not have access to formal cultural or ethnic studies, these programs also provided opportunities for people at various racial development stages to learn about their histories and identities. By getting involved in such organizations, Asian Americans could have a stronger opportunity to envision themselves and people like them to exist as leaders in a predominantly White profession. At the same time, Asian Americans are not geographically bound to one location so being able to connect with folks, especially if you are in a racially isolated environment, can promote a sense of well-being and community.

Seek mental health support

Stereotypes connected to the model minority myth and patriarchy are difficult concepts to unpack and grasp and we all are not fortunate to have the tools and guidance to fully understand its effects, so it is important to seek out professional help. A stigma remains over the use mental health services in Asian American communities but considering the complexities of the intersectional identities of being a man and Asian American along with the limited research on this particular community, it is hard to define the true experience that Asian Americans face every day. Therapy can be an intervention that can assist individuals to cope with their realities in a healthy and informative way. By utilizing such services, Asian American men may be better equipped to dealing with complicated issues that they so often might not be able to understand and would then be able to assist in normalizing using these resources.

Remain Visible and accessible

Due to the lack of Asian Americans represented in senior leadership roles, it becomes difficult for rising Asian American leaders to envision themselves as someone of value in higher education. However, some Asian Americans have been able to break such perceived glass ceilings and bamboo ceilings. It is important to acknowledge the hardships that Asian Americans must go through to get to obtain that level of leadership and it is equally important to acknowledge the difficulty in retaining such positions. As Asian Americans start assisting in paving the way towards higher levels of leadership for others, it becomes more important to share their stories with other on how they got there and what issues they should be aware of as they begin their career journeys.

Examine your male privilege

Although this study focused on the experiences of Asian American men, by no means is this study meant to invalidate or further marginalize the experience of women. Patriarchy is in fact a social system that upholds the dominance of maleness and disenfranchises women, thus creating gender inequality. Many of the participants also understood their male identity by comparing their experiences to the continued unfair treatment of women. By acknowledging this extreme phenomenon, Asian American men must support and advocate for women as they provide leadership in a very different way that is still effective and needed. By building up the women in our communities, we must also acknowledge the prevalence of toxic masculinity and work to dismantle these powers as a united community.

Dismantle White Supremacy

As mentioned previously, the Asian American experience has been externally defined by White individuals. In addition, the foundation of higher education administration were built upon both systems of patriarchy and Whiteness and continues to privilege those identities. This causes major divisions between Asian Americans and other communities of color who perceive Asians as the “model minority”. By understanding this phenomenon, Asian Americans can assist in unpacking these perceptions with other communities of color and create stronger alliances to dismantle White supremacy, which is the true reason why racial inequities exist.

For the organization

Promote and support Ethnic Studies, Feminist Studies, and Gender Studies

Formal education continues to be a tool for socialization and nation-building. Education in the United States continues to perpetuate Whiteness by not including the voices and histories of diverse individuals who helped build and influence this country. By providing more courses in ethnic studies, feminist studies, and gender studies, individuals will be more equipped to understand the experiences of marginalized communities in the United States and identify the inequities that currently exist. Students who take such courses can grow a stronger appreciation for diversity and assist in validating their experiences.

Address racial inequity and biases in career advancement

It is important to understand the systemic issues that prevent marginalized communities from accessing opportunities for education. Creating pipelines for various communities and schools to higher education is necessary to help guide future leaders

into the profession. However, as these individuals gain access into leadership positions and education, it is equally important to understand the biases that prevent diverse candidates to obtain higher levels of leadership. Those who have experience working being leaders in multicultural affairs continue to be called upon to lead certain diversity efforts on campuses but continue to be discriminated against when higher levels of leadership become available. As regarded in this study, bamboo ceilings are experienced by many participants, so it is important to assess the barriers that exist for non-White employees and create a more equitable and conducive work environment for them to succeed.

Provide support for professional development

One of the biggest opportunities that assisted in retaining these Asian American men in higher education leadership roles was being able to use their professional development opportunities to get involved with culturally sensitive organizations. These programs and organizations provided a space for the participants to feel support and validation without having to take the additional step to code switch. Supporting employees to get involved outside of the institution may assist in preventing burnout and may also aid in their retention.

On the same note, there should also be consistent and on-going training and education around the powers connected to Whiteness and hegemonic masculinity to the stakeholders of the institutions at every level. By understanding the dominant power that these ideologies have in both the college setting and in society, institutions can then begin to understand how to make changes to the policies, practices, and protocols to become more equitable for all.

Diversity beyond the number

Many institutions pride themselves for having strong diversity, however it is just as important to not just focus on the mere number of individuals of different backgrounds that exist on a campus but what type of environment you're creating for them to persist. Cultural and community centers continue to be the strongest area of the institution that supports marginalized students and they should be adequately resourced to be able to maximize their efforts. In addition to student diversity, it is important to hire multiple diverse staff across the division and not just in niche roles where they get pigeon-holed. With more diversity in leadership roles, the culture of the institution could shift easier to respond to the ever-changing demographics of students for years to come.

*For Future Research***Sexual Orientation**

The experiences of the queer men in this study indicated that having an additional oppressive identity made them more susceptible to discrimination than their straight counterparts. Future research on the experiences that specifically look at either the experiences of queer men or straight men would be helpful in understanding the intersections of their identities.

Gender Expression

The effects of gender expression was touched upon by some of the participants in the study which seemed to provide some insight on how they experienced various levels of discrimination. Men who could express themselves with more masculine manners and/or willing to bargain and adapt to some hegemonic masculine ideologies may have

experienced less barriers than those that may express more femme qualities so further research on the effects of this identity would also be helpful to examine.

Ethnicity

When recruiting participants, it was difficult to get a diverse pool of candidates to participate in the study. The majority of those who volunteered to sign up for this study ethnically identified as Chinese American and Filipino American and there were enough participants to do a similar study through the lens of these separate ethnicities. Such a study could provide additional insight to the diverse experience of Asian American male higher education administrators.

Geographic Location

Lastly, the majority of the participants worked at institutions on the West coast of the United States. This region tends to be more diverse than other parts of the nation and for participants in the study who were not from the West coast, their understanding of racial identity may be different. Additional research on Asian Americans based on their geographic location would also be helpful in understanding the experiences of Asian Americans.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to advance the field of organization and leadership as it focused on the experiences of male Asian American leadership in American colleges and universities. The data collected in this study revealed the prevalence of White supremacy and its influence on the leadership structures in higher education. By acknowledging this, Asian American men have become trailblazers as racialized minority leaders

navigating predominantly White spaces while combatting stereotypes connected to the model minority myth and perpetual foreigner concepts.

For Asian American men, their racial and gender identities compound themselves to create different forms discrimination that are not as understood within conventional ways of thinking about racism and male privilege. As Asian American men climb the leadership ladder, the diversity that they bring with them helps to strengthen the transformation and culture shift of higher education for the next generation to follow.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INITIAL ONLINE SURVEY

Full Name: _____

College/University of Employment: _____

Position: _____

College/University Address: _____

College/University Phone: _____

Email: _____

Your racial identity(ies): _____

Your ethnic identity(ies): _____

Your gender identity: _____

Current Age: _____

Country of Birth: _____

Generation Status:

- 1st Generation (immigrated to the United States)
- 1.5 Generation (immigrated to the United States at a young age)
- 2nd Generation (parent(s)/guardian(s) are immigrants)
- 3rd Generation (grandparent(s) immigrated to the United States)
- 4th+ Generation (great-grandparents immigrated to the United States)
- Other: _____

Types of degrees completed with majors:

Bachelors

Major: _____ College/University: _____ Date Completed: _____

Masters

Major: _____ College/University: _____ Date Completed: _____

Doctorate

Major: _____ College/University: _____ Date Completed: _____

Years of experience in current position:

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your racial and ethnic identity. What does it mean to be that racial and ethnic identity?
2. Tell me about your gender identity. What does it mean to be that gender identity?
3. Tell me a story about of when you first understood your identity as an Asian American man.
4. How did you arrive at your career?
5. How does your family perceive your career? How much of your family's opinion(s) influence your decision to stay in your career?
6. Why did you become a higher education administrator?
7. Please describe your career positions leading up to your current role and why you think you were hired.
8. Please describe your experience of what it has been like to be an Asian American male working in higher education.
9. Have you had mentor(s) who advised you in reaching your career goals? How did the mentoring relationship begin? What discussions with your mentor stand out as important moments in your career?
10. Have you planned or prepared yourself for advancement?
11. Are you active in professional organizations? Which ones and how have they influenced you?
12. Can you tell me about key points in your career and what stands out as moments of learning and decision-making about your career?
13. Did you face any barriers in your career? Have you encountered a glass ceiling, or

barriers to opportunities for career advancement? If so, please describe your experience(s) and related outcome(s).

14. Have you experienced any exclusion or racial discrimination in your career as an Asian American male administrator?

15. Have you experienced any difficulties related to campus culture?

16. Have you experienced any difficulties related to geographic location?

17. Please describe the racial/ethnic make-up of your colleagues and supervisors you work with. Please describe the quality of your relationship with them.

18. How does the racial/ethnic make-up of you and your colleagues affect your ability to lead and be seen as leader? How do you think it affects your colleagues' ability to lead and be seen as a leader?

19. How does your Asian American identity impact your interaction with your White colleagues at work? Black colleagues? Other colleagues of color? With higher level administrators?

20. In what ways does your gender identity influence your ability to lead and be seen as leader?

21. In your opinion, does the type of institution you have worked at and are currently employed at (public/private, four year/two year, large/small institution) have a relationship to the presence and success of Asian American male administrators?

What about your job or workplace are you most satisfied/dissatisfied with?

22. How has the race/ethnic composition of your current institution influenced you as an Asian American administrator? How has it influenced you as an administrator at other institutions (If applicable)?

23. How has your cultural/ethnic background influenced your career goals? Please explain.

24. Describe major contributions so far in your career or accomplishments that you are proud of.

25. If you were in position to encourage more Asian Americans to become higher education administrators, what would you suggest?

26. Are there ways in which being an Asian American male, an advantage or disadvantage in your workplace? How about overall in higher education administration? Please describe.

27. What do you see yourself doing in 3-5 years from now?

APPENDIX C: IRBHS APPROVAL



Jerald Adamos <jladamos@dons.usfca.edu>

Expedited Review Approved by Chair - IRB ID: 1163

Christine Lusareta <noreply@axiommentor.com>
Reply-To: Christine Lusareta <irbphs@usfca.edu>
To: jladamos@usfca.edu

Thu, Feb 7, 2019 at 10:39 AM

*IRBPHS - Approval Notification*

To: Jerald Adamos
From: Richard Johnson, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #1163
Date: 02/07/2019

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your research (IRB Protocol #1163) with the project title **Splinters from the Bamboo Ceiling: Understanding the Experiences of Asian American Men in Higher Education Leadership** has been approved by the IRB Chair under the rules for expedited review on **02/07/2019**.

Any modifications, adverse reactions or complications must be reported using a modification application to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS via email at IRBPHS@usfca.edu. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Gregory Johnson III
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
irbphs@usfca.edu
[IRBPHS Website](#)

APPENDIX D: IRBHS MODIFICATION APPROVAL



DonsApps
STUDENT/ALUMNI

Jerald Adamos <jladamos@dons.usfca.edu>

Modification Approved - IRB ID: 1163

1 message

Richard Johnson <noreply@axiommentor.com>
Reply-To: Richard Johnson <rgjohnsoniii@usfca.edu>
To: jladamos@usfca.edu

Mon, May 6, 2019 at 4:26 PM



Amendment Approved

To: Jerald Adamos
From: Richard Johnson, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #1163
Date: 05/06/2019

Dear Jerald Adamos:

Your Amendment for research (IRB Protocol #1163) with the project title **Splinters from the Bamboo Ceiling: Understanding the Experiences of Asian American Men in Higher Education Leadership** has been approved by the IRB Chair on **05/06/2019**.

Any modifications, adverse reactions or complications must be reported using a modification application to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS via email at IRBPHS@usfca.edu. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Gregory Johnson III
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
irbphs@usfca.edu
[IRBPHS Website](#)

