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Introduction

Most colleges crumple with a challenge of assessing apt strategies for selecting students to join their institutions. Several civil society groups and organizations have come out to strongly oppose perceived discrimination faced by Asian American students in these admissions. Those vested with the authority to admit students to colleges and universities claim merit is the only factor considered. The puzzle in this fact is whether it is only the Americans who are born bright while Asian Americans are mainly academic dwarfs. This is quite arguable - intelligence is not a preserve of the Americans.

A recent study on academic performance by Asian and Caucasian students reveals that, the Asian students on average perform better than Caucasian students. Some colleges display open discriminatory admission criterion such as setting a limitation to the number of Asian Americans students that they can admit. Even with this open discriminatory criterion, such colleges have insisted that " there is no such thing as discrimination against the Asian Americans in their institutions and that it would be a serious injustice on their responsibility to propose such measures"(Bunzel and Christensen 52).

Research hypotheses

Research conducted on the undergraduate admissions in four leading universities i. e. Stanford, Princeton, Harvard and Brown reveals that the population of the Asian American students is approximately ten percent of the total number of applicants. Two approaches are used when drawing conclusions on the causes of these small numbers of applications.

The first one is where by a comparison is made between “ the percentage representation of Asian Americans in the admittance and/or enrollment pools of their respective colleges and universities with the percentage of the overall population in the country that is Asian American” (Takagi 11). The second one, mostly used by the opponents of the current admissions procedures makes a comparison between “ the numbers of Asian Americans offered admission with the number that actually applies. The main focus in this statistics is to compare the Asian American admission rate” with the Whites (Bunzel and Christensen 54).

Research Findings Based on Academic Qualifications

Research findings on the first approach suggest that “ Asian Americans constitutes of approximately 2 percent of the whole population, and they make up more than 8 percent of the freshmen admitted in the four universities that from the basis of this study” (The Princetonian Daily).

Opponents of this study however argue that the system is flawed in that it fails to consider the geographical deliberation of the Asian Americans in different states especially ones that have a metropolitan population. For example, the Asian American population in California is about 6. 7 percent where as it is about 22 percent in San Francisco.

It would therefore be reasonable to have a higher percentage of the Asian American students in Colleges within San Francisco, which is not the case. Second, the number of Asian American students who qualify for university admission is always way higher than that of the Caucasian students. A higher number of Asian Americans also undertake the Scholastic Aptitude Test and achieve high scores compared to the Caucasians. In addition to this, using <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-the-country-that-is-asian-american-takagi/>

racial model does not consider the fact that most of the Asian Americans further their education beyond the age of seventeen. Again using the Asian American percentage of admissions into the universities, which stands at 2.1 percent as the foundation for evaluation of the university and college admissions is misleading. The procedure fails to consider the actual population of Asian Americans high school graduates who send applications to the colleges. The 2.

1 percent would be relatively low if an excess of 20 percent of the total applications were received from the Asian Americans. Due to these reasons, the Asian American admissions rate which is the second approach seems to be a better statistical criterion for the examination of the issue of whether the Asian American students are being discriminated against in university admissions. In this approach, the rate of admission of the Caucasian students is used as the comparative basis for evaluating the Asian American admissions in the universities.

According to the latter approach various factors influence the admissions rates. The most of these is the “ statistical impact of affirmative action policies which aim at raising the admissions proportion of ethnic groups that receives priority in the university admissions” (The Princetonian Daily). It is thus evident that such groups will have an advantage of the numbers to be admitted irrespective of the total number of applicants. When the group that is not within the preferred frame has a lower percentage of admission than another group under the same category, two things could be possible. “

First, the population of applicants in the former group is less qualified

compared to the latter and second the admissions process could be

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prejudiced whether intentionally or unintentionally against the victimized group.

Therefore, the key question in this research is on whether the low levels of admissions of the Asian Americans is necessitated by low level of their qualifications or is caused by discrimination. In the history of the United States, Asian Americans have always been subject to discrimination in the education system since 1960's. Most universities however seemed like they were taking an affirmative step toward the elimination of this trend by increasing the number of students admitted from the marginalized groups. The affirmative action appeared to make significant progress in improving the situation as more students from the Asian American community were able to connect university and college admissions. The affirmative action was perhaps the only strategy that favored them and so the number of high school graduates unable to secure university admissions also remained relatively high.

The academic performance of these students persuaded the administration in these universities to admit them based on merit rather than the special treatment advocated for in the affirmative action policy.

Research Findings Based on Non Academic Sources

Research on the extracurricular activities of high school students indicated that only thirty percent of the total population of Asian American students participated in sports and other out of class activities. The number of these students participating in scholarly activities was however higher than that of whites. This group also seemed to refrain from community activities which

are inclusive of the ethnic and social organizations. From this information, a conclusion can be drawn against the stereotype that students from the Asian American community do not participate in extracurricular activities (Takagi 14).

Further research indicated that the lower rate of admission into colleges was not as a result of the supposedly non participation in non-academic activities but merely as a result of ethnic discrimination. Besides sporting and intellectual activities, the other non-academic qualifications under consideration include personal habits and character. These could be considered as some of the criterion used in the university admission process. According to Takagi, " Every university's has the right to reject or accept applications from students suspected of dishonesty and give special attention to students with a high level of intelligence and integrity" (16).

There is little evidence that point out the Asian American students to be less endowed with any of the positive character traits a university would require for student admission. The fact that these traits are personal means that they have nothing to do with the person's ethnicity. An Asian American student could be fouled up just like a white student.

Research Findings Based on Admission Procedures

It has proved impossible to account for the low rate of admissions of the Asian American students in the universities using the reasons mentioned earlier on. The other logical explanation on this issue is the characteristics of the procedures used when admitting students to colleges. There are four main categories of students who are given special consideration in this

process. “ The first group is the ethnic minorities who are the target for the affirmative action, second are the athletes, third students from geographical locations that are given preference and fourth students with ties from alumni with legacy, the faculty member and university staff. An increase in the admission of these special cases implies that there will be limited chances for the other students owing to the fact that most of these universities do not admit students beyond their facilities capacity.

Many university admissions officials hold on to a lot of stereotypes based on racial diversity. One of these stereotypes states that Asian Americans are more inclined to developing their personal careers in ways that most of the times benefit just them rather than the entire community. Another one states that Asians Americans are interested primarily in studying science disciplines and technical fields and fail to recognize other disciplines of education. These stereotypes only indicated the level of ignorance perceived to exist among the Asian American communities. Opponents of these stereotypes point out that most of these stereotypes are characteristics that originated from the western countries and not Asian. Technological advancements for example have their roots in the west while the Asians over the years have been concentrating on the development of rational and humanities theories.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is clear that all the explanations provided as an account for the low rates of admissions of the Asian Americans in relation to the other communities are not valid.

The only valid reason therefore is merely ethnic discrimination, an assertion which most of the universities' admission officers deny. A report by Bunzel and Christensen drawn from the Brown University sums up this issue that the "numerical limits were in fact in operation through the use of historical benchmark mechanism" (57). They also point out that this was "a process by which a set of enrollment goals was established using a benchmarked figure anchored on the figures of enrollment of a previous year's freshmen class" (59). The outcome of this practice alludes establishing a limit on the number of applicants from the Asian American community being admitted in the colleges. The answer to this problem is complex and cannot be determined by a single research.

Ethnic diversity should be seen as a blessing to the society though present society fails to recognize this fact. Many people would rather perceive an increase the number of Asian Americans in the universities to be as a result of "unfair advantages being given to the Asian Americans than the result of unfair disadvantages being eliminated" (Bunzel and Christensen 60).

Works cited

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