

## **Campus Diversity & Well-being: A Community Psychological Perspective**

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With the increasing heterogeneity of university student populations, a great deal of effort has been expended in meeting the academic and personal needs of such student diversity on many campuses (Stage & Manning, 1992; Stricker et al., 1990). Throughout the 70s, translation of the civil rights and women's movement into a diverse array of student assistance programs, increased sensitivity to cultural heterogeneity in classrooms, open-door admission policies, and expanded financial aid programs provided greater access to higher education for the historically disfranchised students in the United States, mainly targeting African-American students. In the ensuing 30 years or more since then, however, visible changes have again occurred because of the influx of immigrants and refugees, thereby making the university student population more and more culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse and mixed (cf. Root, 1996; Tyack, 1995). Nonetheless, very little theoretical work has been done to explore the implications of such student diversity on the quality of life among general student populations

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studying in multicultural settings above and beyond the "black-white" issues. Without research evidence demonstrating positive effects of diversity on students' life quality, the increasing importance of ethnic-racial-cultural diversity ends up simply as a value stance only, not as a set of articulated theories and action strategies for promoting diversity on university campuses (cf. Watts, 1992). Therefore, the major purpose of this study was to provide initial evidence for the potential impact of diversity on indices of life quality among college students in a culturally heterogeneous university setting.

### **Inadequacy of the Current Strategies for Addressing Campus Diversity**

Despite college administrators' earlier recognition of the issues facing the increasing heterogeneity in the entire university ecology, many approaches took the form of "special programs," and/or other piecemeal efforts including "Campus Orientation for Minority Students" and "Minority Mentoring Programs." These approaches may be helpful to the ultimate task of creating and promoting a culturally-sensitive campus environment where both students and faculty, regardless of their backgrounds, might experience a sense of well-being.

However, several reasons for the inadequacy of such services as optimal strategies for addressing multiculturalism on university campuses are obvious. First, these strategies assume that those who are diverse culturally, racially, or ethnically must change, and adapt to the dominant college ecology, which is often described as middle- to upper-class, and predominantly Eurocentric. This further implies that it is the responsibility of "minority students<sup>1</sup>" to adjust and become

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<sup>1</sup>The use of terms such as "minority" and "majority" is not without reluctance while realizing the questionable validity and accuracy of the assumptions that underlie these terms. Nonetheless, these words are used in the present article just to be consistent with the traditional usage and to refer to its numerical status in a particular ecological setting such as a university.

socialized into a college environment that may be very different from their past educational and home experiences. These adjustments may be as simple as adapting to the type of social events offered on campus, or as complex as adapting to unfamiliar or unrealistic expectations in classrooms and assignments that differ from what students currently know. At the same time, these "minority students" may struggle with all of the difficulties and stresses that any other students confront as they make the transition into college life (Kleinke, 1998).

Another reason for the inefficacy of the existing programs for addressing the diverse needs of the changing student populations concerns the fact that in order to be assisted by these programs, culturally diverse students must be identified and encouraged to participate actively (Sasao, 1997). While many of these students work hard to "assimilate" themselves into the existing college campus culture or ecology, they may struggle with the issue of whether or not to identify themselves as "different" from other students. Some of them resist outreach or support, and thus are unlikely to receive any services to which they are entitled. Clearly, there is a serious need for an "affirmative" campus ecology where the students of various diverse backgrounds should not be set apart as an anomaly who needs help, but celebrated as full members of a pluralistic campus environment (Jones, 1994).

Related to the above reason is the increasing difficulty in defining who is a majority or minority student in today's college campuses (cf. Phinney, 1996; Root, 1996). Traditionally, in programs that promote recruitment and retention of "minority students" on campus, broad ethnic or racial categories (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics) --often referred to as "ethnic or racial glosses" (Trimble, 1990-91) --are usually used to identify a "minority" student. As argued above, there are students who feel psychologically resistant to being defined or categorized as such, yet there are others who simply do not fit into any of these "administrative" categories because of their multiracial or multicultural backgrounds (Root, 1992; 1996). This problem reflects the continuing debates

about a "multiracial" category for the U.S. census with the changing and interacting links among political, practical, and scientific bases of demographic indicators. Thus, the current "category-based" services to diverse students might not be appropriate, let alone effective, for the large segments of the changing college students today and in the near future.

Finally, while the piecemeal efforts for addressing diversity are encouraged on many campuses, the implementation of interventions has not required any fundamental change in the general campus environment. This intransigence in the overall program implementation precludes closer examination of the underlying assumptions that create the barriers to affirmative expression of diversity represented by various cultural, racial, and/or ethnic groups. Minimal demands are made of those people in the general campus community to learn about the diversity. Unfortunately, an ethnocentric attitude remains in many, if not all, administrative actions that envision and plan interventions only from the perspective of the "non-minority" culture. The ultimate implication of this approach is "to be like us, think like us, and/or act like us" rather than a mutual adjustment to the wide diversity of possibilities in life.

### **Campus Diversity and Asian American Students**

Although some of the programmatic issues have been addressed in the past, they tend to focus on the role of prejudice and discrimination against African American students in predominantly White college campuses (cf. McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998). As noted earlier, many U.S. campuses have become diverse with the increasing numbers of students of diverse backgrounds including Asian Americans, Latinos/Latinas, ethnic White Europeans, Middle Easterners, among others.

One of the most visible phenomena across many U.S. university campuses is the increasing numbers of Asian Americans, whose representation among general

student populations often includes both U. S. - and foreign-born students (Hsia & Peng, 1998). Particularly for Asian American students, academic settings hold a number of important implications for their quality of life. First, the "model minority" thesis has perpetuated the image of Asian "super-achievers" in all areas of life including social relationships as well as academic performance (e. g. , Sue & Morishima, 1982; Toupin & Son, 1991). Nonetheless, accumulated evidence indicates that many Asian students are not as happy or satisfied as other non-minority students, free from interpersonal and/or emotional problems, or even academic failure (Sue & Okazaki, 1991). In fact, many Asian students express discomfort in situations demanding interpersonal fluency (Callao, 1973), and Asian female students do not opt for Asian males as potential dating partners (Weiss, 1970). Zane and his associates (Zane et al. , 1991) indicated that Asian American students were not "universally less assertive" but they found that these students report less assertiveness only in situations involving strangers. A second reason for the importance of investigating the impact of diversity for Asians is that for Asian Americans and other ethnic minority individuals, educational attainment is highly valued and is often perceived as a vehicle in advancing and promoting their social mobility (Sue & Morishima, 1982). Therefore, it can be argued that because of Asians' strong personal investment in education, the campus environment becomes crucial to their optimal functioning including social relationships as well as academic performance. Still, another rationale for the present study's focus on Asian American students is that the within-group diversity that currently characterizes the Asian American group is enormously large. In California, Asians speak over 30 different languages and bring with them a comparable number of distinct cultures (Asian Week, 1991). Also, acculturation levels vary within Asian groups ranging from Chinese and Japanese Americans who have been in the U. S. for more than a hundred years to other refugee or newer immigrant Asians who have been here for a significantly shorter period of time.

Therefore, the potential effects of diversity in an academic setting on the lives of various Asian subgroups are expected to vary considerably.

### **Campus Diversity and Well-being: A Community Psychological Approach**

In order to understand why diversity influences life quality among general student populations including both "minority" and "non-minority" students, an ecological-contextualist framework in community psychology will be used (e.g., Kelly, Azellton, Burzette, & Mock, 1994; Sasao & Sue, 1993; Swartz & Martin, 1997). The ecological approach stresses the assessment of contextual variables that interact with the values, predispositions, and experiences of the populations involved. It also insures that culturally anchored variables are considered in their unique environmental contexts such as campus communities. Particularly in the present study, a variety of diversity effects on two life quality indices including social relationship satisfaction and academic life satisfaction on campus will be examined.

As shown in Table 1, the diversity indices examined in the study include: (a) diversity in high school (a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not an individual attended a high school with ethnic diversity); (b) diversity value referring to whether or not an individual perceives that ethnic diversity on campus is highly valued; (c) actual negative diversity experiences, assessing whether or not an individual had negative diversity experiences such as being involved in racially-motivated incidents or conflicts; (d) perceived positive diversity phenomena indicating whether they have observed any events that would promote diversity on campus (e.g., forming an interracial coalition for establishing ethnic studies programs), and (e) perceived negative diversity phenomena referring to any negatively perceived events (e.g., mounting interracial antagonism in student groups) It can be argued from an ecological standpoint that cultural diversity, as

operationalized by these five indices, affects life quality among Asian American students and perhaps other ethnic minority students in such a way that diversity affects context-specific life-quality variables (such as social relations, heterosexual relations, academic performance) by influencing "sense of community" either positively or negatively.

Based upon a limited number of research on sense of community and subjective well-being (e. g., Davidson & Cotter, 1991; Lang et al., 1982) and more than one operational definition of diversity, it is hypothesized that to the extent that cultural diversity is psychologically proximal or relevant to the perceived campus environment, it would significantly influence students' sense of community and concomitantly context-specific life quality indices such as interpersonal relations and academic concerns. Thus, diversity in high school and diversity value will have minimal effects on such outcomes because they are distal or not directly relevant to the ecological context in which students spend most of their time. On the other hand, actual negative diversity experiences disrupt students' campus life satisfaction because such experiences are ecologically more proximal to the context of a college campus. Likewise, both perceived diversity phenomena on campus, either positive or negative, which are more proximal than other indices, tend to have substantial effects on life satisfaction among students. Particularly, perception of positive diversity is likely to contribute significantly to a sense of community and life quality.

Given these considerations, the following three questions were examined in the present study:

- (1) Are there Asian-Caucasian and Asian subgroup differences in their experiences with campus diversity, their sense of community and indices of life quality ?
- (2) If so, to what extent does ethnic-racial diversity influence the sense of community and various indices of life quality among Asian Americans as a

**Table 1 Description of Variables Used in Analyses**

VARIABLE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION (ITEMS) <sup>2</sup>
Diversity in High School [Yes=1 ; No=0] (1) <sup>3</sup>	*Did you go to a high school with ethnic diversity?
Diversity Value (1)	*I value the ethnic diversity on UCLA campus.
Actual Negative Diversity Experience on Campus (1)	*I have been involved in racially motivated physical or verbal conflicts on campus.
Perceived Positive Diversity on Campus (2)	*Various ethnic minority students on campus get along well with each other. *I am satisfied with my interactions with peers outside my racial/ethnic group.
Perceived Negative Diversity on Campus (4)	*I feel that I am treated negatively at UCLA because of my racial or ethnic background. *I tend to worry about how others think of my racial/ethnic group. *I believe that there is racial tension among students at UCLA. *The presence of ethnic/racial minority students on campus bothers me.
Sense of Community (2)	*I feel a part of the UCLA community. *I am satisfied with my sense of being a part of the UCLA community.
Life Satisfaction : Social Relations Domain (5)	*I am satisfied with ...the number and quality of my friendships. ...my interactions with peers at UCLA. ...the overall quality of my sexual life. ...my physical attractiveness. ...my dating and love relationships.
Life Satisfaction : Academic Domain (4)	*I am satisfied with ...the overall quality of my education at UCLA. ...my career planning. ...the way in which I have been treated by faculty at UCLA. ...the way I balance work and play.

<sup>2</sup> All items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale (5=completely agree; 1=completely disagree) unless noted otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of items per variable.

whole, and various Asian subgroups including Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, and Caucasian students as a group ?

- (3) What are some of the implications of the findings for future research and practice on the impact of campus diversity on well-being ?

## Method

In order to address the above questions, this study used the student self-report data from the general student population collected at UCLA, which is an ethnically and culturally diverse campus community with approximately 34,000 students at the time of data collection in Fall 1987. Originally, the data were collected by the UCLA Student Psychological Services from the general student population by mail at the beginning of AY 1987, and comprised responses from 1,590 completed questionnaires returned in the mail. The gender composition of the sample included 783 males (49.2%) and 803 females (50.5%) with 4 respondents missing gender information. The ethnic breakdown was: 168 African American/Black (10.6%), 400 Asian/Asian American (29.2%), 388 Non-Hispanic White (28.3%), 282 Hispanics (17.7%), and 132 Other (8.3%). Two hundred and twenty students (13.9%) were foreign-born students from overseas.

For the purpose of this study, 324 Asian American students who were distinctly identifiable<sup>4</sup> as belonging to either one of the specific Asian subgroups, namely, Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans, 282 Mexican American students, and 388 non-Hispanic Caucasian American students were included (Total sample size = 1,159). An examination of basic demographic characteristics showed that the

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<sup>4</sup> Those Asian American students who self-identified themselves as mixed-heritage were excluded from the present study.

obtained sample closely reflected the student characteristics compiled by the UCLA Registrar's Office. In sampling, the list of names and addresses was generated by the UCLA Registrar's Office by attempting to balance the list in terms of gender, ethnicity, and class standing. An overall return rate of the survey forms was 44%.

The survey instrument consisted of 92 items on various indices of life satisfaction, sense of community, diversity indices (see Table 1 above), demographic information, sources of psychological stress, students' prior and current utilization of counseling services on campus, actual and perceived stress, coping strategies, attitudes toward mental health services. On the average, the reliability of survey items was fairly high and more than adequate: average alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = .86.

## Results and Discussion

As Table 2 shows, statistically significant differences were found among six ethnic groups on five indices of diversity: omnibus  $F(6, 1145) = 38.98, p < .001$ . For example, the Caucasian American students, as a whole, were less likely to come from a culturally diverse high school, when compared to the students of other groups ( $p < .05$ ). The largest difference between the Caucasian and other groups was found on the diversity index incorporating students' own negative experiences (NEGDIV in Table 2), revealing that African American students experienced more negative events on campus than the Caucasian students, and other students positioned themselves in between. Asian American students, as a single group, showed parallel experiences across the five indices of diversity; however, Korean American students exhibited slightly more negative experiences with diversity. For example, the Korean students' endorsement of diversity value was significantly lower than that for either Japanese or Chinese students ( $p < .05$ ),

and their perceived negative diversity was significantly lower ( $p < .05$ ). Clearly, the perception and actual experiences with campus diversity varied depending on the students' own group membership.

In regard to the first question on across-group (i. e., Asian-Caucasian), differences in levels of sense of community and life quality indices, mean comparisons using MANOVA with multiple comparisons revealed that: (1) there was no statistically significant difference in perceived sense of community between Asians and Caucasians ( $p > .05$ ), (2) statistically significant differences on social life satisfaction indicated that Caucasian American students reported greater satisfaction than Asian American students ( $p < .05$ ), and (3) Caucasian students showed significantly lower academic satisfaction than any other student groups ( $p < .05$ ). In terms of within-group mean comparisons among Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, no statistically significant differences were found on sense of community and life satisfaction indices. The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 2.

These inter-racial or across-group differences, if not within group-differences, appear to reflect our common belief that Asians as a minority group on campus tend to have qualitatively different life experiences in an academic environment when compared to Caucasian students. However, contrary to our general expectations, there were no within-group differences among Asian American subgroups on sense of community and life quality indices. It may perhaps be due to the limited nature of life quality indices used in the study. In addition, because of the recent political movement among various Asian subgroups toward "Asian panethnicity," a term designating the creation of a common identity among various Asian groups (Espiritu, 1992), Asian American students, regardless of and/or above and beyond their specific Asian ethnicities, come to interact with each other more as a single, common group for some super-ordinate goals. Moreover, we must recognize that other important dimensions including

satisfaction with family's expectations about academic performance or such culturally anchored dimensions were not included in the present study. Future research must identify structures and/or dimensions of life quality among various Asian groups and other ethnic minority groups.

The second question concerns the contribution of diversity experiences and phenomena to life satisfaction: to what extent does diversity influence sense of community and life quality indices? To answer this question, two sets of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. For all regression models, gender and year in school were entered at the initial step (Step 1) in order to partial out these effects before assessing the variance due to ethnic-racial diversity.

The first set of analyses focused on the regression of sense of community and life-satisfaction indices on indices of ethnic-racial diversity experience and perception, separately for Asian students as a single group and for Caucasian students as another group. The incremental variances contributed by adding a set of 5 diversity indices at step 2 were statistically significant in all regression models.

More specifically, the effect of perceived positive diversity was significant in each model, indicating that it seems to have a positive effect on the sense of community and two life-satisfaction indices. Comparing models for the Asians as a single group and the Caucasians reveal at least two interesting observations. First, as shown by  $R^2$ , the total variances accounted for in the models were consistently smaller for the Caucasian students. This indicates that ethnic-racial diversity in a university community may not hold as much importance or relevance to the Caucasians students as for the Asian students. Second, the effect of perceived negative diversity on campus seems to have a positive effect on the sense of community among the Caucasian students. On the surface, this may be counterintuitive; however, much research on social identity and self-categorization theory (e. g., Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner, 1987) points to the possibility that

**Table 2 Ethnic Differences in Ethnic-Cultural Diversity, Sense of Community, and Life Satisfaction: Means and Standard Deviations**

Variable	Chinese Americans (n=171)	Japanese Americans (n=98)	Korean Americans (n=54)	Mexican American (n=282)	African Americans (n=168)	Caucasian Americans (n=386)
Diversity in High School (HSDIV) [Yes=1; No=0]	.64a (.48)	.66a (.48)	.67a (.48)	.70a (.46)	.72a (.45)	.59b (.50)
Diversity Value (VALUE)	3.96a (1.03)	4.10a (.97)	3.87b (1.00)	3.78b (1.19)	3.87b (1.16)	3.72b (1.14)
Actual Neg. Div. Exp. (ACTUAL)	1.35b (.75)	1.34b (.79)	1.44b (.84)	1.75a (1.25)	1.92a (1.39)	1.29b (.83)
Perceived + Diversity (POCDIV)	3.49a (.74)	3.59a (.75)	3.41b (.75)	3.43b (.66)	3.17c (.65)	3.35b (.66)
Perceived - Diversity (NEGDIV)	2.05b (.57)	1.94b (.52)	2.11b (.53)	2.11b (.68)	2.39a (.65)	1.74c (.53)
Sense of Community	3.43b (1.01)	3.40b (.90)	3.45b (.84)	3.30b (1.01)	3.11a (1.05)	3.36b (1.04)
Life Satisfaction : Social Relations	3.42a (.57)	3.55a (.56)	3.47a (.58)	3.44a (.62)	3.31b (.73)	3.60a (.65)
Life Satisfaction : Academic Domain	2.56b (.75)	2.54b (.70)	2.80b (.73)	2.54b (.68)	2.60b (.69)	2.31a (.69)

Note. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. Means with different subscripts (a, b, and c) are significantly different at  $p < .05$ . Higher scores for VALUE indicate greater endorsement of diversity value; higher scores for ACTUAL indicate the degree of agreement with the statement, "I have been involved in racially motivated physical or verbal conflict on campus." Higher scores for either POSDIV or NEGDIV indicate higher levels of perceived diversity in either positive or negative direction, respectively. Higher scores on SENSE indicate greater sense of community and satisfaction with it. High life satisfaction are indicated by higher scores on SOCIAL and ACADEMIC.

because of ethnic or racial categories being made more salient due to diversity on campus, the Caucasian students might have felt a need to enhance their sense of community (being a predominantly middle-class Eurocentric) in fear of their weakened social identity, and in search of a stronger sense of group identity as the Caucasian American group.

The second set of similar regression analyses was conducted for three Asian subgroups separately (see Table 3). Consistent with the other regression models, an addition of ethnic-racial diversity effects into regression equations was statistically significant in explaining sense of community in two of the Asian student groups, namely, Japanese and Chinese, but not Korean American students. For the social relationship satisfaction, the positive effect of perceived positive diversity on campus was significant for all groups, and, in addition, perceived negative diversity had negative effects in Japanese and Korean groups. This can be interpreted that positive diversity has a universally facilitative effects for satisfied social relationships across all Asian groups. Moreover, the negative effect of perceived negative diversity phenomenon may be understood differently in two groups. In the case of Japanese Americans who are mostly more acculturated than any other Asian groups (Uba, 1994), the negative effect implies that such phenomenon limits or disrupts their interactions with the wider campus community. On the other hand, the significant negative effect of perceived negative diversity for the Koreans, which was larger than that for the Japanese Americans, may be interpreted as a psychological threat to developing meaningful social relationships with people of other ethnic-racial backgrounds. Because this interpretation is speculative as to its differential effects, future research certainly needs to corroborate these explanations. For the academic dimension of life satisfaction, again, the effect of perceived positive diversity was statistically significant in all three groups. It is interesting to note that the total variance accounted for in this last equation was substantially lower for the Korean American

students than for the other two groups. This appears to indicate that for the Korean American students, the effect of the campus environment including diversity may not be proximal or relevant to their life quality. However, they may seek life satisfaction elsewhere within their own ethnic group, organization, or community such as the Korean Student Association or the Korean American Christian Fellowship. One caution here is that because of the smaller sample size for the Korean sample, there is the possibility of unstable parameter estimates in the regression models, thus requiring caution in interpretation.

## Conclusions

Some implications of these findings for future research and policy on multiculturalism on university campuses are noted. As it was expected, ethnic-racial diversity, particularly perceived positive diversity phenomenon on campus, had positive effects on sense of community and life satisfaction among Asian American and other groups as well. Also, it was found that Asians, in general, reported lower life satisfaction than Caucasians especially in the domain of social relationships. These findings are important in several respects. For example, especially for those who view campus diversity as a liability as opposed to an asset, the present findings show that ethnic-racial diversity can be beneficial in promoting life quality not only among ethnic minority groups but also among non-minority students. Moreover, theoretically, these findings may give partial support for the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) in that even though a set of strict conditions (e. g., equal status) is usually assumed in successful contact effects, there was evidence in this study for the positive effect based on the perceived diversity phenomenon in a university context, even where diversity was experienced vicariously.

Table 3 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Models Regressing Sense of Community and Life Satisfaction on Ethnic-Racial Diversity in an Ethnically Diverse University Setting

Variable	Chinese American (n=167)		Japanese American (n=97)		Korean American (n=54)		Mexican American (n=278)		African American (n=164)		Caucasian American (n=388)	
	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$
<u>Sense of Community</u>												
(Step 1)												
Gender (1=M; F=0)	.48		.259*		.053		.066		-.067			
Year in School	-.024	.00	-.001	.04	-.116**	.01	-.210***	.02	-.086	.02		
(Step 2)												
Diversity in High School	.057		.044		.028		-.063		-.012			
Diversity Value	.021		.132		.135**		.146**		.017			
Actual Neg. Diverse. Exp.	.067		.023		.081		.049		.068			
Perceived + Diversity	.283***		.252**		.192**		.299**		.305***			
Perceived - Diversity	* .10***	.21	* .227**	.11***	* .09***	.12***	* .158***	.08***				
	-.073		* .103		-.198***		-.136*					
adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.10	.23	.15	.10	.14	.10	.14	.10				
<u>Life Satisfaction :</u>												
<u>Social Relations Domain</u>												
(Step 1)												
Gender (1=M; F=0)	-.147*		.025		.051		-.048		.160***			
Year in School	.095	.04**	.343**	.07	-.086	.00	.106	.00	.029	.03**		
(Step 2)												
Diversity in High School	.041		.094		-.058		-.027		.026			
Diversity Value	-.073		-.098		.048		.055		-.014			
Actual Neg. Diverse. Exp.	-.101		-.080		.168**		.150*		.026			
Perceived + Diversity	.307**		.316**		* .214**		* .270**		.06***			
Perceived - Diversity	* .14***	.26***	* .279*	.22***	* .186**	.07***	* .107	.04**	.044			
	-.059		-.172*		-.233***							
adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.18	.27	.29	.07	.04	.09	.04	.09				

Variable	Chinese American (n=167)		Japanese American (n=97)		Korean American (n=54)		Mexican American (n=278)		African American (n=164)		Caucasian American (n=388)	
	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2a$
<u>Life satisfaction :</u>												
<u>Academic Domain</u>												
(Step 1)												
Gender (1=M ; F=0)	.003		-.026		.066		-.137**		.007		-.017	
Year in School	.172**	.04*	.355**	.11***	.282*	.07**	.267***	.09***	.295***	.09***	.089*	.02**
(Step 2)												
Diversity in High School	.005		-.022		.003		.024		-.024		.038	
Diversity Value	-.008		.192**		.037		-.106**		-.122*		.089*	
Actual Neg. Diverse. Exp.	-.107		-.032		.028		.027		.132*		-.096*	
Perceived + Diversity	.249**		.362**		.311*		-.038		-.143**		.171**	
Perceived - Diversity	*	.12***	*	.20***	.135	.09***	.312**	.10***	.05**	*	.005	.06**
	-.109		-.095				*		.032			
adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.16		.36		.16		.19		.14		.08

Note. \*p<.10; \*\*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.01

<sup>a</sup> $\Delta R^2$  refers to change in R<sup>2</sup> at each step.

In addition to no within-group differences in life quality among Asian subgroups, that all Asian subgroups showed mostly similar patterns in regression models is difficult to explain given that the research literature seems to indicate differential effects of acculturation and interracial experiences among these groups.

However, this should not be taken to mean that all three groups as a single group share similar life experiences. Rather, the lower levels of the total variance accounted for in regression models for Korean American students appear to suggest that other ecological-contextual variables relevant to them (e. g., a strong sense of familial obligations, active participation in church youth groups) were not included in the model. Future research must focus on those variables reflective of their immigration history, escalating conflicts between Korean and African American communities, and other interracial experiences, that would predict life quality among different Asian groups. In fact, Trimble (1990-91) argues that "ethnic glosses" or broad ethnic labels such as Chinese, Koreans, American Indians, or Hispanics without paying much attention to historical and community contexts do not usually contribute much to the understanding of problem behaviors among different ethnic group members. Thus, researchers must address, above and beyond simple ethnic classification variables, culture-specific variables such as acculturation and ethnic self-identification in assessing the dimensional structures of life quality for Asian American students, and other students in the entire campus community.

Finally, one concern of the present study is related to the definition of "community" used in the study. In this study, the students' campus community was used as a reference group in assessing their sense of community and life quality. This raises questions as to the conceptual equivalence of meaning attached to such a definition of community. Gusfield (1975) distinguished between two major uses of the term 'community': one is the territorial or geographical notion of community such as neighborhood, town, city, or school; and the other is

"relational," that is more concerned with quality or characteristics of social relationship, without reference to geographical location. As suggested earlier, the relatively small variance that explained the sense of community and life quality for Korean American students may be attributed to within-group differences on diversity in the definition of community that exists among various Asian subgroups (e. g. , family, church, social clubs). For example, a sense of community in an academic context for Korean students may be distal to their life satisfaction, because their sense of community may be defined or accommodated elsewhere. Clearly, there is a need to investigate the relative influences of various "communities" (e. g. , geographical, racial-ethnic, professional, spiritual, etc.) on psychological well-being.

In conclusion, it can be said that while the increasing trend of cultural diversity in educational settings provides a number of challenges for not only academic and social life on campus in general, it also needs to reflect ecological-contextual issues such as interracial-ethnic-cultural climates on university campuses. Only then should we be able to define and test theories that would explain differing quality of life among Asian Americans and other students of diverse backgrounds in relation to the whole campus community.

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