



Filipino Americans and the Glass Ceiling: A Quantitative Analysis of Cultural Adherence, Assertiveness, and Management

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Abstract: With a sample of 473 Filipino Americans in 35 states in the United States, this quantitative study was designed to investigate factors that surround Filipino Americans' glass ceiling challenges in attaining higher-level positions in the workplace. The investigation explored the related variables, including years of management experience, adherence to two dimensions of Filipino cultural values (interpersonal norms and conservatism), and assertiveness. Years of living in the United States, geographic location, and generational levels were also examined. The study revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between assertiveness and the interpersonal norms dimension of the Filipino culture. Findings revealed specific Filipino cultural traits which conflict with assertiveness. Results from the current study can be used for the development of assertiveness training for Filipino Americans who desire to advance in the workplace.

Keywords: Filipino American, Cultural Adherence, Values, Assertiveness, Glass Ceiling.

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1. Introduction

The population of Filipino Americans in the United States has reached four million and represents the third largest Asian group in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019); there is a growing need for continued study and examination of the Filipino American experience. The conflict between Filipino and Western values drives the positive and negative experiences of daily life in Filipino Americans (David et al., 2017; Hufana & Morgan Consoli, 2020; Rodriguez-Operana et al., 2017; Tuason et al., 2007). One negative experience is the glass ceiling for Asians, also called the bamboo ceiling, a concept that describes the challenge Asian Americans face as they attempt to advance in the workplace (Chin, 2016; Hyun, 2005; Yu, 2020). Asians hold 2% of executive positions in Fortune 500 companies, while more than half of them hold a bachelor's degree or higher (Chin, 2016). While many perceive that the bamboo ceiling is caused by discrimination from higher levels, another contributing factor is the deep-rooted Asian values that conflict with characteristics expected for higher positions. A barrier to advancement is a result of deep-rooted Asian values that conflict with the professional characteristics expected of leaders in the workplace (Lathabayan & Senthil, 2017). Communication is a key factor that explains the difficulty and challenges for Asian Americans as they try to advance to higher-level positions (Le, 2016). Asian women who are highly qualified and perform at higher levels than men lose opportunities because they experience lower levels of risk-taking and competitiveness (Tan, 2008).

As Filipino Americans seek success in the United States, they face barriers preventing advancement to higher levels of management. Values and character traits of Asian Americans are interpreted as a barrier to advancing to higher levels in the American workplace. Foreigners have long been required and expected to change their behavior, values, and social interaction to fit the host country (Agbayani-Siewart, 1994). In the engineering field, many Asian Americans are successful, but few are seen in higher levels of leadership (Zhou & Lee, 2017). Despite the high levels of education that Asian Americans have, there is a great under-representation in upper management and executive leadership (Kawahara et al., 2013). In the accounting industry, low Asian/Pacific Islander advancement to leadership was found to be associated with higher values of respect for authority, collectivism, self-restraint, humility, and educational or occupational

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achievement (Jenkins & Calegari 2010). Agreeable, submissive, and modest cultural behaviors have prevented Asians from reaching advanced leadership roles in academic libraries (Le, 2016). Asian culture supports the idea of structure with clear roles of power and loyal followers (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Asian values focus on the whole team, whereas Western leadership values competitiveness (Kawahara et al., 2013). This collective focus, which lacks competitiveness, can be misinterpreted as a lack of leadership in which the worker is seen as a poor leader who is not taking the initiative. The misunderstandings found in cultural differences have created a bamboo ceiling of strongholds, which exist below and above the ceiling.

Hyun (2005) advocated for a change among Asians to break the bamboo ceiling. Chin (2016) discussed the challenges that Asians have in promoting themselves and recounted the experience of an Asian employee who was told by the senior vice president that she needed to speak up more. Wu and Lee (2015) suggested assertiveness training for Asian-American children. With a considerable amount of focus on Asians found in literature, there is an opportunity to investigate Filipino experiences related to culture. The Filipino experience varies from the Asian experience because of influences from other countries. Nadal (2011) presented the impact of the United States and Spanish colonizers who brought an American education system, an individualistic mindset, and Catholicism to the Filipino culture. While these cultural characteristics cause the Filipino culture to be distinctive from other Asian groups, there exists a similarity that represents their shared challenges in leadership behaviors, such as assertiveness. David (2010) examined the difficulties of Filipino Americans in speaking up when they need help. Knowledge of the factors contributing to the bamboo ceiling will empower Filipino Americans by raising awareness of their behavior and guiding them to find methods for breaking through the bamboo ceiling. A deeper investigation of the factors related to this phenomenon provides increased awareness and understanding of the factors related to the bamboo ceiling, and the current study examines one possible factor: assertiveness.

1.1. Cultural Adherence and Assertiveness

The two main variables in the present study were cultural adherence and assertiveness. Cultural adherence, also known as enculturation, is adherence to ethnic values (Hui & Lent, 2018). Two subdimensions of enculturation are interpersonal norms and conservatism (del Prado & Church, 2010). Enculturation has had negative effects on Asian Americans, including Filipino Americans (David et al., 2017; Hufana & Morgan Consoli, 2020; Rodriguez-Operana et al., 2017; Tuason et al., 2007). Higher social anxiety, more daily uncertainty, and lower feelings of competence were found among Asian Americans who held more closely to their culture of origin (Lee & Church, 2017). Enculturation is related to keeping the original culture, while acculturation is related to replacing the original culture with the host country's culture. Acculturation is the manner of social interaction and communication that has been adopted from another culture over time (Barry, 2001; Ea, 2007; Redfield et al., 1936; Vargas & Jurado, 2016). Acculturation can also be considered a way of abandoning the culture of origin while adopting the new culture (Ea et al., 2007). Acculturation represents a shift in a person's life and may negatively affect individuals.

Assertiveness is the skill used to express feelings and ideas (Gabrielsson et al., 2009; Niikura, 1999). Assertiveness ranges from being passive to being firm, and the results of assertiveness are positive outcomes without rudeness or aggression (Ellis, 2018). A comprehensive definition of assertiveness includes practicing fairness and equality, working toward personal goals, defending personal choices, expressing ideas and feelings openly, and protecting personal rights without hurting others (Alberti & Emmons, 1995; Chudnovskaya & O'Hara, 2022).

1.2. Assertiveness, Management, And Culture

This study investigated the relationships between cultural adherence, assertiveness, and management. Management and leadership are characterized by high levels of assertiveness (Coco, 2011; Cook & Glass, 2014; Ebrahimi, 1999; Ellis, 2018; Gabrielsson et al., 2009; Hahm, 2017; Pomeda & Casani, 2013; Serban, 2010; Lounsbury et al., 2016). Filipino culture is characterized by values that contrast with assertiveness. One example, *pakikisama*, is conforming to the ideas or actions of others (Agbayani-Siewart, 2004; Mu & Yu, 2021). Asians are seen as followers who adapt to an environment rather than influencing change (Boiger et al., 2012). Foreign workers from cultures that value collectivism, harmony, and respect experience difficulty working in environments of open communication (Akutagawa, 2013; Atwater et al., 2009; Ea et al., 2007; Lin, 2013; Niikura, 1999; Shen et al., 2005). The communication style of Asians, for example, is shown when a professional believes asking too many questions will cause supervisors to lose respect for an employee (Chin, 2016). Colonial mentality, which involves Filipinos believing that they are inferior to Westerners, makes it difficult for Filipinos to stand up for themselves (David et al., 2017). The conflict in communication styles gives purpose to the present study as the intention is to increase knowledge regarding behavior changes needed for Filipino-American success.

2. Method And Methodology

This study investigated the relationship between adherence to Filipino cultural values and assertiveness. It was hypothesized that high adherence to Filipino cultural values would be negatively correlated with assertiveness. It was also hypothesized that Filipino cultural values are not consistent with high levels of assertiveness, which is needed to obtain and maintain management positions. Racial discrimination is often given as a reason for the lack of promotion and subsequent low numbers of Filipino Americans in management positions. The present study went in a different direction and focused on how traditional Filipino values and beliefs may be impeding their progress and advancement in the workplace. The hypotheses for the present study include

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative relationship between cultural adherence (interpersonal norms and conservatism) and assertiveness.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant positive relationship between assertiveness and management experience.

Hypothesis 3: Cultural adherence (interpersonal norms and conservatism) and assertiveness are significant predictors of management experience.

2.1. Participants And Procedure

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board of Keiser University, an online survey was created using Survey Monkey and then shared with Filipino Americans through email and social media (Facebook and LinkedIn). Members of several popular Filipino-American associations were also contacted and subsequently recruited. The age requirement for the study was 18 years of age or older. An initial outreach using LinkedIn resulted in 1102 Filipinos who clicked to “connect” in response to a request to share a survey for Filipino Americans. LinkedIn contacts replied with supportive offers to share the link with student organizations, Filipino associations, networking groups, and friends. Response messages included comments such as “anything for a fellow Filipina” and “of course I will share the survey, *Ate!*” (*Ate* means “big sister.”) The LinkedIn responses were evidence of the Filipino value of *kapwa*, meaning “community,” which explains the desire for Filipinos to help each other. Some said that they do not identify as Filipino Americans, even though they moved here many years ago and have United States citizenship.

In-person recruitment was conducted at the popular Filipino café and Pasko 2020, a Philippine Christmas festival. Participants who completed the paper survey received a coupon for the local Filipino café. Some respondents shared that they were very interested in the questions, which made them more aware of their Filipino culture. Some stated that the questions were hard to understand, but if they had been written in the Filipino language, they might have understood them better. The design of the measures was a barrier because of the complexity of the language in some items, such as “if I am unsure about how much I need to repay someone who has done me a favour, I keep trying to pay back the favour so that I do not look ungrateful” (Rathus, 1973).

Older Filipinos who did not understand English very well had to ask others to explain the survey items. Despite the various obstacles, there were a total of 47 surveys submitted from in-person recruitment. The high LinkedIn response might indicate that the population represented in the study included more professionals who were knowledgeable of social media and the importance of a professional presence. This population may have excluded Filipinos or professionals whose modest character would prevent them from self-promotion. A low participation rate of low-promoting Filipino Americans may have been a limitation to the study.

2.2. Measures

The Enculturation Scale for Filipino Americans (ESFA, del Prado & Church, 2010) measures the degree of Filipino values that Filipino Americans have learned or retained. A person’s level of adherence to Filipino values affects the way that the person lives, behaves, and interacts in American society. The survey covered three dimensions of Filipino enculturation: connection with homeland, interpersonal norms, and conservatism. The first dimension is related to visits to the Philippines, communicating with family in the Philippines, and knowledge of Filipino history. The dimension of interpersonal norms consisted of statements related to communication, such as confrontation, asking questions, and openly expressing thoughts. The conservatism dimension presents statements related to submitting to authority figures, obeying parents, and accepting what happens in life. The present study excluded the connection with the homeland dimension and focused on two dimensions: interpersonal norms and conservatism. The items in the measure required the participant to choose answers on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. ESFA is offered in two versions, 72 items or 30 items. The present study used the short form, which included 10 items for each dimension, and 20 items total for the two dimensions that are included in the survey for the present study.

Del Prado and Church (2010) developed ESFA and tested its reliability by investigating the correlation of results with alternative forms. The authors conducted factor analyses for the subdimensions of cultural adherence and,

with two different samples, found high factor congruence coefficients (.92 to .96). The authors also revealed reliability coefficients of .89 with the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale and alpha reliability of .64 with Kim et al., (1999) Asian Values Scale (AVS). Various correlations were expected between ESFA (del Prado & Church, 2010) and three different sections of the Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS) (Chung et al., 2004), resulting in reliabilities of .90, .86, and .85 in the different sections.

Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) (Rathus, 1973) was developed to measure assertiveness in scenarios that show the behavior of inhibiting personal feelings or expressing openly and assertively. The RAS includes 30 items scored on a 6-point Likert scale with the following responses: Very Characteristic of Me, Rather Characteristic of Me, Somewhat Characteristic of Me, Somewhat Uncharacteristic of Me, Rather Uncharacteristic of Me, and Very Uncharacteristic of Me. Parham et al. (2015) mentioned that the RAS was designed for business and social settings. Rathus (1973) found a test reliability of .78, showing moderate to high test-retest reliability, and Cronbach's alpha of .82, indicating moderate internal consistency. Rathus (1973) conducted an item analysis to find significant correlations with 27 of the 30 items. Caballo et al. (2014) assessment of four measures, including RAS, found high reliability for all measures using both Guttman split half and Cronbach's alpha. The authors found moderate correlations between the Social Skills Questionnaire and RAS. The supported psychometric properties of RAS and its common use for business and social research support its fit for the present study. Furthermore, Jenerette and Dixon (2010) found supporting validity ($r = .98$) and reliability of .81 of the Simple Rathus Assertiveness Scale-Short Form (SRAS-SF), which includes 19 items instead of the 30 items of the original scale. The short form of this scale was used for the present study. The use of the short form decreased the amount of time for survey completion and likely led to greater participation and completion rate.

2.3. Data Screening, Preparation, And Analysis

In total, 501 surveys were conducted. Data were screened for inconsistencies, incomplete items, and outliers. A total of 28 surveys were not applied to the present study because 24 were completed by non-Filipino Americans, and four surveys had a significant number of items that were not completed. A total of 83 surveys were incomplete but had four or fewer items that were not responded to. A total of 55 responses were missing demographic information, and a response of "No Answer Given" was entered into the cells so SPSS could factor the missing data into the analyses. A total of 28 surveys were missing three or fewer items associated with the variables under investigation. Items were completed using the person-mode imputation recommendations by Enders (2010), Carpita and Manisera (2011), and Eekhout et al. (2014), and mode imputation recommendations by Janssen et al. (2015).

The boxplots do not reveal any significant outliers. Assumptions for correlation analysis, analysis of variance, and regression analysis were reviewed, including variable types, observation independence, residuals using Durbin-Watson, homoscedasticity, and homogeneity of variances. Due to a violation of the assumption of normality using Shapiro-Wilk analyses, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to investigate relationships between variables. Pearson correlation is considered robust and resilient to violations of a normal distribution; therefore, Pearson correlation procedures were also applied with results consistent with the Spearman rho analyses.

3. Results

Data were collected from 473 participants who were identified as Filipino Americans. The geographic locations of the participants covered 35 states and Washington, D.C. The largest groups were from California ($n = 118$), Florida ($n = 116$), and the state of Washington ($n = 58$). The United States Census Bureau (2010) lists California and Washington among the five states with the greatest Filipino population. The large representative sample from many states in the country addressed the limitations seen in other Asian American research (David, 2008; David, 2010; Yu, 2020.)

The number of years of management experience showed a mean value of 5.29 years ($SD = 8.176$), although most respondents showed zero years of management experience. The participants lived in the United States, with an average of 27.69 years ($SD = 11.230$). Generational level in the United States was measured, revealing first-generation immigrants who were not born in the United States but moved from the Philippines ($n = 132$), second-generation ($n = 269$), third-generation ($n = 27$), and fourth-generation or higher ($n = 2$). The high number of second-generation participants may have been children of first-generation immigrants who entered the country after the 1965 Immigration Act.

3.1. Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted a significant negative relationship between cultural adherence (interpersonal norms and conservatism) and assertiveness. The literature review revealed assertiveness was not consistent with the interpersonal norms dimension of Filipino culture (Figure 1).

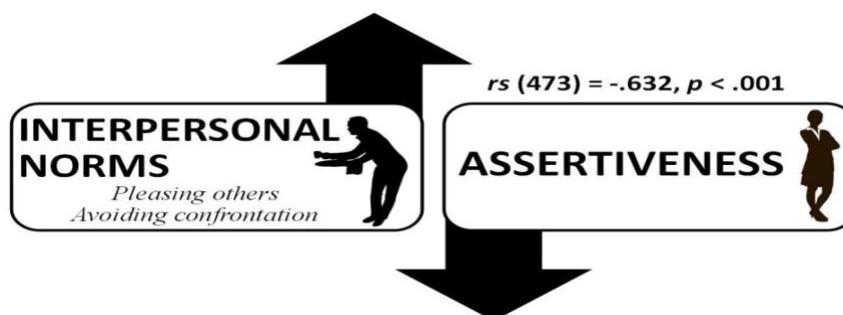


Figure 1: Correlation Between Filipino Interpersonal Norms and Assertiveness

Hypothesis 1 was addressed with a Spearman rho correlation analysis and revealed a significant and negative relationship ($r = -.632, p < .001$) between the interpersonal norms factor of cultural adherence and assertiveness (see Table 1).

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Significant Correlations Among the Key Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
1. Years living in the United States	-	-.166**		.203**	.355**	469	27.69	11.23	
2. Interpersonal Norms		-		-.632**	-.352**	473	30.37	9.72	.85
3. Conservatism			-		.157**	473	38.01	10.88	.88
4. Assertiveness				-	.409**	473	3.57	19.65	.86
5. Years of Management Experience					-	464	5.29	8.18	

Significant correlations from self-identified Filipino Americans. ** $p < .001$.

This outcome is logical because the interpersonal norms items addressed communication style and interacting within relationships (e.g., “instead of confronting someone face to face, I would rather talk about this person behind his or her back”; “using a third party is a good way to avoid the shame of making a request or a complaint face to face”) that are consistent with assertive behavior.

No significant relationship was found between conservatism and assertiveness (Figure 2). Conservatism questions are not directly related to assertiveness (e.g., “I always listen carefully to those in positions of authority”) compared to items that measure the interpersonal norms dimension of cultural adherence.

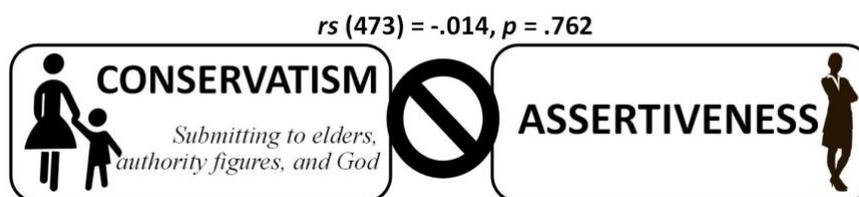


Figure 2: No Significant Correlation Between Filipino Conservatism and Assertiveness

3.2. Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposes a significant and positive relationship between assertiveness and management experience. A Spearman rho correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between assertiveness and years of management experience ($r = .370, p < .001$). Based on the management literature, decision-makers are expected to have high levels of assertiveness (Lounsbury et al., 2016; Ebrahimi, 1999). Managers with more assertiveness are effective and successful as leaders in their organizations (Chakraborty, 2009). Filipino cultural values (e.g., caring, collaboration, modeling, religion) are consistent with servant leadership behaviors that result in positive performance-related outcomes in and out of the workplace.

3.3. Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that Filipino cultural adherence (interpersonal norms and conservatism) and assertiveness are significant predictors of management experience. While assertiveness would be positively correlated with holding

management roles, its relation to Filipino cultural adherence was examined. Since the Spearman rho correlation analysis did not reveal a significant relationship between interpersonal norms and conservatism, multicollinearity was not a factor when performing a regression analysis using the two unique aspects of cultural adherence.

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to investigate whether cultural adherence (interpersonal norms, conservatism) and assertiveness could significantly predict management experience. The first regression model addressed interpersonal norms and assertiveness as predictor variables and management experience as the outcome variable. The results indicated that the model was a significant predictor of management experience, $F(2,461) = 39.47$, $p < .001$. The model summary revealed a relatively moderate (Cohen) outcome ($R = .382$, $R^2 = .146$). In this model, 14.6% of the variance in the data can be explained by interpersonal norms and assertiveness. Interpersonal norms ($B = -.106$, $p = .026$) and assertiveness ($B = .120$, $p < .001$) both contributed significantly to the model.

The second regression model addressed conservatism and assertiveness as predictor variables and management experience as the outcome variable. The results indicated that the model was a significant predictor of management experience, $F(2,461) = 50.51$, $p < .001$. The model summary revealed a relatively moderate (Cohen) outcome ($R = .424$, $R^2 = .180$). In this model, 18.0% of the variance in the data could be explained by conservatism and assertiveness. Conservatism ($B = .157$, $p < .001$) and assertiveness ($B = .154$, $p < .001$) both contributed significantly to the model.

The percentage of variance in the data is significant from both scientific and practical perspectives. These results support the hypothesis that Filipino Americans can attain management positions with increased assertiveness which means learning a communication style in which they voice their ideas and questions more openly and frequently. Although conservatism was not correlated with assertiveness, the regression analysis conducted in the current study identified conservatism as a predictor of management role attainment when matched with assertiveness.

4. Discussion

The bamboo ceiling continues to affect Asian Americans, including Filipino Americans. To further understand the factors related to the bamboo ceiling, the present study examined the relationship between cultural adherence to Filipino values, assertiveness, and management level in Filipino Americans, as well as differences based on geographic location, generational level, and the number of years in the United States. The idea for the present study was to determine whether adherence to Filipino values is keeping Filipino Americans from communicating and promoting themselves in the workplace and preventing them from advancing to higher positions.

The final dataset included 473 survey respondents from 35 states in the United States, spanning four generations of Filipino Americans with different levels of management experience. They offered valuable quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. The data revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between assertiveness and the interpersonal norms of Filipino values. Within the survey, the content clearly shows the contrast between assertiveness and Filipino values. One assertiveness survey item said, "I complain about poor service when I am eating out or in other places," and one interpersonal norm survey item was, "using a third party is a good way to avoid the shame of making a request or a complaint face to face." Another example of the contradicting items is the assertiveness item, "I am quick to say what I think," and the interpersonal norms item, "I may say I understand something, even when I only partly understand the instructions or what is being said." The survey items represent opposite ideas, which is consistent with the negative correlation of the variables in the present study. When assertiveness is high, the opposite behavior of submission, a characteristic measured in the interpersonal norms dimension of Filipino cultural adherence, is low. The interpersonal norms dimension was shown to be contradictory to assertiveness.

Another finding was that the conservatism dimension of Filipino culture is not significantly related to assertiveness. It may be expected that assertiveness would contrast with obedience and regard for authority; however, the conservatism dimension was related to respect for authority, including items such as "I always listen carefully to those in positions of authority" and "one must obey parental advice on education and money." The dimension related to respecting authority showed no correlation with assertiveness. The results demonstrated that only one aspect of Filipino values, interpersonal norms, is related to low assertiveness.

The data also showed that the relationship between assertiveness and management experience is moderated by cultural adherence. The level of Filipino Americans' cultural adherence has affected their assertiveness, which determining their movement to management positions. The present study supports the existing literature on assertiveness and management while adding the layer of cultural adherence, confirming for Filipino Americans that changes must be made to break the bamboo ceiling.

Results related to the number of years each respondent had lived in the United States of America presented a statistically significant negative correlation between interpersonal norms and years in the United States. The interpretation of this result is that the longer a person lives in the United States, the less adherence they have regarding interpersonal norms, such as putting others before oneself or avoiding confrontation. The level of cultural adherence varies from person to person when they live in a country that is not their country of origin for a certain amount of

time. Some Filipino Americans associate with Filipino culture in most aspects of their lives, and some may resent having to live in a mixed culture, while others can blend both cultures (Tuason et al., 2007). Vargas and Jurado's (2016) definition of acculturation addressed the manner individuals change to be more like the host country because of continuous interaction in the host culture. The finding corresponds to acculturation theories and social learning theories which attribute behavior to the influence of community.

The United States is more diverse than ever before, and there is a critical need to understand the dynamics of this diverse population. In 2011, it was reported that more minority babies were born in the United States than white babies (Frey, 2014). Understanding minority populations and their social influences help mental health practitioners and business leaders attain their goals. The information from the present study provides valuable explanations for real-world problems, such as practices in mental health therapy, training for children and students, skills for healthcare leadership, and other workplace strategies. The variable of years in the United States offers insight that was not available in research about Asian Americans (Yu 2020).

Additional findings included behavioral patterns based on the generational level of Filipino Americans. The second-fourth generation Filipino Americans showed significantly lower interpersonal norms, but similar conservatism and assertiveness levels as compared to the first generation Filipino-Americans (See Figure 3).

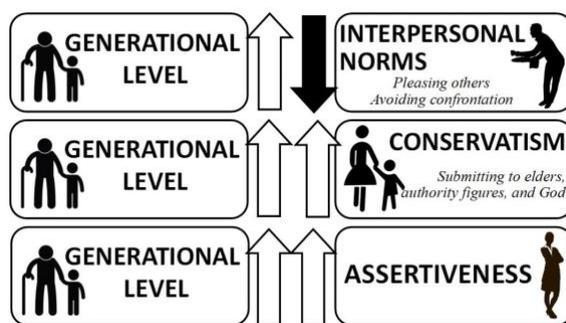


Figure 3: Generational Level Correlated with Conservatism, Interpersonal Norms, Assertiveness.

These results may be explained by the idea that the interpersonal norms variable focuses on pleasing others and regarding others over oneself. While the participants, who are first-generation immigrants from the Philippines, were originally raised in an environment where the norm was to please others, which is in contrast to the American culture, where the focus is on taking care of oneself. Zhu (2016) asserted that American culture is more independent and individual-focused as compared to Asian culture. The participants with higher generational levels were raised in the American culture and showed lower scores in interpersonal norms. These findings add to the research about Filipino Americans from different generational levels.

4.1. Limitations

In the present study, participants answered questions based on a self-assessment of traits, and there were no other sources to evaluate the accuracy of the data, such as a post-test or rater evaluation. David (2008) explained how self-reporting is a limitation when conducting research like the present study. Bjorck et al. (2001) discussed that Korean-, Filipino-, and Caucasian Americans positively present ideas when speaking to authority figures to present themselves as model subordinate. Those who were not willing to participate were omitted from the study. Online surveys are an accuracy risk. David (2008) discussed how online surveys are vulnerable to inaccurate information. With online surveys, there is no monitoring of the participant's eligibility. Gosling et al. (2004) revealed that web-based evaluation is not affected by dishonest participants and is consistent with the results found using other methods.

The limitation of LinkedIn recruiting was that the demographic of LinkedIn users may have included more professionals and excluded those who were less technically competent or those who had little use for LinkedIn, such as retired professionals or early college students. Cesare et al. (2018) reported that 66% of LinkedIn members are between the ages of 25 and 54, with 19% under age 25 and 15% over age 54. A significant part of the population who are not members of LinkedIn may have been excluded from the present study.

Another limitation of this study was the language barrier. Participants for whom English was not their first language struggled with questions that included advanced vocabulary and sentence structure. Gayet-Ageron et al. (2011) discussed challenges related to language barriers in the completion of surveys and reported that participants still completed the surveys while reporting that they had difficulty with the language. Findings in research with Asian Americans have presented challenges in gathering accurate data when Asians do not know how to answer the questions (Yu 2020). For the present study, no paper surveys were returned by participants who admitted that they could not

understand English. The language struggle was shared by participants who verbally expressed that some questions were confusing. One young adult shared that her parents asked her to explain the statements to them.

4.2. Implications For Practice And Further Research

American culture affects Filipino values. The present study supports that assertiveness is low for individuals who closely adhere to Filipino interpersonal norms related to regarding others over themselves and avoiding confrontations. As an extension to Hyun's (2005) introduction of the bamboo ceiling concept and with Lathabhayan and Senthil's (2017) report of the Asian struggle to advancement, the current data identifies specific factors related to these struggles. With this information, Filipino Americans build their awareness of the specific Filipino interpersonal norms they possess and seek out training to counterbalance these attitudes. Akutagawa (2013) advocated for a leadership development program for Asian Americans and started Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.

Two major components comprise an assertiveness training program related to the specific findings and topics provided in the present study. The first part increases awareness of current behaviors related to Filipino interpersonal norms: submission, putting others before themselves, avoiding attention, caring about what others think, and feeling obliged to serve others.

The second part provides training in communication methods, decision-making skills, and finding alternative solutions and approaches to various situations. The present study makes a clear assertion that training for Filipino Americans is needed to reverse the habits of submission and non-assertiveness in order for individuals to reach professional advancement in the United States. The benefit of the present study's results is the specificity of the traits that must be emphasized in training.

Assertiveness was low in individuals with high Filipino interpersonal norms. Further research can examine other traits found in leaders, such as self-motivation, emotional stability, and self-confidence. The more traits that can be identified as weaknesses for those with high Filipino values, the more focused training can be developed to bring Filipino Americans from their current characteristics to a well-rounded combination of who they are and what is required for advanced professional positions. Future research can be conducted to include all states and further understand the Filipino American experience in different areas of the United States.

5. Conclusion

Filipinos have a value called *lakas ng loob*, which means "inner strength." They have endured the hardships of Spanish and American colonialism, and they fought to claim their place in the United States from as early as 1587. Their reputation in the United States is friendly and hard-working individuals, yet they struggle to find their way to advanced positions in their profession. Keister (2017) reported that 39% of Filipinos in the United States have bachelor's degrees, more than 19% of all Americans. However, Filipinos are poorly represented in higher levels of management. As the United States becomes more and more diverse, it is important for minorities to break through the bamboo ceiling and make their way into leadership by identifying the factors related to their challenges and learning how to blend their own culture with the traits of leaders in the United States.

The present study provides specific traits for Filipino Americans to improve and seek training to develop their Filipino interpersonal norms. By focusing on these specific traits, raising awareness in identifying the behavior, and providing alternative, assertive behavior, Filipino Americans can improve their skills which will lead to higher assertiveness and professional advancement. The present study enhances the body of knowledge in Filipino American psychology but also sets the path for continued research to improve the Filipino American experience.

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