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Robin L. Sandberg
University of Northern Iowa

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Abstract

The number of international students pursuing higher education in the United States continues to grow each year. While over 190 countries are represented, over half of the students are coming from Asian countries. According to a 2001 survey of international students studying in the United States, 55% of students come from Asian countries, with China, India, and Japan listed as the top three countries of origin. This paper will focus primarily on (1) the exploration of Asian international students' openness to United States counseling services offered on college campuses, (2) the counselor characteristic preferences of Asian international students, and ultimately (3) the impact of counselor ethnicity as a counselor characteristic.

ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' AND ASIAN AMERICANS' COUNSELING
CHARACTERISTIC PREFERENCES AND IMPACT OF COUNSELOR ETHNICITY

A Research Paper

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Dr. Carolyn Bair / Director of Research Paper

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Dr. Roberto Clemente / Second Reader of Research Paper

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Date Approved

Michael D. Waggoner

Head, Department of Educational Leadership,
Counseling, and Postsecondary Education

Asian International Students' and Asian Americans' Counseling
Characteristic Preferences and Impact of Counselor Ethnicity

The number of international students pursuing higher education in the United States continues to grow each year. Since the Second World War, the international student population has increased over 16 times its original number of 34,232 in 1954 to the recent number of 547,867 as reported in the 2001 Open Doors Survey. This current number of international students represents 3.9% of the total college student population and has steadily increased both numerically and proportionally each year (Institute of International Education, 2001). With this continual growth in the international population, it is imperative for administrators and counselors to prepare themselves to understand the unique needs of this often overlooked population, particularly in the areas of mental health counseling.

While over 190 countries are represented, over half of the students are coming from Asian countries. According to a 2001 survey of international students studying in the United States, 55% of students come from Asian countries, with China, India, and Japan listed as the top three countries of origin for international students (Institute of International Education, 2001; Aubrey, 1991). This paper will focus primarily on (1) the exploration of Asian international students' openness to United States counseling services offered on college campuses, (2) the counselor characteristic preferences of Asian international students, and ultimately (3) the impact of counselor ethnicity as a counselor characteristic.

Limitations

Limitations of this paper include the following: (1) inability to find literature specifically addressing Asian international students' preferences related to counseling; (2) much of the research found by the writer corresponds to the general international student population; and (3)

little literature is available to discuss Asian international students' perceptions of U.S. ethnic minorities.

In response to the limited literature addressing Asian international students' perceptions of ethnic minorities, the author will dedicate the second half of the paper to exploring research conducted with a similar population. The group chosen is the Asian American population, specifically those who are considered to be low acculturated. The author is operating under the assumption that the Asian American community is one that shares more cultural values and beliefs with the Asian international population than any other, specifically low acculturated Asian Americans. Asian American counselor characteristic preferences will be examined, with particular attention given to this group's preference for same race counselors versus transracial counselors. Ultimately, the author wishes to gain a comprehensive understanding of preferred counselor characteristics of the Asian American community, explicitly the perceptions of ethnically-matched counselors. From these findings, recommendations will be made for future research to be conducted with the Asian international population to better understand preferred counselor characteristics and the impact of counselor ethnicity.

Challenges of International Students and Need for Counseling

With the continual increase of the international student population, it is important for student affairs professionals to understand the distinct needs of this growing population, particularly their mental health concerns. Like U.S. students, international students experience emotional and psychological challenges while pursuing higher education. During their studies, they may reach levels of emotional distress that would require counseling services. Thomas and Althen (1989) note that although all new students, regardless of country origin, face the "need to

adjust to their new setting;” they contend that international students must “face some adjustments that domestic students do not”(pp. 213-214).

Leong and Chou (2002) also acknowledge the challenges faced by international students and continue by distinguishing between the key issues these students face. In the overview of client variables, the authors reference two approaches used to discuss the issues of international students. In one category, researchers identify the issues that are distinctive of the international student population. Leong demonstrates the identification method when he lists three types of personal adjustment problems of international students: “those common to all students, those common to most sojourners, and those unique to international students” (as cited in Leong & Chou, 2002, p.186).

The second approach identified by Leong and Chou is a classification method that names international students’ specific problems into groups. The classification technique is exemplified by Thomson and Althen (1989) in their enumeration of international students’ adjustment challenges: (1) culture shock, initial adjustment to the new culture; (2) academic difficulty stemming from the novelty of the academic system; (3) political, religious, and social conflicts among fellow nationals; (4) impacts of developments in home countries; (5) cross-cultural male-female relationships; (6) social isolation; etc.” (pp. 214-215).

Berg-Cross, Craig, and Wessel (2001) propose that the “emotional issues faced by international students go beyond separation and adjustment issues” (p. 866). The authors go further by naming the following special challenges that international students face:

1. **Work Restrictions.** Without the freedom to seek and accept any type of work, international students often feel a restriction of their independence needs. The inability to accept employment can also result in an increase of financial burdens.

Those who choose to work without a permit can also experience guilt, paranoia, and stress.

2. Poor academic achievement. Due to immigration restrictions, international students often do not have the luxury to take a semester off or take a lighter load to “get it together” if their grades are too low. They can be forced to leave or change their major.
3. Reluctance to utilize psychological services. Cultural constraints and fear of “records” prevent international students from seeking out help freely.
4. Discrimination. International students, like other minority populations, also face discrimination based on their nationality, ethnicity, language, food preferences, and leisure styles. This is an ongoing and at times an agonizing experience for many international students (Berg-Cross et al., 2001).

International students often feel isolated and do not have adequate social support systems (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986; Thoas & Althen, 1989). While international students and United States ethnic minorities (EM) share the common characteristic of not belonging to the majority, international students are quite unique from EM populations. Unlike U.S. minorities, most international students plan to return to home countries once their studies are finished and are only in the U.S. temporarily; thus they are people in transition living in a foreign academic setting only to realize their educational objectives. The international student populations are far from their families, relatives, and friends and are likely to have basic social support networks very different from those of the U.S. students. “Being faced with a new set of basic values and beliefs, international students are continually challenged to accommodate themselves to a variety of cultural differences” (Mori, 2000, p. 137).

International students often face many challenges while studying in the U.S. (Brinson & Kottler, 1995; Komiya & Eells, 2001; Thomas & Althen, 1989). From homesickness, adjusting to a new university system, effective communication in a foreign language, financial worries, leaving a familiar social support system, to battles with loneliness, these students often find themselves feeling socially isolated. Stress levels experienced within the first 6 months can reach crisis levels and thus is important for higher educational systems to be prepared to provide adequate counseling support for their international students (Wehrly as cited in Yomiya & Eels, 2001).

Under-Utilization of Counseling Services by International Students

Despite the numerous psychological challenges and high need for support, international students are generally reluctant to seek counseling services (Brinson & Kottler, 1995; Mori, 2000). Additionally, when counseling services are utilized, 50% of international students do not return after the first session as compared to 30% for U.S. students (Komiya & Eells, 2001; Brinson & Kottler, 1995). The underutilization of college counseling centers is of concern because counseling centers play a role in increasing higher retention and graduation rates (Turner & Berry 2000).

There are many possible reasons for underutilization of counseling services by international students. One possibility may be the perspectives and attitudes towards counseling by non-U.S. students. Mori attributes the under-usage to the “critical cultural differences in basic beliefs about mental health problems” by international students (2000). The U.S. culture (particularly the Euro-American) views the psychological self as central to the individual being. As a result, U.S. clients deem it necessary to incorporate the self when attempting to understand

and address mental health, and “may view personal problems as a consequence of personal inadequacies” (Brinson & Kottler, 1995b, 1995).

On the other hand, minority groups, such as the international student population, are reported to frequently consider psychological problems to be caused by forces outside of their control and do not perceive counseling as a means to respond to the problems (Brinson & Kottler, 1995b). It has also been reported that in many cultures it is not just the individual who tries to deny the existence of mental illness, but often times also includes family denial as well, which is done to prevent cultural excommunication and losing face (Mori, 2000).

Another reason for the under-usage of counseling services may be attributed to the manner in which this population responds to psychological challenges. Alexander, Klein, Workneh, and Miller (1976) found that international students express their stress differently than U.S. students. They maintain that many international students experience stress physically rather than psychologically and will seek medical help more often than psychological help (as cited in Leong & Chou, 2002).

Oropeza, Fitzgibbon, and Baron (1991) also acknowledge that international students may face challenges unique from those of domestic students. They identify the following five stressors, which they believe to be central in mental health crises of international students:

1. Culture shock, usually manifested through anxiety and depression
2. Changes in social and economic status, which can create feelings of loss, grief, or resentment
3. Concerns about academic performance
4. Isolation, alienation, and discrimination

5. Family-related pressures, which include differential rates of acculturation among family members (pp. 280-281).

Additionally, Lin and Yi (1997) report, "many international students develop performance anxiety and depression, but their problems are often manifested as psychosomatic complaints such as sleep disturbances, eating problems, fatigue, stomach ache, or headache" (pp. 475). Although their problems may be psychologically related, international students often seek medical help for their physical complaints. In reality, their problems are stemming from psychological stressors.

A further consideration for underutilization should be international students' perceptions of U.S. counselors. International students may view counselors with suspicion due to their inability to understand why counselors who are most likely from the "mainstream Euro-American culture," are interested in helping them, the minority student (Brinson & Kottler, 1995b). Some students may go as far as to consider counseling a form of mind control (Brinson & Kottler, 1995b). For these misperceptions, students repress sharing psychological concerns and symptoms with persons outside of fellow nationals.

International Counseling

The international student population faces counseling-worthy challenges and is one that could benefit from utilization of counseling services. Although research findings suggest a need for counseling services for this group, one cannot assume positive results solely through utilization. Counselors must be prepared and able to provide both positive and effective sessions for those students who do choose to utilize these services.

To understand how to assist international students most effectively, a review of international counseling literature is necessary. Many authors suggest that counselors need to

have knowledge and respect for other countries and cultures in order to counsel international students effectively. While many support this notion, Zhang and Dixon (2001) argue there are few “empirically supported techniques and approaches for providing cross cultural counseling” to this population (p. 254).

Counselors must be able to recognize the “potential cultural differences that can be barriers to effective counseling” (Sue et al, 1982 as cited in Zhang & Dixon, 2001) and should be ready to have certain culture-specific skills to use with the respective students from these cultures. By functional definition, one could view international counseling to be the epitome of multicultural counseling due to the vast number of different cultures all categorized as “international.” Although counselors should hone their culture-specific skills, it is important to avoid cultural stereotyping (Zhang & Dixon, 2001). It is important to remember that while cultural assumptions are being drawn for specific countries, there are still vast cultural differences within nationalities just as we find within the United States.

Additional research addressing preferred counseling styles by Foley and Fouqua (1988) indicates a preference by international students for a more directive style of counseling. This style calls for counselors to provide more structured sessions in which they are authoritative, give advice, and “provide solutions to clients’ problems” (p. 468). Pederson (1991) also addresses counseling formality: “The critical incidents and responses suggest that informal methods and informal counseling contexts become especially important in counseling international students” (p. 10).

With all the challenges of counseling international students, counselors must acknowledge one cannot be an expert in all 190+ countries and cultures represented in the international student population. Although it can be argued that all international students may

experience high levels of psychological stress, Asian international students have been identified as having more problems than students coming from European countries. "Asian international students experience problems that, if not unique to Asian international students, are often amplified with them" (Zhang & Dixon, 2001, p. 253). Problems include language difficulties, culture shock, difficulty adapting to U.S. culture and social norms, financial problems, role conflicts, and lack of self-confidence.

Asian international students' interactions with U.S. citizens are less frequent than those students from Europe, and their adjustment experiences rate lower than Latin American and European students. Additionally, the Asian international population has been noted to be less effective in their ability to handle stress and to have more difficulty with the English language than students from other regions of the world (Zhang & Dixon, 2001). Through past studies and research, Asian international students have been identified as a population that faces difficulties appropriate for counseling services (Lin & Yi, 1997; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993; Surdam & Collins, 1984)

While Asian international students would benefit from the use of counseling services, one must be aware of additional challenges associated with effective cross-cultural, Asian international counseling. Counselors recognize that not all students respond well to traditional U.S. western counseling techniques. In fact, it has been stated, "in the field of multicultural counseling, there is a consensus that western approaches may be inappropriate for ethnic minorities and international students" (Yau, Sue, & Hayden, 1992, p.100).

When conducting a western counseling session with Asian international students, it is important for counselors to understand and recognize the presence of very influential cultural differences between the "west" and the "east". Aside from the obvious differences of language,

one must be conscientious of additional aspects that may influence the interaction. It is important to understand that different cultural perceptions and beliefs affect how individuals make sense of the world and affect both the conscious and unconscious mind in their attempts to understand, respect, and operate within the different cultures. Americans are operating under the influences of a western mentality and when interacting with the Asian populations will interact more effectively if they are aware not only of cultural traits of the host country they are working in, but also of the general “American traits” they themselves possess (Samovar & Porter, 2001).

Counselors need to remain aware of another difference between western and eastern cultures, the difference between “High-Context” cultures vs. “Low-Context” cultures. High-context cultures, such as those found in many of the Asian countries, include people who are “very homogeneous with regard to experiences, information networks...because tradition and history [tend to] change very little over time.” These cultures also use nonverbal communication more because the meaning is often implied and assumed to be understood without the actual detailed verbal or written description of what happened (Samovar & Porter 2001, p. 81).

The omission of details is seen often in saving-face strategies and/or strategies to display politeness. “Our assumption regarding people from high-context cultures is that they use more politeness strategies because of the need to save face, especially in negative situations” (Thomas 1998, p. 9). Messages are often relayed through the use of the environment or context rather than the verbal expression. Japanese, Chinese, and Korean cultures are examples of those that would be defined as high-context.

In low-context cultures, such as the United States, communication tends to be “more direct and explicit... everything needs to be stated, and if possible, stated well.” A low-context communication interaction would make use of more words rather than silence and articulate

verbally what needs to happen (Samovar & Porter, 2001, p. 81). In order to communicate effectively with a person from a high-context culture, U.S. western-trained counselor must be able to recognize and understand these cultural differences. "The point isn't that high-context forms of communication are always better, but that it's essential to select the communication style most appropriate for the people and the purpose involved" (Gundling 1999, p. 30).

Counselors should be aware of the effect of western counseling methods with Asian international students. In a study by Sadowsky (1991), Asian international students' perceptions of culturally consistent counseling techniques were compared to culturally discrepant counseling techniques (labeled as western counseling biases). Sadowsky found that Asian international students perceived counselors to have greater expertise and trustworthiness in those who used culturally consistent counseling. Attractiveness was also examined, but there was not a significant preference for a counselor who was culturally consistent over a counselor who was culturally discrepant.

Asian International Students' Openness to Counseling

Although the Asian international population may benefit greatly from counseling services, attitudes towards receiving psychological help are not positive. Zhang (2000) found that of all the international students, the Asian international students held the most negative attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, ability to recognize the need for psychological help, confidence in mental health practitioners, interpersonal openness, and stigma tolerance. His research also indicates that Asian international students who have higher levels of acculturation had more positive attitudes towards counseling, stigma tolerance, and confidence in mental health practitioners.

Mau and Jepsen (1988) compared Chinese international and U.S. student preferences for helpers. They found that students from both groups exhibited similar preferences for helpers in areas such as: health problems: a physician, financial difficulties: a parent, academic: an academic advisor, etc. The two groups made distinguishing preferences in their responses to vocational-educational problems and psychological pathology. While U.S. students indicated a preference for academic advisor and psychological helpers, Chinese international students sought help from their friends for vocational-educational problems and preferred no helpers for psychological problems.

This negative perception towards counseling by Asian international students is exhibited in a 1998 study by Flum, who investigated attitudes towards seeking psychological help by Asian international students from China, Japan, and Korea and how they conceptualize mental health and mental illness. A majority of students from all three Asian groups indicated a negative reaction by their parents if they learned their son or daughter had sought out psychological help. Students from China and Japan also reported underdevelopment of mental health counseling in their home countries and indicated that counseling was not used as frequently as in the United States. Students from all Asian groups attested that citizens in respective countries view psychotherapy as a shameful activity.

Preferred Counselor Characteristics

For those Asian international students who do choose to seek counseling, researchers have found the existence of counseling preferences. Japanese students are reported to prefer a more directive counseling style from counselors whereas U.S. students understand counseling to be non-directive. Chinese students are also reported to prefer a directive and structured approach

(Fukuhara, 1973; Exum & Lau, 1988). Foley and Fuqua (1988) have also found a more directive, authoritative style of counseling to be preferred by Korean clientele.

Furthermore, it was found that Asian international students expected to play a more passive role in counseling (Atkinson, Maruyama, & Matsui, 1978; Exum & Lau, 1988; Yuen & Tinsley, 1981, as cited in Zhang & Dixon, 2001). Although research supports the use of directive counseling for Asian international students, Yau, Sue, and Hayden's research did not find a preference for directive counseling styles by international students. Their results showed no difference in preferences for non-directive and directive approaches by international students (Zhang & Dixon, 2001). Bingi's (1994) research indicates that Asian international students from China and India have preferences for counselor interpersonal communication styles that are: friendly-dominant, friendly-submissive, and hostile-dominant over the interpersonal styles that were eclectic or hostile-submissive.

Ethnicity as a Counselor Characteristic

Limited research literature is available to address Asian international students' preferences and perceptions of counselor characteristics in regard to ethnicity. For this reason, the author will examine research regarding Asian American preferences for counseling and counselor characteristics.

The decision to examine the Asian American population is made under the assumption that these two groups share similar characteristics in regard to counseling preferences due to shared cultural beliefs and values. The author hopes to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Asian international population tendencies by examining the extensive literature that has been written about the U.S. ethnic minority population whose cultural roots

and value systems are derived from the same countries the Asian international students call home.

Past research has drawn a connection between these two groups in regard to cultural values and norms. Culturally responsive techniques designed for the use with Asian Americans are often derived from the same Eastern, Asian, collectivist cultural framework used for the Asian international student. This is exemplified through Pederson's literature that warns counselors to be wary when they attempt to utilize "culturally responsive" counseling techniques with Asian Americans due to the fact that some of the clients will have high levels of assimilation and acculturation and no longer hold the "traditional Asian values" (1985). Kim and Atkinson (2002) also theorize that "recently immigrated Asian Americans will adhere to the Asian cultural values to a greater extent than those... who are more removed from immigration and have been socialized in the U.S. culture" (p. 3). These Asian cultural values that distinguish them from European Americans include, "collectivism, conformity to norms, emotional self-control, family recognition through achievement, filial piety, and humanity" (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999 as cited in Kim & Atkinson 2002).

Perception and preferences of counselor ethnicity

Talbot, Geelhoed, Ninggal, and Tajudin assert that a limited number of studies have been conducted about "...international students' attitudes and perceptions of the American people and their culture; even less is known about international students' beliefs about and perspectives on the ethnic minorities of the United States" (1999, p. 210). The research of Talbot et al. examines Asian international students' perceptions of the U.S. African American ethnic minorities. It was found that the Asian international students had "biases against and some discomfort with African Americans" (p.210).

While some attention has been given to the perceptions of Asian international students towards the physically and culturally dissimilar African American population, research conducted to explore the perceptions towards the physically and culturally similar Asian American population is nonexistent. In order to explore the role of counselor ethnicity as a counselor characteristic for Asian international students, it is necessary to for additional research to be conducted. Currently, literature that addresses Asian international students' perceptions of U.S. ethnic minorities only examines the African American population. For this reason, the author is unable to explore the effect of ethnicity on Asian international students' perceptions and preferences of counselor characteristics. As a result, literature of a similar population, Asian American, will be examined and from this, the author will make future research recommendations to be applied to the Asian international population.

Use of Asian American Literature in Lieu of Asian International Literature

The Asian American (AA) population has been chosen as for comparison to Asian international students due to their shared ethnic roots, physical similarity, comparable cultural transition and adaptation experiences of those 61% of AA who are foreign born, and shared cultural values (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000a; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000b).

The Asian American population also shares similar challenges as the Asian international population. Hong and Ham (2001) identify adaptation challenges faced by immigrant Asian Americans as experienced by Asian international students: culture shock, racism, separation from family/social support, language barriers, etc. Some immigrant AA experience the process of "morphostasis" in which individuals attempt to "cope with changes in the organization of their lives in the new host country and to maintain predictable patterns of behavior within their own culture" (p. 57).

Some immigrants may choose to live in ethnic clusters or locate by a family member already living in the U.S. to help preserve their normative cultural patterns and perspective. As a result, some Asian Americans do maintain close ties and values of the home country and culture (Hong & Ham, 2001). Another similarity shared between the Asian international students and the Asian American population is the reported preference for directive, authoritarian counseling style (Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991).

Much research has been given to exploring the impact of same ethnicity counseling dyads. The interest in this area is inspired by the "social influence theory's similarity-dissimilarity propositions" (Kim & Atkinson, 2002, p. 4), which is taken from the "proposition on group-membership similarity, which posits that ethnic similarity is positively related to perception of counselor credibility" (Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991 as cited in Kim & Atkinson, 2002).

The importance of an ethnic match between counselor and client is recognized by most researchers, but "few empirical studies have been conducted on this topic, and those that exist have focused on African Americans" (Hom, 1996, p. 6). While ethnicity has been identified to be a counselor preference by Asian American clientele, it is not the only, nor the most important characteristic. Atkinson, Poston, Fulong, and Mercado (1989) found that Asian American respondents preferred counselor characteristics in order of greatest importance to least were: (1) amount of education, (2) similar attitudes, (3) age (preference of older), (4) similar personality, and (5) similar ethnicity.

Ethnically matched client/counselor dyads are supported in the research of Gim, Atkinson, and Kim (1991), who found that Asian Americans perceived an ethnically-similar counselor to be more credible and culturally competent than an ethnically-dissimilar counselor.

Atkinson and Matsushita's findings (1991) also support the Asian Americans' preference for an ethnically-similar counselor in regard to attractiveness, but preference for the use of non-directive, culturally-consistent counseling techniques by the ethnically-matched counselor was not existent.

While many researchers (Atkinson, Wampold, Low, Hatthews, & Ahn, 1998; Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Atkinson, Poston, & Furlong, 1989; Gim, Atkinson, & Kim, 1991) report positive correlation between counselor ethnicity and credibility, one must be aware of a research design limitation that decreases the generalizability of the findings. In the previous studies, which supported positive impact of matched ethnicity counseling, actual counseling sessions were not used but rather responses were made to counseling sessions presented in formats such as audiovisual analogues.

In response to the actual counseling session limitation, Kim and Atkinson (2002) incorporated actual counseling sessions with their investigation of the "relationships among client adherence to Asian cultural values, counselor expression of cultural values, counselor ethnicity, and career counseling process with Asian American college students" (p. 3). They found that students who had high adherence to Asian cultural values viewed Asian American counselors as more credible and empathic than those clients with low adherence to Asian values. The students with low adherence to Asian cultural values evaluated the European American counselor as more empathic than those clients with high adherence to Asian values.

Although Asian American students who had high adherence to Asian cultural values viewed Asian American counselors as more credible and empathic, all of the Asian American students, regardless of high or low adherence to cultural values, rated sessions with the ethnically dissimilar counselor to be more positive and arousing. Kim and Atkinson (2002) concluded that

for “some situations and by some measures, European American counselors are viewed more favorably than Asian American counselors” (p.12). They also go on to claim that the more favorable ratings of the European American counselor could be attributed to “multicultural counseling sensitivity, respect, and competence” (p.12).

While Asian American counselor ethnicity is found not to positively influence the perceptions of clients with low adherence to Asian values, those students who had high adherence to Asian values, similar to Asian international students, responded positively to the Asian ethnicity of the counselor in regard to credibility and empathy.

Discussion

Asian American counseling research reports positive correlations between credibility and ethnically-matched counselors (Atkinson, Wampold, Low, Hatthews, & Ahn, 1998; Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Atkinson, Poston, & Furlong, 1989; Gim, Atkinson, & Kim, 1991, Kim & Atkinson, 2002). Although ethnicity plays a positive role in perception of credibility, it is not found to be a factor in clientele and session satisfaction (Kim & Atkinson, 2002). While Asian American populations indicate a preference for ethnically-matched counselors, ethnicity does not appear to be the most important factor for this population when seeking ideal counseling characteristics. Counselor ethnicity appears to affect the attractiveness of counselors, particularly for those Asian Americans with low acculturation. Asian Americans report ethnically similar counselors as preferable, but this does not appear to be a major preference for counseling characteristics. Rather, greater importance is given to counselor’s education, attitudes, age, and personality, all of which are independent of ethnicity. Regardless, the influence of counselor ethnicity is undeniable and when examining Asian American counselor characteristic preferences, it should be considered a significant factor.

Counselors and Student Affairs professionals should be aware that while Asian international students and Asian American students may exhibit similar characteristics, they are two very distinct populations. Although counselor ethnicity, specifically Asian American, is found to be an influential characteristic among Asian Americans, it may not be as significant for the Asian international population. The impact of counselor ethnicity and ethnically-matched counseling dyads has not been researched in regard to the Asian international students/clients.

As U.S. institutions continue to draw their students from a global market, it is imperative that Student Affairs and Counseling professionals have the skills and knowledge necessary to respond and understand the needs of their new international clientele. Fortunately, U.S. professionals are not a homogenous group but as a result, professionals must recognize the impact of one's ethnicity on students/clients' perceptions of the helper. Due to the diversification of helpers, future research is needed to understand how international students perceive U.S. ethnic minorities and what role ethnicity plays in preferred counselor characteristics.

The author recommends research in the following areas for the Asian international population:

- (1) Perceptions of Asian Americans by Asian international students
 - a. Are Asian Americans perceived to be more similar to Asian international students as compared to other ethnicities?
- (2) Impact of counselor ethnicity for Asian International students
 - a. Positive and negative stereotypes Asian international students have towards various ethnicities in a helping role (African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, etc.)

Until population-specific-research is conducted, professionals are unable to determine what impact counselor ethnicity has on Asian international students' perceptions and preferences for counselor characteristics. Consequently, without a solid, population-specific, research-based foundation, professionals are left to mere speculation regarding Asian international students' perceptions of U.S. ethnic minorities.

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