Background Research – AAPI Data Disaggregation

For the Asian American/Pacific Islander community, data disaggregation is one pressing

issue that the community has to deal with. Data disaggregation, in reference to the Asian

American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, refers to the collecting and making visible

separate data for each AAPI ethnic subgroup. In doing so, it brings to light the disparities

between the different subgroups in different field, like socioeconomic status, health, higher

education attainment, and corporate achievements, that would otherwise not be visible when all

information is aggregated, or averaged together, between all subgroups (Yin, "Not All Asians").

The contemporary AAPI issue of data disaggregation is closely related to the model minority

myth mentality still prevalent in the United States, which assumes the AAPI community tends to

"outperform" other minority groups at significant rates, because current aggregated data for the

AAPI community does not reflect the ethnic subgroups that are actually being recorded at lower

than average rates.

Although there have been efforts at both the federal and individual state levels to report

disaggregated data for the AAPI community, through the recently passed AHEAD Act in

California, as well as federal efforts to attain disaggregated data for AAPI in higher education,

much of the information is not easily accessible to the general public (Fuchs, "Governor").

Furthermore, the ways in which the information is presented could be improved for the reader's

experience in gaining that insight much much instantaneously.

In looking at other similar projects that have used data visualization to reveal social

disparities, one project is "Wealth Divides", which displays wealth inequalities in major U.S.

cities geographically, combining both the quantitative data of actual wealth levels, while

delivering qualitative insight by providing deeper meanings for the users about what this visualization of data means (Bosco, "Using Data Visualization"). The intent of this project is to show where economic disparities can occur and how cities can leverage that information to understand the issue more. Although many data visualization projects can tend to be very quantitative, "Wealth Divides" shows how data visualization can allow users to directly interact with data that has deeper social meanings and can help society understand each other better.

Works Cited

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