The Power of the Public: An Evaluation of the Measures Taken by Non-Profit

Organizations in Supporting the Korean American Autism Community

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), also referred to as autism, is a developmental condition that affects social interaction, communication, and behavior, impacting how individuals navigate social environments and interpersonal relationships (National Institute of Mental Health, 2024). The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), a widely used diagnostic tool, classifies autism under the category of "disability" while emphasizing the broad spectrum of its manifestations (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

In recent years, researchers and advocates have drawn attention to the importance of language in shaping perceptions of autism. The debate between identity-first language (e.g., "autistic person") and person-first language (e.g., "person with autism") has significant implications for the way autistic individuals are represented and understood. Identity-first language is often preferred within the autistic community because it acknowledges autism as an integral aspect of identity rather than an external or separable characteristic (Virhia, 2022). These linguistic considerations underline a broader societal shift toward embracing diversity and inclusion for autistic individuals. However, in many communities, cultural stigmas continue to obstruct the path to acceptance, particularly in racially and culturally minoritized groups. This study focuses on Asian Americans, including East and Southeast Asian subgroups, who face unique challenges due to the intersection of cultural stigma and systemic inequities.

Asian Americans represent one of the fastest-growing racial groups in the United States, encompassing diverse communities such as Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese Americans. According to U.S. Census data, the Asian population grew by 81% between 2010 and 2019 (Blazina, 2024). Within these groups, cultural attitudes toward

disabilities, including autism, vary but often include shared elements such as a reluctance to seek mental health or disability services and a preference for maintaining social harmony and family honor. These cultural dynamics can lead to delayed diagnoses, limited access to services, and stigma that extends to families of autistic individuals. For instance, Korean Americans, influenced by Confucian values that are deeply rooted in South Korean culture, often view disabilities as deviations from social norms, associating them with shame or personal failure. Similar patterns can be observed in other East and Southeast Asian groups, where disability is frequently perceived through stigmatized cultural lenses. The consequences of these attitudes are particularly pronounced in employment, where autistic individuals face disproportionate barriers to entry and retention. Integrating autistic individuals into the workforce requires not only addressing systemic inequities but also challenging cultural stigmas that hinder access to opportunities.

Despite federal legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Autism CARES Act, significant gaps remain in the support systems available to autistic individuals, particularly those from racially minoritized backgrounds. The IDEA Act, enacted in 1975, mandates early intervention and individualized education plans (IEPs) for children with disabilities, offering foundational support for autistic students. However, this system primarily targets children and often falls short in addressing the needs of autistic adults transitioning into employment. Similarly, the Autism CARES Act, reauthorized in 2019, has provided substantial funding for autism research and services but has been criticized for disproportionately prioritizing pediatric interventions while neglecting adult services. These limitations are particularly evident in employment support, where government programs tend to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach that overlooks the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations. For Asian Americans, the lack of culturally competent services further exacerbates disparities, leaving many reliant on community-based

resources.

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) have emerged as critical players in addressing the gaps left by government systems. Unlike federally funded programs, which often lack the flexibility to adapt to cultural nuances, NPOs are uniquely positioned to provide tailored and culturally sensitive services (Giordano & Edwards, 2023). Organizations such as the Korean American Special Education Center (KASEC) in Los Angeles and the Asian Americans with Disabilities Initiative (AADI) offer targeted support for autistic individuals and their families. These organizations provide resources such as bilingual counseling, culturally informed advocacy, and job training programs designed to address the specific barriers faced by Asian American communities. For example, KASEC emphasizes culturally competent approaches by hosting workshops that educate families on autism in a way that aligns with Korean cultural values, thereby reducing stigma and promoting acceptance. Similarly, AADI collaborates with employers to create inclusive hiring practices and offers mentorship programs that connect autistic individuals with role models who share similar cultural backgrounds. These tailored interventions not only bridge systemic gaps but also address the unique cultural challenges faced by Asian American autistic individuals.

Employment remains a critical area where NPOs play a transformative role. Employment rates for autistic individuals are lower than for those with other forms of disabilities. Only 58% of young adults on the autism spectrum report employment during their early 20s, compared to over 90% of their peers with emotional disturbances, speech impairments, or learning disabilities (*Autism Outcomes*, 2015). Many Asian American families struggle with navigating the complexities of workplace integration for autistic family members, particularly in environments where cultural differences may amplify misunderstandings or discrimination (Lee, 2021). NPOs such as KASEC and AADI work to mitigate these challenges by offering job readiness programs, workplace advocacy, and

ongoing support for both employees and employers. These services are especially vital in addressing the employment disparities faced by autistic individuals in the Asian American community, where cultural stigma often discourages families from pursuing support. However, despite their significant contributions, the methodologies and success metrics of these NPOs remain under-researched, highlighting the need for further investigation.

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of NPOs in addressing employment challenges within the Asian American autistic community. By analyzing survey data, the study identifies recurring barriers such as stigma, limited access to resources, and the need for culturally competent support. The findings will provide a comprehensive overview of the role NPOs play in bridging gaps in employment support and will propose actionable recommendations to improve outcomes for racially minoritized autistic individuals. This research ultimately seeks to advance the discourse on autism advocacy by emphasizing the importance of culturally tailored solutions in fostering inclusion and equity.

Methods

Introduction to the Study Design

This study examined the employment experiences of Asian Americans with ASD and, where applicable, their interactions with non-profit organizations that provide employment-related support. The research aimed to identify both the barriers these individuals face and the strengths of existing support systems to inform actionable improvements in employment opportunities. By focusing on the intersection of ethnicity, neurodivergence, and employment, this study contributes to addressing gaps in workplace accessibility and support mechanisms for Asian Americans with ASD.

Study Design and Ethical Approval

This research employed a cross-sectional survey design to gather quantitative and qualitative data from participants meeting specific inclusion criteria. Participants provided

informed consent after being presented with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and potential benefits or risks. To ensure confidentiality, responses were anonymized, and data were securely stored on password-protected servers.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited through Prolific, an online research platform that connects researchers with diverse populations for survey-based studies. Prolific's ability to screen participants based on custom criteria allowed for targeted recruitment of individuals relevant to the study's focus.

Recruitment criteria included the following:

1. Participants were required to identify as East or Southeast Asian, as defined by the survey's ethnic background categories.

2. Participants had to self-report a formal diagnosis of ASD, identify as being on the autism spectrum, or be in the process of seeking a diagnosis.

3. Participants had to reside in the United States and be at least 16 years old.

One hundred participants were recruited for this study to maintain a focused and manageable dataset. Recruitment was conducted through Prolific's "standard sample" distribution method, which allowed eligible participants to access the survey without imposing custom quotas based on census data. Participants were compensated $3 for completing the survey, which was estimated to take approximately 12 minutes. This compensation aligned with Prolific's guidelines and ethical standards for participant remuneration.

Survey Design

The survey was developed using the Qualtrics platform, which was chosen for its user-friendly design and secure data collection capabilities. The survey was structured to

collect comprehensive data on participants' demographics, employment experiences, and interactions with support systems.

1. **Development and Pilot Testing**

   The survey content was informed by a review of existing literature on employment challenges faced by individuals with ASD, with specific attention to cultural and contextual factors relevant to Asian Americans (Lee, 2021). Questions were adapted to address this unique intersection, ensuring cultural sensitivity and relevance.

2. **Survey Content**

   The survey was divided into three main sections, each focusing on a key area of inquiry: demographics, employment experiences, and interactions with support systems.

   o **Demographics**: Participants provided information about their age (grouped in four-year increments), gender identity, ethnic background, country of birth, state of residence, and English proficiency. Additional questions gathered data on their highest level of education or current educational status.

   o **Employment Experiences**: This section explored participants' employment status and history, including questions on the importance of having a job, current employment status (full-time, part-time, or unemployed), and the industry or sector in which they worked. For unemployed participants, the survey inquired about reasons for unemployment and challenges in securing employment. Participants were also asked to describe any employment-related difficulties they had faced, such as bias, insufficient resources, or a lack of accommodations.

   o **Support Systems**: This section investigated participants' use of employment

support services, such as those offered by non-profit organizations, private

companies, or government agencies. Questions addressed the types of services

accessed, satisfaction with the services provided, and suggestions for

improvement. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their

experiences with these support systems.

3. **Question Formats**

To ensure comprehensive data collection, the survey incorporated a mix of

closed-ended questions with predefined response options and open-ended questions

that allowed participants to provide detailed narratives. Likert-scale items were used

to assess levels of agreement or satisfaction, while multiple-choice and free-response

formats captured a range of experiences and perspectives.

Data Handling and Analysis

The collected data were securely stored on the Qualtrics platform, with access

restricted to the research team.

1. **Quantitative Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic variables and responses to

employment and support-related questions.

2. **Qualitative Analysis**

Open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring

themes and insights. Representative quotes were selected to illustrate key themes and

add depth to the findings.

The Present Study

This research paper highlights the critical role of NPOs in addressing the needs of Asian American Autistic Individuals (AAAI) and supporting their integration into society by fostering employment opportunities. While existing research often compares autism perceptions between countries, such as South Korea and the United States, limited attention has been paid to Asian American communities and their distinct challenges at the intersection of cultural stigmas and systemic inequities. This study examines how NPOs assist racially and culturally minoritized autistic individuals, focusing on the culturally specific barriers faced by groups such as Korean, Chinese, and Japanese Americans.

Although the primary focus is on Asian Americans, the findings are expected to offer broader implications for other minoritized autistic groups. Many challenges faced by Asian Americans, such as stigma and limited access to culturally competent services, parallel those of other marginalized communities. As such, this research underscores the importance of individualized support systems that account for cultural differences, emphasizing their role in fostering workplace inclusion and equity.

Despite advancements in autism awareness, societal perceptions of autism as a disability often limit opportunities for autistic individuals. Promoting meaningful workplace interactions between autistic individuals and their neurotypical peers is essential to overcoming these barriers. This study aims to build a foundation for further research into the contributions of NPOs, advocating for a society that recognizes and supports the unique contributions of all autistic individuals, particularly those from underrepresented communities.

Results

Demographics

The survey participants for this research comprised 101 individuals representing a

diverse demographic profile. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 59 years, with the most common age group being 30–34 years, followed closely by the 25–29 age group; the mean age was 31 years. The participants self-identified their gender identity as 51 men, 39 women, 1 transgender man, 8 non-binary individuals, and 2 who identified as Agender and Gender Queer. Ethnic representation among respondents included 43 Chinese, 14 Filipino, 19 Vietnamese, 17 Korean, 9 Japanese, 4 Thai, 3 Cambodian, 3 Hmong, 2 Laotian, and 5 Taiwanese. Additionally, 3 respondents specified their ethnicity as Indigenous Ryukyuan, Indian, and White/Cuban. Educational attainment varied among participants; 61 participants held undergraduate degrees, followed by 26 participants with postgraduate degrees and 14 participants with secondary school education. The self-reported English proficiency for respondents born in the United States was 72 native speakers and 10 fluent speakers. The self-reported English proficiency for those born outside the United States was 11 native speakers and 8 fluent speakers. No respondents categorized themselves as beginner or intermediate English speakers.

Employment Experiences

The majority of respondents (66.34%) were employed at the time of completing the survey. Among those employed or previously employed within the last two years, the most common compensation method was hourly wage, followed by salary. As illustrated in Figure 1, respondents primarily worked in industries such as technology and IT, business and finance, and retail and customer service. Less common industries included non-profit and community services (1 respondent), transportation and logistics (1 respondent), arts and creative industries (3 respondents), manufacturing and production (3 respondents), freelance or self-employment (4 respondents), and science, research, and engineering (5 respondents). Notably, none of the respondents were employed on the Board of Directors or

Executive-level/C-suite positions.

Figure 1. Current employment status: In which industry or sector do you currently work?
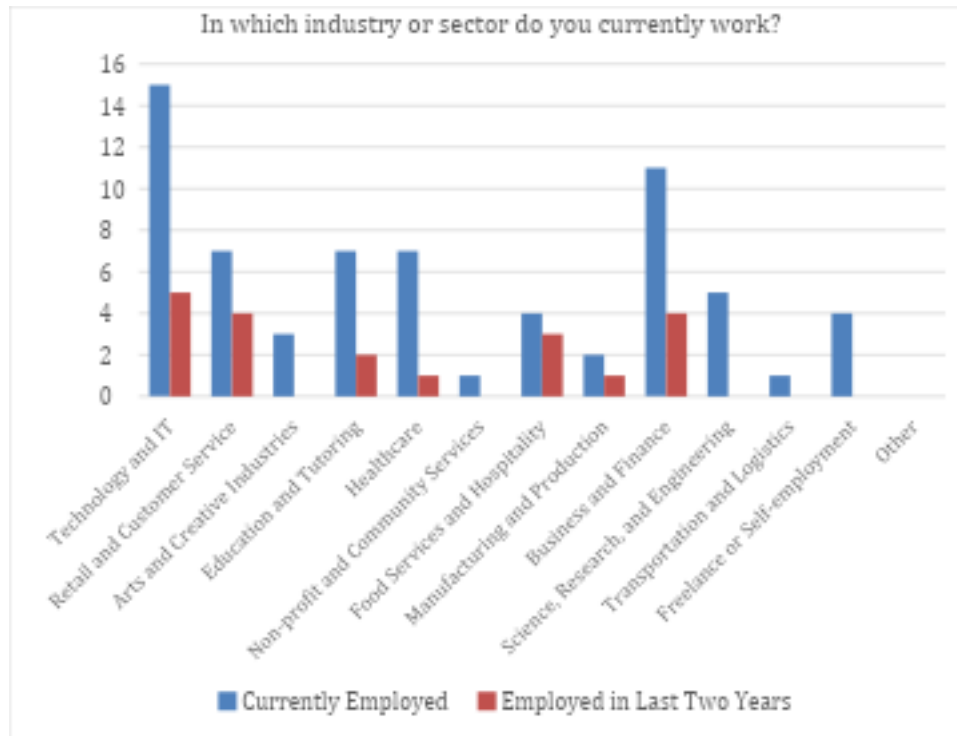
Most respondents who were currently employed worked at entry- or junior-level positions (21) or as associates/individual contributors (16), highlighting the concentration of roles at foundational or mid-career levels within their organizations.

Answers to the question on the importance of having a job are presented in Figure 2. A majority of respondents (89) across all employment statuses rated having a job as either "extremely important" or "important." Specifically, 41 respondents who are currently employed, 12 who were employed in the last two years, and three who have not been employed in the last two years considered a job to be "extremely important." Only a small subset across all categories rated job importance as "nice to have but not essential" or "not important at all," reflecting the high value placed on employment across the sample.

Figure 2. Employment experience: Importance of Having a Job

Support Systems

The majority of respondents reported facing challenges in the workplace, with 50.75% of those currently employed and 56.52% of those employed within the last two years indicating significant difficulties. Among respondents who are either currently employed or have been employed in the last two years presented in Figure 3, the most frequently reported challenges were an unsupportive working environment (29 respondents), limited networking opportunities (21 respondents), lack of access to job training or resources (18 respondents), and bias or discrimination (17 respondents). Additionally, some respondents in the "Other" category noted unique challenges such as "Not playing politics" and "Lack of fit with the social environment."

Figure 3. Have you experienced significant challenges related to your employment? If yes: Which of the following challenges have you faced? Select all that apply:
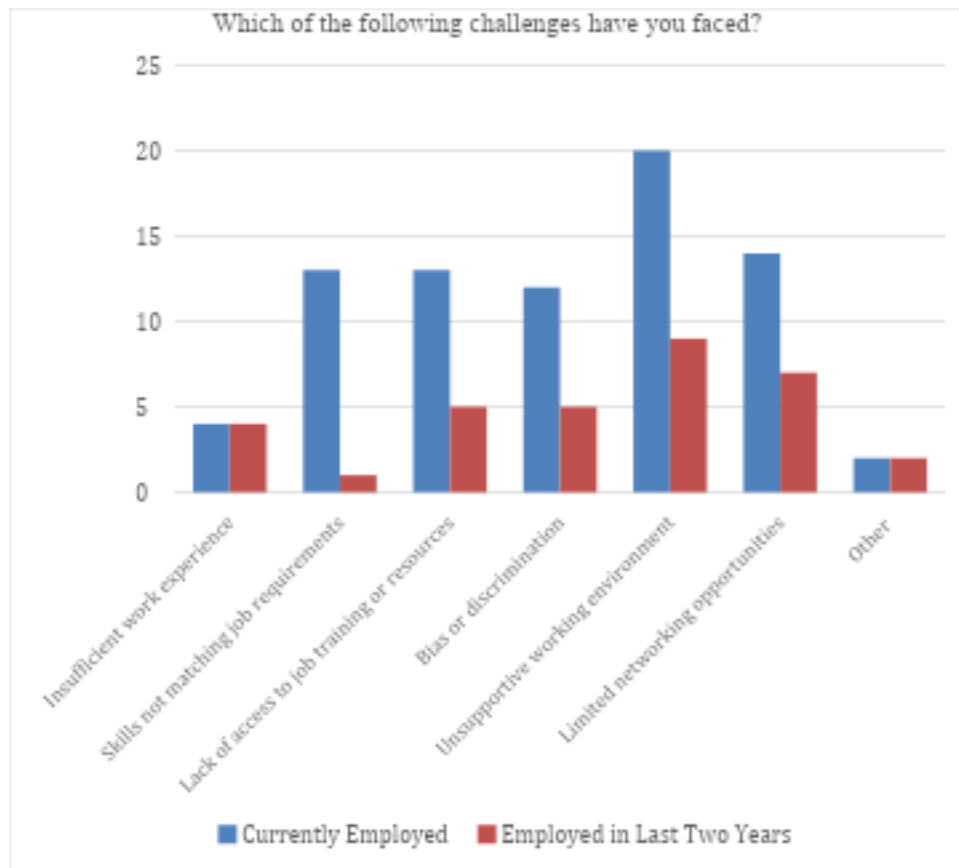

For respondents who have never been employed, the most commonly reported barriers to employment were "Difficulty with interview preparation" and "Lack of relevant work experience." One respondent, under the "Other" category, shared that their unemployment was due to "Focusing on mental health / working through realizing I have autism."

The Underutilization and Effectiveness of Employment Services

Regarding the use of employment services illustrated in Figure 4, 46 respondents indicated that they had never used these services but expressed interest in accessing them.

Meanwhile, 31 respondents reported having used employment services in the past but are no longer utilizing them, and only 6 respondents stated they are currently using employment services. This discrepancy points to significant gaps in outreach, accessibility, and program design.

Figure 4. Use of Employment Services: Have you used any services or programs that support you with employment?
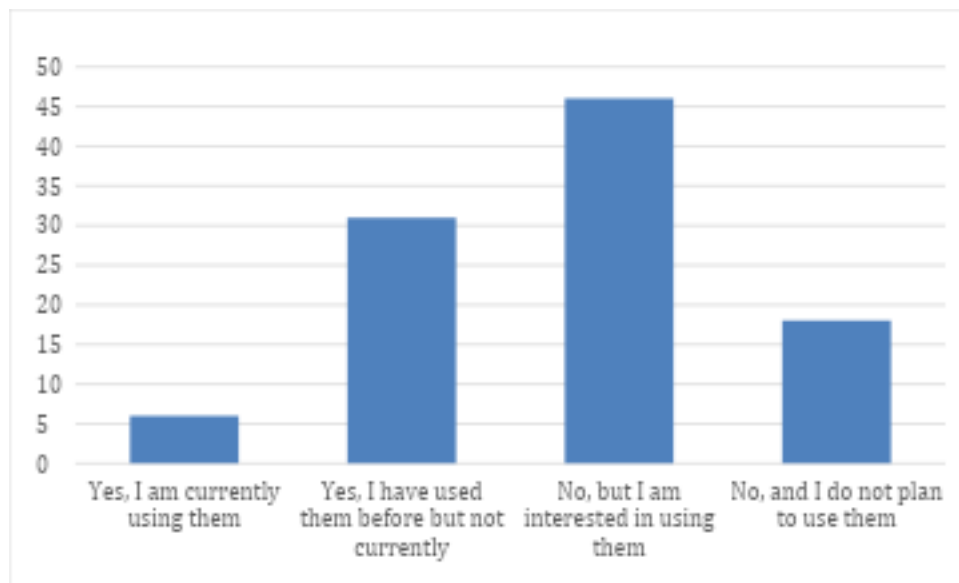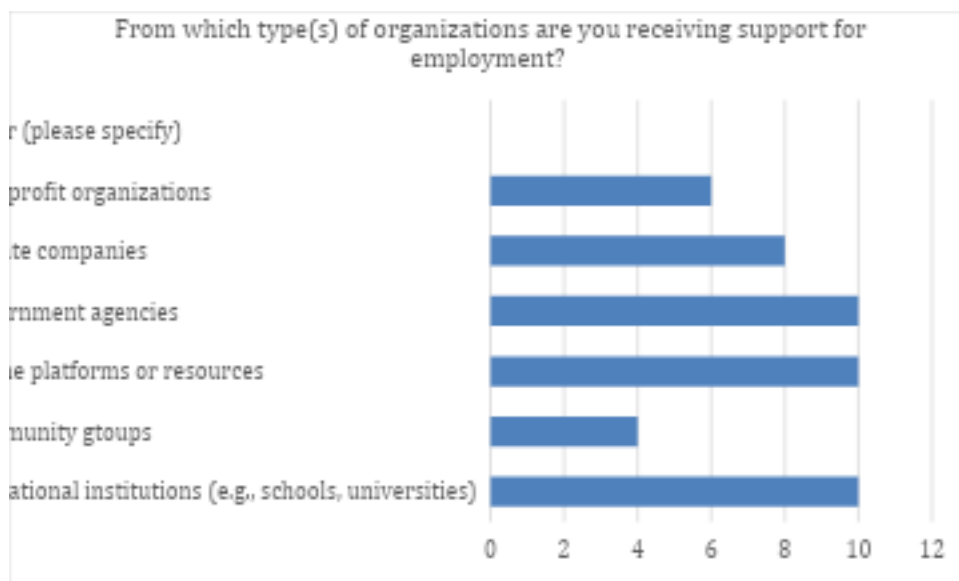

Among the 31 respondents who previously used employment services presented in Figure 5, the duration of use varied: 12 respondents utilized the services for less than three months, 7 used them for three to six months, and fewer respondents engaged with services for longer periods. Notably, 5 respondents reported consistently using services for more than 24 months.

Figure 5. Use of Employment Services: How long have you been using employment-related services or programs?
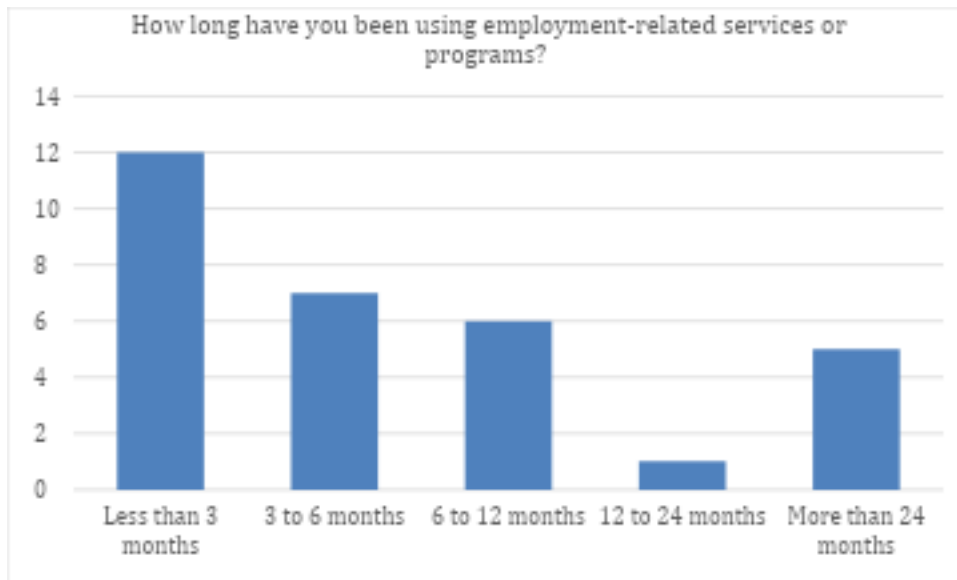
As presented in Figure 6, the top providers of these services included educational institutions, such as schools and universities, online platforms or resources, and government agencies.

Figure 6. Use of Employment Services: From which type(s) of organizations are you receiving support for employment?

For those who had previously used employment services, the feedback was mixed. Many

respondents noted challenges such as mismatched job placements, lack of follow-up from service providers, and insufficient neurodiversity training among staff. For example, one respondent stated, "The resources didn't actually help me, and I ended up finding a job on my own." Another remarked, "The program was fast-paced and hard to keep up with—it felt like a one-size-fits-all approach." These responses indicate that many services fail to account for the individual needs and preferences of autistic job seekers, resulting in frustration and disengagement.

Among the 31 respondents who had used employment services in the past but were not currently utilizing them, several recurring challenges emerged. A significant issue was the lack of personalization in the services provided. Respondents often felt that the programs followed a "one-size-fits-all" approach, which did not cater to their unique needs. One respondent noted, "It was a one-size-fits-all program, and that approach doesn't work for individuals who don't learn a certain way." Another shared, "The resources didn't actually help me, and I ended up finding a job on my own." This lack of tailored support often extended to mismatched job placements, where respondents were directed toward roles that did not align with their abilities or preferences. For example, one respondent explained, "I specified the type of employment I was looking for… but the organizations kept trying to place me in customer service roles."

A lack of understanding of neurodivergent needs among staff was another prominent concern. Several respondents indicated that the individuals assisting them were unprepared to work with people on the autism spectrum. One respondent remarked, "The person assigned to help me had obviously never worked with someone who was on the autistic spectrum." Administrative barriers also pose significant challenges, such as overwhelming paperwork, difficulty navigating the system, and sorting through fake job listings. One respondent shared, "It felt overwhelming to sign up for, and there are many forms/hoops to go through," while

another noted, "It was impossible to sort through fake job listings."

Respondents provided several actionable suggestions for improving employment services, focusing heavily on the need for greater personalization. Many emphasized the importance of tailoring services to individual needs and circumstances. As one respondent put it, "I wish services were more tailored to me." Another suggested, "I would like a deeper screening to better address my individual needs with regard to my mental disabilities." Improved communication and follow-up were also highlighted as critical areas for enhancement. One respondent explained, "There needs to be more open communication and follow-up." Another respondent added, "They should actually listen to what I have to say. Maybe take notes?"

Respondents also pointed to the importance of better staff training to ensure that service providers understand the unique challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals. One respondent noted, "The people working at these support agencies try as best as they can but don't necessarily achieve results." Another respondent stated, "People who work for these services need to be educated about the existence of neurodivergence in job seekers." Accessibility improvements were frequently mentioned, including making services available to individuals without electronic resources or those who speak languages other than English. Suggestions such as "Be able to text instead of calling" and "Make services more easily accessible for those without electronic resources" were particularly common.

Lastly, respondents recommended hosting more specialized workshops and networking events tailored to specific industries and skill sets. One respondent said, "Provide more of a hand-holding experience when it comes to networking." Another respondent shared, "Having services hosted by people in the same field as me to discuss how they landed a job would help." These suggestions highlight the need for services that go beyond basic job placement, providing practical tools and support to ensure long-term success.

In terms of effectiveness, 61.29% of respondents reported facing no challenges with the employment services they used. However, among those who are not currently using services, 67.39% stated, "I need support but do not know where to find it," as the primary barrier to accessing services. Respondents identified "Learning about job opportunities" (35 respondents), "Career counseling (e.g., job advice, workplace success)" (26 respondents), and "Gaining work skills (e.g., computer programs)" (25 respondents) as the most beneficial services to address their employment-related needs.

Figure 7. What types of services or programs would be most beneficial in addressing your employment-related needs?
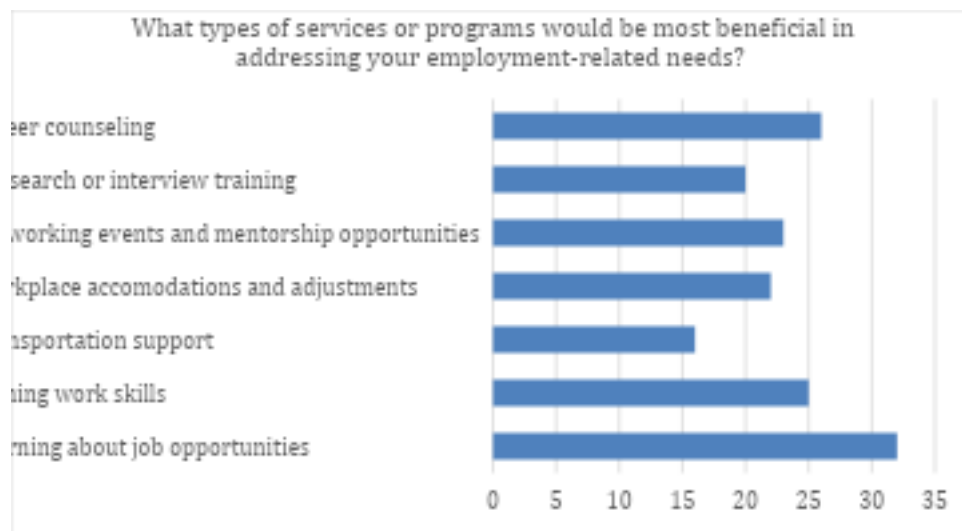
These findings illustrate the significant challenges faced by respondents in both workplace environments and in accessing support systems. The focus on respondents who have previously used employment services but are not currently doing so will provide valuable insights into improving the accessibility, duration, and effectiveness of these programs for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Discussion

The present study explores the employment challenges of Asian Americans with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and evaluates the role of non-profit organizations (NPOs) in

addressing these barriers. The paper first identifies the limitations of existing government systems in supporting autistic individuals from racially minoritized backgrounds. It then explores how cultural values, particularly those rooted in Confucian traditions, shape perceptions of autism within Asian American communities, influencing access to education, employment, and societal inclusion.

The findings from the survey data reflect the intersection of cultural stigma, systemic gaps in employment services, and the unique needs of autistic Asian Americans. By analyzing the tailored approaches of NPOs, the study provides insight into how these organizations address culturally specific challenges and promote inclusion in the workplace. Leveraging the original data collected, this discussion delves deeper into the implications of these findings, explores how NPOs can design and implement effective employment services and provides actionable insights for improving support systems.

Several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. Recruitment through Prolific may have introduced selection bias, as participants on the platform may not fully represent the broader population of Asian Americans with ASD. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may have contributed to inaccuracies due to recall bias or social desirability bias. Lastly, the cross-sectional design of the study limits its ability to establish causal relationships between variables.

Employment Challenges

The Importance of Employment

Survey results highlight that employment is a high priority for the majority of respondents. Across different employment statuses, 87% of respondents ranked having a job as "Extremely important" or "Important." These answers underscore not only the financial necessity but also the social and psychological importance of employment for individuals

with ASD. Employment often provides a sense of purpose, a structured environment, and opportunities for social interaction. However, the fact that many respondents are either unemployed or underemployed signals systemic shortcomings in creating pathways to meaningful and sustained work opportunities for this population.

Barriers to Employment

The most common employment-related challenges faced by respondents reflect a combination of systemic and cultural factors. Nearly 30 respondents reported that their workplaces were not accommodating to their needs. This includes environments that lacked flexibility, failed to provide reasonable accommodations, or perpetuated neurotypical-centric norms that marginalized neurodivergent employees. Such findings emphasize the need for workplace reforms that prioritize inclusivity.

Twenty-one respondents identified networking challenges as a significant barrier. This is consistent with the broader literature on autism, which highlights difficulties with social communication and the unstructured nature of networking as barriers to professional advancement.

Eighteen respondents pointed to insufficient job training programs as a key obstacle. This finding suggests that many individuals are not equipped with the skills or knowledge required to navigate the job market or succeed in the workplace.

Seventeen respondents explicitly noted experiencing bias or discrimination, indicating that societal stigma against autism persists even within professional contexts. Cultural biases specific to Asian communities likely exacerbate this issue, where autism may still be misunderstood or stigmatized.

Respondents who had never been employed cited unique challenges, including difficulties with interview preparation and a lack of relevant work experience. One respondent noted, "Focusing on mental health / working through realizing I have autism" as a

primary reason for unemployment, underscoring the interplay between mental health challenges and employment readiness.

The Role of Cultural Stigma

Cultural stigma plays a significant role in shaping the employment experiences of Asian Americans with ASD. Within many Asian communities, disabilities, including autism, are often viewed through the lens of shame or failure. This stigma can delay diagnosis and intervention, reducing the opportunities for early skill-building that are critical for future employability. Moreover, families may discourage open acknowledgment of autism, limiting their advocacy for workplace accommodations or support.

The data suggests that these cultural barriers may also influence how respondents engage with employment services. Many respondents reported reluctance to use such services due to fear of being misunderstood or judged. For example, respondents noted that existing employment services were "not tailored to my needs" or that they felt the programs were designed for neurotypical individuals without adequate consideration of autistic-specific challenges.

Insights for Non-Profit Organizations: Designing Effective Employment Services

The findings provide actionable insights for NPOs aiming to improve employment outcomes for autistic individuals, particularly within Asian American communities. Based on the data, the following recommendations can guide the design of effective services:

A recurring theme in the survey responses was dissatisfaction with mismatched job placements. Respondents emphasized the importance of aligning roles with their skills, interests, and sensory preferences. NPOs should implement comprehensive assessments to evaluate each individual's strengths, challenges, and workplace preferences. Personalized job

matching tools, potentially incorporating AI or machine learning, could improve the alignment between job seekers and employers.

The underutilization of employment services underscores the need for culturally informed outreach strategies. NPOs can partner with community leaders, faith-based organizations, and cultural centers to raise awareness about their services. Multilingual resources and workshops tailored to the specific cultural contexts of different Asian subgroups can further enhance accessibility.

Respondents frequently identified gaps in job-related skills as a barrier to employment. NPOs should offer tailored training programs that address common challenges such as interview preparation, workplace communication, and technical skills. Interactive, hands-on workshops and mentorship programs can provide practical experience and build confidence.

To address workplace biases and create more inclusive environments, NPOs must actively engage with employers. This includes providing neurodiversity training, advocating for flexible work arrangements, and assisting with the implementation of accommodations. Highlighting the benefits of hiring neurodiverse employees, such as innovation and problem-solving skills, can also help shift employer perceptions.

Several respondents noted a lack of follow-up from employment service providers. NPOs should establish mechanisms for ongoing support, including regular check-ins, peer support groups, and career coaching. Building long-term relationships with clients can improve job retention and satisfaction.

Limited networking opportunities were a common challenge among respondents. NPOs can create safe and structured spaces for autistic individuals to connect with peers, mentors, and potential employers. Hosting industry-specific networking events and facilitating online communities can help expand professional networks.

Given the challenges of physical accessibility and geographical disparities, NPOs should invest in virtual platforms to deliver services. Online job boards, virtual career fairs, and telehealth-based counseling can make services more accessible to individuals in remote or underserved areas.

This study provides valuable insights into the employment challenges faced by Asian Americans with ASD and the critical role of NPOs in addressing these barriers. By leveraging culturally sensitive approaches, personalized services, and community partnerships, NPOs can create pathways to meaningful employment for this population. The findings also highlight the importance of integrating cultural competence into policy and practice, advocating for inclusive workplaces, and fostering public awareness of autism. Moving forward, a collaborative effort between NPOs, policymakers, and employers is essential to ensure equity and inclusion for autistic individuals in the workforce. Through these efforts, we can build a society that recognizes and values the contributions of all its members.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study also have implications for policymakers and practitioners. While NPOs play a critical role in addressing gaps in employment support, systemic changes are necessary to create a more inclusive labor market. This includes:

1. Expanding funding for autism-specific job training programs.

2. Mandating neurodiversity training for employers as part of anti-discrimination policies.

3. Developing public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and promote understanding of autism within Asian American communities.

<u>Appendix</u>

Demographics
1. **Age**: Four-year increments starting from 16-19 and ending at 65 and older
2. **Gender**:
    • Man
    • Woman
    • Transgender woman
    • Transgender man
    • Non-binary
    • Gender non-conforming
    • Prefer not to respond
    • Prefer to self-describe (text box)
3. **Ethnic Background**:
    • Chinese (excluding Taiwanese)
    • Filipino
    • Vietnamese
    • Korean
    • Japanese
    • Thai
    • Cambodian
    • Hmong
    • Laotian
    • Taiwanese
    • Burmese/Myanmar
    • Nepalese
    • Indonesian
    • Mongolian
    • Malay
    • Other (please specify)
    • Prefer not to answer
4. **Place of Birth**: Country of birth (text response)
5. **State of Residence**: (text response)
6. **English Language Proficiency**:
    • Native speaker
    • Fluent
    • Intermediate
    • Beginner
7. **Highest or Current Level of Education**: For current students, select your current level:
    • Primary school
    • Secondary school
    • College or university (undergraduate, e.g., bachelor's)
    • College or university (postgraduate, e.g., master's, MBA, PhD, MD)

Employment Experiences
4. **Importance of Having a Job**:
    • Extremely important
    • Important
    • Nice to have, but not essential

- Not important at all

5. **Current Employment Status**:
   - Yes, I am currently employed.
   - No, but I was employed within the last two years.
   - No, and I have not been employed in the last two years.
   - **If currently employed**:
     1. Are you working full-time or part-time?
        - Full-time
        - Part-time
     2. How are you compensated for your work?
        - Hourly wage
        - Salary
        - Not paid
        - Other (please specify)
     3. In which industry or sector do you currently work?
        - Technology and IT
        - Retail and customer service
        - Arts and creative industries
        - Education and tutoring
        - Healthcare
        - Non-profit and community services
        - Food services and hospitality
        - Manufacturing and production
        - Business and finance
        - Science, research, and engineering
        - Transportation and logistics
        - Freelance or self-employment
        - Other (please specify)
     4. What is your current level of seniority in your organization?
        - Entry-level/junior level (e.g., assistant, junior analyst, intern)
        - Associate/individual contributor (e.g., specialist, analyst, coordinator)
        - Mid-level/senior individual contributor
        - Manager/supervisor
        - Senior manager/director
        - Vice president/senior director
        - Executive-level/C-suite (CEO, COO, CFO)
        - Board of Directors
        - Other (please specify)
     5. Have you experienced significant challenges related to your employment?
        - Yes
        - No
        - Not sure
        - Prefer not to say
        - **If yes**:
          - Which of the following challenges have you faced? Select all that apply:
            - Insufficient work experience
            - Skills did not match job requirements

- Lack of access to job training or resources
- Bias or discrimination
- Unsupportive working environment
- Limited networking opportunities
- Other (please specify)

- **If employed within the last two years**:
    1. Did you work full-time or part-time?
        - Full-time
        - Part-time
    2. What was your level of seniority in your organization? (Same options as above.)
    3. Did you experience challenges related to your employment?
        - Yes
        - No
        - Not sure
        - Prefer not to say
        - **If yes**:
            - Which of the following challenges did you face? (Same options as above.)
- **If not employed in the last two years**:
    1. What are the reasons for your unemployment? Select all that apply:
        - Not seeking employment
        - Unwelcome workplace environment
        - Lack of support for neurodivergent individuals
        - Lack of relevant work experience
        - Limited networking opportunities
        - Few job openings
        - Facing bias or discrimination
        - Skills not matching job requirements
        - Difficulty with interview preparation
        - Limited access to job training
        - Prefer not to say
        - Other (please specify)

Use of Employment Services
1. **Have you used any services or programs that support you with employment?**
    - Yes, I am currently using them.
    - Yes, I have used them before, but not currently.
    - No, but I am interested in using them.
    - No, and I do not plan to use them.
    - **If currently using services**:
        1. From which type(s) of organizations are you receiving support for employment? Select all that apply:
            - Non-profit organizations
            - Private companies
            - Government agencies
            - Educational institutions (e.g., schools, universities)
            - Community groups
            - Online platforms or resources
            - Other (please specify)

2. What is the name of the organization providing you with employment support? (Free response.)
3. How long have you been using employment-related services or programs?
   - Less than 3 months
   - 3 to 6 months
   - 6 to 12 months
   - 12 to 24 months
   - More than 24 months
4. How many employment-related services or programs are you currently using?
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4 or more
5. How close is the nearest center providing the services or programs for employment you are using?
   - Within walking distance
   - Within 1 hour by car
   - More than 1 hour by car
   - I access the services/programs online without traveling
6. How clear are you about the goals and benefits of the employment-related services or programs you are receiving?
   - Very clear
   - Somewhat clear
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat unclear
   - Very unclear
7. Do you feel that the employment-related services or programs you are using are tailored to meet the needs of individuals with ASD?
   - Strongly agree
   - Somewhat agree
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat disagree
   - Strongly disagree
8. Do you feel that the employment-related services or programs you are using have effectively helped you meet your needs?
   - Strongly agree
   - Somewhat agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Somewhat disagree
   - Strongly disagree
9. How satisfied are you with the employment-related services or programs you are currently using?
   - Very satisfied
   - Somewhat satisfied
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat unsatisfied
   - Very unsatisfied

10. Are you facing any challenge(s) with the employment-related services or programs you are currently using?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Prefer not to say
    - **If Yes**: Please describe the challenge(s) you are facing (free response).
11. Based on your experience, do you have any suggestions for how the services or programs can be improved? (Free response.)

- **If services were used before but not currently**: (Similar follow-up questions as above, adjusted for past tense.)
- **If interested in using services**:
    1. Why have you not used the services or programs supporting employment?
        - I need support but do not know where to find it.
        - I need support, but it is not easily accessible.
        - Other (please specify)
    2. What types of services or programs would be most beneficial in addressing your employment-related needs? Select all that apply:
        - Learning about job opportunities
        - Gaining work skills (e.g., computer programs)
        - Job search or interview training
        - Workplace accommodations and adjustments
        - Transportation support
        - Networking events and mentorship opportunities
        - Career counseling (e.g., job advice, workplace success)
        - Other (please specify)
- **If not interested in using services**:
    1. Why are you not considering such services or programs?
        - I am not currently seeking employment.
        - I am employed (or seeking employment) and do not need support.
        - I need support but do not believe these services/programs can meet my needs.
        - Other (please specify)

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