

# The problems of asian american millennials

[Experience](#)



## **Introduction**

Asian American millennials are one of the United State's most affluent and fastest growing subgroups. Because of the way the United States tends to stereotype Asian Americans, they feel trapped by the limited ideas of who they can be and act compared to other Americans. For years Asian Americans have been deemed successful based on one limited focus, academics.

## **Redefining the Stereotypes**

There is a popular Facebook group called Subtle Asian Traits that has over 1.5 million followers worldwide. It is a meme page dedicated to jokes and conversations about Asian Americans experiences in the West. On the page you can find discussions from academic expectations, to struggles with depression and anxiety, to even the stereotype that Asian Americans are workaholics and should achieve huge levels of success. This leads to the Millennial model minority myth, which is based on Asian American stereotypes. It maintains the stereotype that Asian Americans are kid geniuses or musical prodigies. It also discusses within the myth, the "Tiger Mom" mentality that Asian mothers make sure their child is better off and harder working than everyone else. With all of this being said, Asian American millennials are helping redefine what it means to be Asian American; they should not only been seen for being quiet, academic, structured people, instead they are funny, creative, confident leaders.

## **Collective Mindset**

Dr. Steven Lindquist, Associate Professor and Director of Asian Studies at SMU as well as a member of the American Oriental Society, discussed the meaning behind the “Asian American experience.” Lindquist examined Asian American history, stating that “throughout history, Asian Americans have been challenged with exclusion and inequality especially during times of war, recession or changing demographics.” As children growing up and going to school in the United States we are taught to be unique and personalize everything, “but Asian Americans still hold with them their groupthink mentality and way of life in terms of family, culture and ancestors,” Lindquist states. Lindquist went on to say that the Asian American experience is a collective mindset that is “about being a part of the much larger whole, no matter how far removed you may be.” When asked about stereotypes that he frequently saw or heard surrounding Asian Americans, Lindquist talked about “eliminating the notion that Asian Americans are all smart, spelling bee champions who have no social skills and can not climb up the executive ladder.” To challenge the thinking surrounding such stereotypes, “the United States needs to reevaluate what we tend to think of in terms of a leader. Not all leaders have to be vocal, loud, bold characters,” Lindquist said.

## **Asian Americans in the Media**

Asian Americans’ portrayal in the media is definitely lacking. In fact, in today’s world it is highly unlikely to see Asian Americans in lead roles. A study done by the University of Southern California shows that only one percent of all leading roles in Hollywood were played by an Asian-American as of 2017. Sandra Oh made history by becoming the first woman of Asian

descent to be nominated for an Emmy this year. Director of the Asian American Studies Program, Vivian Louie explained what she thought about how the media portrays Asian Americans today. She declared that, “ Asian Americans are not vocal enough. Yes, we are misrepresented, never seen as the real hero in films and only for our cliches, but if we want more representation in media, we must demand it.” Louie mentioned the tv sitcom, “ Fresh Off The Boat” as an example of how Asian-Americans are portrayed. “ Fresh Off The Boat” is the first Asian-American sitcom to hit the 100 episode landmark. Louie details that the show received a lot of criticism at first, for its “ racist nature and reliance on stereotypes,” but after five seasons, many viewers appreciate the show for “ tackling relevant, important issues that pertain to the Asian-American culture, like assimilating into a white-dominated community,” Louie said. In addition, Louie maintained that while the show does play into Asian-American stereotypes, for example portraying the mom as a “ tiger mom” and having characters speak in broken english with heavy accents, Asian Americans are not just one dimensional characters who can only play Asian-American roles.

## **The Bamboo Ceiling**

According to Pew Research, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing, best-educated and highest-income racial group within the United States. While Asian Americans have achieved status in some areas, they are still challenged in reaching management and executive positions. Similar to the term “ glass ceiling,” the “ bamboo ceiling,” is a term “ used to describe the obstacles and limits Asian Americans face in trying to reach top leadership and executive positions. Asian Americans have little trouble getting hired,

but struggle to move up the ranks to senior management positions, despite their achievements levels. Louie stated that “ research shows that only 28% of Asian Americans are comfortable being themselves at work.” Efforts to break through the “ bamboo ceiling” are still at work as companies are trying to develop training programs to decrease bias as well as encourage Asian-Americans to apply to higher up positions. On the reverse side Louie states that “ Asian-Americans are starting to encourage one another to break through the bamboo ceiling on their own.”

## **Conclusion**

It is becoming increasingly more and more important to discuss the issues surrounding stereotyping Asian American millennials. The more Americans become immersed in Asian Americans’ culture, such as paying attention to movies and tv shows like Crazy Rich Asians, or “ Fresh Off The Boat,” the more Americans will understand how to respect and view their way of life.