About the Author: I am a senior here at the University of Illinois, majoring in Human Development and Family Studies with a concentration in Family Studies. Being a Korean American adoptee has played a large role in shaping my identity. I take pride in identifying as a Korean American adoptee. I believe I wouldn’t feel so strongly about this topic unless my parents did not encourage me to explore my heritage by giving me the opportunity to attend a Korean American culture camp for adoptees. There I connected with others who had similar stories and feelings.

Although I was able to attend a Korean culture camp every summer, I did grow up in a small predominately white town right outside of Champaign-Urbana and because of this I was not exposed to many Asian Americans or the Asian culture. Growing up, I realized I related more to my Caucasian peers more so than other Asian Americans. I am a strong believer in that the environment an individual is raised in influences their identity.

When I came to the University of Illinois, I felt as if my identity would change. I became a member in the Asian American Association and Korean American Student Association. Shortly after, I realized neither was for me. I have always been interested in identity but after realizing how I identified myself, I was even more interested in researching adoptees and second-generation students.

Keywords: Identity, Asian American, adoptee, second-generation

Abstract: After observations, interviews, and personal experiences, I was able to research and compare Asian American adoptees and second-generation Asian Americans and how their lives have shaped their identity. There were a variety of factors shown to have an effect on an individual’s identity but I found that the environment an individual has been surrounded by has a large effect on whom and how they identify themselves. Data showed that there are similarities and differences when comparing Asian American adoptees and second-generation Asian American students here at the University of Illinois.
I would like to explore the Asian American adoption community here at the University of Illinois. I know there are a number of Asian American adoptees here on campus and I would like to contact them in order to find out a few questions I have had for years. I would like to ask the question of how satisfying their lives are being an Asian American adoptee and what factors have affected their lives when it comes to being adopted. Because I am a Korean American adoptee I have always been exposed to other adoptees but many of them have lived in a more Asian populated community. I would like to explore other adoptees views on being adopted and to what extent has it affected their lives.

How satisfying is your life as a Korean American adoptee and what factors have affected your life when it comes to being adopted? Has coming to the University of Illinois affected your identity? Have you gotten involved with Asian American groups here on campus and has it affected your feelings as an adoptee? Do you identify more as a Korean?

What are the differences when it comes to Korean American adoptees and Chinese second generation students here at the University of Illinois when it comes to their identity and life satisfaction?

Are there any key differences/similarities between Asian American adoptees and Asian American second generation children when it comes to identity and life satisfaction? Have these individuals altered their identity since coming to college? If so, how and why?

I would begin my research with an interview with random Korean American adoptees here at the University of Illinois. I would ask them about their life growing up and how college has affected their identity.

I would also like to observe a couple Korean American adoptees. Because I know a few here on campus, I would be able to "shadow" them, in other words, observe their day to day life. I would also like to take the information I observe and relate it back to how I have adapted.
to college, being around more Asian Americans.

The last method I would use to collect information about Korean American adoptees and their identity would be giving surveys to the adoptees. I would include questions and a scale having them rate their satisfaction of life. I would also include questions about their childhood and the environment they grew up in, in order to become familiar with their background.

Lastly, I would take the interviews, observations, and surveys and summarize all of my data. Hopefully, this would answer my curiosity along with many other Korean American adoptees here at the University of Illinois and all over the country.

"Initial Plan" 10/24/2007

I will begin my research with an interview with various Asian American adoptees and second generation young adults here at the University of Illinois. I will ask them about their life growing up and how college has affected their identity. I will include questions about the satisfaction of their life. I would also include questions about their childhood and the environment they grew up in, in order to become familiar with their background. Lastly, I will ask them about various identity alterations since coming to college.

I would also like to observe a couple Korean American adoptees. Because I know a few here on campus, I would be able to "shadow" them, in other words, observe their day to day life to see if their identity alters in different environments. I would also like to take the information I observe and relate it back to how I have adapted to college, being around more Asian Americans.

Lastly, I would take the interviews and observations I have done and summarize all of my data. Hopefully, this would answer my curiosity as to how, when and why their identity has changed over the years and if college as played a role in the transition.

Data (observation):

"Observation" 10/9/2007

After observing a variety of individuals and their actions here on campus, I was able to pinpoint a few of my speculations as to what their feelings on being an adoptee. I began my observations by just observing the Asian Americans in their everyday life. One of the major groups I looked at was the young women and men who are involved in
the Greek community here at the University of Illinois. There are a small amount of Asian Americans participating in Greek life and the few that I know are adopted. What I found was that the adoptees tended to have characteristics of what we discussed in class of being "Americanized." I found this very interesting.

I later was able to observe one individual. She is a Korean adoptee who has also grown up in central Illinois her whole life. By the way she carried herself, she made it very clear that she was "Americanized," and that she was satisfied with her life. I was able to ask her various questions concerning her childhood and her feelings on being adopted. The questions I used were not the exact questions I would use in the interview or surveys I am intending to collect my data with. These questions were out of curiosity.

I was also able to observe some of my peers here on campus that are second generation. I was able to compare a Korean American adoptee and a second generation Chinese American. Both are "Americanized," but when comparing their adaptation to this campus they had some differences. The Korean American joined an Asian American group when arriving on campus freshman year while the second-generation student did not. Both identify themselves as more "Americanized" than "traditional." The difference between the participants was their homes. When going home, the Korean American adoptee went home to her Caucasian parents while the Chinese American went home to her "traditional," parents.

I believe there is an identity difference here. The Chinese American and Korean American will always identify themselves as "Americanized," but the Chinese American will identify herself more as Chinese when she returns home on breaks. I can also relate to these observations. Because I am a Korean American adoptee, I also return home continuing to identify myself as Korean American (Americanized).

Overall, many of these observations will be beneficial to my project but I would like to explore more in depth as to how satisfied the adoptees and second-generation are when it comes to their life and identities.

**Data (interview):**

"Interview" 10/24/2007

After interviewing two individuals, one a Korean American adoptee, Jackie, and the other being a second generation Chinese American student here on campus, Whitney, I have found some very interesting
information when it comes to how they each identify themselves. I began each interview with some background questions. With each participant, I asked similar questions. I did have to alter a few of my questions due to the adoption issue. Both Jackie and Whitney grew up in a predominately white community not having a great deal of association with other Asians, Jackie growing up in a small town south of Champaign, Whitney growing up in a suburb of Chicago. I asked them both if they had to deal with any racism growing up. I found that although they were both raised in predominately white communities, Jackie had to deal with racism more than Whitney. I then asked them how well their parents socialized them about racism and because Whitney never had to deal with racism, the subject was never brought up. As far as Jackie’s response, “Her parents told her that some people are ignorant and that she will always encounter these types of people but to just ignore it.”

I then moved on to ask each individual how their relationships were with their families. Both responded that they had strong relationships with their family, Jackie having a stronger relationship with her mother while Whitney having a stronger relationship with her sister. I also questioned if they felt as if their parents were too pushy when it came to their heritage. Jackie and Whitney each had similar responses. Jackie stated when she was younger her parents stressed the importance of finding her Korean heritage and becoming more involved, making her go to Korean cultural programs for adoptees. Whitney also felt as if her parents stressed the importance of her Chinese heritage on her when she was younger, forcing her to attend Chinese school, speaking Chinese to her at home, and forcing many of the traditional Chinese customs on her.

I later asked Jackie, the Korean American adoptee about her feelings on adoption. She stated that “it makes her really unique and that it is not any different than growing up with biological parents in her experience.” She has never been back to her birthplace which is definitely not one of her top priorities right now. I proceeded to ask her about her birth parents and how she felt about them. She said “she doesn’t really feel anything towards them, they are not a big part of her life and she doesn’t spend a great deal of time thinking about them.” I felt that this was a huge turning point in the interview and it made me realize more about how Jackie identifies herself. I know a great deal of Asian American adoptees that feel a sense of resentment towards their biological parents and have identity issues.

Throughout the interview, I was able to get a sense of how comfortable each individual felt about talking about their identity and both Jackie and Whitney seemed comfortable with themselves. I asked them how satisfied they were with their lives and each was very satisfied. She commented on how they identify themselves makes up
who they are as a person and they wouldn’t change that. I was also curious as to when they came to college if their identity was altered at all and Jackie said that before she came to college she had a more negative view of Asians but since coming to school she has relaxed more around them and associates herself with more second generation Asian Americans. Whitney said that “her identity has not altered much due to the fact that she was never really exposed to other Asian Americans at home.” She did state that “I do associate myself with more Asian Americans here at school but they are all Americanized like me.” I was also curious as to if either one of them decided to join any of the Asian American groups here on campus freshman year. I thought this was an important aspect of my interview because many Asian Americans come to college with an open mind wanting to explore a variety of organizations and activities that can help identify themselves. I know that when I got to campus, I joined a variety of Asian American groups hoping that I could become more intact with my heritage. I later learned that it just wasn’t who I was. Neither Jackie nor Whitney associated themselves with Asians while they are at home which I thought was very interesting.

My last question was when they return home, do they identify themselves differently, and do they act or carry themselves differently than if they were at school. This was a major difference when it came to each individual. When Jackie returns home her identity does not change. She goes about her everyday life not changing how she identifies herself. She did say she may act differently when at home but not when concerning Asianness. Whitney on the other hand, returns home identifying more as an Asian. While at home she alters her actions, conforming more to her Asian identity. She is forced back into her more traditional Chinese traditions. She feels more Asian when she is at home more than when she is at school.

Overall, there is an abundance of similarities and differences when it comes to Asian American adoptees and second generation Asian Americans and their identities. Much of my data shows that college may have a small influence on these individuals when it comes to altering their identities, but not a large enough influence to change who they are and how they have always identified themselves.

"Interview Clarification" 10/30/2007

I would just like to make a few clarifications about my interview. I conducted two separate interviews. I would also like to clarify that it is unclear as to why the Korean adoptee faced discrimination and the second generation individual did not. My only analysis of the situation would be because of the environment each individual was exposed to. I know I stated that there was not much diversity in each community each individual grew up in, but the Korean adoptee did grow up in a community that was strictly Caucasian while the second generation individual grew up in a suburb of Chicago. As far as if
each individual participated in an Asian American club once they came to college; neither one did.

Analysis:  

"Analysis" 10/30/2007

After reviewing my interviews, I would first and foremost analyze a very important aspect of my data. Nancy Lesko (1996) states that “the creation of normal adolescents occurred along the same lines as did the demarcation of wayward girls, juvenile delinquency and White trash” (p.141). I believe that Lesko is stating that society has invented a time where children can transition from childhood into young adulthood. I believe this can relate to my data because the two individuals that I interview also went through a period in their life where they each transitioned into young adulthood where they may have altered their identity. In many instances, young adults go through a period of time where their bodies, personalities, and identities change. Each individual I spoke with stated that they have found their self identifying themselves differently.

In my research, I found a specific aspect very interesting. After spending a great deal of time with each participant and interviewing them, I found that because each individual was Americanized, their feelings towards other Asians, both Asian American and Asians, were somewhat discriminatory. The Korean adoptee clearly stated that before coming to college she had a negative perception of Asians and because neither interviewee was exposed to a great deal of Asians growing up, I felt as if they developed a distorted outlook of Asians in general. Throughout the Matsumoto reading, she expresses the presence of discrimination towards Asians and other ethnicities. Again, I can relate this article with the environment an individual is raised in. Because the youth in Matsumoto’s article were raised in an Asian community they tended to look down upon outsiders. For example, “mixed couples were not welcome at all public venues” (Matsumoto, 2004, p. 90). I believe that because both individuals were raised in a community with a small amount of diversity, they formed similar views and stereotypes for Asians and other ethnicities. Again, I believe that the environment you were raised in contributes to your assimilation into a different culture. As stated in Stacy Lee’s reading, “Traditional” and Americanized”, “the fact that traditional and Americanized students formed and defined their respective identities in opposition to each other…” (2005, p. 54). I believe this statement to be very true when compared to my findings. I believe that although each individual was raised differently, Jackie and Whitney both altered their identity to “fit” the more “American” way of life. I feel as if each grew up seeing the stereotypes society has labeled for Asians and
wanted to be categorized more as an American or Asian American more than anything else. Don't get me wrong, I know both Jackie and Whitney take pride in their heritages, but they identify themselves with the American culture more than their Asian heritage.

I would also like to relate to a reading by Danico (2004). Although Danico main focus is on cyber cafes, I would like to look deeper into a statement she made. "This Korean American youth had internalized the parental pressure of getting into a “top” college, and his failure to do so had affected his sense of identity as an Asian American... (p. 186). I found this statement so intriguing because after interviewing a Korean American adoptee and a second generation Chinese American I was able to see a difference in them. As I stated in my findings, when Whitney goes home she is forced back into her more traditional Chinese traditions compared to Jackie going home her identity does not alter. The statement above, is a prime example of how being raised in different environments can alter a persons identity. Asian parents tend to put more pressure on their children when it comes to academics compared to Caucasian parents.

Many of the reading throughout this course were very relatable to my research, but I felt as if these four readings were extraordinary. Overall, I have realized that the environment people are raised in and assimilated into have a great effect on their views and aid in forming their perceptions of other and everyday life.

Bibliography


Research Proposal:

After much thought, experimenting, and trial and error I was able to design a research proposal that will be very beneficial to University of Illinois's demographics. Taking Asian American Youth gave me an opportunity to explore a topic I have always been curious about. Throughout this proposal you will find what techniques work, who to interview, and maybe even find out more about a topic you never really thought about. I examined the differences and similarities between Asian American adoptees and Asian American second generation students here at the University of Illinois.
My main questions were "Are there any key differences/similarities between Asian American adoptees and Asian American second generation students when it comes to identity and life satisfaction? Have these individuals altered their identity since coming to college? If so, how and why? I hypothesized there would be a variety of different/similar characteristics between Asian American adoptees and Asian American second generation students. I hypothesized that the environment the individual was raised in would have an effect on the individuals identity. I also felt that college became a large factor in altering an individual’s identity.

Begin research by observing a variety of Asian American students—adoptees and second generation—here on campus. I found that it was easier to observe and speak with individuals I was acquainted with. Because I knew them, the atmosphere was much more comfortable. Observe their everyday lives; their actions and how they may relate to their ethnicity, how they carry themselves, and how they react to various people and situations. It is a very important aspect of the research because the individual is participating in their own routine, not being asked numerous questions.

Throughout my observations, a few of my speculations became apparent. Their feelings on adoption were expressed and I was able to see that many of my own feelings/characteristics were demonstrated by many of the participants. I began observing Asian Americans (in general) in their everyday life. One of the major groups I looked at was the young women and men who are involved in the Greek community here at the University of Illinois. There is a small amount of Asian Americans participating in Greek life and the few that I know are adopted. I did not focus on a particular chapter because there is not a large amount of Asian Americans participating in the Greek community here at the University of Illinois. For example, because I am involved in the Greek community, I was able to associate with a couple of young men and women who are Asian American adoptees. I am unsure as to why there are only a select few Asian Americans involved in the Greek community. What I found was that the Asian American adoptees and second generation students tended to have characteristics of what we discussed in class of being "Americanized." I found this very interesting because if researched more in depth, I am curious as to if these individuals involved in the Greek community altered their identity since coming to college and being involved within the Greek community.

Further in my research, I observed one individual. She is a Korean adoptee who has also grown up in central Illinois her whole life. By the way she carried herself, she made it very clear that she was "Americanized," and that she was satisfied with her life. I was able to ask her various questions concerning her childhood and her feelings on being adopted. The questions I used were not the exact questions I
I was also able to observe some of my peers here on campus that are second generation. I was able to compare a Korean American adoptee and a second generation Chinese American. Both are "Americanized," but when comparing their adaptation to this campus they had some differences. The Korean American joined an Asian American group when arriving on campus freshman year while the second-generation student did not. Both identify themselves as more "Americanized" than "traditional." The difference between the participants was their homes. When going home, the Korean American adoptee went home to her Caucasian parents while the Chinese American went home to her "traditional," Asian parents. I believe there is an identity difference here. The Chinese American and Korean American will always identify themselves as "Americanized," but the Chinese American will identify herself more as Chinese when she returns home on breaks. I can also relate to these observations. Because I am a Korean American adoptee, I also return home continuing to identify myself as Korean American (Americanized).

Overall, many of these observations were beneficial to my project but I would suggest exploring more into how satisfied the adoptees and second-generation are when it comes to their life and identities based on how they were raised and who they have become.

I proceeded to conduct individual interviews with Asian American adoptees here at the University of Illinois. I asked them various questions about their life growing up--demographics, family life, education, and how coming to college has affected their identity. This is more personal. By asking questions, the researcher is able to go more in depth about the individual's life. Although I did not use this technique, I would suggest using a scale called "Satisfaction With Life Scale," designed by Ed Diener and colleagues. SWLS is a measure of life satisfaction consisting of a brief 5 items that can be administered in an interview or paper and pencil. By using this system and an interview, the researcher will be able to better understand each individual. This technique may also clear up any animosity between interviewer and interviewee because the questions are not as specific. Throughout the interviews, ask each participant specific open ended questions dealing with their family relationships, demographics, and personal feelings about their identity. After collecting the data from the observations and interviews, the researcher should be able to find specific patterns and characteristics between Asian American adoptees and second generation students.

After interviewing two individuals separately, one a Korean American adoptee, Jackie, and the other being a second generation Chinese American student here on campus, Whitney, I have found some very interesting information when it comes to how they each identify
themselves. I began each interview with some background questions. With each participant, I asked similar questions. I did have to alter a few of my questions due to the adoption issue. I found that both Jackie and Whitney grew up in a predominately white community not having a great deal of association with other Asians, Jackie growing up in a small town south of Champaign, Whitney growing up in a suburb of Chicago. I asked them how well their parents socialized them about racism and because Whitney never had to deal with racism, the subject was never brought up. As far as Jackie’s response, “Her parents told her that some people are ignorant and that she will always encounter these types of people but to just ignore it.” Again, I believe that the environment you were raised in contributes to your assimilation into a different culture. As stated in Stacy Lee’s reading, “Traditional” and Americanized”, “the fact that traditional and Americanized students formed and defined their respective identities in opposition to each other…” (2005, p. 54). I believe this statement to be very true when compared to my findings. I believe that although each individual was raised differently, Jackie and Whitney both altered their identity to “fit” the more “American” way of life. I feel as if each grew up seeing the stereotypes society has labeled for Asians and wanted to be categorized more as an American or Asian American more than anything else. Don’t get me wrong, I know both Jackie and Whitney take pride in their heritages, but they identify themselves with the American culture more than their Asian heritage.

In my research, I found a specific aspect very interesting. After spending a great deal of time with each participant and interviewing them, I found that because each individual was Americanized, their feelings towards other Asians, both Asian American and Asians, were somewhat discriminatory. The Korean adoptee clearly stated that before coming to college she had a negative perception of Asians and because neither interviewee was exposed to a great deal of Asians growing up, I felt as if they developed a distorted outlook of Asians in general. Throughout the Matsumoto reading, she expresses the presence of discrimination towards Asians and other ethnicities. Again, I can relate this article with the environment an individual is raised in. Because the youth in Matsumoto’s article were raised in an Asian community they tended to look down upon outsiders. For example, “mixed couples were not welcome at all public venues” (Matsumoto, 2004, p. 90). I believe that because both individuals were raised in a community with a small amount of diversity, they formed similar views and stereotypes for Asians and other ethnicities.

I also questioned if they felt as if their parents were too pushy when it came to their heritage. Jackie and Whitney each had similar responses. Jackie stated when she was younger her parents stressed the importance of finding her Korean heritage and becoming more
involved, making her go to Korean cultural programs for adoptees. Whitney also felt as if her parents stressed the importance of her Chinese heritage on her when she was younger, forcing her to attend Chinese school, speaking Chinese to her at home, and forcing many of the traditional Chinese customs on her.

I later asked Jackie, the Korean American adoptee about her feelings on adoption. She stated that “it makes her really unique and that it is not any different than growing up with biological parents in her experience.” She has never been back to her birthplace which is definitely not one of her top priorities right now. I proceeded to ask her about her birth parents and how she felt about them. She said “she doesn’t really feel anything towards them, they are not a big part of her life and she doesn’t spend a great deal of time thinking about them.” I felt that this was a huge turning point in the interview and it made me realize more about how Jackie identifies herself. I know a great deal of Asian American adoptees that feel a sense of resentment towards their biological parents and have identity issues.

Throughout the interview, I was able to get a sense of how comfortable each individual felt about talking about their identity and both Jackie and Whitney seemed comfortable with themselves. I asked them how satisfied they were with their lives and each was very satisfied. Each individual commented on how she identifies herself makes up who she is as a person and she wouldn’t change that. I was also curious as to when they came to college if their identity was altered at all and Jackie said that before she came to college she had a more negative view of Asians but since coming to school she has relaxed more around them and associates her self with more second generation Asian Americans. Whitney said that “her identity has not altered much due to the fact that she was never really exposed to other Asian Americans at home.” She did state that “I do associate myself with more Asian Americans here at school but they are all Americanized like me.”

I was also curious as to if either one of them decided to join any of the Asian American groups here on campus freshman year. I thought this was an important aspect of my interview because many Asian Americans come to college with an open mind wanting to explore a variety of organizations and activities that can help identify themselves. I know that when I got to campus, I joined a variety of Asian American groups hoping that I could become more intact with my heritage. I later learned that it just wasn’t who I was. Neither Jackie nor Whitney associated themselves with Asians while they are at home which I thought was very interesting. Nancy Lesko (1996) states that “the creation of normal adolescents occurred along the same lines as did the demarcation of wayward girls, juvenile delinquency and White trash” (p.141). I believe that Lesko is stating that society has
invented a time where children can transition from childhood into young adulthood. I believe this can relate to my data because the two individuals that I interview also went through a period in their life where they each transitioned into young adulthood (perhaps coming to college) where they may have altered their identity. In many instances, young adults go through a period of time where their bodies, personalities, and identities change. Each individual I spoke with stated that they have found their self identifying themselves differently.

My last question was when they return home, do they identify themselves differently, and do they act or carry themselves differently than if they were at school. This was a major difference when it came to each individual. When Jackie returns home her identity does not change. She goes about her everyday life not changing how she identifies herself. She did say she may act differently when at home but not when concerning Asianness. Whitney on the other hand, returns home identifying more as an Asian. While at home Whitney alters her actions; conforming more to her Asian identity. She is forced back into her more traditional Chinese traditions. She feels more Asian when she is at home more than when she is at school. I would also like to relate to a reading by Danico (2004). Although Danico main focus is on cyber cafes, I would like to look deeper into a statement she made. “This Korean American youth had internalized the parental pressure of getting into a “top” college, and his failure to do so had affected his sense of identity as an Asian American... (p. 186). I found this statement so intriguing because after interviewing a Korean American adoptee and a second generation Chinese American I was able to see a difference in them. As I stated in my findings, when Whitney goes home she is forced back into her more traditional Chinese traditions compared to Jackie going home her identity does not alter. The statement above, is a prime example of how being raised in different environments can alter a person’s identity. Asian parents tend to put more pressure on their children when it comes to academics compared to Caucasian parents.

Overall, there is an abundance of similarities and differences when it comes to Asian American adoptees and second generation Asian Americans and their identities. Much of my data shows that college may have a small influence on these individuals when it comes to altering their identities, but not a large enough influence to change who they are and how they have always identified themselves. I would also like to clarify that it is unclear as to why the Korean adoptee faced discrimination and the second generation individual did not. My only analysis of the situation would be because of the environment each individual was exposed to. I know I stated that there was not much diversity in each community each individual grew up in, but the Korean adoptee did grow up in a community that was strictly Caucasian while
the second generation individual grew up in a suburb of Chicago. I was able to link my findings to a previous EUI project titled ‘Survival of the Fittest: How Does Self-identification Determine the Latino Student Experience at the University of Illinois” by Edelmira P. Garcia. The EUI project examines what causes fragmentation along Latino ethnic lines and the external classification or imposed identity and how it affects self –identification. I believe this project has its similarities when it comes to my project on “Self Identity: Comparing Asian American Adoptees and Second-Generation Asian Americans.” One of the major similarities I found while reading through Garcia’s final paper, was that she wrote from experience. The reason I proposed and conducted this project on identity was that not only was I interested in the topic, but I was also able to relate my findings with my own experiences. Another major similarity I found was how the researchers sought out a topic on identity in general. She faced an experience in her life that caused her to take a step back and examine her own identity.

Throughout this semester, I was able to research a topic that relates to my life. Not only was I able to compare information on Asian American adoptees and second generation students, but I was able to find out more about myself. I believe that no matter what ethnicity a person is, their identity may change due to situations in life. I would suggest incorporating a larger subject pool when it comes to research. It may help the process and understanding. People’s identities may alter throughout their lives no matter if he or she is adopted or second generation, but the environment the individual was raised in plays a large aspect to how they identify themselves and how others identify them.

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I viewed an archive material that caught my eye while browsing through the different research projects after typing in Asian. I felt that the questions the author addressed were very beneficial to the research he was conducting. She questioned "How does this consumption of Korean products help to define who they are in America? Does it make them feel more "Korean"? Do these products help build pride in their nationality? Are there Korean Americans who do not take part in the consumption of Korean pop culture?" throughout his research on Korean American Online Consumption of Korean Pop Culture. By addressing these questions in a survey I feel as if the researcher will get the best results. Using the survey methods can be very reliable because participants tend to be more honest when not speaking to someone who may judge them to their face.

The researcher talks about her findings and how Korean Americans relate to the Korean Pop Culture. She found that there is very prevalent community Korean American youths/teens have a with the Korean pop culture. I found it really interesting that the researcher focused on two major forums when conducting her research on Korean Americans and the Korean Pop Culture. She also interviewed participants from each of the forums. It was also interesting to see how she was able to take the discussions from each of the forums and relate them back to her research. She used the discussions on Korean fashion, music, and various topics to better her research.

Overall, I believe that this research topic was very intriguing, not only because I am a Korean American and was able to relate to the researcher, but also because it was a topic many people overlook on a day to day basis. I would love to look more into it as the semester moves on. I would also use some of these researcher’s methods when conducting my own research on my specific topic.

"EUI Links" 11/5/2007

I was able to link my findings to a previous EUI project titled “Survival of the Fittest: How Does Self-identification Determine the Latino Student Experience at the University of Illinois” by Edelmira P. Garcia. The EUI project examines what causes fragmentation along Latino ethnic lines and the external classification or imposed identity and how
it affects self-identification. I believe this project has its similarities when it comes to my project on “Self Identity: Comparing Asian American Adoptees and Second-Generation Asian Americans.”

One of the major similarities I found while reading through Garcia’s final paper, was that she wrote from experience. The reason I proposed and conducted this project on identity was that not only was I interested in the topic, but I was also able to relate my findings with my own experiences. Another major similarity I found was how the researchers sought out a topic on identity in general. She faced an experience in her life that caused her to take a step back and examine her own identity.

There were also various differences in this EUI project when compared to mine, but I believe these differences were only caused because the researcher took the opposite path that I did. Her finding showed a different perspective than what I chose to take. Although it was a different perspective, it was along the same basis when it came to what we wanted to find. The researcher wanted to know what influenced students to exhibit and embrace their ethnicity. I also was curious about how both Asian American adoptees and second-generation Asian Americans react to their surroundings both here at school and at home and if it has an effect on their identity.

I also came across an EUI project called “Is there an Invisible Boundary between the Races at UIUC (specifically FAR)?” by Ashanti Barber. She examines three important questions, two relating to my project; “What interactions take place between racial groups” and “are these interactions, or lack thereof, due to a subjective sense of community and students’ preconceived ideas of ethnicity?” Both of these questions are able to relate back to my project because she examines racial groups and their interactions and the effects they have on the ideas an individual has on ethnicity.

I believe Barber’s questions pinpoint what I am curious about. In her final paper, she writes about UIUC and how the campus is supposed to be so diverse when it comes to different ethnicities associating themselves with others, but in reality people are seen with individuals similar to their ethnicity. For example, in many of the dorms you will find groups of Asians or African Americans socializing with only individuals of their own ethnicity.

Reflect: Over the past semester, I was not only able to learn a great deal about the University, but also about myself and my identity. After researching and comparing Asian American adoptees and Second Generation individuals, I have come to find that the atmosphere an individual is surrounded by has a great effect on his or her identity. At the beginning of the semester I was somewhat hesitant about the Asian American 341 course and the EUI material. I was oblivious to the content of the course when registering for the course. I have
always been interested in the life styles and identity of Asian Americans, but after beginning my research and write-up, I realized I was more intrigued than ever. I thought this course was very beneficial not only for myself as a student to learn the techniques and curriculum for research, but also for the University in order for them to become familiar with their students’ concerns and questions.

I have conducted a study similar to the research I did in this course, but being able to have the project split into different steps was very beneficial. I also liked how there were other students in my course researching topics that were both similar and different to my own project. I was able to compare and contrast to their topics, different techniques, and research styles. I also liked the idea of being able to comment on one another’s projects and get feedback from my Professor and peers. The only aspect of the project that bothered me was the part where I was instructed to not erase any pervious material I had already written, but to add to each section when changing questions, plans, and proposals. I felt as if my project would look more professional if I was able to erase the irrelevant material to my project.

There is not much I would suggest when it comes to preparation to the course. I may give a better description under the course description when students are looking for course to take. I may also advertise the course to students. An individual can learn a great deal taking this course.

Overall, I really enjoyed the EUI research process. I thought it was very realistic and convenient to record the research process on moodle/ an on-line environment. It saves paper, time, and was very straightforward with the instructions. When pertaining to my project, I didn’t feel the observation aspect was necessary, but the interviews were essential. I really enjoyed interviewing my subjects. It gave me a more detailed look into their lives and my research.

Overall, I thought that searching archives was interesting and important. There were times where it was difficult to find a previous project that related to my project, so I had to stretch to find a few relatable projects. I did find the process of being approved by the IRB simple. The process was straightforward and my professor was very good at providing us with reasons when complying with IRB.

Overall, the EUI project was a wonderful experience. I learned a great deal of information about myself, my peers, and the University as a whole. I found few setbacks when it came to the EUI project process. I would definitely recommend this class to future students.

Recommendations: After researching a topic not many people have looked into, I would recommend that the University of Illinois and other universities provide a group or organization that Asian American adoptees and second-
generation individuals would be able to become more involved with their culture/heritage without being pressured into it by their elders, maybe another RSO geared toward looking more in depth into individuals' cultures. I also suggest that the University take a more modern technique when offering the organization. I am aware that it would be difficult to have an organization that singled out adoptees and second-generations individuals but I think it would beneficial when it came to identity issues. They could offer workshops for individuals who are curious about their ethnicity doing activities such as cooking, language, or even watching a movie once a month. I am also aware that the University already offers cultural courses, organizations, and houses, but I feel that if there was an organization (just like any other organization) where individuals had one large aspect in common, it may play a role in shaping an individuals identity.