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Title: The labels of ABC and FOB in the Chinese American community at UIUC

About the Author: I am a freshman here at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign with undecided as my major. Currently in DGS, and my objective is to get into College of Business. I’m an immigrant that lives in America for nearly eight years and I was always been label as being a FOB in the early years that I’m here. But as time went on, I change my image and started to associate myself as being an ABC because I think I’m no different from them except the fact that I wasn’t born in America.

Keywords: Chinese, Chinese American, FOB, ABC, Identity, Labels

Abstract: This project investigates the meaning of the labels of ABC and FOB in the Chinese American community, the benefits, and why people label themselves one or the other and is it possible for someone to have both identities? Data was gathered through interviews of four Chinese and Chinese Americans who identify themselves as FOB or ABC. Findings shows that these two identities can be perform through clothes and actions and how being coexistent with both cultures, there’s a need to choose to either act out one identity or rejects the other.

Initial Exercises:

Question:

Plan: Proposal

Aesthetics and style of Asian American

Question

Is there a correlation between race and style? Where do people get style from and how does race affect the development of style? What is the role of style in racial identity? How do media and magazines affect style choices? How does race restrict style? Do people avoid certain styles of clothes because they don’t want to be stereotyped? What is considered fashion (desirable look)? What are some common factors in
AA society?

This is the topic that I wanted to study on because I’m interested in fashion and influenced by the ideals article by Anona Whitley (Korean American Aesthetics and Style).

Plan

For my research plan, I’d like to find out is there a correlation between race and style. The first approach I will take is to observe the union courtyard café to see if I can find anything about my topic while I’m there. Secondly, I will interview my Asian friends and see their opinions on my topic and asked them the questions I mention above. Lastly, I will make a survey so I can do surveys about my topic and use the survey results as one part of my research.

With all the examinations have done above, I would have enough resources to complete my research and see if there are correlations among race and style. All the results from above can give me what others’ ideas are and so I won’t judge things just by my own. With the results I can be less subjective and be more objective.

Couples week into my research, the topic Aesthetics and style of Asian American became dispassionate to me because I found that I’m more interested in the labels of ABC and FOB. Throughout my life, I have been associated with the two terms therefore I changed my topic to The labels of ABC and FOB in the Chinese American community at UIUC.

Data: Intervarsity

The text that I analyzed was one of the brochures from the conference held by the intervarsity, a Christian fellowship large group. It’s an Asian American Student Conference called *Engage*: the main focus of the conference is to explore how gender roles influences Asian American identity and what it truly means to be an Asian American. The first thing I saw was schedule for the conference and it’s pretty Christian basic relating with quiet times, large group, small group, praise and worship…. The second document was about stereotyped images of Asian Americans in media presented with few images considered stereotypical and the back of it is what are some things that Asian American being labialized in terms of gender roles. The third thing I saw was a questionnaire, the front page has few passages from the bible about “the Apostle John” and “revolution”, and the back side is reflection questions about the passages and the stereotypical images
and gender roles. Lastly, the brochure ends with an evaluation sheet rating the conference from one to five and some improvement suggestions.

Even though this is an Asian American conference, but most of the materials inside are church related because it was held by intervarsity and it made me realize on how there’s certain criteria that Asian Americans fit base on the American’s view and stereotypes from the media. The goal of the conference is to withstand the stereotypes and engage with the idea of Asian American labeling.

After analyzing the text, I realized that lots of Asian American has influenced by the American culture because their religious stand is Christianity and not what their parents believe. All the text was written in English, indicating that language plays a role on within their decision on who their friends are and what they language they use to communicate. Example, Asian Americans would prefer to have friends that speak the same language as they do like English but on the other hand, Asians would prefer to use their native language to communicate because they are uncomfortable of speaking other languages besides their native language. This is all part of fitting in with the Americans because Asian Americans try to be like them by believed in what they believe and speak what they speak.

This brochure will help me on the religious views of Asian Americans and Asians, and the language they each present themselves in. The media also plays a significant role in terms of labeling; it provides the representation of that racial group and display images on how Asian Americans should be like, slanted eyes, math geeks, and more. Also the ideas of what are some things Asian Americans do to fit in with the Americans such as believe in Christianity in terms of fitting into the American culture.

Interview

For my interview, I chose to interview two friends of mine because my topic is finding the distinction of American Born vs. Foreigner and they both fit the criteria of my research, one is American born and the other is Foreigner and I’m interested to hear their responses. The location I chose to do my interview is in one of my interviewee’s dorm because that’s a common place where they both chill and I want them to be in a place where they both comfortable with the surroundings.
The first person I interviewed was the American Born friend. When I first asked him about his family history and the demographics of his neighborhood, he answered how he is glad that his family came here early and while growing up as a native citizen in a neighborhood with mostly Chinese, going to a typical Chinese/Chinese American elementary school with mostly FOBs make him feels linguistic superiority because most of the Chinese have bad English. It seems like to me how language plays an important role of labeling American Born vs. Foreigner. Later he added, he would prefer to speak English but when he encounters someone with very bad English like his parents he would speak Chinese (to the best of his ability). It looks like American born has limited Chinese vocabulary even though he wishes he would know more Chinese so his parents won’t have a hard time understanding him. The interview carry on, I asked “when someone asks you if you are a Chinese American or Chinese, how you would respond, and list some reasons why you defined yourself that way?” With some thought in process, he answered, “I am Chinese American but I’m also a Chinese want to be because I’m interested in those short Chinese girls because I, myself is relatively short. Also how I can’t dress Chinese due to lack of China clothes to help me identify as Chinese so I mostly wear brands like Hollister, and Abercrombie like rest of my Chinese American friends wear.”

The second interviewee was not native born, I ask the same first question above, and he answered that he wishes he was native born because he dislike his accent, he moved to few different living areas within the 10 years he has been here: it was not a so good experience for him because he always imagined he would be with a bunch of Chinese people instead of living in a white neighborhood where he was force to be friends with the whites. It seems he’s not comfortable with the new culture that he’s in, where there isn’t just Chinese in the neighborhoods. Later he added, it’s not that he isn’t open to the new culture, it’s just that he sometimes don’t get the white people jokes because he doesn’t understand them. It looks like he has limited English vocabulary where as the Chinese American lack of Chinese vocabulary. I asked the same second question above: he answered how he would label himself as Chinese because most of his clothes he has is from China and they are more fashionable than Chinese American style, and his idea of “inductive generalization” help him understand some separation in how he is different from Chinese American and some similarities in turn of actions. Chinese Americans eats very formal and quiet when it comes to drinking soup, but he is different, he would drink soup with the slurping sound and he identified that sound is
signifying the soup is good, but the ABCs or the Americans think it’s bad to have a habit like that because to them that’s just rude. The similarities are that we both watch dramas and we mostly play PC games like *Dota*.

From the results of my interview, I learned that food choices can be one of my questions for the future interviews: Chinese American and Chinese have nearly similar ways of classifying themselves as native vs. foreign: Appearance, actions, and language are the main characteristics on how they use to label themselves. The most interesting part of the interview is that I never took account of height would help me labeling the two and the interviewee mentioned he wishes he’s Chinese because he wants to get the short Chinese girls that matches his height because Chinese American girls is generally taller than Chinese girls and how each of them in term of both sex would prefer to use the language they know the best in terms of having a good conversation and a better understand of each other to minimize the language barrier between the two that’s one of the reasons Chinese American be friends with Chinese American and Chinese be friends with Chinese. In terms of appearance is how Chinese would prefer wearing clothes from China because they considered is more fashionable in a way comparing to Chinese American and also it’s cheaper to buy clothes from China than here. Chinese American and Chinese, they both grew up in a different culture therefore they have different perspective of a lot of things like how one of my interviewee mentions the slurping sound while drinking soup. Chinese Americans would consider it rude to make that slurping sound while drinking soup but Chinese will consider that as complimenting that the soup is good. These results are very helpful to me is because my three main focuses are appearance, language, and actions. Those are all provided with the group interview that I just did not long ago so I would think this would help me a lot when it comes to the time when I start to put my paper together as a whole.

**Discuss:**

The labels of ABC and FOB in the Chinese American community at UIUC

**Introduction**

Being in America for nearly 8 years, I have encountered the labels of ABC and FOB. But what are these terms that I’m speaking of? ABC is an abbreviation of what we normally call American-Born Chinese; the ones that are born in America and inheriting two cultures: both Chinese and
American. But on the other hand, FOB is an abbreviation of what we normally call Fresh-Off-the-Boat, the ones born in China yet live in America, inheriting only Chinese culture that we do not consider up to date in American culture from the Asian perspective.

My past experience of being labeled as both a FOB and an ABC by others led me to some reminiscence of these two labels. Upon my first arrival to America, I have made many American born Chinese friends from my elementary school, and my first impression to them was that I’m a FOB. At first, I didn’t know what a FOB is or what it stands for until they later explain the urban definition to me which mention above. I had no objection to the term that they label me as, because I myself know that the clothes I wore was from China, know little English, clueless of the American culture and most importantly, I was born in China. All the negative aspects of this term later hit me in my life. I was viewed as low class and no good for anything besides being a restaurant worker not only by my friends, but my family also. I feel the need to step up and change the standard of myself to let people view me as. As time went on, the term FOB did not apply to me anymore.

Time went on: I assimilated into the American culture. Changing the brand of clothes I wear, making American born Chinese friends, and speak English elsewhere besides home created a new image of myself. I started to wear American brands clothing like Hollister and Abercrombie as replacement for my old clothes from China. As I step into high school and college, many of the new friends, consists of mainly Asian, most of them are ABC and few of them are FOBs. They would think of me as an ABC because of the first impression I gave them consists of the way I dress, preppy/casual, and the fluency of my English; also without them knowing my birthplace. But as for my elementary friends, knowing my birthplace and yet accepting me as one of them, ABC, because to them I wasn’t the same person from many years ago due to the changes I made.

During my research process, every aspects of identifying ABC and FOB are classified. Relating myself to those aspects that I have found, I found myself fitting in both labels so I associated myself with the word “hybrid”. Therefore, I consider myself as a hybrid that can blend in both worlds, and can act ABC or FOB because I’m well adapted to the American culture and have been here for nearly a decade. The term hybrid associates with what Victoria Hu was talking about in her article “What Does It Mean To Be Chinese or Asian American?” Hu explores the label of Chinese and Asian American through her own perception of
how each group should be with her life experiences of being in both worlds. She examines the languages both groups use when in different situations and the parents’ reaction to their children’ academic life. Then she mentions on the uniqueness of being Chinese American and how it’s a blessing, an opportunity because it gives her privileges to experience both culture without linguistic problems and that’s what make who she is, existing in both cultures. I agreed with Hu’s idea of being coexistent in both cultures but disagrees with how she label herself as both because I believed she can’t be both of those identity at the same time.

But all these are just my opinion. What if someone asks me how I would label myself? Calling myself hybrid won’t answer the question because to me, being coexistent in both cultures doesn’t necessary mean you are accepted by each group. I sometimes wonder what made me switch from being a FOB to an ABC and why. This is why I would like to find out what it means to be an ABC and a FOB, the benefits, and why people label themselves one or the other and is it possible for someone to be call hybrid?

Methods

In my research, I have conducted four interviews. All four of my interviews took place in Blaisdell Hall of Pennsylvania. All four interviewees are males, two of them identify themselves as ABC and the others identify themselves as FOBs. However, all four interviewees were my friends, three of them are my high school friends from Chicago, Illinois and one of them is someone I met during my first semester in college. During each of my interviews, I would first present them the topic of my research and what my research is about. Secondly, I would ask each of my interviewees some basics questions consists of their cultural background and the racial demographics of the neighborhood they grew up in. This is important to my research because it is essential to know what kind of community they have come from, and how they were raised because I believe that their background affected how they defined the terms. By asking the interviewees what they think of the labels of ABC and FOBs and their opinions of these two terms, I can get a sense of knowledge of what these two terms are to them in terms of their identities and how these labels portrait them as being Asian American.

ALL THE INTERVIEWEES HAD FULLY READ, UNDERSTAND, AND SIGNED THE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM. FOR THE PRIVACY OF
Interview with Jason

The first person I interviewed was the American Born friend of mine from Chicago, Illinois, Jason. When I first asked him about his family history and the demographics of his neighborhood, he answered how he is glad that his family came here early and while growing up as a native citizen in a neighborhood with mostly Chinese, going to a typical Chinese/Chinese American elementary school with mostly FOBs make him feels linguistic superiority because most of the FOBs have bad English. It seems Jason uses language to distinguish the labels of FOB and ABC. Later he added, he would prefer to speak English but when he encounters someone with very bad English like his parents he would speak Chinese (to the best of his ability). Jason explained he has a limited Chinese vocabulary and wishes he knew more so he can hold better conversations. The interview carry on, I asked “when someone asks you if you are a Chinese American or Chinese, how you would respond, and list some reasons why you defined yourself that way?” With some thought in process, he answered, “I am ABC but I’m also a FOB want to be because I’m interested in dating girls that are Chinese because I, myself is relatively short. Also how I can’t dress fobby due to lack of China clothes to help me identify as FOB so I mostly wear brands like Hollister, and Abercrombie like rest of my ABC friends wear.”

Jason is coexistent in both cultures because he’s born with the Chinese culture and raise in American and yet he labels himself as one of the other depending on how he feel about himself and which label fits him the most.

Interview with Nick

Nick was my second interviewee: he’s also someone who was born in America who’s from Chicago, Illinois just like my first interviewee Jason. I pick Nick as my second interviewee is because he has a unique side of him that was shown while enrolling in UIUC, he’s full confident of himself and proud who he is, as an ABC. He even started to sing “I’m proud to be an American where at least I know I’m free.” I asked him the same questions that I asked to my first interviewee and his responses are quite interesting. He mentioned how his family been here for quite a long time, with a time period of over twenty years, and he’s the middle child of his family with one younger and older brother, also
growing up in Chinese neighborhood like Jason did. He associates the term “Americanize” as someone like him. Wearing mostly American Clothes consists of standard v-neck, jeans and sneakers which he claims he got that from GQ. Speaking of fashion, he sometimes he wants to be like FOB because he likes the clothes that they wear and he’s fascinated to know where he can purchase them at. Nick is proudly Americanized, yet also partly wishes he was FOB because he likes their clothing. As you can see, he associate himself as ABC since he’s born in America and in all his life he was taught that English is the Universal language which is why he prefer to speak English over Chinese and he knows his Chinese is not so great that’s why he started to watch Chinese shows occasionally to improve his knowledge of Chinese vocabulary. Nick is very similar with Jason: they both have the same culture background as being Chinese and influenced by the American culture. Even though, Nick’s coexistent in both cultures and yet he label himself as being an ABC because he’s proud of whom he is and he likes be label of being an ABC. The very last thing he mentions was that how he can easily identify ABCs vs. FOBs: he claimed he has the “FOB detector”. I wanted to know what he meant by the “FOB detector” but all he said was that it’s something comes from your mind, my own image of them. Then I asked him where’s that image of them come from? He said it’s something comes unconsciously.

Interview with Wong

The third interviewee was born in China, Wong, who I recently met during my year of college, I ask the same first question above, and he answered that he wishes he was born in America because he dislike his accent, he moved to few different living areas within the 10 years he has been here. Now he lives in a white neighborhood, where most of his friends are White. Then later, he complains about how he wasn’t well adapting to American culture with his reasoning of how he doesn’t get most of his white friends’ jokes and he blames himself for having limited English. He feels disappointed in himself how language was the barrier that keeps him away from being diverse with the American culture: which is why he claims that he would mostly hang with FOBs because the language barrier was little and they have similar interests in terms of the topics they usually talk about like games and school work. Then later, I asked him the same second question above about how he sees himself as Chinese American or Chinese, and why; he answered how he would label himself as a FOB because most of his clothes he has are from China and they are more fashionable than the ABC style, and his idea of “inductive generalization” help him understand some separation
in how he is different from ABC and some similarities in turn of actions. Wong is Chinese and lives in a White neighborhood, he labels himself as being a FOB because he associates his style with being foaby so he categorized himself as being a FOB. After hearing his responds, the word “inductive generalization” interests me because I never heard of that term before. So I asked him, what does “inductive generalization” mean? He smiled, and answers, Inductive generalization is a word that he learned from his Rhet. Course while he was studying race and it means people usually generalize the others based on their past experiences or present occurrence of that certain group. As the interview almost ends, we started to have an informal conversation on my topic. He mentioned there are some distinctive habits that he has as a FOB comparing to the ABCs that he know when it comes to eating. As a FOB he would cross his legs regularly unconsciously and how he noticed ABC eats very formal and quiet when it comes to drinking soup, he’s different, he would drink soup with the slurping sound and he identified that sound is signifying the soup is good which he claims that’s a sign of complementing the chef. Then he mentions how this habit of his made people view him negatively because that slurping sound that he makes is rude consider rude and no manner.

Interview with Harry

The fourth and last interviewee was Harry. He is someone like me who has been in America for nearly nine years, who I met not long ago. He’s from Chicago, Illinois who grew up near Chinatown and went to a mostly Chinese school, consists of half ABCs and FOBs. Most of his friends are FOBs because he somewhat dislike ABCs because he thinks they are cocky and look down at him as a FOB, but he feel no shame of who he is unlike me. After knowing his history on who he is, I find it interesting how we both from the same neighborhood and yet think and behave differently; which is why I’m interested in interviewing Harry and asked his opinions and his definition of the labels of ABC and FOB.

The very first question I asked him was “Do you prefer to speak Chinese or English and describe your clothing style?” He answered, he prefers to speak English, he believes he needs practice since he’s in college and there aren’t that many FOBs around. Even though, he wears American brands like Guess and such, he said his sense of fashion is casual but he doesn’t associate the brand of clothes that he wears with his identity of being a FOB. He also claimed that the typical clothes that ABCs wear are Hollister and Abercrombie, and Guess is not a brand that they normally wear therefore he buys his clothes from there. Then
later I asked “how do you view yourself in terms of being a FOB vs. someone who is ABC?” he answered, well I see myself as a FOB because I mostly watch TVB (A Chinese TV broadcast just like Hollywood), I speak mostly Chinese, even though I prefer speaking English and to me ABCs are just cocky Asian. Harry is the same with Wong, they both are Chinese and lives in America. Even though, Harry is coexistent in both cultures, and yet he labels himself as being a FOB because he believes that’s who he is and how his actions define the labels his definition of a FOB also that’s where he feel himself belongs.

Analysis

Reexamining the idea of being coexistent in both cultures like how Hu talk about in her article “What Does It Mean To Be Chinese or Asian American?” there’s a need to choose the label of one or the other because throughout my research I learned that the term hybrid defines where you are from but it doesn’t define who you really are in terms of your identity. And that’s something I have proven throughout my research as being a EUI researcher. Through my interviews, I found that all four of my interviewees are coexistent and yet they label themselves as one or the other based on how they feel about themselves and which groups that they are widely accepted also choosing to continue to perform the identity that they choose.

Exploring the labels of ABC and FOB, I have conclude there are some positive and negative in both terms after interpreting the four interviews.

In the interview with Harry, he seems to be proud of himself being label as a FOB. He likes the interactions with his own culture such as watching TVB, the only TV broadcast that he watches, and speaks the language he’s best at such as Chinese. As for Wong, he likes to do what he loves to do such as slurping while drinking soup and crossing his legs, because he believe those actions represents his culture. Those actions that he does are something that his culture shares and values. They both believe the identity, FOB, represent who they are and they think of it positively. To them, FOB is the identity that they like to perform, speaking their native language represents their culture and sharing some unique actions that only their cultures share such as slurping while drinking soup, also they both are widely accepted in their own culture.

But in the American society, thing are view little differently; slurping while drinking soup is considered rude because we viewed it as no
manner. FOBs is the group that can’t communicate with English well, and they carry a dialect as they speak and how they are not well fit into the American culture just like how Wong explained his experiences as being a FOB and his reason for not understanding his White friends which makes him wanting to be with people that share the same culture as him so he won’t be disappointed with himself. This feeling of limiting himself with different racial groups and not fitting in the American culture reminds me on one of the article I have read from IDEALs. The title of the article is “segregation in International Students” the author finds how languages and cultural background plays a significant role in how international students limit their options on who can or can’t be their friend because of their aim of comfort zone (hanging with people with same culture, and speak the same language, etc) and afraid of the reaction of how other people view them and their English because they feel intimidated and embarrassed. As for Harry, he feels the need to practice his communicative skill using English which is why he prefers to speak English even though he mostly speaks Chinese and how most of his friends are FOBs.

As for ABCs like Jason and Nick, they view ABC positively because they both are the second-generation Chinese American. Relating to the idea of Jerry Park’s article “Second-Generation Asian American Pan-Ethnic Identity: Pluralized Meanings of a Racial Label.” Park once mentions how the second generation Asian American being stereotype as model minority because of their academic success. I think the reason for that is because being born in America: they were exposing to English at an early age which is they associate good English with being Americanized and how they value their ability to speak English more than FOBs. Just like how Jason mentioned being American born, he feel linguistic superior among the FOBs. And as for Nick, he was told that English is the universal language at an early age which is why English was his primary language. They both possess the language of success at an early age which is why they are consider as model minority, superiority over FOBs.

But being ABC doesn’t mean you have the best of both cultures and view greatly among others. With them feeling linguistic superior, they sometimes think highly of themselves. Just like how Nick always would sing “I’m proud to be an American where at least I know I’m free.” By singing that song, he indicates that he’s full of himself being label as ABC. Behaviors like this will influence them to look down on FOBs, which is why Harry once mentions in his response on ABC that they are cocky Asians. The second negative aspect of ABCs is that they sort of
lose their culture values as being Chinese. Even though, they are superior in English among the FOBs, however their Chinese is not so great. To me, language is the most visible trait of one’s culture. Lacking of one’s language which means lacking of culture values, that’s why Jason and Nick are slowly erasing their native culture as being Chinese. They know their Chinese sucks and they would like to learn it for different reasons. For Jason, he wants to learn Chinese because he likes Chinese girls who speak mostly Chinese, also to hold a better conversation, for instant with his parent. But for Nick, his reason behind his study of his native language is different from Jason’s. He feels the need for knowing more about his native language, Chinese, because he wants knowledge and improvement. The idea of needing Chinese, they have the anxiety not being Chinese Enough, which is why they both are also interested in the fobby fashion. The idea of how fashion represents one’s identity relates to what Anona Whitley researched in her project “Korean American Aesthetics and Style”. Through her research, she concludes how style is influential in terms of permits their ethnic identity and their view of education, religion and class. I believe that’s the reason why Jason and Nick interested in FOB style.

After listing the advantage and the disadvantage of the two terms, there’s something interesting about my interviews. It seemed like how each of my interviewee wanted to be more like the other category. If they were FOB, they also wanted to be ABC and if they were ABC, they also wanted to be FOB. With them migrating within both cultures, they can’t identify themselves as hybrids because if the ABCs declare themselves as FOBs, the FOBs won’t accept the ABCs as one of them, due to the fact that their performance of being FOBs is not convincing enough for the FOBs to accept them and vice versa. This idea of performing an identity explains why I went from being a FOB to an ABC because I feel a need to change and back away from the negative aspects of my own identity that are set by the Chinese American community based on the history of the two terms. Setting a good example of myself for being ABC through the changes of my fashion, action, and language and I’m widely accepted as one of them because of how convincing my performance of their identity. The main aspect of performing an identity is to let others (society) view you as being different from who you were before and in order to for people view you differently, you have to be convincing on which identity that you are performing.

_Why is this important for race?_
Labels are important because it category groups based on similar cultural background and interests. By examining the labels of ABC and FOB concludes that there are positive and negative aspects behind each label. Understanding history and background of these two terms provides the ideas of why they label themselves that way. Also because of people label others and people also label themselves just like how ABCs label FOBs and how ABCs label themselves. It’s all just performing an identity. Like Vershawn Young have mention in his article “So Black I’m Blue” how his performance of his racial identity is sufficiently white. He escape from his burden being Black by performing White and his performance of being White is widely accepted because everything about him is like a White man except for his skin color. You can change but people are also going to label you, so you are performing for them and your performance of one’s identity has to be convincing in order for people to change their perspectives on who you are. Performing one’s identity can make you lose your own culture and can also be viewed as escape from the burden of your own identity, which is why if you want to perform an identity and you have to perform it well so others will accepted and viewed you as the ones that you are performing to be.

Problems or limitations

With little research that is conducted in a short period of time, I only manage to get four successful interviews. This research project can be seen as generalizing because I defined the terms ABC and FOB based on four interviews that I conducted. So the information that I have researched doesn’t represent the definition of ABC and FOB as a whole.

Conclusion

My research examines the labels of ABC vs. FOB. The positive and negative aspect of the terms and how these two identities can be perform. It seems that the most important thing is that each person associated with the labels FOB and ABC in different ways and each one identified themselves as one or the other for different reasons. In my analysis, performing an identity can change yourself and how you are viewed. With the idea of performing an identity, you can back away from the burden of your old identity because in every label dealing with race there’s always be advantage and disadvantage of that label. This research focuses on the main streams of labels within Chinese American and how it’s set to a smaller focus race as one ethnicity then
race as a whole unlike what the past researchers did. Findings shows that these two identities can be perform through clothes and actions and how being with both cultures, there’s a need to choose to either act out one identity or rejects the other. Understanding the idea of performing an identity can influences the future researchers’ view on different racial groups when it comes to labeling and how different racial groups perform identities. For future research, re-examined my ideas of performing an identity with different racial groups and investigate the proper definition for the ones with mixed cultures.

Appendix

1. Can you tell me about your family background— when did you family come to this country? How long have they been here?

2. What neighborhood did you grow up in? What are the racial demographics of that neighborhood?

3. Who do you hang out with? Friends

4. Do you prefer to speak Chinese or English? Do you speak differently in different situations?


6. How would you describe your clothing style?

7. Do you consider yourself ABC (Chinese American/American born) or FOB (Chinese, foreigner)? Why?

8. Do you compare yourself to other Chinese? How?

9. If you had to describe ABC characteristics and FOB characteristics, how would you describe them?

Reference

No Author. “Segregation in International Students” Ideal.uiuc.edu. 09 June 2008 <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/8730>


Young, Vershawn. “So black, I’m blue” Theminnesotareview.org <http://www.theminnesotareview.org/journal/ns58/young.htm>


Hu explores the label of Chinese and Asian American through her own perception of how each group should be with her life experiences of
being in both worlds. She examines the languages both groups use when in different situations and the parents’ reaction to their children’s academic life. Then she mentions on the uniqueness of being Chinese American and how it’s a blessing, an opportunity because it gives her privileges to experience both culture without linguistic problems and that’s what make who she is, existing in both cultures. I found this article useful because it gives me a better view on the life of Chinese and Chinese American. I can relate myself to the author and take an approach on how she viewed herself as consideration when it comes to labeling Chinese and Chinese American for my final project.

No Author. “Can Korean Twinkies and FOBs be friends?” Ideal.uiuc.edu. 19 Feb. 2008

<http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/3636>

In “Can Korean Twinkies and FOBs be friends?” the author aims to answer the topic question by researching Korean Twinkies and FOBs through interviews and observation about their behaviors/actions and interactions on campus. Within the author’s research, he first focuses on the language barriers between these two groups then later finds the students prefers to speak their native language, the language they know the best, and how language wasn’t the main factor keeping Twinkies and FOBs from being friends but the uncomfortable atmosphere. I find this research is useful because it examines the languages that the group uses and their actions. For my final research project about labeling Chinese American and Chinese on campus, this article helps me glimpse on the idea of labeling in terms of language and actions because these two subjects will help me classify Chinese Americans and Chinese.

No Author. “Segregation in International Students” Ideal.uiuc.edu. 09 June 2008 < http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/8730>

In “Segregation in International Students” the author aims to find out the reasons behind why segregation among international students is based on nation like she mentioned how Chinese with Chinese, Indian with Indian. She focuses her research using interviews, annotated bibliography, observation, and analyzing public text. Later, she finds how languages and cultural background plays a significant role in how international students limit their options on who can or can’t be their friend because of their aim of comfort zone (hanging with people with same culture, and speak the same language, etc) and afraid of the
reaction of how other people view them and their English because they feel intimidated and embarrassed. I found this helpful is because it gives me the idea of how international tend to segregate themselves from others because of their language and cultural background. This will help me distinguish in labeling Chinese American and Chinese because it provides me a clear view of how international student (Non–American born) has a distinctive barrier within them comparing to American born and how they behave differently in terms of interactions with other ethnicity group. Chinese American tends to be more open and socialize with people from different culture and Chinese is limits themselves from the outside world lacking interaction with other differ from them.


Park explores the idea of second–generation Asian American in terms of their social life, academic life, ethnicity, religious view, and model minority. He examines Asian American’s identity as diversify in terms of multicultural because he believes the label of Asian American present cultural diversity within the Asian community. Arguing that Asian American is a label applied to all Asian in America, but people within that label are actually very different from each other. So in the past it was important to have the label “Asian American” for political reasons and to get recognition from the government. Then he mentions the idea of Asian American being stereotype as model minority because of their academic success. I found this study useful is because it gives me the logics behind what it means to be Asian American in terms of their identity and how they are being categorized based on their history. Also, it seems important to note that people use these labels for different reasons. So they might use Asian American for one reason and they might use Chinese American for another reason. These reasons change with audience, place and time. For my final project, I can relate the burden of being Asian American to this study and what it means to be an Asian American and also how they are represented in the
American society in terms of academically, and socially.


<https://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/1791>.

Whitley explores and researches how style plays a significant role of defining one’s identity within the Korean and Korean American community on campus. She focuses on how Korean and Korean Americans view each other in their style and appearance and explores how style defines their ethnic identity. Through her research, she concludes how style is influential in terms of permits their ethnic identity and their view of education, religion and class. I find Whitley’s research is valuable because it examines the importance of how style influences our view of ethnic identity in terms of labeling. For my final research project about labeling Chinese American and Chinese on campus, this article helps me glimpse on the idea of labeling in terms of style and gives me the idea to focuses on both groups’ perceptions about each other’s values, history, language, action, and other aspects of their ethnic identity.