

Understanding the Educational Experiences of Domestic and International Asian Students

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ABSTRACT

The study examined psychological concerns, social support, and cultural aspects influencing academic nonpersistence decisions for 48 domestic and 64 international Asian students. Variables of self-perception, social support, and cultural aspects were assessed between and within groups. Differences regarding social support for friends were found by status; however, no differences were yielded by sex. The psychosociocultural model of understanding educational experiences held for both student groups, however, the processes occurred differently. Specifically, the psychological dimension was most predictive of academic nonpersistence decisions for Asian domestic students, whereas the social dimension was most predictive for Asian international students. Study limitations and future implications are discussed.

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DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ASIAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- ❖ International students have shared characteristics which are uniquely different from domestic students (Thomas & Althen, 1989; Leong & Chou, 1996; Mori, 2000)
- ❖ No differences yielded between Asian international and domestic students (all race/ethnicities) (Fritz, Chin & DeMarinis, 2008)
 - Domestic students reported greater stress than their international counterparts (Misra & Castillo, 2004)

ASIANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- ❖ Universities often do not differentiate domestic and international Asian students for diversity numbers
- ❖ Students of Asian descent often perceived as “perpetual foreigners” (Tataki, 1994; 1998) or “outsiders”(Paige, 1990) in particular within higher education
- ❖ Model minority stereotype, a hegemonic device, is salient within education, creating a monolithic monotone of experiences of Asians (Lee, 1996)
- ❖ Exploration to differentiate domestic and international Asian students at a PWI warranted

PSYCHOSOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH

- ❖ 3 dimensions of student educational success (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Castellanos & Gloria, 2007)
 - Dynamic and interdependent relationships of psychological, social, and cultural constructs to understand educational experiences within context-specific issues of racial and ethnic minority students (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000).
 - Model empirically-tested with undergraduates: Asian American (Gloria & Ho, 2003), Korean American (Gloria, Castellanos, Kim, & Park, In Press), Hmong American (Lin & Gloria, Revise and Resubmit; Sengkhammee et al., 2008)

PURPOSE OF STUDY

- ❖ To examine the differences between Asian domestic and international students
- ❖ To assess the differences in strengths of relationships for the study's Asian domestic and international students
- ❖ To test whether the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions similarly uniquely and collectively accounted for academic nonpersistence decisions
 - Model-testing
 - Processes similar for domestic and international Asian students

PROCEDURES AND SETTING

- ❖ Conducted at a large Midwestern predominantly White 4-year research institution
- ❖ Institution Review Board approved
- ❖ Recruitment procedures
 - Non-parametric sampling
 - Asian-specific student organizations
- ❖ Collected as part of larger study
 - 45 minutes to complete
 - Incentive of movie ticket
- ❖ Critical racial incident(s) against Asian students
 - University response(s) point(s) of contention

PARTICIPANTS

- ❖ 48 Domestic
 - Largest ethnic groups were Korean (10), Hmong (9), Chinese (8) and Lao (5)
 - 31 females, 17 males
 - Age = 18-49
 - ($M = 22.81$, $SD = 4.78$)
 - Class standing
 - 5 Freshman
 - 6 Sophomores
 - 11 Juniors
 - 7 Seniors
 - 19 Graduate students
 - GPA = 3.21 ($SD = .52$)
- ❖ 64 International
 - Largest ethnic groups were Korean, (20), Chinese (17), and Japanese (4)
 - 29 females, 35 males
 - Age = 18-40
 - ($M = 26.8$, $SD = 5.16$)
 - Class standing
 - 2 Freshman
 - 2 Sophomores
 - 7 Juniors
 - 5 Seniors
 - 48 Graduate students
 - GPA = 3.47 ($SD = .66$)

INSTRUMENTATION

- ❖ Counterbalanced scales with general demographic sheet first
- ❖ All internal consistencies are adequate
- ❖ *Psychological Construct: Self Beliefs Variable Set*
 - College Environmental Stress Scale (CESS, 16 items, $\alpha = .88$) – examined college stress related to academics and finances (Muñoz, 1986)
 - Imposter Syndrome Scale (ISS, 14 items, $\alpha = .73$) – assessed feelings of academic phoniness (Harvey, 1982)
- ❖ *Social Construct: Social Support Variable Set*
 - Perceived Social Support Family and Friends (PSS-Fa, PSS-Fr, 20 items, $\alpha = .92$) – measured perception of support, information, and feedback from family and friends (Procidano & Heller, 1983)
 - Mentors Scale (MS, 5 items, $\alpha = .84$) – examined perceived mentorship (Gloria, Robinson, Hamilton & Willson, 1999)
- ❖ *Cultural Construct: Cultural and Environmental Factors Variable Set*
 - University Environment Scale (UES, 14 items, $\alpha = .81$) – assessed perceptions of university environment (Gloria & Robinson, 1996)

- Multiethnic Identity Scale (MEIM, 20 items, $\alpha = .85$) – measured sense of ethnic identity and other-group orientation (Phinney, 1992)
- ❖ *Criterion Variable*
 - Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decisions Scale (P/VDDS, 30 items, $\alpha = .76$) – examined academic nonpersistence decisions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980)

RESULTS

- ❖ Group mean differences (t-tests)
 - Gender
 - No difference found
 - Status
 - Domestic reported higher PSS-Fr than international students
- ❖ Differences of Coefficients (r to z transformations)
 - Gender
 - Females reported significantly stronger:
 - CESS to P/VDDS than did males
 - ISS to CESS than did males
 - Status:
 - Domestic reported significantly stronger CESS to P/VDDS than did international students
- ❖ Unique and collective prediction of P/VDDS (Hierarchical Regressions)
 - Imposter, social support, mentorship, and university environment were strongest predictors for both groups
 - Domestic student reported that imposter, stress, social support from friends, mentorship, and university environment were the strongest predictors
 - International student reported that social support from friends, mentorship, and university environment were the strongest predictors

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

- ❖ PSC process salient in accounting for academic nonpersistence decisions for both domestic and international Asian students
 - Model holds for both groups, supporting need that whole student processes warrant attention
- ❖ Salience of dimensions differed by status in which social was most predictive for international and psychological was most predictive for domestic
 - Unique contribution of psychological dimension was non-significant for international students
 - Mentors strongest predictor of social for international whereas social support from friends strongest predictor for domestic students
 - Differ emphasis in student programming and services for students (e.g., social activities with mentors versus psychoeducational workshops on personal and academic coping)
- ❖ Influence of stress to academic nonpersistence decisions significantly stronger for domestic than international students
 - Explore influence of stress as related to development of social relationships (e.g., mentors for international students)
 - Examine means to decrease stress as related to sense of phoniness within the university context
- ❖ Perceived social support from friends significantly greater than and a stronger predictor for social dimensions for domestic than international students
 - Domestic students may have greater expectations for the “full college experience” with social support from friends whereas international students’ expectations may be focused on academics with mentor(s)
 - Clinicians must consciously refer students to specific student support type (e.g., student organizations for domestic and academic or “elder” connections for international students)

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- ❖ Small N
 - Work with Asian student advisors and student leaders for recruitment

- ❖ Scale not developed or validated for Asian students
 - Development of culture specific scales
- ❖ Self-report with likelihood of social desirable responses
 - Addition of social desirability scale
- ❖ Construct of imposter syndrome too general
 - Measurement of culturally-specific perceptions (i.e., perpetual foreigner, model minority)
- ❖ Aggregation of Asian ethnic groups
 - Compare specific Asian ethnic groups by domestic and international status (e.g., Korean international and Korean domestic students)

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