

## Undergraduate Research Symposium **May 19, 2017 Mary Gates Hall**

### Online Proceedings

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#### **POSTER SESSION 2**

**Balcony, Easel 94**

*1:00 PM to 2:30 PM*

##### **Are Women Less Likely to Show Interest in Engineering Career When Advised to Follow Your Passion than Men?**

*Jennifer Bohyun Ko, Senior, Psychology*

*Mentor: Sapna Cheryan, Psychology*

*Mentor: Helena Rabasco, Psychology*

Gender differences exist in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, as women are underrepresented in some STEM fields than others and continue to face discrimination even in fields in which women are better represented (Cheryan, 2016). Will using different American ideologies help to explain gender disparities in interest in STEM fields in the U.S.? This study examined this question by exploring differences in expressing interest in engineering careers between men and women. Specifically, we designed a study to investigate whether women are deterred from engineering when advised to “follow their passions.” Eighty undergraduate students completed a questionnaire, in which they are asked how interested they would be in pursuing a career in engineering based on listening to the advice to follow their passions or based on following the advice to do what is practical. We hypothesized that women will report less interest in engineering career when asked to base their decision on the advice of following their passions versus when asked to base their decision on the advice of doing what is practical; the difference for men will be weaker. This study explores how popular American ideologies may contribute to gender gaps in STEM.

#### **POSTER SESSION 2**

**Balcony, Easel 95**

*1:00 PM to 2:30 PM*

##### **The Ideology of “Following Your Passion” as a Factor that Dissuades Women from STEM Fields**

*Shi Lu, Senior, Linguistics, Psychology*

*Mentor: Sapna Cheryan, Psychology*

*Mentor: John Oliver Siy, Psychology*

Women are underrepresented in STEM (Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields in U.S. contexts. In this

study, I investigate whether the prominence of the “follow your passion” ideology in choosing careers may be one factor that contributes to the gender discrepancy in STEM fields. Passion ideology is the idea that people choose their career mainly according to their idealistic personal interest. Previous research has shown that in terms of career preference, women tend to choose feminine stereotyped careers and are less interested in masculine stereotyped careers, and vice versa for men. STEM fields are masculine stereotyped. Therefore when U.S. society in general advocates for the priority of personal interest in career choice, we hypothesize that passion ideology mediates the relations between gender and interest in STEM fields, where women are less likely to develop interest in STEM. Considering passion ideology is less popular in Asian culture, in the current study, I primed Asian American women with either their American identity or Asian identity by using leading questions. Then I measured how interested participants are in engineering careers and art careers and how much participants agree that people should either follow their passions or be practical when choosing a career using a questionnaire. Following predictions are made: participants primed with American identity will be less interested in engineering careers than those primed with Asian identity, but not for art careers; participants primed with American identity will express stronger beliefs in the passion ideology than those primed with Asian identity; weaker interest in engineering careers when primed with their American identity will be mediated by stronger beliefs in the passion ideology. If these predictions stand, it suggests that, in U.S. context, these culture factors can partially explain the gender discrepancy in STEM fields.

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#### **SESSION 2J**

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##### **MCNAIR SESSION - THE ART OF LEARNING: FROM ALGEBRA TO PREJUDICE**

*Session Moderator: Stewart Tolnay, Sociology*

**MGH 258**

*3:30 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

**Does Perceiving Asian Americans as Experiencing Prejudice Facilitate Greater Inclusion of Asian Americans in the Racial Minority Category?**

*Santino G (Santino) Camacho, Senior, Psychology*

*McNair Scholar, UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Sapna Cheryan, Psychology*

*Mentor: Linda Zou, Psychology*

Asian American students are often restricted from accessing academic services that are intended to benefit racial minorities. This may have negative consequences for disadvantaged subgroups within the Asian American umbrella (e.g., Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders) that would benefit from such services. The existing literature suggests that the racial minority category prototype includes features such as numerical representation and experiences of racial prejudice. While some groups (e.g., African Americans) may be perceived to fit this prototype, other groups (e.g., Asian Americans) may not. However, increasing Asian Americans' perceived fit with the racial minority prototype may facilitate greater inclusion of Asian Americans in the racial minority category and in minority-targeted academic resources. The current study uses a 2 (prejudice salience) x 2 (target race) factorial design to investigate whether making the perception of Asian Americans' experiences of prejudice more salient will increase the inclusion of Asian Americans in the racial minority category and in minority-targeted academic resources. White UW student participants are presented with information about either Asian American or African American students at a fictional university who are publicizing their anti-racial harassment campus outreach initiative (prejudice salience condition) or their student club (control condition). We predict that perceiving Asian Americans as experiencing prejudice will make participants more likely to perceive them as a racial minority group and as having more in common with other racial minority groups. We also predict that perceiving Asian Americans as experiencing prejudice will increase support of the inclusion of Asian Americans in minority-targeted educational resources. Furthermore, we predict that these effects will be weaker for African Americans, who are already perceived as fitting the racial minority prototype. This research has implications for increasing the recognition of Asian Americans as a racial minority group and the opportunity for Asian American subgroups to participate in minority-targeted resources.