

Research exposes racial discrimination against Asian-American men in job market

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A new study by a University of Kansas researcher shows that U.S. employers fail to pay Asian-American men as much as they pay similarly qualified white men.

"The most striking result is that native-born Asian Americans — who were born in the U.S. and speak English perfectly — their income is 8 percent lower than whites after controlling for their college majors, their places of residence and their level of education," said ChangHwan Kim, assistant professor of sociology at KU, who led the study.

Full results of the research appear in the December issue of the *American Sociological Review* in which Kim and Arthur Sakamoto of the University of Texas-Austin authored the article "Have Asian American Men Achieved Labor Market Parity with White Men?"

According to Kim, the findings show that the United States falls short of the goal of a colorblind society.

"As an individual, you can reach as high as president," said the KU researcher. "But as an ethnic group, no group has reached full parity with whites. That's the current status of racial equality in the United States."

Kim and Sakamoto combed data from the 2003 National Survey of College Graduates to investigate earnings — numbers that have not been used previously in research on Asian Americans.

Among their other notable findings:

- First-generation Asian-American men, who were born and completed their education overseas, earn 29 percent less than white men earn in the United States.
- 1.25-generation Asian-American men, who earned their highest degree at a U.S. institution but were born and previously educated in a foreign country, had incomes 14 percent lower than those of white men.
- The only group to have achieved earnings parity with [white men](#) is 1.5-generation Asian-American men. Though foreign-born, these men came to the United States as children, so they speak perfect English and have U.S. educations.

Kim said that 1.5-generation Asian-American men could benefit economically from their parents' immigrant work ethic.

"They see their parents struggle, and they understand that their achievement in the United States is actually their parents achievement, it's not their own goal, it's the goal for their whole family," he said.

"They actually have a burden of success."

Despite the disparity in income levels, Asian-American men fare better than they did before the Civil Rights era in the [United States](#).

Advancement toward an end to racial discrimination continues, according to Kim.

"The 8 percent difference is large, but it is small compared to previous Asian-American generations," Kim said. "Previous generations had income levels much lower, so in this sense we've made progress."

Provided by University of Kansas

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