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Experiences of Chinese American Psychology Trainees in Multicultural Education

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Abstract

Although research has established that students of color have unique experiences in their multicultural training, few studies have examined the experiences and needs of specific subgroups of students of color. This study examined Chinese American psychology trainees' experiences in multicultural education. Qualitative data was collected from individual semi-structured interviews with Chinese American doctoral students (N = 6). Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to understand participants' perceptions of their experiences in multicultural courses. Data analysis resulted in four themes: the (1) *burden of being minoritized*, (2) *Chinese American identity inflection points*, being (3) *sidelined by whiteness*, and (4) *recommendations for curricular modification*. Experiences unique to Chinese American trainees were uncovered, such as the burden of being in racial isolation, navigating Chinese American racial and cultural identity development, and having their educational needs be sidelined by whiteness. Participants described curricular and pedagogical shifts that would better support their learning in multicultural courses. Education and training changes that would support Chinese American psychology trainees in their multicultural education are discussed.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The 2010 United States Census revealed America has been experiencing a demographic transformation. The current growth patterns and shifts in the racial and ethnic composition of the population vastly contrast those of the last two decades. The racial and ethnic make-up of the population is becoming more diverse (Devine, 2017). The Non-Hispanic or Latino white population is still the largest racial and ethnic group in the United States, but the group is growing at the slowest rate. Latinx population and Asian populations have grown considerably in the past decade. Current immigration trends and differential birth rates among white and racial/ethnic minority populations have contributed to this change (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, in press). Key factors to the increase in diversity are international migration patterns and higher birth rates (Devine, 2017). The diversification of the United States has been a driving force behind the counseling profession's shift to a more proactive stance on cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism in Psychology

Multiculturalism has been referred to as psychology's "fourth force" as the United States is becoming a multiracial and multicultural society (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). The multicultural counseling and psychology movement arose out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. During the Civil Rights movement, diversity issues were at the forefront of the psychology field as a large portion of the population was excluded from full participation in social life (Vera & Speight, 2003). Social justice advocates like

Clifford Beers and Frank Parsons promoted humane care for people with mental health concerns and assisted immigrants with work issues (Motulsky, Gere, Saleem, Trantham, Koch, & Juntunen, 2014).

Integrating multiculturalism into counseling psychology training has been a focal point for the profession since that time (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). The field has shifted to focus on the importance of oppressed and historically marginalized clients' lived experiences (Arredondo, Tovar☐Blank, and Parham, 2008). Before this movement, the white middle-class values embedded in counseling psychology research regarding marginalized communities were often unquestioned and unchallenged (Sue et al., 1992). Many graduate programs presented a predominately white Anglo-Saxon orientation. For example, the profession was using white, middle-class modzels of human development and behavior that fail to represent the needs of marginalized populations (Vera & Speight, 2003).

Professionals without training or competence in working with marginalized communities can be harmful and unethical. Researchers have found racial and ethnic disparities in the quality of mental health services (Alegria et al., 2008). Damaging models have also been used to guide and conceptualize racial research. Essentialist beliefs about social groups defined by gender, race, and sexual orientation have justified social inequalities (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). The "encapsulated counselor" is a concept that embodied the monocultural and monolingual perspective of society for a long time (Sue et al., 1992). Within the past decade, a new model has focused on the idea that being culturally different does not equate with inferiority, deviancy, or pathology

(Sue et al., 1992). Biculturalism has become a positive and desirable quality that enhances and enriches the human experience.

To better serve a rapidly diversifying U.S. population, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) proposed 31 multicultural counseling competencies and encouraged the counseling profession to adopt them in accreditation criteria. The multicultural counseling competencies (MCCs) are guidelines for counselors to practice from multicultural and culturally specific perspectives (Vera & Speight, 2003). The MCCs comprises three elements: counselors' awareness of their own cultural and racial heritage and the extent to which they have benefited from the dynamics of oppression, knowledge about the cultural norms and beliefs of other groups, and ability to modify therapeutic skills or techniques in a culturally sensitive manner (Sue et al., 1992). These competencies outline specific ways counselors can integrate diversity issues into their work with marginalized clients (Vera & Speight, 2003).

Due, in part, to the MCCs, the field has emphasized increasing the number of multiculturally competent clinicians for over several decades now (Whaley & Davis, 2007). Counselors are to acquire multicultural counseling competencies to effectively and ethically work with diverse cultural groups. Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis's (1992) paper has served as the benchmark document for outlining multicultural counseling competencies and has provided a foundation for counselor training. These guidelines express a commitment to the operationalization of cultural competence, but they are not without limitations (Whaley & Davis, 2007).

A limitation of the guidelines is the absence of an emic or culturally specific approach. This type of approach may be more valuable for providers who work with

specific ethnic/racial groups (Whaley & Davis, 2007). Additionally, social justice has been become a consideration of the multicultural counseling and psychology movement in recent years (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). The goal of social justice is "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (Bell, 1997, p. 3). The MCCs did not focus on systematic interventions or on ways to advocate for social justice. They do not include other professional activities or roles that might constitute multicultural competencies (Vera & Speight, 2003). The MCCs guidelines are aspirational but not mandatory or enforceable. There have been efforts to shift away from dominant paradigms (e.g., Heteronormative, Eurocentric, patriarchal, corporate-consumerist-capitalist) as historically marginalized communities' cultures and knowledge were subordinated through popular applications of multicultural counseling and psychology.

Owen, Tao, and colleagues (2011) introduced the multicultural orientation (MCO) framework as a critical response to the MCCs. MCO represents the clinician's way of being with diverse clients. MCO is an underlying mechanism through which MCC is actualized (Owen, Tao, Drinane, Hook, Davis, & Kune, 2016). There are three pillars of the framework: cultural humility, cultural opportunities, and cultural comfort (Owen, 2013). The framework advocates for therapists to take a culturally humble approach with clients by being open, curious, and respectful of clients' cultural identities (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013).

Culturally humble therapists rarely assume competence but approach clients with respectful openness to explore the client's cultural identities (Owen et al., 2016). Initial studies have shown that cultural humility is a characteristic of working with diverse clients (Owen et al., 2016). MCO encompasses the complex therapeutic processes needed in cultural discussions and the factors that reflect the tripartite model of MCC: knowledge, skills, and awareness (Owen et al., 2016). Trainees must be willing to examine diversity issues, embrace a social advocacy agenda, and be culturally humble to work with a diversifying clientele.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural competence has become one of the most important constructs in counseling (Castillo, Reyes, Conoley, & Phoummarath, 2007). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2015) has mandated multicultural coursework in all accredited counselor preparation programs. Social and cultural diversity is one of the eight core foundational knowledge areas required of all entry-level counselor education graduates (CACREP, 2015). The American Psychological Association (APA) published guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, and organizational change for psychologists in 2002. Since then, the APA has updated them in 2017 to incorporate broader reference group identities and to acknowledge within-group differences. Multicultural training and education have been areas that have received a great deal of attention.

Multicultural training varies across training programs. There are currently four models of cross-cultural training found in APA-accredited counseling psychology programs: separate course, area of concentration, interdisciplinary, and integration

(Newell et al., 2010). The most common approach is to offer a single multicultural class (Kagnici, 2014). These multicultural courses enhance multicultural competence in psychology training programs. A variety of studies have reported their effectiveness in promoting students' multicultural competencies. (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010). Smith et al., (2006) completed a meta-analysis on multicultural education in the mental health profession and found that multicultural education interventions were associated with positive outcomes across a wide variety of participants and study characteristics. Multicultural education has contributed to counseling students' multicultural awareness and knowledge (Kagnici, 2014). Multicultural training has also decreased implicit racial prejudice and increased cultural self-awareness (Castillo et al., 2007).

As a field, there has been a growing acceptance of culturally competent counseling, cross-cultural psychology, and other multicultural modes of practice and scholarship (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). Psychology has shifted away and started to challenge the imposition of Euro-, cis-male, Christian-, or hetero-centric norms onto counseling and psychology. Often, lip service is given to multicultural concerns without commitment to infuse and translate them into the curriculum (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). Multicultural counseling and psychology may be practiced or theorized in a way that may perpetuate the sorts of marginalization that the practices were to counteract (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). For example, due to funding mandates, psychologists may further drift into remedial interventions rather than offering responsive interventions that account for contextual influences on people's lives (Kennedy & Arthur, 2014).

Multiculturalism without a social justice framework can create the illusion that psychology practices are addressing the oppressions of marginalized people and the

oppressiveness of hegemony, even if its attention to marginalized groups is superficial (Gorski & Goodman, 2015, pg. 2). The adoption of multiculturalism is often operationalized in the counseling and psychology disciplines and reflects more an illusion of movement than actual movement toward social justice (Gorski & Goodman, 2015). Often, multicultural counseling or psychology is presented as "how to counsel Asian Americans" or "how to counsel African Americans" as if these groups are monolithic. In one of the foundational textbooks on multicultural counseling by Derald Wing Sue & David Sue, each racial/ethnic minority group is listed in individual chapters. The textbook breaks down how to counsel African Americans, Indians/Native Americans, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, Latina/os over the span of four separate chapters (Sue & Sue, 2007). These paradigms perpetuate existing social conditions and ask only that we "understand" these groups' "differences" from a supposed "norm." These presentations fail to interrogate the sociopolitical forces that create injustice and the kinds of systemic oppression trauma experienced by marginalized groups (Gorski & Goodman, 2015, pg. 4).

To fully conceptualize multicultural competence, emphasis must be on oppression, privilege, social inequities, and social justice (Vera & Speight, 2003). Knowledge should be a tool for social action (Prilleltensky, 1997). Supervised service-learning experiences, advocacy-focused counseling, and outreach have been incorporated into training models to increase the interest and commitment of trainees to social justice (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). Incorporating these modifications increased trainees' awareness of social justice issues and developed advocacy skills (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011).

Training programs may need to reevaluate their multicultural training to ensure stakeholders are benefiting optimally and developing multicultural competence. For example, most studies of counselor multicultural competence are primarily focused on white participants, sometimes even deliberately excluding students of color (Cannon & Frank, 2009). There is an assertion that counseling students from minority groups are more aware of and knowledgeable about diverse worldviews and cultural issues based on their marginalized status (Chao & Nath, 2011). Studies on the multicultural competence of students of color have been overlooked due to these assumptions. More research on students of color is needed to address this research gap.

Students of Color in Multicultural Education

National data has shown trends of increasing racial/ethnic diversity among students enrolling in graduate and first-professional programs (Planty, Hussar, Snyder, Provasnik, Kena., & Dinkes, 2009). Planty et al.'s (2009) findings indicated that student diversity within counselor education can be expected to increase. The training of counselors needs to evolve in response to the anticipated diversification of the U.S. population and the student body by providing training that prepares counselors from different racial/ethnic groups to work effectively with the diversity represented by their clients.

Researchers have used the Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills Survey (MAKSS) and racial identity scales like the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale to measure outcomes of multicultural education (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010). The focus has been placed on these types of measures rather than on the experiences throughout the multicultural training. Student experiences throughout multicultural training may be

influential in the development of multicultural competency (Coleman, 2006). While these studies have generally demonstrated positive effects of multicultural education, participants in these studies were predominately white.

There is little attention on the pedagogical strategies used in multicultural education to enhancing multicultural competence in students of color (Seward, 2014). Most researchers use samples of predominately white students when examining students' perspectives of their multicultural training experiences (Dickson, Argus-Calvo, & Tafoya, 2010). Race/ethnicity has not been a factor affecting the outcomes in most of the literature. A lack of empirical evidence has not increased the effectiveness of multicultural counseling training of students representing diverse racial-ethnic populations (Dickson et al., 2010).

Graduate students of color have unique experiences and reactions to multicultural education due to their exposure to racism and oppression in their daily lives (Pieterse, Lee, & Fetzer, 2016). Racial-ethnic minorities' experiences of chronic discrimination can alter their psychological well-being and ability to cope with other life stressors (Meyer, 2003). Over the last few decades, overt discrimination and racist actions have transformed into covert and subtle forms, commonly termed microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007).

Microaggressions are brief and daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that communicate hostility and insult toward people of color (Sue et al., 2007). Sue et al., (2007) identified three forms of microaggressions: microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults. Microinsults are explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the victim (Sue et

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al., 2007). Microinsults are forms of communication that convey rudeness and insensitivity. Microinvalidations are communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential realities of a person of color (Sue et al., 2007). People of color have reported lower psychological well-being and self-esteem and increased psychological distress following microaggressions (Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny, 2012). Within the environment of the classroom, students of color have reported instances of racism by instructors and by peers that go unchallenged (Allen & Solorzano, 2001; Hurtado, 2002; Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002).

Coleman (2006) found that students of color in a multicultural counseling course had different experiences in the classroom based on their racial background. The difference could be because students of color often enter discussions about race with some awareness of the issues based on personal experiences (Tatum, 2002). Constantine and Yeh (2001) conceptualized that counselors of color may have higher levels of multicultural competence when compared to their white counterparts due to their personal experiences as racial/ethnic minorities in the United States. Chao (2013) found that racial/ethnic minority counselors generally had higher MCC than white counselors and reported similar scores in MCC across different levels of training. From these studies, it appears that trainees of color are not benefiting as much as their white counselors from their multicultural training. This unbalanced training could influence racial/ethnic morning counselors' work with diverse clients.

Pieterse et al., (2016) found that graduate students of color were significantly less likely to identify interaction with peers as a positive learning experience in multicultural courses. Additionally, students of color reacted to course content in an emotion-focused

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manner initially, followed by a more reflective phase (Pieterse et al., 2016). Research has

found that students of color may avoid discussions of race due to the superficial nature of

the conversations (Watson, 2002). Watson (2002) also found that students avoided

discussions of race due to fear that they would become too emotional as they are unable

to separate themselves from issues white students may approach as an abstraction.

Students of color often feel frustrated due to the expectation that they are experts in

racism and are responsible for sharing their life experiences (Jackson, 1999). They may

even resist multicultural education due to the perceived pressure to be the "expert"

because course material may open wounds from painful experiences with racism in the

past. Jackson (1999) also found that students of color reported experiencing fear they

would be ridiculed and attacked for their beliefs and were hesitant to speak about race in

the classroom.

Students of color reported feeling negative emotions such as uneasiness, being

disturbed, being offended, vulnerability, and being tired during multicultural courses

(Lenington, 1999). Lenington (1999) found that students of color felt less safe than white

students in the classroom. Many students of color in higher education deal with the "only

one" syndrome in which they are the sole member of their racial or ethnic group in a

class (Quaye, 2009). Some students in higher education reported feeling "always under

the microscope" (p. 158) or "on trial" (Watson, 2002, p.70) when they are the only non-

white person in a predominately white environment.

Although research has established that students of color have unique experiences

of their multicultural training, few studies exist that examine individual groups of

students of color. Dickson et al., (2010) found that a multicultural course increased the

multicultural competencies and cognitive racial attitudes among a sample of predominately Hispanic/Latinx students (Dickson et al., 2010). The study was one of the first to explore how diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds may experience multicultural training differently than white students.

In another study, Black students reported more diversity-related knowledge and experiences and described strong emotional reactions to the course material (Smith Goosby, 2002). Additionally, there were differences in how the students responded to the course. The course activated Black students' previous racial traumas. The students needed to address the traumas before moving towards forming new insights about themselves and others. A limitation of this study was in the demographics of the participants (Smith Goosby, 2002). They compared the experiences of black students with white students and did not include other students of color. Additionally, most of the participants were white (78.6%) as compared to the 21.4% that were black (Smith Goosby, 2002).

No studies currently exist that exclusively examine the experiences of Asian American students in multicultural education. Research studies that have examined students of color in multicultural education include small samples of Asian Americans. For example, Coleman (2006) only included 3 Asian Americans (5.1%) in their study. Pieterse et al., (2016) only had 15 Asian Americans (11.5%) out of their 131 participants. Educators must tailor the multicultural training curricula to fit counselors' diverse cultural backgrounds (Chao, 2013). More population-specific research on Asian American subgroups could reflect a more accurate representation of various experiences of students of color in multicultural education.

Asian Americans in Psychology

The Office of Management and Budgets (OMB) defines 'Asian' as an individual having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). According to the 2010 census, the Asian population grew faster than any other racial group in the United States between 2000 and 2010, growing by 43% from 10.2 million to 14.7 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Asian/Pacific Americans will continue to grow from approximately 4% of the U.S. population to nearly 9% by 2050. (Hong & Ham, 2001, pg. 221).

The psychological study of Asian Americans spans only about 59 years (Hall & Okazaki, 2002). The 150-year history of Asian immigration to the United States has created an Asian American population that varies in terms of their American and Asian values and behaviors (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Asian Americans face numerous stereotypes that limit their identities, relationships with others, and their opportunities (Lee, Wong, & Alvarez, 2009). For example, many view Asian Americans as "perpetual foreigners" (Lee et al., 2009). This othering casts Asian Americans as inherently foreign and not truly "American." Asian Americans are ostracized as they are known as foreign-born outsiders. This can lead to assumptions made of Asian American students in multicultural classes by their instructors and peers.

Another stereotype that limits Asian Americans is the "model minority myth." The "model minority myth" is the idea that Asians are the perfect minority group: quiet and industrious, with intact families and high educational aspiration and achievement

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, pg. 91). This stereotype perpetuates the idea that Asian Americans have "made it" and no longer face any barriers to economic, social, or political success (Lee et al., 2009). These stereotypes ostracize Asian Americans from the white majority and cause racial tensions with other minorities. The representation of Asian Americans as models and foreigners upholds the racial status quo and marginalizes the group even further (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007).

Anti-Asian discrimination is distinct as it takes two forms. The racialization of Asian Americans as both non-American and as the model minority places Asian Americans in a vulnerable racial position. Asian Americans are ostracized from the white majority and have racial tension with other minorities (Ng et al., 2007). Members of a racialized group may internalize the myths about cultural differences and engage in internalized oppression. For example, the pressures of the model minority myth stereotype could interfere with help-seeking for emotional problems as Asian Americans may be motivated to hide issues that contradict the stereotype (Lee et al., 2007).

In a study examining racial microaggressions, 78% of Asian Americans reported experiencing some form of racial microaggressions within a 2-week study period (Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, & Sue, 2013). The researchers found that elevations in daily microaggressions predicted increases in somatic symptoms and negative affect (Ong et al., 2013). Nadal (2011) found that Asian Americans experience microinvalidations that involved themes of xenophobia or treatment as a "perceptual foreigner" Ong et al., (2013) found that microinvalidations were the most common class of microaggressions for Asian Americans. Having one's racial identity assailed and needing to decipher mixed messages is likely to play a role in increased risk for negative affect and somatic

symptoms (Ong et al., 2013). Additionally, in one month beginning mid-March 2020, more than 1,500 reports of anti-Asian hate incidents were received by the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (Lee, 2021). Fears around the coronavirus have led Asian Americans to be vilified based on a false assumption that they are to blame of the pandemic (Lee, 2021).

There are common cultural values among Asian Americans, but there is variability between Asian cultures (Kim, Li, & Ng, 2005). Kim, Li, and Ng (2005) identified collectivism, conformity to norms, emotional self-control, humility, and family recognition through achievement as cultural values particularly salient in the Asian American population (Kim et al., 1999). Asian cultures have generally been identified as collectivist in orientation, emphasizing interdependence and prioritizing social obligations and duties over individual desires (Ho, 1994). Traditional Asian cultures also encourage the suppression of full expression of emotions and emotional conflicts to save face and ensure interpersonal harmony (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). Asians are discouraged from appearing self-centered by talking about their accomplishments or expressing their opinions as it could reflect negatively on their family (Kim et al., 2001). Failure or engagement in inappropriate social behavior can negatively reflect on one's family as the entire family shares in the same embarrassment and loss of face (Kim et al., 2001). While there are differences within Asian ethnic groups, these cultural values play a role in determining Asian American attitudes and behaviors.

The term Asian American has come to represent numerous groupings as if they are a single coherent category (Hune, 2002). Asian Americans are often lumped together as a monolith (Dobson, 2018). As a racial category, 'Asian American' is not fixed but a

fluid canopy grouping that has evolved over the past three decades (Espiritu and Omi,

2000, p. 43). A limitation to an understanding of the Asian American experience is the

lack of research on various groups of Asian Americans. Asian Americans are typically

considered one group, with specific national background or generation status not

identified (Hall & Okazaki, 2002, pg. 84). Place of birth has a significant impact on

Asian individuals' models of cultural orientation. This can affect various measures of

psychological well-being (Hall & Okazaki, 2002, pg. 44).

There has been a movement to shift away from a pre-conceptualized ethnicity-

based approach to group identity. Within the Asian American monolith, there is

tremendous diversity in all areas, such as language, region, ethnicity, and religion

(Zhang, 2015). An examination into inter-group identities can deepen the understanding

of the experiences of Asian Americans. Few studies have examined differences across

Asian American subgroups even though the national histories, cultural backgrounds, and

immigration histories may drastically differ (Hall & Okazaki, 2002).

There are no studies that exclusively examine Asian American students and their

experiences in multicultural courses. Studies that include Asian Americans have numbers

that are too small to discuss in population-specific terms. The Chinese population is the

largest detailed Asian group in the United States, totaling 3.3 million people (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2012), and knowledge is limited about the experiences of Chinese American

trainees with social justice training (or the lack thereof) within their programs.

The voices of Chinese American trainees are missing concerning their

experiences, perceptions, and training needs in social justice and multicultural

counseling. It is crucial to explore and understand trainees of colors' perceptions of the

degree of preparation they have in their programs to directly examine and confront issues of power, privilege, and oppression in training (Singh, Hofsess, Boyer, Kwong, Lau, Mclain, & Haggins, 2010). Without research examining their experiences, Chinese American students may not fully benefit from the training. It is crucial to understand the experiences of Chinese American students to develop better pedagogy and a deeper understanding of the educational features of multicultural counseling courses (See Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 76). Findings from multi-ethnic group studies can contribute to an overall understanding of Asian Americans (Hall & Okazaki, 2002).

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Chinese American students in multicultural courses. I examined the potential intersectionality of participants' identities and explored how cultural background may influence the experience of a multicultural course for Chinese American graduate students. Chinese American students' training experiences may have been affected by the racial climate of their programs and institutions. Racial climate may include numerical representations of students of color and perceptions of racism and marginalization within the institution (Seward, 2014). I used qualitative methods to understand the experiences of Chinese American students in multicultural courses since qualitative research allows one to unearth and understand a topic that has yet to be explored or examined (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Specifically, I used phenomenology to describe the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I chose Phenomenology as personal narratives can provide detailed descriptions of a

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phenomenon from the participants' perspective. I worked from a critical race lens to conceptualize Chinese American students' perspectives regarding multicultural pedagogy. Critical race theory is a "race-conscious approach to understanding educational inequality and identifying potential solutions" (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011, p. 2). Critical race theory emphasizes the inclusion of racially marginalized perspectives.

Chinese American students possess unique knowledge based on their lived racial experiences that critiques the dominant racial discourses (Zamudio et al., 2011). Their viewpoints and perspectives can pinpoint the racial inequalities in multicultural training. Utilizing a critical race lens acknowledges that Chinese American students' perceptions and experiences of their multicultural education will be affected by their worldviews. These worldviews are influenced not only by race and ethnicity but also by other cultural factors. Critical race theory principles reject notions of homogeneity between and within groups as members of a cultural group may have differing viewpoints on matters (Seward, 2014). This framework places value on student views to examine overlooked gaps in multicultural training.

My primary research question was "What are the experiences of Chinese American students in multicultural courses?" Qualitative research consists of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible (Creswell & Poth, 2017). There are still factors of the multicultural counseling course that are invisible. The racial makeup of a multicultural classroom may shift how the facilitation of the class. Instructors need to ensure all students are getting the multicultural training they need to become culturally humble counselors. This study highlighted the stories of Chinese

Americans in their multicultural education to bring greater understanding and knowledge

to the psychology field.

Chapter Two: Method

Qualitative research methods enabled an examination into the experiences of Chinese American trainees in multicultural education as there is a limited amount of literature on the topic (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative methods can empower individuals to share their stories and minimize the power differential between researchers and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Research on Chinese Americans has been inadequate due to the monolithic nature of research on Asian Americans (Dobson, 2018). It is imperative to conduct this research on Chinese Americans to ensure they have ownership over their voices and lived experiences. This study examined the phenomenon of multicultural education from the lens of Chinese Americans themselves.

Qualitative methods are a natural fit within the critical race framework was utilized. It emphasized how individuals create and give meanings to their social experiences and lived realities (Heppner, Wampold, Owen, Thompson, & Wang, 2015). Critical race methodology encourages and requires the development of theories of social transformation wherein the generation of knowledge addresses conditions of oppression and deprivation (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Philosophical Assumptions & Framework

A crucial element in qualitative research is understanding the philosophical assumptions that underlie a study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I align with the interpretivist-

constructivist tradition that posits "objective reality can never be fully understood or discovered and there are many possible ways of looking at realities" (Heppner et al., 2015, pg. 258). I do not want to quantify the experiences of Chinese Americans in multicultural courses or verify/falsify a priori hypothesis about their experiences. To understand the realities of Chinese Americans in multicultural education, I utilized a critical race framework to examine and change the dominant discourse that may suppress Chinese Americans in higher education. I explored the importance of race and the phenomena of being a Chinese American in multicultural education through a social justice framework.

Critical race theory studies the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race methodology rejects notions of "objective" researchers. It challenges traditional claims of "neutral" research and exposes deficit-informed research practices that silence people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Soloranzo and Yosso (2002) argued that critical race theory-informed research challenges the emphasis on neutrality and objectivism that can maintain racial inequity and is often privileged in academic research. I wanted to ground my research on the experiences and knowledge of Chinese Americans. Critical race theory highlights how racial/ethnic minority students are limited in their potential in predominately white spaces due to historical contexts (Quaye, 2009).

Adopting a critical race perspective allowed me to contribute to the discipline's emerging social justice agenda (Morrow, 2005). In keeping with the interpretative framework of critical race theory, Chinese American student voices were privileged so

they could construct a shared story to bring to light what may often go unnoticed in relationship to Chinese Americans in multicultural education.

Engaging stories can help us understand what life is like for others and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Stories are tools for marginalized individuals to challenge discrimination and work toward social justice. Stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our systems of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Narratives can reduce alienation for members of excluded groups and offer opportunities for members of the majority group to meet them halfway (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

This research was a counter-story to help change the dominant discourse that may suppress Chinese Americans in higher education (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Counterstorytelling is a tenant of crucial race theory and allows individuals to challenge claims of meritocracy, color blindness, and the dominant culture's discourse (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This research drew on the knowledge of Chinese Americans have traditionally been excluded from the narrative. The study allowed participants to name their realities and was an opportunity to preserve themselves emotionally and mentally (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The lack of research and invisibility of the experiences of Chinese American students is one of the ways dominant ideologies are ignoring and omitting the experiences of Chinese Americans in mostly white classes (Quaye, 2009). I co-created a counter-story by gathering data from the research process, examined the existing literature, and drawing from my professional and personal experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

I drew explicitly on the lived experiences of Chinese Americans by utilizing phenomenology to challenge traditional deficit-informed research that may distort the experiences of people of color. I focused on Chinese Americans and their racialized experiences as a source of strength. I wanted this research to empower participants by providing a space for them to hear their own stories and the stories of others. "Mono-vocal" stories are told about Chinese Americans. That master narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of Asian Americans (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is crucial to name and recognize the power of White privilege in constructing stories about race.

This research is a challenge to the master narrative about Asian Americans and how it makes assumptions about the group according to negative stereotypes (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). It is important to tease apart the monolith of "Asian American" and distinguish the lived experiences of different subgroups of Asian Americans. This research is a counter-story to share the overlooked stories of Chinese Americans in multicultural education. It provides composite stories and narratives to recount the experiences of Chinese Americans. The exchange of stories between the teller and the listener can assist individuals in dominant cultures to examine the ethnocentrism related to their privilege and bring attention to the overlooked oppressions such as racism in Chinese Americans' lives (Delgado, 1995).

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenology was used to describe the experiences of Chinese American graduate students in multicultural counseling courses. Phenomenology aligns well with a critical race lens because both methods are avenues for marginalized individuals to have

a voice and reveal that others have similar experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Phenomenology is the process of "producing an exhaustive description of the phenomena of everyday experience, thus arriving at an understanding of the essential structure of the 'thing itself,' the phenomenon" (McLeod, 2001, p. 38). Phenomenology approaches have five basic guidelines: (a) philosophical perspectives and epoché, (b) research questions and lived experiences, (c) criterion-based sampling, (d) phenomenological data analysis, and (e) essential, invariant structure (or essence) of the lived experience (Heppner et al., 2015).

There are various types of phenomenological studies. I utilized an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). There are two aims of IPA: (1) understanding participants' experiences and (2) interpreting how meanings are constructed by the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Double hermeneutics is central to IPA, which emphasizes that while participants are trying to make sense of their world, the researcher is trying to make sense of participants' reflections of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2004). IPA allowed me to enter the participants' perceptual world and examine it from a comprehensive and critical standpoint.

Researcher's Background

This study is "filtered" through my lenses of knowledge and worldviews. As a Chinese American, I approached the topic with a level of theoretical sensitivity due to my lived experience as a Chinese American and my previous experience in a multicultural course. Theoretical sensitivity is a personal quality of the researcher that indicates the attribute of having insight and awareness of subtleties of the meaning of data (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As a Chinese American researcher, I have a cultural intuition that

extends my personal experience to include collective experiences and community memory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I shared my own story and reflections and drew on my peers' voices to tell the story of Chinese Americans in multicultural education. I am a 1.5 generation Chinese American and that is the lens I approach my life. I moved to the United States when I was seven years old, and that migration impacts my perception of what it means to be Chinese and American.

I cannot deny my experiences, but I need to be cognizant of my biases. The idea for this study started from the real-life experience that I encountered in a multicultural course. As the sole Chinese American in the class, I wondered about the experiences of other students of color. I conducted a consensual qualitative research study on the experiences of students of color in multicultural education. While that research allowed me to hear the voices of other students of color, I was most curious about the voices of other Chinese Americans. I was unable to recruit Chinese Americans in that study. My interest in understanding multicultural courses and my desire to understand other Chinese Americans shaped the intention of this study.

Due to my personal experience, I was aware of my perceptions and beliefs about multicultural courses. This awareness ensured my immersion in the participant's worldview. Throughout the research process, I took steps to ensure I was aligning closely with the data. I assumed a constructivist perspective and focused on the participants' experiences to address the research question.

Participants

Six Chinese American psychology trainees (n = 6) were interviewed for this study. Smith et al., (2009) reasoned that a smaller sample size rests in IPA's focus on

quality and detailed account of a complex phenomenon. They all self-identified as Chinese Americans. Additionally, I inquired about their other salient and pressing identities to stratify my sample to incorporate an intersectional frame. All participants had completed a multicultural course within the last five years. Two participants were in Counseling Psychology Ph.D. programs, and three participants were in Clinical Psychology Ph.D. programs. One of the participants was in a Clinical Psychology PsyD program. Three of the six participants were completing pre-doctoral internships. Participant demographics and pseudonyms are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant Name *	Age Range	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Subjective Social Class	Generation Level**	Other Racial/ Ethnic Identities	Geographical Region
Melanie/ 1	Late 20s	F	Heterosexual	Upper Middle	2nd	N/A	West
Victoria/ 2	Late 20s	F	Heterosexual	Middle	2nd	N/A	Northeast
Geri/3	Mid 20s	F	Heterosexual	Lower	2nd	N/A	South
Emma/4	Late 20s	F	Heterosexual	Upper Middle	2nd	N/A	Midwest
Britney/5	Mid 20s	F	Heterosexual	Middle	Immigrated 10 years ago	N/A	Midwest
Nick/5	Late 20s	M	Heterosexual	Middle	2nd	White	Midwest

* Pseudonyms are used to protect client identity and privacy
** 2nd Generation refers to the second generation of a family to inhabit, but the first natively born in a country

Chinese American doctoral students at least 18 years or older were recruited through an email sent through the Asian American Psychology Association listserv. A recruitment flyer was also created and circulated through the Instagram @asiansformentalhealth.

Interview Protocol

This research was conducted during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. All interviews were conducted via Zoom conference call. All interviews went smoothly from start to finish with no interruptions or unexpected occurrences. The duration of interviews was between 45 minutes to 1 hour from introductory statement to final response. No follow-up interviews were required. I conducted in-depth interviews through open-ended questions combined with semi-structured probes to obtain a meaningful rendition of the participants' lived experiences. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The interview questions focused on getting participants to recall parts of their experience in multicultural courses, explore their connections, and discover a "common meaning" (Smith et al., 2009). The interview provided participants an opportunity to tell their stories openly and reflectively. A draft of the interview protocol was piloted with a Chinese American to gain feedback. The participant provided feedback related to the clarity and flow of interview questions, suggestions regarding the interviewer's style, and other feedback that may increase the effectiveness of the interview. The feedback was integrated into the final draft of the interview protocol.

The semi-structured one-to-one interview consisted of eight open-ended questions and four debrief questions. It started with more descriptive questions. The order of the

questions allowed participants to ease into the interviewing process. A sideways approach ensured the range and depth of topics covered answered the research question (Smith et al., 2009). Participants were shown the interview protocol during the interview for review. Follow-up probes allowed participants to elaborate on their responses. Below are the interview questions:

1. Often 'multicultural counseling' is used in the course title for diversity classes in psychology training. What comes to mind when you think of the term 'multicultural counseling'?

2. Describe the overall learning environment of your multicultural course.

   a. *Possible prompt: How did this environment affect you? In what ways were you impacted by the learning environment? (Peers, instructor, etc.)*

3. What were some of the emotions you experienced during your multicultural course?

   a. *Possible prompt: Some students report feeling disengaged or defensive during multicultural classes. What experiences with these feelings did you have, if any? Did it remind you of any other experiences you've had personally or professionally? Did you feel you needed to prepare yourself for the course?*

4. Tell me about your experience as a Chinese American in your multicultural course.

a. *Possible prompt: How has your cultural identity conflicted with or enhanced your experience? Are there specific moments in class that comes to mind?*

5. What meaning do you ascribe to being Chinese American?

a. *Possible prompt: What do you think of the term Chinese American? When did you first realize you were Chinese American? Is there a certain time where you ascribed more meaning to it?*

6. Thinking back to your initial hopes for the multicultural course, can you talk about how your class did with meeting your educational interests and learning needs?

a. *Possible prompt: Did your experience match your expectations for the course? How so/how not?*

7. What would you change about your experience as a Chinese American during the multicultural course, if anything?

a. *Possible prompt: If you could change something about the course to make it more beneficial for you. What would you change?*

8. What else might be significant to share about your experience as a Chinese American in a multicultural course?

a. *Possible prompt: What questions did I not ask that you think would be important to ask other participants? What would be your response to those questions?*

Four debrief questions were included as Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argued that the personal nature of interviews can create the potential for change in how problems are defined or understood and how solutions are considered. Below are the debrief questions:

1. How was it talking about this experience?

2. How are you feeling now, having talked about this?

3. Do you have any questions for me?

4. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Transcription

All Zoom interviews were video and audio recorded using the record feature within the platform. The recordings were transcribed into Word documents. Identifying information was removed from the transcriptions during this phase. I included notes on non-verbal interactions, significant pauses, and hesitations. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect the identities of each participant. To further ensure confidentiality, each transcript was password protected for an additional level of protection. Each participant was sent the transcript and asked to add or delete anything they wished. When transcripts were returned with changes or participants indicated that the transcripts were correct, they were read and reread to get a "feel" for the data and identify themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an inductive process that focuses on the participants' attempts to make sense of their experience (Smith et al., 2009). Throughout the data analysis process, I utilized the Microsoft Suite (Ex. Word and Excel) and the Dedoose software to help organize data, make notes, identify themes, and find connections between participants. I

immersed myself in the data through the process of reading and re-reading transcripts. While reviewing the transcripts, I also watched the video recording to observe the participant for a complete analysis. I noted my initial reactions while reviewing the transcripts to ensure I identified any biases that could detract from the data.

Themes were generated through the analysis of significant statements in each transcript (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Horizontalization or quotes analysis started the data analysis. Significant statements were marked to gain an understanding of how participants experienced the multicultural course (Creswell & Poth, 2017). After horizontalization, I developed clusters of meaning from the statements into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A textual and structural description of the experiences were included in the analysis. A textural description conveys what the participants experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A structural description highlights how participants experienced the course in terms of the conditions, situations, and context (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Verbatim excerpts were pulled from the transcripts to create a rich text report of the results. Significant statements were included, and the composite description presented the "essence" of the phenomenon to the reader (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It focused on the experiences of Chinese American graduate students in multicultural counseling courses (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This process was repeated for each participant.

The final stage in the analytic process involved exploring patterns across the participants. I searched for connections across themes through a process of mapping to see how they fit together. These themes are were connected with super-ordinate themes and referenced with excerpts from participants' transcripts. The goal of this step was to reduce the volume of detail while maintaining the complexities of the responses through

a process of mapping interrelationships, connections, and patterns (Smith et al., 2009). The identified themes were shortened to key phrases to capture the essence of the text. The phrases were reflective of the participants' original words merged with my interpretations (Smith et al., 2009).

After data analysis was completed, participants were invited to comment about being involved in the study. Each participant was allowed to examine the results to ensure their words were correctly interpreted. Participants were sent the list of themes and asked to note their agreement or disagreement and to comment and provide feedback. This allowed participants to add or delete specific examples or comments. When participants indicated that the themes were correct and sent in their feedback, the original transcripts were read again.

Trustworthiness

A crucial element of qualitative research is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to the appropriate, adequate, and reliable methods to collect data (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). There are eight criteria for quality qualitative research including worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence (Tracy, 2010). Trustworthiness is the equivalent of validity in a qualitative study (Elliott et al., 1999).

The strategies employed in qualitative research are dependent on the "flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, see p. 113). As the primary researcher and the interviewer, I actively engaged in critical self-reflection concerning my perspectives. I regularly journaled to reflect on my biases throughout the process. The journals were a

way for me to reflect on emotions, interactions, and experiences that arise throughout the process. This process ensured I could bracket or set aside my own biases and assumptions to maintain subjectivity. I also checked in biweekly with my dissertation chair throughout the interview, transcription, and data analysis process to reflect on my experiences while interpreting the data.

I utilized triangulation by incorporating multiple data sources from the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I asked participants for documents or artifacts (Ex. Course syllabus) that they may have available and a brief description of what was meaningful or significant to them about the object. The artifacts served as another source of data to add to the richness of the participant's narrative.

Lastly, each participant was sent the final list of themes and descriptions to improve the internal validity of the emerging themes. Participants were asked to provide feedback about the accuracy of the themes. All feedback provided was incorporated into the final analysis and documented in the results.

Chapter Three: Findings

The primary aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. This chapter includes the findings from the semi-structured interviews. Transcript excerpts will provide examples of thematic content. Conclusions about the data can be drawn by a close reading of the text and commentary. The themes illuminate participant distinctions as well as convergence and divergences of themes and concepts. Contextual information is added for clarity to support interpreted themes.

Themes

Data were analyzed for each participant and using each research question. The Dedoose software program organized significant statements and codes. Four primary themes, capturing the lived experiences of what it means to be a Chinese American psychology trainee in multicultural education, were derived from the data. The themes were: (a) the burden of being minoritized, (b) Chinese American identity inflection points, being (c) sidelined by whiteness, and (d) recommendations for curricular modifications.

A description of each theme, transcript excerpts, summaries, and analytic commentary are below to ensure a rich understanding of participants' experiences in their multicultural education. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis calls for the inclusion

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of a combination of extracts and analytical comments to capture a rich understanding of participants' lived experiences while making a case for what it all means. Efforts were made to ensure all participants' voices were represented. However, there may be times when select participant's dialogue is highlighted to create a more dynamic portrayal of the concepts presented.

Figure 1 Presentation of Themes

Theme One: Burden of Being Minoritized

Participants shared stories and candid examples of the reality of being a student who held a racially minoritized identity in their classrooms. All six participants reported feeling pressured to speak up and take on an "expert" role in their courses. The participants had various responses to the burden of being racially minoritized in their multicultural education. When participants found themselves racially isolated (e.g., the only person of color in the class), they experienced internal and external pressure to have cultural expertise. Participants were often the racial spokesperson and tokenized by

standing in for an absence of curricular focus and texts. The testimonials of students of color often serve as the impetus for white students' epiphanies. Emma voiced the following:

> That idea of feeling like because I'm a person of color, I need to be the expert and know everything. Maybe for the white students in the class, they didn't know as much, but I feel this responsibility to already know these things… I think I did, and probably still do, have this expectation of myself, "oh, I'm a person of color. I care about diversity and social justice a lot." It's almost like when I'm in a class or setting where we're talking about diversity, it feels like I need to say something, or I need to be the expert on this topic, in that setting, especially.

Geri reported taking on an educator role for her peers since she was the only one in her class who held a minoritized identity. She shouldered the burden of sharing out testimonials that encompassed her racial heritage to spark epiphanies for her classmates.

> I went to an undergrad that was a primarily white institution, so all of my psychology classes were white females. It was the same thing for this class as well… Whenever I would share, I knew that the purpose of my sharing wasn't to hear empathy because I knew no one else would also understand it. It felt like my purpose of sharing is, I know that they probably never have experienced this. It's important for me to share because they should know the experiences as a person of color so a lot of times when I share my perspectives, I noticed that none of the other students are talking about this perspective or anything, but I have, or similar things. [Whenever] I do speak, I feel like my speaking is an educational

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opportunity for them. It feels like I have this responsibility, where I have to teach

them what it is to be a POC in this space.

Geri's testimonies became a type of first-hand learning experience about race and racism

for her peers. When asked if she ever felt fatigued being her peer's educator, Geri said:

I think the tiredness is multifaceted. It's tiredness from always having to be my

peer's educators, but also tiredness from refraining myself from always being the

educator. It's almost an internal dialogue and battle that I constantly have with

myself "Should I be the one who educates my peers because they don't know

about certain topics/experiences that I have, or should I be quiet because I don't

want to be perceived as the angry/knowledgeable POC who always talks or be

responsible for what they should be learning"

The role of a "cultural expert" often relegates participants' educational experience in the

course. Victoria spoke about feeling pressured to demonstrate her cultural expertise in her

classes and fears about being viewed as ignorant.

I felt pressure to demonstrate my understanding of other groups because I was

like, "If I'm going to get interviewed about my biases and all these other groups, I

better show up like I know my stuff. I know that I do, but in that context, if I'm

nervous, I might say something that might demonstrate my ignorance. I think

there was that pressure there too. I've had these conversations with people I can

talk about race, I can talk about all these different identities, but when it comes to

being in that space, being interviewed by five of my peers and then being process

observed by another five, and then being interviewed by my professor and TAs as

well, I was like, "Oh my gosh, I need to know my stuff if I go in and say

something that I need to justify it."

Emma shared this fear of misspeaking. She recalled her experience in her multicultural

classroom:

I also think that culturally or as a society, it's hard to talk about race and diversity

and I can't remember if cancel culture was such a big thing back then. But I feel

like that general sentiment of, "I don't want to speak up in a public space." I

probably held that view at that time too… But I think there's this fear of me, I

could jump in there and say something, but what if I'm wrong? And what if I get

called out in such a public way?... I don't want to be wrong because it doesn't feel

like there's space to do that.

When asked to elaborate on the fear of speaking up, Emma spoke about the pressure she

felt from her peers to appear culturally competent.

I think I was intimidated like, "I don't want to say the wrong thing" especially in a

multicultural class. I want to sound woke and I don't even know if that was a term

back then, but it's, "I want to sound like someone who is culturally competent and

doesn't make mistakes." And I want to make sure that whatever I'm saying sounds

like it's coming from a social justice perspective or someone who's very

thoughtful about diversity. I don't want to be wrong, especially because I have

these peers whom I respect a lot and I think they're very smart and have done a lot

of great activist work. I don't want to say something that could offend them, or

they would say like, "Oh, like you're wrong."

Participants also reported feeling disengaged during the course. Melanie reported moments of feeling detached from her class:

> [Speaking up] felt very vulnerable. I opened myself up a lot and I think felt very alone… There were moments where I detached. Where it felt like I was watching everything else play out, regardless of me.

Participants struggled with the weight of being the perceived expert. They were wrestling their own identities while being asked to lead discussions. Nick reported:

> I think my thoughts and emotions, initially, pretty enthusiastic. I finally have a course that focused on this and then as the course went on, I was just probably disengaging as well. I got tired of being the spokesperson... For me, the way I interact with people and in courses, like if they're invested then I'm equally invested. Same as enthusiasm or willingness to talk, but I'm not going to put myself out there and share my own experiences and go deep into my processing if people aren't willing to meet me there. I felt like with that course, in particular, people aren't willing to meet me there. So, that's where that disengaged like, "If you don't care. I don't care", approach came from.

When asked where this mindset originated from, Nick elaborated:

> "Why do I have to talk about these things" or I felt this need, this pull, that I should be doing this talking even though I'm still trying to figure out things on my own so that was frustrating too… The more disengaged I became, the less pressure I felt. I just stopped caring. I probably could have done more to be a leader in the classroom and push for more depth and more insight. But I think because it was still relatively new for me. I just wasn't feeling like taking charge

of conversations or things like that… But because of the mindset that culture is about minorities, people expected the minorities to do a lot of the heavy lifting with the conversations and the presentations and whatnot. It just felt like we had to lead a lot of the talks in that environment. But it was weird being put in the hot seat, especially for someone like me because I was figuring this out as I went.

For many participants, their multicultural class was the first time they were introduced to different concepts of institutional and structural racism. Many participants did not feel like an expert in multiculturalism. They were still searching for answers and expanding their multicultural knowledge. Britney reported:

I'm somewhat familiar with Asian and Asian American psychology literature, but I'm not familiar at all with other races and other ethnic minorities and we read a lot on not just Asian and Asian Americans. I learn[ed] a little bit more, which was not what I anticipated.

Many participants reported pressure to be the "expert" in the classroom as a person of color and felt vulnerable about making mistakes. They described unpacking their own Asian American identities while still learning about other cultural identities. Emma described what it was like being introduced to new ideas in the course and how confusing the experience was:

I think that I did, and probably still have this expectation of myself, I'm a person of color and I care about diversity and social justice a lot and it's almost like when I'm in a class or setting where we're talking about diversity, it feels like I need to say something, or I need to be the expert on this topic… Coming from settings where I had learned a lot about race in undergrad. I was an Asian American

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Studies minor, and so I felt like back in that context, I think I was often around a

lot of people who knew less about Asian American history or knew less about

intergroup relations. I guess, finding myself going from that role of knowing more

or teaching others [and then being] in that position of not knowing and being a

learner. I guess it's humbling, and I think that can feel confusing too… I am being

exposed to all these different frameworks and I also wasn't a psychology major in

undergrad. So, I was just like, "oh, I'm learning a lot of new things."

Participants reported that a diverse classroom alleviated the pressure they felt being the

spokesperson for minoritized experiences and provided room for richer dialogue. The

majority of Emma's multicultural course identified as people of color. She spoke about

how having diverse classmates eased the burden of being minoritized:

It was probably helpful to just be learning those things… And not feel that burden

of being the token minority, of having to speak up and know everything… Having

other people there who were knowledgeable and spoke up. This included other

BIPOC as well as White students who were passionate about social justice and

diversity issues. So, I felt like I could sit back, let them speak, and listen to what

they had to say, and learn from them. Also, my developmental phase at the time –

being a first year and feeling like an imposter and not sure if I had anything

valuable to add or contribute to the conversation, as well as feeling unsure of how

exactly to articulate my thoughts well. And similarly, feeling afraid to make

mistakes and say the wrong thing. I felt like "Maybe it's better to not say anything

at all – these other people probably know better than me anyway."

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Participants felt comfortable around and felt heard and supported by their peers of color. Participants who had other students of color in their classrooms found it meaningful to hear from their peers about their minoritized experiences. Britney reflected:

It made me feel more comfortable sharing about my personal experiences, knowing someone might have had similar experiences and they can add on to it... I think I appreciated that our class was somewhere diverse. I was able to hear from personal experience. In a lot of the readings, we talk about these cultural values and cultural beliefs and what verbal and nonverbal behaviors are like, but from personal experience, I was able to learn about personal differences and also how they thought about the readings, and if we talked about something and someone else had a comment or someone else was able to echo what the other person said, I think it was also interesting to learn about how different groups share some of the common core values. I think that was also interesting in some of the shared experiences of being minorities in the US. [Also,] I rarely get to talk about my culture in-depth with others from various backgrounds, so I enjoyed being able to teach others about my culture.

Melanie also reported a positive experience being in class with other peers of color. In particular, she enjoyed hearing from her peers and was motivated to share her own experiences after hearing from her peers of color.

It was really helpful in some cases from really being able to just hear from my classmates and colleagues and professors about their experiences on things that I am just not aware of… I was hearing from other people, from other races, other ethnicities sharing their experiences and I felt very pulled to share myself even

though it's not something that I talk about a lot. But it was also this moment of

like, "yes, I am saying it", and I'm now more willing to think about it more.

Theme Two: Chinese American Identity Inflection Points

Participants were encouraged to share personal examples and articulate how their

Chinese American identity influenced their multicultural education. Encounters with their

identities included events that forced them to focus on their identity as Chinese

Americans, a group targeted by racism and prompted them to acknowledge the impact of

racism in their lives (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). All six participants detailed

various personal stories about their experiences as Chinese Americans in multicultural

education. Participants' experiences with Chinese American identity development varied

based on generation level, lifestyle orientation, class background, and regional dialect.

The terminology used to identify racial/ethnic identity within the Chinese American

community differed. Victoria succinctly described her identity as a Chinese American as:

I knew that my parents were called immigrants. But I also know I'm not an

immigrant. So, I could say I'm Chinese. But I don't think that quite fits that bill…

I'm not just Chinese. I'm not a Chinese immigrant like my parents. I'm Chinese

American and I think that was when I started ascribing more meaning to it.

Victoria expanded and noted the following about her sense of belonging in the United

States:

I do have privilege and I do have some flexibility and [it] almost feels like I have

some fluidity thereof being able to go back and forth between my Chinese side

and my American side. And to pick and choose essentially how I want to present

myself, depending on the context, depending on who I'm interacting with. I think

there are some positives there, but it is confusing… Being Chinese American, I

feel caught between two worlds… When I think American, I feel like the term

American is synonymous with white and I feel that I can never be fully American.

Geri also understood her Chinese American identity through her family's migration story:

Just growing up in a big Asian household, my entire family from China

immigrated here in the 1980s. I know my Chinese identity and I know that my

siblings and cousins were born here. So that's different from having to immigrate

here because we were born *here*, so I feel like I realized [the difference] early on.

Nick realized he was Chinese American at a young age through his family's holidays and

traditions:

We did celebrate Chinese New Year and different holidays and had some unique

traditions with family interactions and even things like keeping your shoes off

when you go to someone's house. I think realizing I was Chinese American was

probably at a young age.

Melanie defined her Chinese American identity through various specifiers and cultural

markers:

Earlier on, I was looking at you know, can you speak the language? Can you

read? Can you write? Do you know any of the festivals? Do you know all of the

heritage and traditions? And are you connected to the pop culture and the media

and all those things that the SL-ASIA would ask about? I think I do still utilize

that a bit.

Britney, who was born in China, recognized the following:

The term Chinese American could mean a lot of things for a lot of people and I think, for me, it just means that I'm Chinese and I live here now. I call myself Chinese American or Asian American, but when I talk about my ethnicity, I still say I'm Chinese. I think a lot of people who associate more with [being] Chinese American are people who are born here. So, I think that's a little different. But I think I also identify myself with [being] Chinese *and* Chinese American because I identify with both cultures and cultural values… [Chinese American], even though it's very specific, it's better than Asian American. It still lumps a lot of people together and only talks about the Chinese American experience, but it can be different.

Britney's definition of Chinese American was grounded in her migration story. She moved to the United States 10 years ago, so her identity as a Chinese American is rooted in her experience as an immigrant and her Chinese ethnicity. Her story differed significantly from Emma, who did not identify strongly with her ethnicity:

Ethnically I am Chinese American, but I feel like my identity is so much more in the Asian American. My family speaks Chinese, and we do Chinese New Year's and the customs and stuff, but when I think about my experiences and the things that I care about. It's about the experience of being an Asian in America. And what it's like to grow up or be treated as someone who is seen as this foreigner in America. I think that I identify more strongly with that experience than being a Chinese American.… When I think about who I am. I think it's more of that broader experience of being Asian American. That's more salient to me than being Chinese American.

While participants had various levels of ethnic-racial identity salience, many were the only Chinese American or Asian American in their multicultural course. There was pride and pain in navigating the experience of being othered. At times, participants felt shackled by their identity as Chinese Americans in their classrooms. Nick talked about his experience as the only Chinese American in his class and the pressure he felt to speak up for his ethnic background.

> I was the only Chinese American in the class, probably in the program for quite some time as far as I know… It forced me to be thinking about that because whether I viewed myself as Chinese American or white or a mixture of both, they saw me as Chinese. They put me in that box.

Nick identified as bicultural, but his classmates did not view him as such. He reflected:

> I just remember thinking it was so weird to have my own culture brought up to me. More than I was identifying with at the time. There was a mismatch. It just wasn't very congruent. Like even when I started graduate school and towards the program. I just really didn't know much about my cultural identity and being biracial. It was mainly identifying with the majority culture. So, it's just a weird position to be in. To be like, "Hey, you're Chinese American, you know how to have multicultural conversations, how this should look and practice. Tell us what it's like to come from a collectivist culture." I don't know that that sort of thing. It was just an odd place to be.

Victoria echoed Nick's sentiments around being a spokesperson for the Asian experience:

> Being one of the few Asian faces, I felt there was pressure there… I was a little worried that I would have to be a face for Asians. I also worry about that when it

comes to multicultural counseling classes or contexts where people might ask me, "Oh what would Asians do in this?" or "How would they feel in this context or example?" I don't want to speak for all Asians. There are so many different kinds of Asians, but I feel that pressure sometimes if I'm one of the few Asian faces in the room.

Victoria also felt the pressure to speak on her Chinese American experiences as compared to a Chinese international peer. She talked about the experience of being in a group project with white peers and a Chinese international peer:

I felt like the white women in the group consistently looked to me to explain some things that my Chinese peer was saying. Maybe they didn't understand her accent or maybe they expected me to be the spokesperson for the two of us. I don't know. It was really strange. I think that made it salient for me and I also felt pressure. I have to be honest, I also felt the pressure to be articulate, to make sure that I spoke clearly so that I could differentiate myself as Chinese American versus a Chinese immigrant or international student or something like that. I felt that because I could see how my white peers were treating my Chinese classmate and I was like, "I don't want to be treated that way."

When asked where the desire for differentiation came from, Victoria reflected:

I think I had to prove that I belong in the university. Proving that I have the intelligence and the skills to be present at the same table as my white classmates. It was a dynamic between me and my Chinese peers who didn't identify as Chinese American that made it so strong for me. I was like, "Oh, I need to differentiate itself," because it's very apparent to me how the white folks are

treating them. And for me, as someone who was born here, who, yes, I can speak Chinese. And yes, I can speak English, but I want to make sure you know I can speak English. And you know that I'm different. And I felt that pressure and it was it, it felt shameful for me to feel like I need to differentiate myself.

Victoria spoke more about the feelings of shame and how it impacted her experience in the course:

The shame that I felt could have stemmed from my desire to want to disconnect from "my people," particularly the immigrant community that I have always strongly professed as the community I want to serve in my work. My need to differentiate myself from my Chinese peers who didn't identify as Chinese American like me reminded me of my younger self when I wanted so desperately to differentiate myself from my immigrant parents to not be seen as inarticulate or unaware of White American culture (i.e., making sure my pronunciation didn't show any signs of having an accent). In this class setting/example, I wanted to show that I was more articulate and perhaps more aligned with American culture than Chinese culture. I wanted to show my classmates that I could speak English fluently, unlike my Chinese peers. And that feeling of competitiveness or desire for positive attention from my White peers felt very shameful for me. I felt like I was trying to dissociate myself from people who reminded me more of my Chinese values and culture, as though it was a lesser part of me than my American side.

For Britney, it was important for her classmates to understand her Chinese American experience:

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When I'm the only person in a group with this identity, Chinese, Chinese

American, or Asian, Asian American, I feel more pressure about sharing my

culture because I want them to know. I think that's when my culture becomes

more important to me and important for me to share. I think I was only Asian,

other than our instructor and I was speaking a lot about the experiences of Asians

and Asian Americans. I didn't want people to think my experience is everyone's

experience. So sometimes I would put that caveat there. In a sense, I felt like it

was good that I was in the class because otherwise, we'll lose that perspective. I

was the only student who identified with my cultural identity, it was probably

pretty helpful for my peers to learn about my experience.

Britney spoke in class when she saw her experiences were not represented in the

materials that were presented in class.

I was born in China. I wasn't born here. A lot of the readings and literature is

focused on Asian Americans, Chinese Americans were born in the US.

Sometimes I don't feel like it describes me personally, and I would talk about it

with the class, and I feel like a lot of the readings, even though they put the caveat

that there that these cultural norms don't necessarily represent everyone in the

group. But I think sometimes we forget that, and we want to put positive or

negative stereotypes on people from that group or just lump them all together.

When asked about the differences Britney noticed about Chinese Americans born in the

United States vs. Those born in China, she stated:

This might be better described as differences due to various acculturation levels

and generation differences. It is perhaps not simply those who were born in the

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U.S. vs. in China. An example can be Asians and Asian Americans are written as valuing silence during conversations as a sign of respect – I learned about this growing up as a value, but I have become to detest this as a value now. So, I think my personal experience would want me to put a caveat to the readings that not every Asian or Asian American adheres to traditional Asian values. And at the same time, most training and readings simply lump all Asian ethnicities together is not helpful in multicultural training.

For Melanie, her multicultural course was one of the first times spoke up about her personal experiences. Her identity as a Chinese American heavily influenced that.

Culturally, we put our heads down and just ride through. It certainly, it's something that I have felt for quite a while. Just don't make waves. It's like a long-standing, lifelong type of pattern. That makes a lot of sense, given what I have heard about my parent's experiences.

When asked what it was like to speak up about their experience as a Chinese American in class, Melanie noted:

It felt really difficult because it's not something that I talked about with my friends. I perceive my Chinese American or Taiwanese American friends to be more Asian than I am so that's not something we talk about... It was really difficult because it was truly one of the first times [I was] verbalizing it out loud with others. I remember that I was in that fishbowl saying that "I'm straggling these two worlds and I don't feel like I have a voice in either and having a really hard time saying that.

She elaborated on what it was like to share out in that moment:

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I think there was a moment where I had to [decide] to say something, [my

Chinese American identity] felt the most salient. This one is the one that impacts

me THE most. Either I am going to participate within the entire structure of this

or I'm not. And if I'm going to do it, It's, like "Now Is the time" so I think in that

way, it's brought it all together to be like, "No, you're going to say something,

even though you don't want to."

Victoria shared a similar sentiment when she shared during class. She spoke about how

that was influenced by her Chinese American identity:

Respecting authority, respecting structure, respecting the rules. If this is how the

class is done, let it run its course. That's how the professor talks. That's how she

leads the class. Don't disrupt. Don't cause a scene. Don't cause problems with you

inserting your feedback that can make people feel uncomfortable. You want it to

be comfortable, you want everyone to just be at peace with each other. And the

more I'm learning about myself and about different identities. It's like, that's not

safe, to just maintain the status quo and to keep the peace, for goodness's sake.

For white folk's comfort. So, I think that's something that I'm challenging myself

more. I know these are values that I learned from my family, and it might also be

just my own awareness of the stereotypes about Asians, and about Asian women

in particular. I'm trying my best to not support that stereotype or not be living

proof of that stereotype. But I also don't want to overcompensate and do it for the

sake of just disproving the stereotype, for example. I'm looking for balance.

Geri was the only Chinese American and person of color in her classroom and felt called

to speak about her experiences as an Asian American:

As a Chinese American in the class, I knew that I had more unique experiences

because they never heard what it's like to be a Chinese American or things like

that. I remember this lecture where I had to share what the model minority myth is

for Asian Americans. Some of my classmates have never heard about that. Just

being in the South where, it's literally very Black and white, so having to share

my experiences as an Asian American in the class was like, "Oh, this is novel!"

My peers were more used to hearing the experiences of Black individuals in

anything related to diversity. Sharing about being a Chinese American was the

extra step of vulnerability aspect. That weird feeling saying I have this

responsibility that I have to educate them and share with them what it's like to be

a Chinese American in the South and in this class, as the only person of color. For

the most part, I wasn't too scared to express those thoughts and my experiences.

Again, it just ties back to, because I felt like I have this responsibility to teach

them or expose them to something that they've never been exposed to before.

When asked about what she'd change about her experience as a Chinese American in the

course, Geri responded:

I wouldn't change anything about my experience because I think it ties back to my

collectivistic view on things and how I am able to use my cultural identity as a

Chinese American to help others to expand their perspectives. If I wasn't a

Chinese American in class, and I was white, then the whole class would be white.

I felt like my experiences in the class in the grand scheme of things, well this

sounds borderline cocky, but it helped the class. It made the class more

meaningful to other students because I shared perspectives that may have been not

discussed or may have been overlooked or things like that, even though it was a

burden on me sometimes. It ultimately benefited more people than it did to take

the burden on me. So, then I felt like, okay, then it's worth it.

When asked how her Chinese American identity affected her experience in the course,

Emma mused:

I think, when we talked about race, that did feel more salient, or I think those

topics stood out to me a little bit more than specific ethnicity… I think that

generally when it comes to being Chinese versus Asian American, there are times

in which I think that identity does, the ethnic identity does become a little bit

more salient and it's possible that it could have come up in this course as well…

To understand that there's a lot of Chinese people in the US. And there's a lot of

well-educated Chinese people. And so, understanding within race, it's still

important to look at those different factors as well. Again, I don't remember if that

was specifically discussed in our multicultural course, but I think about that

general idea of data desegregation or looking at within-group differences and

thinking about things like migration factors or refugee status, things like that.

Some participants explored how the model minority stereotype caused feelings of

inadequacy as they were unable to measure up to the model minority ideals. Victoria

spoke about the pressure to prove herself in the classroom and how she perceived her

identity through the model minority myth.

I will never be where the white folks are. I feel like I'm close enough in the sense

of, they call me a model minority, but I will never be quite there. When it comes

to being Chinese American, I still feel like I need to prove the American side of

me, that that I do have a place there… I don't know how much of that is just

coming from my own experiences and wanting to fit in and wanting to be in

proximity to power. Like that was something that we talked about in our

experiential class as well.

It was meaningful for participants to have instructors who identified as Asian American.

Some participants viewed their Asian American professors as inspiration. Victoria had an

Indian American professor, and she discussed how her professor influenced her:

She just says it as it is, and I love that. But what was different, was that she

vocalized all of that. I did not. I might have had certain thoughts, but I was like,

"Oh, how do I articulate it in a way that will receive because I know I'm sassy. I

know I just say things as they are with no filter. And I know that's going to hurt

people." She just went ahead and just said it, and I'm like, whoa, an Asian woman

just said that… I felt like she was such a role model for me as someone who's

trying to find my own voice as an Asian woman. That when I saw how confident

she was in what she was sharing and she was so unashamed, so unapologetic

about whatever feedback she was giving. I was like, I could be like that and I

could be like her. An Asian woman could be that and that's fine.

Melanie saw her professors of color as models for how to engage in dialogue around her

identities. Several professors of color participated in her class.

[Professors of color] who spoke up set an example of how to own those identities

and struggles. I already respected these professors, and afterwards I was more

aware of how "behind" I was in understanding and reconciling my identities than

any effect it had on my view of them.

However, there was pain when Melanie shared about her experiences of being Chinese American and was not recognized by her Korean American professor:

I think what made that moment more interesting for me was that one of the professors was Korean American and seen around the school as like, "Oh she's so badass" and have done a lot of social justice work around race and ethnicity. [Sharing out] felt like a revelation to me, and I felt, or maybe I just imagined it coming from her, that it was like, "Okay. Yes, sure. What else is new?" That's what I imagined and that's what I wish I could change. Because that essentially invalidated that moment for me. I'm like, "oh, ha-ha, okay, I'm playing catch up." It didn't appear to be valid. It didn't appear to resonate. I was thinking of this, it's been simmering there, and I put it out [to the class], and what I wanted was for somebody who looks like me, who would have the most similar kind of experience to me to be like, "Yes, absolutely." And I think what I got was, "Hey, we're running out of time. We need to take our class break right now so let's take 15." And it left it feeling really open and hanging for me. Just watching her a little bit and being like, "oh, this was not as impactful for you as it just for me, okay alright."

Leaving her testimony unacknowledged and unexamined was hurtful for Melanie. She further elaborated on this moment of contention with the instructor and how it affected her:

I would even be more specific, it wasn't just Asian American, but even more specifically East Asian. Or if she had been Chinese American, I would have been

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like, "Oh my god, like, tell me what you think." Yeah, I think that when I was really needing at that moment. What I wish I would have had.

Theme Three: Sidelined by Whiteness

A majority of the participants were in multicultural courses with predominately white peers and instructors. As the only people of color or Chinese Americans in the room, whiteness was something each participant had to confront. Whiteness is the "overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (Helms, 2017). Even before the course began, most participants anticipated the class would only cater to white students. Many expressed frustrations at how students of color were not a central educational concern. Victoria summed this up:

My expectation was this class is for the white folks. It's not for us students of color who want to engage more deeply with the content or learning about our identities and different identities. It felt like everything that was being taught was basically lived experience that we are already aware of. Why are we learning something that we experience on the daily? That was frustrating.

Participants all voiced similar concerns about their white peers and cultural encapsulation. Cultural encapsulation is a "personal reality that is based on one set of assumptions; insensitivity to cultural variations among individuals; accepts unreasoned assumptions without proof or ignores proof because it might disconfirm one's personal assumptions; unwilling to evaluate other viewpoints; demonstrates minimal attempts to accommodate the behavior of others different from him/her; trapped in one way of thinking that resists adaptation and rejects alternatives." (Corey, Corey, & Callanan,

2007, pg. 117). Participants reported an expectation that their white peers would have limited awareness of multicultural issues and the minoritized experience. Emma shared this:

> Maybe for the white students in the class. Maybe they don't know as much, but I feel this responsibility to already know these things… That expectation that I have already done some work and learning on diversity and race myself and I think my expectation is just white students haven't taken the time to go and do that themselves. And so, maybe this is newer for them. My expectation would have been that the other white students hadn't, and it would have been newer for them.

The preoccupation with raising white students' race consciousness led to the invisibility of students of color in classrooms. Victoria argued that her multicultural counseling courses felt targeted towards her white peers who lacked cultural awareness and sensitivity.

> In my experience of multicultural counseling classes, I feel that it's more geared towards bringing white folks up to speed with experiences of people of color. That's been my experience a lot, especially in the graduate-level courses that I've taken with multicultural counseling in the course title… I'm paying just as much as all these other students in this class, and it did seem like a lot of the white folks were engaged, they kept asking her a lot of questions because they're like, "Oh, why is it bad to ask people of color where they're from?' or something and it's these questions like, "Oh, come on, can you get with us? Can you get up to speed?" I think seeing where some of my peers were at and seeing that we were all trying to have the same education, we're paying the same tuition, yet it felt like

I wasn't learning anything in that class. I think that was really discouraging. That
was frustrating.

When it comes to navigating whiteness, Britney shared about her experience after
watching *The Color of Fear* in class and how it related to her classroom experience:

I felt empowered and disappointed at the same time after watching the

documentary. I felt empowered because some individuals in the documentary

demonstrated ways that I could speak up for myself. I felt disappointed at the

same time because most individuals in the documentary had to spend so much

energy and time to convince a White individual about things that sound obvious

and frustrating to them such as gaslighting and microaggressions, and this is still

the way it is right now.

This echoed a similar experience she had in her course when a white student expressed
insensitivity towards some of the topics they were discussing in class:

[They] explicitly said they did not understand why BLM protesters burn things

because it makes them look bad. I and many other students had discussions with

this student, who was receptive to learn, but we felt frustrated that the student

seemed insensitive and unwilling to learn on their own before asking such

questions.

Geri was the only person of color in her course and felt a deep sense of social
responsibility towards teaching her white peers:

Even before taking the first class, I already knew, like what can I learn, what am I

going to take away from this experience? Or what can I do to make this

experience more positive. And I felt like sometimes my takeaway from this

course is just teaching the other students in the course. Like, how can I use this

experience to make their experience and their multicultural competence more

valuable and meaningful.

Students of color must often tend to white students' defensiveness and dilemmas around

race (Blackwell, 2010). Geri reported feeling responsible for her white peer's education

and having to fight back when a classmate articulated hurtful remarks in class:

When someone had to play the devil's advocate, I felt like I was the only one who

can confidently fight back or contrast that perspective because I would be the one

who was the most infuriated by that perspective. I felt like I had to speak up

during those courses. So, having those cultural identities, whether it's being a

POC or low-income or, honestly, I just felt like sometimes it's just having any

marginalized identity or any identity that's not middle upper-class white, that I

had to be the one who can confidently combat those thoughts because either I had

those experiences, or my friends had those experiences or that's just the

community and culture that I identified the most with. I wouldn't say that it

conflicted with my experience, but it made it more burdensome.

Geri was tasked with making counterclaims around her white peers' disbelief around the

pervasiveness of oppressive systems. Geri elaborated on how her white peers influenced

her, both negatively and positively:

There were times where I felt like I was fighting for cultural competency like,

"Let's not play the devil's advocate, because I think we know what the right

answer is if you want to have a practice that truly is multicultural and inclusive." I

did find that I would be the one who'd speak up first for those types of things.

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There were times where I wanted to not always do that because I didn't feel like, I want to be perceived as the angry POC who's always going to fight against what other white students said, but there were other instances where I felt other people were defending me. I definitely felt like there were some allies that I had in the class as well that helped my experiences.

Nick took a different approach and reported feeling disengaged during the course and a main component of his disengagement was due to his white peers. He reported:

I'm not going to put myself out there and share my own experiences and go deep into my processing if people aren't willing to meet me there. Especially with current events, people are so uncomfortable with talking about diversity and ethnic differences. People get uncomfortable if you start bringing up like, "hey, this is like my perspective and it's a little different from yours." I don't think a lot of people know how to navigate those types of conversations. I think people do like to keep it shallow, never in an overtly, "I don't care about your ethnic background" kind of approach, but they just don't even know how to have conversations. So, they're like, "okay, that's interesting." And then they'll try to divert to something else. So, I think that's representative of just day to day experiences.

Some participants expressed underlying currents of internalized racism and negotiated their identities among white peers. Many were negotiating the meanings of their racial classification. Victoria elaborated on this:

You have to admit as a person of color, it's easier to be close to white folks. There's a certain safety there. And as an Asian, and as Chinese American, it was

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easier for me to be closer to white folks than it is for my black and brown classmates.

Participants also questioned their relationship with whiteness. Melanie spoke about her bicultural ambivalence and how she wrestled with her proximity to whiteness in her class.

[Speaking about my identity in class] really heightened my bicultural ambivalence. Because I definitely thought that there were some things that other people [of color] were saying that I was like "No, that doesn't resonate for me and that must be because I'm like too white" and then I was like, "But I do have these other things that I am resonating with so clearly so I'm not that white."

Participants' educational experiences were riddled with white interference from their peers, but they also witnessed moments of white fragility from their instructors. Victoria spoke in-depth about her white instructor and how the instructor's lack of critical pedagogy and race consciousness led to a negative learning environment for Victoria.

It's one thing if a white woman could acknowledge her white privilege in front of the entire class and talk about that. But the way that she did it. It made it seem as though she was trying to justify why she was up there. She seemed really nervous and really defensive when people of color would ask her questions about, like, "What do you mean Latinx folks do this?" And at least for me, I felt like she was nervous that she would say something to offend people of color. She would talk about "Oh yeah I have white privilege and I know that and I know it's hard for some of you to experience this class but um yeah," She would try to provide an answer, and it would never suffice.

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The professor's inability to address their whiteness led to a decentering of students of color in the classroom. When asked what her experience being in the classroom led by her white professor was like, Victoria noted:

> I always felt anxious in that class. I felt the tendency to almost want to protect my white Professor because it seemed like she needed saving. It's an odd way for me to think of it. It always felt like she was up there, being put on the spot. She did not answer the questions and so it made me feel like, "Are we going too hard on her because she's a white woman?" That tendency to want to protect white women was so salient on all of our minds. We were just like, "She's also the person in power. She's also a professor." It was just such a strange dynamic because you can see how nervous and anxious, she was about teaching that class to half white students and half people of color. So, I think, it was challenging for me as a student in that class, someone who identifies as a person of color to watch her struggle and flounder about in front of the class. I was really anxious watching her. I'm not really learning much in this class and I can feel the anxiety just permeating through the room because she didn't seem prepared to teach the class. She didn't seem like she was ready to address some of the questions that came up, especially from students of color.

Theme Four: Recommendations for Curricular Modification

All participants had recommendations for curricular modifications. All spoke about the lack of content around Asian Americans in their multicultural education. The invisibility of Asian Americans can be damaging because their suffering can go unseen,

ignored, and overlooked. Participants wanted more from their multicultural courses to build social-historical context for understanding their own stories. Geri reflected:

> In the class, when we talked about race & ethnicity, we mostly talked about interacting with Black clients. That is true, that is the POC clients that we do see most of the times in the South but there weren't many times where I feel like we talked about Asian identity or anything like that.

Nick also noticed how lacking information about Asian Americans and Chinese Americans were in his class:

> Asian Americans were never really talked about too much. Whether it was the articles we were reading or in conversation in general. I think Asians specifically, I wouldn't say neglected, but we're never really the main focus… I never really come across research studies or have conversations that are specifically with Chinese Americans in mind.

Britney wanted more readings about Asian Americans and getting more exposure to Asian Americans in psychology:

> Just have more readings or learn more about cultural beliefs and cultural values for probably most major ethnic minority groups in the US. For example, for Asian Americans, we don't learn about Asian Americans in general.

Melanie had hoped to have learned more about herself and read more about immigrant experiences.

> There is something to be said about understanding our histories. I think if there were a way, that I could have learned about some of the personal accounts of what might have happened to my parents or my grandparents, etc. That could have

been helpful just for myself later to just take that with me later on and to have that context and to validate myself.

Participants also wanted to learn more practical applications to the material they were being exposed to. Britney expressed a desire for more hands-on solutions.

I wished courses like this; it'd have more hands-on solutions… I wanted to learn more about how to conduct multicultural counseling, especially with specific ethnic minority groups and we didn't really talk about that or read about that. So, I think I was a little disappointed.

When asked to elaborate, Britney noted:

I think it's one of the biggest struggles, I guess for all of us, is we don't know how to best tailor our treatments for clients from diverse backgrounds, especially those who are very different from ours. I learned a lot in my literature and my readings. But still, I wouldn't, I feel like I would feel not confident if I had a client from that background… [I want to] learn more about the practical side of things. We read a lot about theories. Had a lot of really meaningful discussions. Coming out of the course, I still felt like I don't know how to apply everything. I think I would learn more about the practical side of things, but I know that's what clinical supervisions are for, clinical didactics are for. But I feel like I might even want another course that's focused on diversity and multicultural counseling on the clinical side.

Britney continued and talked about the desire for specific strategies while noting how the approach could be problematic.

It will be useful to talk about: what are some specific strategies you would use

with a certain cultural group. Or like, what are some treatment methods that don't

usually work well with this cultural group. But I know it's problematic, too

homogeneous, and lumps everything, everyone together. Say everyone's the same

just because they're of this cultural group. But I feel like that's still better than, just

talking about how everyone is different, every group is different, but we don't

know what to do, or you should be more aware. I think it's great that the course is

teaching people to be more aware, to be more humbled. But there aren't more

specific, practical tools, but I don't really know what they would be like.

Emma spoke about how she felt after taking the course and applying her learning to her

clinical work.

I think that it did challenge me and teach me a lot of really helpful ways of

conceptualizing my research. I think that in terms of clinically, like how do I

incorporate and conceptualize culture into... How do I incorporate culture into my

conceptualization and clinical interventions? I felt like it didn't do that as much. I

had to seek that out on my own… I guess at the same time, I am really, wary of

multicultural courses that are like, "Oh, like is what you do for African American

clients and this is what you do for Asian American clients." And I think if the

class had been like that. I also would have been super annoyed.

Nick also wanted more practical applications to the course. He noted:

I think, from a hands-on, takeaway, like, "how can I put this in my practice" didn't

really hit the mark with that. Aside from book knowledge and these obvious

things, I think actually applying what was learned and having the self-reflection with ourselves.

Participants also wanted more experiential learning opportunities in the course. Victoria noted this about her didactic course:

If it's didactic, you're going to be learning from a book. How do you learn about people's experiences, just from reading a book and PowerPoint slides? You need to hear people's experiences, and I think that's why the experiential class was so rewarding and where I felt like real learning happened because we were hearing from each other's experiences versus the didactic class where it was literally just reading from a book.

In many multicultural classrooms, white students' preparedness to talk about race determines the depth of discussion (Blackwell, 2010). This can limit students of color who want to engage in dialogue beyond a basic knowledge about racism. Nick spoke about his classroom environment in this way:

As the course progressed, it seemed like it was a check the APA box approach. As the course went on, the dialogue was pretty shallow. People's defenses were up, so we weren't getting anywhere. It got really repetitive. Recognizing diversity and coming from a cultural perspective is important, but we weren't actually actively processing things are talking about biases are talking about how this can look in therapy.

Victoria reported wanting to hear more from her peers and engaging in deeper dialogues around identity.

Everybody has their own story, and everybody has their own experiences. I feel

like it was such a missed opportunity in that space to not have that interaction

between all the students and their different experiences. But again, it is a didactic

course. So, what did I expect? We're going to be learning from the book,

everything's going to feel very clean and academic, and you're going to learn all

these fancy terms about people's experiences, which is fine. We need to be able to

name certain things that people experience. But it's so different when you put a

human face to those experiences. It's so different when it's coming out of your

classmates' mouths as they're sharing that academic term, for example, and how it

applies to their lives. I think that makes the learning real.

Nick also spoke about what it was like to discuss identity programmatically.

What my program wasn't great at was sitting with discomfort and actually being

vulnerable and processing things and having these valuable discussions. It felt like

it was like here are these really cool research articles on CBT with African

Americans or rural psychology. I mean that that kind of thing. But what we didn't

get was the actual conversations. The actual processing with one another. And I

think that kind of processing would be way more valuable than reading 15 articles

on different multicultural counseling theories… Just processing it. Even

acknowledging, these conversations are uncomfortable. Why are they so

uncomfortable? That kind of thing. Instead of, what did you guys think about this

article, and let's talk about the findings and criticize their measures. Maybe it was

a defense mechanism, maybe it's just the way that the program is set up, but it was

very academic-focused, driven, rather than personal development.

Participants also wanted additional information on intersectionality. Geri spoke about her

desires to learn more about intersecting identities:

> As an Asian American who has intersecting identities, being a female, being
>
> Chinese and American, and all those things. I wish the class could have been
>
> more sensitive to intersectional identities. Like what does it like to be LGBTQ+
>
> and Asian American? That's a whole thing. We didn't get the opportunity to talk
>
> about that because, in a weird way the class wasn't, the majority of the class
>
> wasn't ready for that stuff. It's maybe their first time talking about what it's like to
>
> be an LGBTQ+ person seeking therapy and how to work with something like that.
>
> I felt like it would have been too complex or crazy or something like that. But for
>
> me, what would make it more meaningful to me is if we did have a deeper dive
>
> into those intersection identities, just more rich discussions on those things,
>
> because like I said, honestly, I feel like I didn't really learn much in the class
>
> because these were all things that were just pertinent to my life already or I have
>
> some of my closest friends are in other multicultural, diverse groups.

Emma also noted a similar preference for expanding into intersectionality and how power

and privilege play out in the therapy room.

> Again, thinking of all those different dynamics of privilege and incorporating
>
> more of that self-reflection into that course. I think that would have been useful. I
>
> think those are all things that got outsourced to our clinical sites, but I felt like it
>
> would have been useful to have that as part of our core training within the
>
> program.

The most common approach to multicultural education in APA-accredited programs is to offer a single course in multicultural training (Kagnici, 2014). After going through the only multicultural class offered, Britney noted:

> I think it would have been more helpful if we had a separate, or perhaps a second course with just clinical students so we can focus more on how to integrate multicultural research and practice.

Participants wanted more time dedicated to multicultural education. Melanie expressed a similar sentiment around having a single course and how lacking it might be: "Absolutely not, you're not going to move into everybody's brains within 13 weeks." Victoria raised the idea of having a racially separate space for her multicultural education after spending time in a predominately white classroom.

Victoria raised the idea of having a racially separate space for her multicultural education after spending time in a predominately white classroom.

> I wonder what it would be like to be in that multicultural counseling class with just people of color, if that would be different. If there was a class, just for white folks… I'm just curious what it would have been like.

Additionally, Victoria spoke about the identity of her professor and a desire to have a culturally sensitive instructor.

> I would have wanted a different professor just or I mean, she could be white, he could be white. Fine. But it's how do you use your identity as a way to help us engage more deeply with our identities. And to learn more about how we impact each other with our identities. I think that would have been really powerful. If it was done correctly and I can't say for sure how. I don't identify as white, but I can

imagine that someone who can be vulnerable and honest in a way that doesn't take up space because I felt my white professor's anxiety just literally took up so much space in the room. There was no room for learning or anything else for at least, students of color, like me, but a different professor would've been helpful.

Chapter Four: Discussion

This study examined the experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. I utilized an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to gather more insight into the phenomenon. My primary research question was: what are the lived experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education? The six participants who participated in the study described their experience in four interpreted themes: *burden of being minoritized, Chinese American identity inflection points, sidelined by whiteness*, and *recommendations for curricular modifications*.

There is diversity within the Asian American population, and it is important to disaggregate data for various ethnic groups. This study demonstrates that diversity exists, even within a single nationality (Armenta et al., 2013). While there are common cultural values among Asian Americans, there is a high degree of variability between Asian cultures (Kim, Li, & Ng, 2005). Therefore, it would be a mistake to assume this research speaks for all Chinese American psychology trainees and that these experiences are characteristic of all Chinese American experiences. However, the use of critical race theory (CRT) in this study illuminates the unique challenges of Chinese American psychology trainees and possible racial inequalities in multicultural education specific to this group.

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The burden of having a minoritized identity was evident in the participants'

multicultural courses. Participants felt internalized and externalized pressure to have

cultural expertise when they were racially isolated and often thrust into an instructor role

in their classes. The participants' frustrations mirror findings from previous research in

which students of color reported feeling frustrated by the expectation that they are experts

in racism and are responsible for sharing their life experiences (Jackson, 1999).

The pressure to be a cultural expert contrasted with participants' fear of appearing

culturally ignorant. There were fears around misspeaking and pressure to appear

culturally competent while many were still searching for answers and expanding their

multicultural knowledge. Participants reported that racially diverse classrooms alleviated

the weight they felt being the spokesperson for minoritized experiences. It also provided

room for richer dialogue. Quaye (2009) found that many students of color in higher

education deal with a similar "only one" syndrome where they are the sole members of

their racial or ethnic group in a classroom. When underrepresented in a predominately

white classroom, students of color have reported feeling objectified and forced to assume

the role of "native informant" due to expectations of white peers to turn to their singular

peer of color to explain what they do not understand (hooks, 1994, p. 43). Having a more

diverse classroom could alleviate students' feeling like they are "always on the

microscope" or "on trial" (Watson, 2002, p. 70). Participants reported that their course

required exhausting work. Having other students who held marginalized identities led to

feelings of comfort and support.

Throughout their multicultural education, participants experienced numerous

encounters with their Chinese American identity that forced them to acknowledge the

impact of racism in their lives. These experiences sharply called race into perspective and forced them to focus on their identity as a member of a group targeted by racism (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). These encounters opened up wounds from painful experiences with racism from the past (Jackson, 1999). Many were the only Chinese American or Asian American in their multicultural course and felt pressured to speak up for their racial and ethnic backgrounds. The model minority myth caused feelings of inadequacy as some participants wrestled with what it meant to be ostracized from the white majority and to have racial tension with other minorities (Ng et al., 2007).

For some participants, the multicultural course was one of the first times they spoke up about their Chinese American identities. Participants displayed a range of withdrawal and avoidance behavior like keeping to oneself and disconnecting from the coursework. These behaviors could be forms of self-preservation and reflected the findings of Jackson (1999), where students of color reported experiencing fear they would be ridiculed and attacked for their beliefs and were hesitant to speak up about race in class. The pressures of the model minority myth stereotype could have also interfered with engaging in direct coping strategies to manage reactions to their class experiences (e.g., speaking with the instructor, raising concerns during class) as Asian Americans may be motivated to hide issues that contradict the stereotype (Lee et al., 2007).

As the only students of color or Chinese Americans in their multicultural classrooms, whiteness was something each participant had to confront. Participants expressed frustration at how students of color were not a central educational concern. Students of color are often rendered invisible on the sidelines in multicultural education (Blackwell, 2010). The centering of whiteness led to the exclusion of students of color

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and their educational needs. Similar to findings from Blackwell (2010), the participants

perceived their courses as centered on raising white students' race consciousness. Many

participants voiced apprehensions about their white peers and cultural encapsulation.

They also desired richer dialogue in their classroom. In many multicultural classrooms,

white students' preparedness to talk about race determines the depth of discussion

(Blackwell, 2010).

Some white instructors lacked crucial pedagogy and race consciousness which led

to undesirable and unsafe learning environments for participants. Students of color in

graduate-level diversity courses have reported a desire for instructors to be more aware of

multicultural issues, use various pedagogical methods, and pay more attention to the

impact of the class dynamics and climate to create a positive classroom environment

(Morgan & Marin, 2016). To reduce the burden on students of color, instructors should

utilize tactics to address moments when white students place pressure on students of

color to enter into teaching roles and to competently address the students' racism as it

surfaces (Pieterse, Lee, & Fetzer, 2016).

The lack of content on Asian Americans led participants to fear fitting into

stereotypes around being Asian, particularly around the model minority myth. The model

minority myth is divisive because the nature of all stereotypes is to dehumanize people

and prevent society from seeing them in their whole humanity (Kiang, Witkow, &

Thompson, 2016). Participants wanted more from their multicultural education to build

social-historical contexts for understanding their own stories. They also requested more

intersectional content to expand their knowledge on how power and privilege may play

out in the therapy room. This reflected findings from Seward (2014) which argued for

expanding multicultural courses beyond "identity-based" trainings as they are an outdated model of multicultural training. It has been suggested that multicultural classes have curriculum content focused on recognizing the systemic mechanisms that render various intersectional identities as less than (Metzl & Hansen, 2014).

Additionally, participants wanted more practical and specific applications from the course to apply to their clinical work. Other students of color have voiced similar desires for ways to broach clients' multicultural identities, practice in tailoring interventions according to clients' multicultural identities, and skills needed to advocate against systemic inequalities (Metzl & Hansen, 2014).

Lastly, participants wanted more time dedicated to multicultural education. A single course in multicultural training was not sufficient for participants, however, this is the most common approach to multicultural education across psychology training programs (Kagnici, 2014). Other studies have found that students of color wanted more time to explore multicultural issues (Morgan & Marin, 2016). Training programs that only provide a single multicultural class should reevaluate their multicultural training and may draw from other modalities to increase multicultural education, such as an area of concentration, interdisciplinary, and integration of multicultural training across the program (Newell et al., 2010).

Limitations and Future Research

Findings from this study should be considered in the context of several limitations. Homogeneity of the sample enables a deeper understanding of nuanced experiences in IPA studies. There was some variability among the participants in their years of experience, immigration status, and other intersecting identities. The variations

enabled a richer contextual understanding of the experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. However, a more homogenous sample could impact the findings. For example, five of the six participants were born in the United States. Only one participant was born in China. They reported having a slightly different identity development process compared to the participants who were born in America. In addition, the focus of the interviews centered on the Chinese American identity of psychology trainees. One of the participants also identified as biracial. In addition to his Chinese American identity, he also identified as white. This study did not explore the intersectionality of participants' immigrant and racial identities and how they related to their multicultural education.

IPA suggests utilizing a smaller sample size to capture a more nuanced understanding of a phenomenon. A small sample size is not a limitation but a reason for future research. It would be beneficial to explore Chinese American psychology trainees' experiences in multicultural education in a larger and more diverse sample with an emphasis on intersectionality. This could increase transferability to other settings as it is important to recognize the various demographic characteristics, training programs, and geographic regions that may inform students' experiences. Sampling a larger and more heterogeneous group of students would allow for new perspectives and interpretations to emerge. For example, the geographic locations of the participants in this study could have influenced the findings. Training experiences could differ dramatically depending on participants' location. A Chinese American student living in a predominately white city could have vastly different experiences than a Chinese American student living in a more racially and ethnically diverse city. Chinese Americans who live in a more ethnically

diverse environment may not have to codeswitch and leave their cultural language or demeanor to better fit in with their predominately white counterparts. It would be interesting to tease out these differences by exploring if certain regions affected Chinese American psychology trainees' experiences.

Furthermore, additional research could illuminate pedagogical strategies for multicultural education instructors to utilize in their courses. This could be operationalized in mixed-methods research by identifying experiences in the classroom that led to an increase in multicultural awareness. Multicultural awareness/preparedness to address multicultural considerations could be an aspect to explore in a quantitative inquiry to add context to qualitative findings.

More qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research is needed. To date, only a handful of studies discuss the experiences of students of color in multicultural education and none that addressed Chinese American students. The findings suggest there are unique challenges and needs of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. One idea might be to look at the three approaches to training highlighted earlier and explore how students in programs who use each one of the approaches describe the quality of their multicultural training. This could be paired with the incorporation of quantitative scales like the California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS) to examine how adequately training programs have prepared professional psychologists to work with culturally diverse populations. Additionally, researchers may want to examine how multicultural course materials are integrated into clinical work. A case study may provide an up-close, detailed examination

of how multicultural trainings are affecting Chinese American clinicians and their work with diverse populations.

Implications for Practice

Support for the multicultural education of therapists remains as vital as ever. The diversification of the United States and the increased visibility of mental health has emphasized the value of culturally sensitive care. Multicultural education has contributed to counseling students' multicultural awareness and knowledge (Kagnici, 2014). Participants indicated several requests that would have enhanced their multicultural education. Training programs must reevaluate their multicultural training to ensure trainees are benefitting optimally and developing multicultural awareness.

Training programs should recruit a racially/ethnically diverse cohort of students to support Chinese American psychology trainees within the field. Participants all reported a desire for more diverse classrooms. Consistent with previous findings, exposure to various cultures and interacting with peers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds were beneficial aspects of multicultural education (Coleman, 2006). Another request was for an additional time dedicated to multicultural education. Many felt a single course was inadequate. An infusion of multiculturalism into all course work, practicum experiences, and supervision could benefit students of color. A previous study also found that students wanted multicultural education infused into various aspects of the training program (Dickson et al., 2010). Another aspect to consider is the content of the course. Multicultural education could include classroom-based activities to encourage the exploration of personal history and development to help students develop a greater awareness of their own identities and values. There was a desire from participants to gain

a deeper understanding of the social-historical contexts for understanding their own stories.

Furthermore, participants all reported a desire for moving beyond the development of knowledge and awareness into the development of applicable skills that will assist their clinical practice. Training programs may benefit from incorporating didactics around developing specific skills and tools to help facilitate multicultural engagement. Alberta & Wood (2009) defined multicultural engagement as the "ability to create mutually respectful relationships in which cultural meanings and patterns are openly explored and provides a foundation for learning how to interact with persons from different cultures." The Practical Skills Model for Multicultural Engagement incorporates four specific skills (empathetic communication, relationship building, and diunital reasoning and observation) as a starting point for trainees to start developing their abilities to practice in a culturally competent manner (Alberta & Wood, 2009).

A participant recommended a racially separate space for their multicultural education. While not explicitly stated by other students, other studies have expressed similar sentiments. Blackwell (2010) proposed a similar idea and discussed the importance of racially separate spaces as a pedagogical intervention to make education anti-racist for students of color. Specifically, an academic space free from the hostile, restrictive racial dynamics may be necessary to build resistance against a class that has traditionally allowed the racial desires of white students to dominate the course of discussion (Blackwell, 2010). This racially separate space could serve as a "homeplace" or a site of resistance from the oppression that students of color face in their daily interactions with white mainstream society (Hooks, 1990). These spaces could offer

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historically marginalized individuals a place to develop a critical consciousness and center their experiences to reaffirm their humanity (Hooks, 1990). Studies have found that Chicana/o students who participated in same-race groups are more likely to successfully achieve their academic goals and participant in campus organizations because their same-race group helped them build a critical consciousness (Villalpando, 2003).

Studies on multicultural education have often overlooked students of color as there is an assumption that students from minoritized groups are more aware of and knowledgeable about diverse worldviews and cultural issues based on their marginalized status (Chao & Nath, 2011). More research on students of color is needed to address this research gap. The training of counselors needs to evolve in response to the anticipated diversification of the student body and the United States population to ensure counselors from different racial/ethnic groups can work effectively with the diversity represented by their clients.

The curricular modifications reported by participants reflect similar findings from other studies: a desire for recognizing intersectionality and how identities afford students privilege and power, developing applicable skills to utilize in the therapy room with diverse clients, tailoring curriculum according to student's knowledge and developmental levels, diversifying the student body, and having more time and space to engage in multicultural education (Metzl & Hansen, 2014; Seward, 2014; Pieterse, Lee, & Fetzer, 2016; Dickson et al., 2010; Morgan & Marin, 2016).

Researcher Reflections

The idea for this study stemmed from my personal experience in my multicultural education. I felt a range of emotions in my multicultural classroom and a deep desire for more training geared towards my educational needs. My investment in this study was personally meaningful and driven by a desire to further my multicultural knowledge and learn more about the experience. It was incredible to hear and learn more about participants' experiences. It was remarkable to hear from other psychology trainees who identified similarly. Their honesty and willingness to reflect were moving.

This research was conducted during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Everything was conducted virtually. It was interesting to note that two of the participants' courses pivoted to an online format. However, neither reported any difference from the course as the pivot occurred at the end of the courses. I was honored the participants were willing to meet with me during this time and allowed me a glimpse into their personal lives. Conducting research on Zoom felt very intimate because participants shared more than they normally would have. It allowed me to see some of their homes or whatever spaces they happened to be in at the time of the interview.

My Chinese American identity and my experience in a multicultural course led to my sufficiency in commenting and coding the data. A key component of IPA is the importance of the interplay between participant and analyst. Notwithstanding, I tried to note my ideas in various ways by engaging in personal therapy to process my emotional responses, journaling my reflections, and utilizing other self-care experiences to increase my self-awareness. However, I would not claim to be a neutral researcher as critical race methodology reject the notions of "objective" researchers (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). I

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was not trying to bracket out myself but rather to find a balance between my own perspectives and staying true to the participants' perspectives and what they were describing. By utilizing a critical race theory framework, I challenged the emphasis placed on neutrality and how it can maintain racial inequity. I wanted the study to be grounded in the experiences and knowledge of Chinese Americans. I wanted to highlight how being situated in predominately white spaces can limit Chinese American psychology trainees' potentials (Quaye, 2009).

This study was illuminating and expanded my understanding of the experience of being a Chinese American in multicultural education and beyond. I expected to feel a sense of comradery with my participants. However, the kinship I felt towards my participants was beyond my expectations. Engaging with my participants and sharing collective experiences was an incredible point of connection. It felt validating to see my own experiences reflected by my participants. It was equally validating to hear from participants that they valued the space I created for my participants to process their experiences in their multicultural education and how participating in the study elicited a greater awareness of the self.

I hope this research will serve as a counter-story to change the dominant discourse that may suppress Chinese Americans in higher education (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Counterstorying is a crucial tenant of critical race theory. I hope this research can challenge the claims of meritocracy, color blindness, and the dominant culture's discourse (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). By drawing on the knowledge of traditionally excluded Chinese American trainees, I hope the research allowed participants to name their realities and was an opportunity to preserve themselves emotionally and mentally

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). It served that purpose for me as the researcher. I was empowered to focus on the racialized experiences as a source of strength and reject the master narrative that groups all Asian Americans as "mono-vocal" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

This study has aspects of my role as a researcher interwoven throughout the process. I intended to highlight Chinese American psychology trainees who endured and provided so much to their classrooms despite their educational needs often going unmet. It was rewarding to learn from my participants and better understand their lived experiences in multicultural education. I hope the study will lead to other research focused on Chinese American psychology trainees.

Conclusion

This study was the first to focus on the experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. Despite its limitations, this study provides an insightful and conceptual view of how Chinese American psychology trainees navigated and reacted to their multicultural education. The voices of Chinese American psychology trainees were missing concerning their experiences and multicultural training needs. The study identified curricular modifications that would support Chinese American psychology trainees in their multicultural education. Participants expressed challenges unique to their Chinese American identities: the burden they felt in racial isolation as they navigated their role of being a historically minoritized individual and the sidelining of their educational needs being by whiteness. The expansion of this work remains a vital field of inquiry. Additional research can yield benefits for multicultural education and beyond. It is crucial to prepare psychology trainees, particularly trainees of

color, to confront and explore issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the therapy

room and beyond. I hope this study can inspire further inquiry and interest into the

multicultural education of Chinese American psychology trainees and other students of

color.

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Appendices

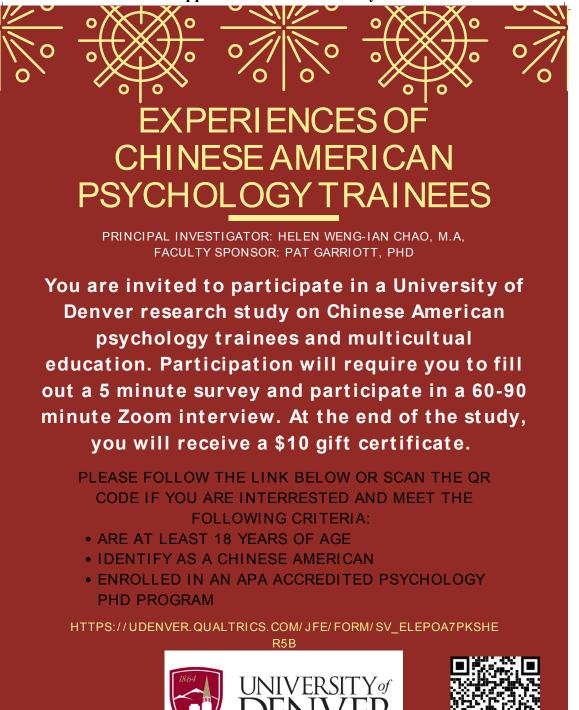**Appendix A: E-Mail to Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) Listserv**

Dear AAPA,

My name is Helen Weng-Ian Chao, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Counseling Psychology at the University of Denver. I am currently seeking participants for my dissertation which is a qualitative study aimed at understanding the experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural education. I am seeking Chinese American PhD students who are (a) currently enrolled in an APA accredited Clinical or Counseling psychology doctoral program, (b) are enrolled or have completed a multicultural course within the last year.

For those qualified and interested in taking part in this study, I am requesting that they follow the below Qualtrics link that will allow me to collect further demographic information and contact information for me to follow-up with participants individually. If selected, involvement in the study will include a 60–90-minute Zoom interview in which the participant will describe their experiences in multicultural courses, as well as reviewing the transcript of said interview to ensure accuracy of participants' experiences. At the end of the study, you will receive a $10 gift certificate.
If there are further questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at helen.chao@du.edu.

For those interested in the study, please follow the link below: https://udenver.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_elEpOA7PKSheR5b. Please also see attached for a recruitment flyer with more information!

Best,
Helen

EXPERIENCES OF CHINESE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY TRAINEES

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: HELEN WENG-IAN CHAO, M.A,
FACULTY SPONSOR: PAT GARRIOTT, PHD

You are invited to participate in a University of Denver research study on Chinese American psychology trainees and multicultual education. Participation will require you to fill out a 5 minute survey and participate in a 60-90 minute Zoom interview. At the end of the study, you will receive a $10 gift certificate.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINK BELOW OR SCAN THE QR CODE IF YOU ARE INTERRESTED AND MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:
- ARE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE
- IDENTIFY AS A CHINESE AMERICAN
- ENROLLED IN AN APA ACCREDITED PSYCHOLOGY PHD PROGRAM

HTTPS://UDENVER.QUALTRICS.COM/JFE/FORM/SV_ELEPOA7PKSHER5B

UNIVERSITY of DENVER

THIS S... BOARD

Appendix C: E-Mail to Participants

Dear _____,

My name is Helen Weng-Ian Chao, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Counseling Psychology department at the University of Denver. I'm writing to talk to you about participating in my research study. Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural courses. I am excited about the possibility of your participation and having the privilege of hearing your unique experiences in multicultural counseling courses. The purpose of this e-mail is to inform you of your rights within this study and to provide you with a copy of the informed consent you signed while filling out the Qualtrics. You are eligible to be in this study because you identify as a Chinese American psychology trainee. I obtained your contact information from your completed Qualtrics survey.

You will be participating in a qualitative study whose aim is to understand a unique phenomenon and provide descriptive detail and understanding of your experience. My main research question is "What are the experiences of Chinese American psychology trainees in multicultural courses?" Through your participation, as well as several other Chinese American graduate students who share common experiences, I hope to understand the essence of the Chinese American experience in multicultural courses as it reveals itself in your shared stories.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will ask you to share your experiences before, during, and after your multicultural course and how that relates to your academic experience. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you which may include your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience. I will provide you a one-time $10 gift card following the interview. The gift card will be digitally sent. I would like to video record our interview and I'll use the recording to type out a transcript.

I hope to create an egalitarian relationship in our work together where you can feel safe, heard, and valued. I strive to work with you in a collaborative and empowering manner. I will need to follow-up with you at times to ensure I accurately capture your experiences as I begin to analyze data. It is important to me to be able to sure your story using your words and to be able to convey your experiences in a manner that feels genuine and true to you. If you have additional thoughts or ideas beyond our interview, I encourage you to contact me so I can fully capture your experiences.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. I very much value your participation and the time and energy that it will take to be a part of this

study. I express my sincere gratitude for your participation in this study. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to me via e-mail at helen.chao@du.edu or (952) 994-2789. I've attached a copy of the consent form for your records. Please use this link to find a time for our interview: https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=18309819

Sincerely,
Helen

Helen Weng-Ian Chao, M.A.
University of Denver
helen.chao@du.edu
952.994.2789

Faculty Sponsor:
Dr. Pat Garriott
pat.garriott@du.edu
(303) 871-6758

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Study Title: Experiences of Chinese American Psychology Trainees in Multicultural Education
IRBNet #: 1632491
Principal Investigator: Helen Weng-Ian Chao, M.A., University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education
Faculty Sponsor: Pat Garriott, PhD, University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

Purpose:
If you participate in this research study, you will be invited to provide your perspectives before, during, and after your multicultural course and how that relates to your academic experience. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you which may include your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience. Data will be collected through a video-recorded personal interview conducted over Zoom. You will be asked to review the transcription of the interview to determine accuracy. The interview will be scheduled at times that are most convenient for you. The interview should last no longer than 90 minutes and be scheduled at a time that is most convenient for you. You may refuse to answer any question during the interview. Some questions you may be asked include:

1. Tell me about your experiences as a Chinese American in your multicultural course.
2. What were some of the thoughts and emotions you experienced during your multicultural course?

You are eligible to be a possible participant if you identify as a Chinese American psychology trainee.

Risks & Benefits of Being in the Study:
The study has potential risks in that the experiences you share may be recognizable to others. However, to protect your confidentiality, I will use pseudonyms for your name, as well as your university. All recordings will be kept in locked files on my password-protected laptop and on a secured cloud storage service. To prevent any inaccurate

portrayal of your experiences, I will ask you to review a copy of the transcript, as well as review my final data analyses to validate accuracy.

This survey is designed to screen potential participants and collect demographic data. It will take about 5 minutes. You will be asked to answer questions about your generation level, age, type of graduate degree you are currently earning, etc. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to collect demographic information. Data will be collected using the Internet; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third party. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. We strongly advise that you do not use an employer issued device (laptop, smartphone etc.) to respond to this survey.

The overall risk in this study is minimal and you are only asked to disclose personal information that you wish to disclose. Potential risks of being involved include the possibility that discussing certain issues about your experience may be upsetting. If this occurs, I will assist you in locating professional mental health care in your area. You may withdraw from the study at any time and have your data (personal information & interviews) destroyed at any time.

Sharing your experiences in multicultural courses may have benefits for participants in feeling empowered by telling their story aloud or providing cathartic relief. It also may be validating to hear about other Chinese Americans in their multicultural courses when you review my final product.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. Written and video research records will be kept in password-protected files on my password-protected laptop. Files will be backed up on an secure cloud storage service, which will also remain password protected. I will use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of all participants and the universities they attend. Your responses will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in an encrypted and password protected file. Only the research team will have access to the file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Confidential information will not be shared with anyone outside of the dissertation committee. The link between your identifiers and the research data will be destroyed after the records retention period required by state and/or federal law. With your permission, I would like to videotape this interview so that I can make an accurate transcript. Once I have made the transcript, I will erase the recordings. Your name will not be in the transcript or my notes.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled**. **The alternative is not to participate**. If you decide

to participate, complete the following survey. Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate in this research study.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relationships with the University of Denver. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time; you may also skip questions if you don't want to answer them or you may choose not to return the survey.

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Denver (DU) Institutional Review Board to speak to someone independent of the research team at (303) 871-2121, or email at IRBAdmin@du.edu.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance science and health. We will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Use of your information for future research
Your information collected for this project will NOT be used or shared for future research, even if we remove the identifiable information like your name or date of birth.

Incentives to Participate:
You will receive a $10 gift certificate for participating in this research project immediately after participating in the interview.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me if you have additional questions at:

Helen Weng-Ian Chao, M.A.
helen.chao@du.edu
Counseling Psychology Department
(952) 994-2789

Faculty Sponsor:
Dr. Pat Garriott
pat.garriott@du.edu
(303) 871-6758

By providing a digital signature, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I agree to be video/audio recorded. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks

and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age. I will be given a copy of this form for your records. (If you decline, please close the webpage).

 X Sign Here

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

1. Often 'multicultural counseling' is used in the course title for diversity classes in psychology training. What comes to mind when you think of the term 'multicultural counseling'?
2. Describe the overall learning environment of your multicultural course.
   a. *Possible prompt: How did this environment affect you? In what ways were you impacted by the learning environment? (Peers, instructor, etc.)*
3. What were some of the thoughts and emotions you experienced during your multicultural course?
   a. *Possible prompt: Some students report feeling disengaged or defensive during multicultural classes. What experiences with these feelings did you have, if any? Did it remind you of any other experiences you've had personally or professionally? Did you feel you needed to prepare yourself?*
4. Tell me about your experience as a Chinese American in your multicultural course.
   a. *Possible prompt:* How has your cultural identity conflicted with or enhanced your experience? Are there specific moments in class that comes to mind?
5. What meaning do you ascribe to being Chinese American?
   a. *Possible prompt*: What do you think of the term Chinese American? When did you first realize you were Chinese American? Is there a certain time where you ascribed more meaning to it?
6. What would you change about your experience as a Chinese American during the multicultural course, if anything?
   a. *Possible prompt: If you could change something about the course to make it more beneficial for you. What would you change?*
7. Thinking back to your initial hopes for the multicultural course, can you talk about how your class did with meeting your educational interests and learning needs?
   a. *Possible prompt*: Did your experience match your expectations for the course? How so/how not?
8. What else might be significant to share about your experience as a Chinese American in a multicultural course?
   a. *Possible prompt: What questions did I not ask that you think would be important to ask to other participants? What would be your response to those questions?*

Debriefing Questions
1. How was it talking about this experience?
2. How are you feeling now, having talked about this?
3. Do you have any questions for me?

4. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?