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**ABSTRACT**

**What Barriers Do Southeast Asian American Students Face In Their Quest For Educational Success?**

Southeast Asian Americans have had the advantage of being included within the panethnic title of Asian Americans, which has been considered the “model minority” group within American society. While the title might have intended to have been a positive, the implication has also come with unrealistic expectations and alienation from other ethnic groups from within the Asian American community. While some Southeast Asian groups have achieved a high level of academic success, others have also sunk down to the bottom and have comparable income to other minority groups. Though Asian American groups have similar cultural values, the question of authenticity amongst them comes into question. Two groups have branched out, those who assimilate into the mainstream society, and those who stick within their ethnic group. The negotiation of trying to find a balance between these two groups is one of the main issues that Southeast Asians deal with on a daily basis. Depending on their location, some groups who live in lower class neighborhoods often think that being a minority is a negative and they end up developing values that are associated with the poor. On the other hand, those who live in a middle class neighborhood are more likely to become assimilated into mainstream society and adopt traditional American values. Amongst Asian American youth in education, there are 2 groups, those who are at the highest level and those who are among the lower level. The lack of a middle ground doesn’t allow for Southeast Asians to find a balance between groups until they reach adulthood.

The primary objective of this paper is to exam the barriers (racial, cultural, economic) Southeast Asian American students face in their quest for educational success? The paper will look into how 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Southeast Asian American youth define success and the role of school in achieving success?