

Do Men and Women Perceive Money Differently? A Study of Asian and Asian American College Students: A Discussion

A Discussion of the paper presented at the Western Family Economics Association conference.

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Significance of the Study

Studying the gender differences of Asian and Asian American college students is important because financial educators, counselors, and Extension personnel need a much clearer understanding of gender and cultural differences in various population groups regarding money management beliefs and behaviors.

Background Information

By 2050, it is projected that there will be 35 million Asians living in the United States. The census projection for the growth in the Asian American population between 2000 and 2050 is 213 percent. Contrastingly, the entire American population is only projected to grow by 50 percent (Reynolds, 2004). The size of the demographic group in this study will have implications for financial management education, counseling, and Extension program design and marketing.

In addition, Reynolds (2004) reports that the average personal income of an Asian American is \$24,900. This group has the highest personal income of any race. It is a population that can provide rich research data and implications.

Limitations

This research study focuses on a young population, college students, which some might say is a limitation to the study. However a trend report in the October, 2004 issue of *American Demographics* states “While young Asian Americans seem increasingly assimilated to American ways, they also carve out a defining culture, distinct from that of their counterparts who live in Asia, but also dissimilar to that of young Americans of other cultures” (“Asian Youth Trends,” 2004, p. 14). This research study will help us understand more clearly how we need to design education to meet the needs of this important demographic group which will be a large target audience for financial management education in the future.

The sample size of 490 college students is moderate, but it is very impressive to have the sample drawn from California, Hawaii, New York, South Korea, and Japan. The authors readily admit that this paper is descriptive and preliminary.

Researchers involved in the NC 1013 multi-state research project, “The Economic and Psychological Determinants of Household Savings Behavior,” have spent a great deal of time trying to ensure that that research design will provide large enough cells of unique populations such as Asians and Asian Americans to result in significant findings. This goal might not be achieved, which makes smaller, targeted studies such as this one very important to the body of knowledge.

Dr. Celia Hayhoe, Extension Specialist at Virginia Tech, is a member of that research team. In a draft of a paper she is working on about Money Attitudes, she agrees that the most widely used money attitude scale is Furnham’s (1984) Money Beliefs and Behaviors Scale. However, she states that researchers have had problems with reliability with this scale. It is suggested that the researchers of this study contact Dr. Hayhoe to discuss this matter to make sure that they address such concerns.

Recommendations

Reviewers for the Western Family Economics Association conference papers provided excellent suggestions to the authors such as modifying the title and restating the purpose of the study to improve clarification which have been completed. In addition, it was suggested that the authors examine the factor structure of the money beliefs and behaviors in each subgroup through the use of an exploratory factor analysis procedure. Additional

papers building upon this preliminary, descriptive paper will provide greater understanding and implications for future research of these populations.

Endnote

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References

Asian youth trends. (2004, October). *American Demographics*, 26, 14.

Reynolds, C. (2004, October). Far east moves west: Growing trends in the Asian American market. *American Demographics*, 26, 56.