

MANAGEMENT

Perceived Discrimination Against Asian Americans and Asian International Students

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Past research has identified that Asians are often perceived as the “Model Minority” (a group that is seen as exemplary for other minority groups and does not suffer from discrimination). This study sought to explore the attitudes and perceptions of discrimination across Purdue, with a focus on Asian American and Asian international students in an educational context.

Over 3,700 students responded to a Qualtrics survey containing 38 questions assessing In-group disadvantage, Out-group privilege, Prejudice across contexts, and Past experiences with discrimination, using the 5-Point Likert Scale.

When students were asked to take the perspective of an Asian, students from all groups perceived less discrimination against Asians. Blacks perceived the most, while Whites, Middle Easterners, and East Asians perceived the least discrimination against Asians. Regardless of group, domestic students perceived more discrimination against Asians than international students.

When asked about their own experiences, domestic students perceived significantly less discrimination against their own group than international students. However, as a group, Asians perceive equal discrimination regardless of

citizenship status. These results provide initial evidence that discrimination is a problem on campus for all racial groups, and is especially true when you are an international student.

Due to a lack of preceding studies on Asian American and Asian international students’ experiences on a college campus, the resulting data collected in this study are pivotal to show evidence against the “Model Minority” concept as well as acknowledging prejudiced sentiment against Asians on Purdue’s campus.

To follow up, when asked to provide suggestions for potential student resources on campus for issues of prejudice and discrimination, participants gave a range of responses. A common theme among all students, regardless of group status, focused on systematic institutional and administrative support for issues of discrimination across campus. Implementation of possible diversity policies that will positively and realistically impact students are discussed, such as requiring racial etiquette modules or more public cultural events.

Research advisor Meara Habashi writes: “Research on the experiences of minority groups is not new; however, little (if any) research documents the experiences of specific groups across the Purdue campus. Zoya takes on this important question and offers possible suggestions for the Purdue administration to implement to improve the experiences of Asians and other minority groups across campus.”