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Doctor, Lawyer, Social Worker?: Exploring the Experiences of Asian American Pacific Islander (APIA) Social Work Students

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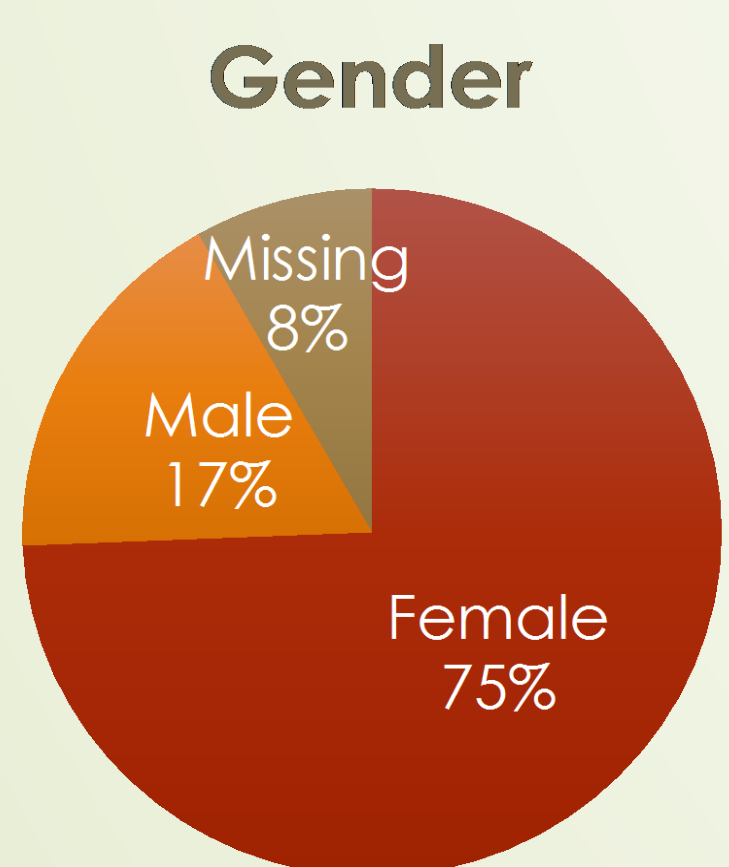
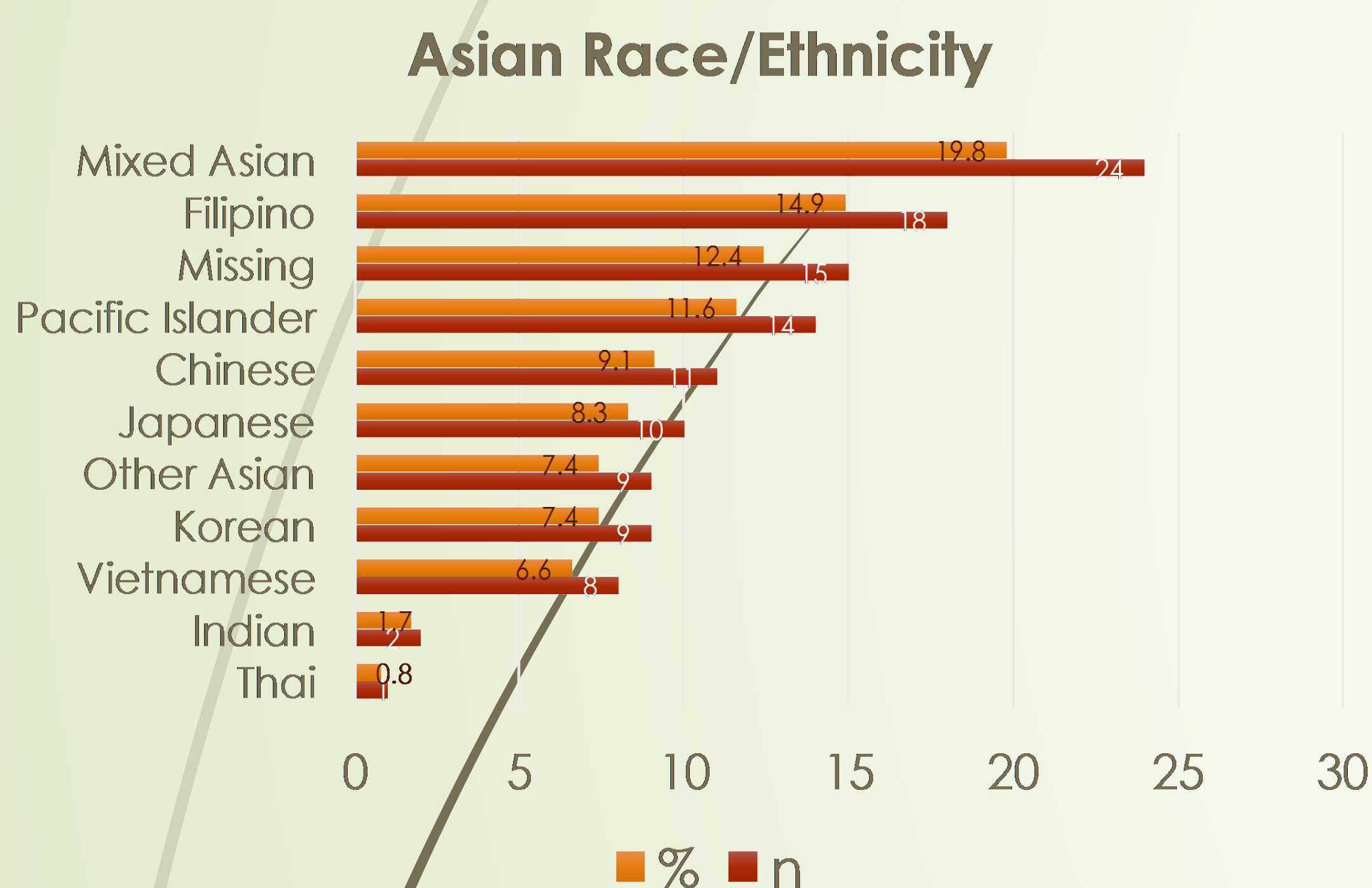
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Doctor, Lawyer, Social Worker?: Exploring the Experiences of Asian American Pacific Islander (APIA) Social Work Students in the US

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Purpose

APIA students find their way to social work often find themselves on a “nontraditional” path. This study explores the expectations and experiences of APIA students choosing social work as a profession.



Female Male Missing

Race/Ethnicity	n	%
Chinese	11	9.1
Korean	9	7.4
Filipino	18	14.9
Vietnamese	8	6.6
Japanese	10	8.3
Pacific Islander	14	11.6
Other Asian	12	9.9
Mixed Asian	24	19.8
Missing	15	12.4
Total	121	100

Research Questions

- What are some cultural factors that APIA experience?
- What are some perceptions and expectations from friends and family members?
- How is it different between Asians and Pacific Islanders?
- How supportive do students feel perusing social work as minorities?

Method

- Participants
 - BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. students enrolled in SW in the US
- Data Source
 - A 44-item survey
 - Convenience Sampling (Council on Social Work Education)
- Data Analysis
 - Consented to respond to the questions through a secure online survey host anonymously
 - Obtained results from SPSS descriptive analysis and Chi-Square test

Conclusion

The preliminary findings of this study showed experiences of APIA students are not reflected in the curriculum and field experiences. More research is needed to show the difference between Asian and Pacific Islander students in respect to their perception and experiences in social work.

Findings

Chi-Square data suggest that:

- students from institutions that have APIA faculty/staff in their program tend to rate higher in the importance of APIA faculty/staff ($\chi^2 = 22.57^*$, $df = 12$, $p = .03$), with 78% of respondents;
- students tend to rate higher in parental support when they are least likely to be influenced by studying in STEM field ($\chi^2 = 189.79^*$, $df = 49$, $p = 0.00$).

Why choosing social work as a profession	Participants
Had positive personal experience with social workers	32
No opinion/Not Applicable	12
Wanting to make a difference	9
Inspired by social workers after received help from them	8
It is a broad field	7
Interested in counseling	5
To promote social justice	3
Have APIA background	2
Align with personal value	2
To practice case management	1
To do research	1
It is a beneficial field to all	1

Perceptions of social work as a profession	Participants
Have positive perceptions of social work	26
No opinion/Not applicable	18
Neutral/Have some knowledge about social work	16
Have negative perceptions of social work	12
Did not know anything about social work prior to enrolling to the program	8
Know about the field and what it does	3

