

Understanding the Model Minority Myth



What is the model minority myth?

It is a myth based on stereotypes that perpetuates a narrative that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are a smart, polite, and law-abiding group who have been able to be successful through talent and having a hardworking immigrant mentality.

Why is the model minority harmful?

- Misleading metrics and figures do not accurately represent the biases that AAPIs face, such as leadership positions.
- Ignores the immensely diverse AAPI communities.
- Disregards racism against AAPIs.
- Is used as a racial wedge to minimize the struggles of other minority groups.



Statistics

- AAPIs make up approx 7% of the US population which includes ethnicities such as East Asian (8.6 mm), Southeast Asian (7.6 mm), South Asian (5.3 mm), and Pacific Islander (1.5 mm).
- AAPIs have a median household income of \$78k annually, but the data is largely obscured by the economic disparities that exist amongst the different AAPI groups (Eg. the median household income for Indian Americans is \$127k, whereas for Burmese Americans it is \$46k).
- In 2020, AAPIs represent 12% of the US professional workforce, but only 4.4% are directors of Fortune 1000 companies.



Take Action

- Learn more about the model minority myth and other issues AAPIs face.
- Support AAPI communities that may traditionally be overlooked due to the model minority myth (Eg. this scholarship is for students who are unable to receive financial aid due to their immigration status).
- Consider the makeup of your classroom and your departments: are minorities represented in leadership?
- Speak up against racism towards any minority group in the workplace, and become an ally to different minority groups.
- Join ERGs, student groups, and get involved with the JEDI Office to create a more inclusive IHP.

