

Tigers in My House: How Tiger Parenting in Asian America Endangers College Students

Tiger parenting is a traditional parenting formula of many Asian cultures believed to encourage success. Most Asian American (AA) children experiencing tiger parenting undergo rigorous regimes including intensive academia, limited social opportunity, and impaired mental health literacy. Coined in 2011, “tiger parenting” as investigated by long-term psychological studies beginning in the 1990s, has since been revealed to have a clear contribution to increasing AA depression in the later 2010s (Kim). This study consisted of a meta-analysis of the literature on tiger parenting in psychological research journals, wherein previous scholars have concluded a major difference in the socialization and self-esteem of tiger-parented children from their peers during adolescence. However, the lasting consequences of tiger parenting on individuals in their adulthood and in the higher education setting have not been fully examined. Asian American college students in Irvine, a city with a significant Asian American demographic, participated in interviews and surveys which asked subjects about their personal experiences with tiger parenting throughout their lives, and how they feel it has impacted their adulthood. Results revealed that tiger-parented college students develop a tendency towards social anxiety, depression, deficient self-esteem, and imposter syndrome. Extreme tiger parenting should be recognized as a form of psychological trauma. Solutions must be developed to address the rising rates of AA suicide and, in consideration of the alarming conclusion this study has revealed, colleges need to focus more community awareness around this trauma and provide ethnically specific support to college students dealing with Asian American generational trauma.

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