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THE COLLEGE OF
WOOSTER

BEING ASIAN DURING COVID-19: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF
DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL IDENTITIES

by Liang-Liang Jiang

An Independent Study Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Course Requirements for
Senior Independent Study: The Department of Chinese Studies

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Supervised by: Dr. Ziyang You, Ph.D.

Abstract

The past 3 years of the COVID-19 global pandemic has seen a rise in anti-Asian racism and hate. However, in Ohio, where Asians make up only 2.2% of the population, there is little visibility for Asians and Asian Americans. This study aims to document the diverse experiences of students and staff of East Asian descent, at The College of Wooster, during the past three years of the pandemic. My study focuses on a specific demographic of both international and domestic “Asian” identities. I recorded and transcribed interviews and uploaded them to a digital archive that can be found at: lianglij.weebly.com. There were several key themes that emerged from this study, including the overlooked experiences of anti-Asian hate and racism, significant impacts on mental health, and impact on identity regarding stigma during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for Asians and Asian Americans alike, many contributors have positive attitudes and advice to give, regarding forming a community, and the importance of supporting others during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Anti-Asian Hate, Mental Health, Stigma, Racism, Asian Identity, Pandemic

Dedication

To Anna.

Thank you for sharing your story with me.

I will never forget your kindness and openness.

I hope we can speak together in Chinese again soon.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to complete this project without the immense support of my mentors and peers. First, I would like to express my gratitude towards my advisor, Dr. Ziyang You. Thank you for your support and flexibility throughout the Independent Study process. I am so glad you encouraged encouraging me to incorporate a creative element into my project. Thank you for always helping me think big picture and reminding me to fight and see the project to its completion. You are truly one of the kindest and most caring professors I have ever had at Wooster, and my education would not be the same without you. You are such a wonderful teacher and mentor.

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I would like to give a big thank you to my participants. This project would not even exist without your contributions. Thank you for your time, stories, laughs, advice, and insights about the project, and help with finding other contributors. I thoroughly enjoyed connecting with all of you and getting the chance to understand each of your unique perspectives, as they differ and match my own experience during the pandemic.

I wish I could write an individual note to each of my amazing friends; however, I will just say this. You have all impacted and supported me, more than you know, whether it has been directly, or indirectly, like pointing me in the right direction to find support for myself that I need, or just reminding me that we are in the same boat, and we can both suffer together. Not to be one of those people, but if you are reading this, you know who are (: . Also, hiii Nina!

Finally, I must express my greatest gratitude for my mother and sister. Thank you for always thinking of me, and encouraging me to think realistically, while also teaching me to stretch my limits, dream big, and recognize and be confident in my own value and identity.

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Dedication.....</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Chapter I : Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
Purpose	1
Rationales	2
Method	3
<i>Chapter II: Literature Review</i>	<i>4</i>
Stigmatization and Impact on Pan Asian-Identity during COVID-19	4
Stigma Abroad During COVID-19.....	7
Asian American Invisibility.....	9
Intersection of Inequalities due to Racism with Anti-Asian Rhetoric	13
Being Asian in Ohio	15
<i>Chapter III: Methods.....</i>	<i>16</i>
Justification of Method.....	16
Participants	18
Specific Methodological Steps	19
Positionality	21
<i>Chapter IV: Analysis & Discussion</i>	<i>22</i>
Contributor Bios	23
Part I: Anti-Asian Rhetoric and Hate	27
Part II: Increased Stigma During COVID-19	31
Part III: Impact on Physical and Mental Health.....	35
Part IV: Lack of Resources for Asians and Asian Americans	40
<i>Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations.....</i>	<i>43</i>
Limitations	43
Implications of Research Findings	44
Recommendations.....	46
Final thoughts.....	47

Chapter VI : Digital Archive.....	48
References.....	49
Appendix A: Consent Form	51
Appendix B: Interview Questions 采访问题.....	53
Appendix C: Intro Blurb Email.....	54
Appendix D: Transcriptions.....	55
Alicia	55
Anna.....	61
Sarah.....	67
Zhongting	71
Naomi	75
WeiDi	80
Zhenze.....	83
Moro	86
Siyan	89
Karen.....	93
Little Orange.....	96
Xuan Han.....	99
DSM	101
Zoombi	103
Eric	106

Chapter I : Introduction

On December 31, 2019, COVID-19, an acute form of the coronavirus, was first reported in Wuhan, China. After a three-month period of doubt and confusion, regarding mixed information about how the virus spread, and was contracted, cities around the globe struggled to contain the virus, and keep the economy afloat. As case counts and death tolls grew exponentially, global stigma regarding the coronavirus increased. This was particularly seen in relation to individuals of Asian and more particularly, East Asian descent. Further, stigma was widespread against foreigners in the United States and abroad.

Purpose

The research problem is that there is a lack of reporting of anti-Asian hate in Ohio. The objective of this ethnographic study is to investigate the implications of being Asian and Asian American during COVID-19. The study will look at how Asian Americans, and Asians view themselves in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Are people more aware of their “Asian” identity? How has racial lumping, and the essentialization of “Asians” in the United States, affect both domestic and international individuals of Asian and East Asian descent? Most importantly, this study aims to reveal what steps can be made to make sure Asian Americans feel safe during COVID-19. In the rise of anti-Asian hate, there aren’t always appropriate resources for Asians or Asian Americans due to improper representation and marginalization in institutions, especially at a small liberal arts college in rural Ohio.

The key themes that surfaced were racism and anti-Asian hate, impact on mental health, and overall stigma about COVID-19, regarding both having COVID, as well as being Asian or Asian American during the pandemic. Many contributors mentioned that collectively there

should be an effort to treat people equally. Broadly speaking, the purpose of this study is to increase visibility of anti-Asian hate through the showcasing of diverse lived experiences. I will use my findings to create an online archive where these varying experiences will be showcased, and so that individuals that deserve attention and appreciation will be supported.

Rationales

I am interviewing Asian and Asian American students and staff at The College of Wooster, and outside of the college to find out how they have fared over the course of the pandemic, and how racism and xenophobia has shaped their experiences. In the context of hate crimes, and anti-Asian racism, the biggest issue with seeing the bigger picture is underreporting. Namely, there is fear of the police, and having doubts about the kind of actual action that will take place after a hate crime has been reported. Due to underreporting, Ohio severely lacks a holistic lens when it comes to racism. This project will highlight the voices that are underrepresented, and unheard. Anti-Asian hate in the United States has seen a dramatic increase during the pandemic, leaving many Asians and Asian Americans physically and emotionally traumatized. And despite the surge of anti-Asian hate crimes, there is underreporting.

Historically, Asian Americans have consistently been seen as a threat in the United States. From the Yellow Peril of the 1800s, when the Chinese Exclusion Act was put in place, to the Japanese internment camps of 1942-1945, fear of Asian Americans is nothing new (Chou 2014, 6). The Trump Administration's efforts to conflate fear of the coronavirus with existing Sinophobia has fueled the rise of attacks and anti-Asian sentiment. Enacting entry bans in the United States on Chinese travelers has further created a divide. Additionally, the fear of economic insecurity is enough to scapegoat minority groups. At the same time, Asians and Asian Americans are still stereotyped as perpetual foreigners – a designation that is deeply ingrained in

the American consciousness. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened racism against Asians and Asian Americans to the point that it has finally gained a level of visibility among the general American public. These points demonstrate the importance of shedding light on anti-Asian hate – a phenomenon that has been overlooked in society until very recently.

Method

My study's methodological design centers around ethnographic interviews. Interviews were chosen due to their capacity for capturing in-depth experiences and perspectives from contributors, as well as probing deeper into contributors' experiences, and feelings regarding the pandemic. To capture a wide array of perspectives, I ensured that my research population was composed of contributors from diverse East Asian backgrounds. This included both international and domestic students of various socioeconomic classes, genders, ages, and disciplines. Any trends or similarities within the data could therefore be analyzed as evidence for the lumping of East Asian nationalities and ethnicities into the artificial "Asian" racial category. This is important to project because, while students of varying backgrounds internally have differing positionality, they are all addressed as the same category of "Asian" from externalized sources.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This section examines the literature surrounding several broad bodies of scholarship: stigmatization and impact on pan Asian-identities during COVID-19, stigma abroad during COVID-19, Asian American invisibility, intersection of inequalities due to racism and anti-Asian rhetoric, and being Asian in Ohio. While these topics have been studied extensively in their own right, they have seldom been combined, and never been analyzed in the unique context of Ohio. By synthesizing and discussing these topics, I justify the unique importance of my own study. This project sheds light on the unique experiences of Asian and Asian-Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ohio - an understudied area that provides insight into the role of community in resilience.

Stigmatization and Impact on Pan Asian-Identity during COVID-19

During COVID-19, the stigmatization of individuals belonging to East Asian descent has greatly increased. This may have to do with the tendency to generalize “Asians” in the United States. On the other hand, stigma abroad seems to have a more generalized effect of targeting anyone who is perceived as a foreigner. In the face of disease related stigma, people of the targeted group tend to have different actions and perspectives on how to react. Scholars do not agree on the effect that stigma has on individuals belonging to the stigmatized group.

Yen Le Espiritu (1992) argues that “external threats intensify group cohesion as members band together in defensive solidarities” (Le Espiritu 1992, 134). This move of minorities banding together to fight against discrimination and marginalization is most famously seen after the highly pivotal Vincent Chin case in which “a Chinese American [...] was beaten to death by two white men who allegedly mistook him for Japanese” (Le Espiritu 1992, 135). The nature of his

death was never identified as racially motivated by the police, and this resulted in a pan-Asian response to gain recognition for his death, and raise awareness about Asian American invisibility, and justice. Le Espiritu argues that since the tragedy of Chin's death, and the coalition of Asian Americans, “anti-Asian violence unites Asian American groups across generational, ethnic, class, and political lines” (Le Espiritu 1992, 145).

Historically, racial lumping has never ended well for Asian Americans, because “early attempts by Asian immigrant groups to ‘disidentify’ themselves [...] often failed” (Le Espiritu 1992, 135). While specific groups will try to push the label of “Asian” outsiders, still use the label, and so affected groups are unable to escape the association of the stigma, or threats. In relation to the coronavirus, it seems relevant to note that “racially defined group[s] can [...] suffer reprisals because of its externally imposed membership in a larger group” (Le Espiritu 1992, 134). While Le Espiritu argues that “group members can suffer sanctions for no behavior of their own, but for the activities of others who resemble them,” it only partially applies to the problem of racism that Asians and Asian Americans abroad are facing (Le Espiritu 1992, 134). This is in part due to the fact that the stigma of the coronavirus stems from a false narrative. It is inherently more obvious that Chinese Americans are being targeted, but anyone who looks like they belong to East Asian descent can also be targeted by false association of an already false allegation. While Le Espiritu argues that external threats cause the targeted group to band together, they also mention that racial lumping leads towards sentiments of “ethnic disidentification”, because “external threat[s] [do] not always consolidate groups but can also disintegrate them” (Le Espiritu 1992, 134).

In the same vein, the claim that the hyper stigmatization of Asian Americans leads to intergroup disidentification in order to separate oneself from the targeted group is seen in

Shinwoo Choi's personal essay and article. Shinwoo Choi (2021) reflects on how being Asian American has affected her experience and perception of others during the pandemic. Choi (2021) argues that despite marginalization, and general discrimination against Asian Americans, inter-minority discrimination has been on the rise considering scarce resources and overall fear of the virus (Choi 2021, 234).

In the beginning of the pandemic, Choi, like many others, felt averse to wearing a face mask. However, there was an added layer of judgement because she was afraid that she would be stigmatized for being Asian American and wearing one. Choi (2021) talks about how her husband refused to wear a face mask at that supermarket because he didn't want to be seen as an Asian who was carrying the virus (Choi 2021, 235). This thinking is relevant to the beginning of the coronavirus because the understanding of why mask wearing was important was not fully developed and accepted. At first people only said that only if you were sick, you would need to wear a mask, so this reaction seems common, but further unfortunate due to the fear of stigmatization as an Asian in the United States.

Choi (2021) admits that hyper-stigma of the coronavirus and its disassociation with Chinese Americans, was affecting her own bias of other Asian Americans. Unfortunately, a lot of external racism is internalized by Asian Americans. In particular, the underlying notion that Asian Americans are not part of U.S. society and seen as perpetual foreigners (Choi 2021, 235). The pervasive presence of exoticification of Asian culture in social media, media, and the news, makes it difficult to ignore. She also found herself judging others that were wearing masks, and being critical of them if they were Asian, by thinking something along the lines of "these people are adding to the stigma", whereas when she saw white people, or black people wearing a face mask, she perceived them to be smart and proactive. Choi also adds that this sentiment is not

only felt by Asian Americans like herself, but other racially marginalized groups. Especially in reference to how black men were wary to wear the mask because of how society has characterized them as lawless and violent, and so wearing a mask would make them a target as well. Mistaken identity is highly prevalent considering the pandemic as all Asian Americans have been stigmatized for looking “Asian”. While generalization of East Asians in the United States, has led to a collective experience for Asians

Stigma Abroad During COVID-19

Jianhua Xu (2021) addresses the stigma of COVID-19 in the Chinese-speaking world, and abroad. Xu argues that targets of discrimination, are most commonly and consistently perceived as the “outsider” (Xu 2021, 64). This initial sentiment, however, shifted as the virus spread regionally, and then globally. Xu explains that initially Wuhan residents were stigmatized greatly and that was the beginning of the pandemic, but then eventually everyone in the Hubei province was stigmatized (Xu 2021, 64). Xu also noted that several people turned against their neighbors when they realized that they left for the New Year, and came back to Hebei, because they were returning to the province after international/ regional travel (Xu 2021, 56).

Despite the initial internal tensions during the pandemic, the ultimate fear in mainland China, and abroad was from foreign cases coming into the country. This led to an increased stigma of foreigners, especially Africans. The amount of fear that was projected and circulated during the pandemic, was the same in the Chinese-Speaking sphere (Xu 2021, 64). Xu argues that authorities in Taiwan and other countries referred to the virus as the “Wuhan pneumonia”, and so this created fear of Wuhan’s citizens. Xu addresses inner group anxieties and fears, in relation to COVID-19.

Initially, fears about COVID were strictly placed on the people of the Hubei province, and so the stigma was not necessarily connected to a person's race like it was in the U.S., but as the case number went down for domestic cases, and cases relating to incoming international traveling increased, foreigners, especially Africans were looked down on and blamed for bringing in new cases. Mainland China's ethnic makeup is extremely homogeneous in terms of race, so the "minority" is flipped. While in the United States, Asians are the minority, "Asians" are the majority in China, and so the new minority of the Eastern context is the white people and the black people. Xu notes that though white people are looked at as foreigners, they did not experience nearly as much discrimination as their black counterparts (Xu 2021, 70).

Stigma in relation to COVID-19 is particularly dangerous because it not only stems from the fear of two unknowns. Firstly, the lack of understanding about the virus, and it builds on the fear of the unknown regarding race. By combining these two fears, stigma is disseminated rapidly, and it makes it difficult to separate the two fears, one being the virus itself, and the other being the deep-rooted fear of foreigners and Asians in particular. Stigma unfortunately is not an exclusive thing that only belongs to the United States. It is not unique. Abroad, stigma has had equally devastating effects, for the people affected by it, due to their perceived association with the virus. Since the discrimination that results from stigma abroad is not based on race, and purely based on geographical location, it makes it surprising, but it also reinforces the overall / generalized outlook that foreigners are something to be feared, no matter where you come from.

Asian American Invisibility

Although exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-Asian racism in the United States is not a new phenomenon. It has existed in different forms since the beginning of Asian immigration to North America. From the Yellow Peril narrative and immigration bans to more contemporary manifestations in the “model minority” myth and perpetual foreigner stereotypes, anti-Asian racism has underpinned American society for centuries (Chou and Feagin 2014, 6).

Anti-Asian sentiment is so deeply ingrained in the American consciousness, that most of the time, people blatantly ignore racism and discrimination against Asian Americans or completely disregard it or choose to invalidate it. Despite numerous accounts of anti-Asian hate, police seldom recognize it and prosecute it.

In Chapter 2 of Chou and Feagin’s *Myth of the Model Minority* (2014), Chou and Feagin argue that Asian American invisibility, which is largely due to the model minority myth, makes it difficult for people to see how and when Asian Americans are being discriminated against. Chou and Feagin emphasize that historically Asian American discrimination in the United States has gone unrecognized, and unprosecuted by the law (Chou and Feagin 2014, 38).

In Chapter 2 of Hall and Hwang (2001)’s *Anti-Asian Violence in North America: Asian American and Asian Canadian Reflections on Hate, Healing, and Resistance*, Hwang address the impact that anti-Asian violence has on Asian Americans. While external negligence of anti-Asian discrimination and racism lives in the American consciousness, this same mindset is internalized by many Asian Americans. In Hwang’s Chapter 2 “The Interrelationship between, anti-Asian Violence and Asian America,” Hwang explores the impact that anti-Asian violence has on the formation and perception of Asian American identity and community. Hwang begins by detailing two main incidents of anti-Asian violence, both which exemplify the internalization

of Asian invisibility. The first narrative focuses on a Korean immigrant named Sylvia. In her interview, she reflects that she originally tended to consistently brush off racism, and “never thought she experienced much racism in the ivory tower setting” (Hwang 2001, 46). She never made a big deal about it because she didn’t really understand it, and when her kids told her they were facing racism at school, she always told them to “just to work harder and prove to everyone else that they were superior” (Hwang 2001, 46). This mindset seems to suggest that Asian Americans are both informing stereotypes and reinforcing externalized stereotypes about Asians. This is especially seen when Sylvia says that the “Asian work ethic [is] to work twice as hard when confronted with racist behavior” (Hwang 2001, 47). Sylvia did not believe she had experienced any racism, until she was physically assaulted because someone assumed that she was Chinese or belonged to Chinese descent.

After this incident, Sylvia, had a jarring change in her perspective. She was appalled that immediately after her assault, a nearby tourist couple asked if she spoke English, instead of trying to help her, which added literal insult to injury. Sylvia was faced with both verbal and physical discrimination and violence. As a premature resolution, there was little action from the police department in prosecuting and investigating the person who was responsible. She was essentially told that “the investigation was not worth [their] while [...] and [to] simply let old wounds heal” (Hwang 2001, 48). So after being told that “it was hopeless to pursue a random assault” Sylvia was forced to take matters into her own hands, and made efforts to put her story into the media. This is just one example of how violence against Asian Americans has failed to be recognized properly.

The second section of Chapter 2 highlights another narrative regarding anti-Asian hate and Asian invisibility in the Sunset District of San Francisco. The main incident that is

addressed, is the vandalism of several Asian-owned business storefronts. Swastikas had been engraved on their storefront windows. The business owners were not aware that this was a racially motivated crime and thought that they were just being vandalized like every other day. Furthermore, they did not report it because they did not understand the symbol's significance.

After the press got involved, the police department failed to fully acknowledge that the crime was anti-Asian in nature and claimed that "[the] acts of vandalism were the acts of juveniles and therefore, should not be taken seriously" (Hwang 2001, 50). It was not until after "the acts were dismissed and somehow excused as childish pranks and [...] not worthy of community discussion and intervention" that the police revised their statement, and decided to look a bit further into the case (Hwang 2001, 53). After arresting some youth in the area, and claiming they were responsible for the vandalism, they rejected the idea that the vandalism could be considered a hate crime, because one of the suspects was Filipino, so the police concluded that it clearly was not a hate crime. Then weeks later, the police sent out a report saying that the juveniles had nothing to do with the swastikas, but it received little attention. One community member organized a volunteer clean-up day, and the community came out to help with cleanup of the graffiti and sweep the streets. Although this effort showed solidarity in the effect of showing that hate crimes are not to be tolerated in that area, little was done to address the underlying tensions that the community was having, which led to the existence of the targeted hate crimes. The community held a town hall, to address the underlying issues, but unfortunately a lot of the merchants, and the affected shop owners were not present at the meeting and able to speak up about their concerns. Hwang states that in a loosely controlled forum, the audience had come full circle in scapegoating the victims as the perpetrators (Hwang 2001, 54). The meeting became specifically focused on the crimes instead of hate, and community members expressed

that they felt the “real problem contributing to the rise in crime was the fact that the community had changed so much that they did not feel that this was their community anymore” (Hwang 2001, 56). Hwang also argues that the changing character of the neighborhood that people were upset about was a euphemism for the rapid growth of the Asian American community in the Sunset district, which some say at the expense of the older Jewish Russian community.

Despite the historical lack of recognition of anti-Asian hate and violence, it seems that considering the pandemic, there are more reports of anti-Asian violence and hate incidents. However, it is too early to tell if these incidents are being investigated and prosecuted or not.

According to the 2002 Audit of Violence against Asian Pacific Americans Tenth Annual Report, 275 bias-motivated hate crimes against Asian Pacific Americans were documented (NAPALC 2022). The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, as well as STOP AAPI Hate, find that underreporting is a serious problem regarding looking at whether or not Asian Americans are experiencing hate and anti-Asian bias and violence. NAPALC finds that there has been a decrease in bias-motivated hate crimes against Asian Pacific Americans, however it is unclear why. The study suggests that due to resources being devoted to anti-terrorism activities, less resources had been allotted to dealing with hate crimes. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, it is difficult to get a full perspective on how many hate crimes Asian Americans experience. STOP AAPI has analyzed reports of hate incidents, however they do not differentiate between incidents and hate crimes. STOP AAPI (2021) reports that physical assault comprises the third large category of total reported incidents, at 16%. With the total number of incidents being 10,370, this would suggest that there have been at least 1,659 hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. And that is only accounting for the reported ones. With this context in mind, data from STOP AAPI Hate and the NAPALC suggests that hate

crimes against Asian Americans have increased by more than 500% since 2002. STOP AAPI (2021) finds that the number of hate incidents reported increased from 6,603 to 9,081 during April—June 2021.

Intersection of Inequalities due to Racism and Anti-Asian Rhetoric

The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected all minority groups in the United States. This is in part due to embedded inequalities within the American healthcare system, as well as general increases in xenophobic and white-supremacist sentiments. This has been discussed by Quach et al. (2021), Yaya et al (2020), and Darling-Hammond (2020).

Yaya emphasizes that minorities and populations of color struggle with socioeconomic status, and they don't have the same healthcare benefits as their white counterparts (Yaya 2020, 1). She finds that of the people admitted to hospitals, either one third of them are African American or 50% are African American. It can also be noted that those that are being affected by racism are less likely to be insured and have health insurance coverage that will help them. The entire situation folds in on itself as those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged due to racism, are forced into jobs that put that at greater risk for contracting COVID (Yaya 2020, 3). In turn these same people are less likely to have health care coverage, and so the cycle continues. Yaya outlines how in combination with institutionalized racism, the pandemic exacerbates already fragile situations for minority populations. Asian Americans are also facing health inequalities to during COVID-19; however, the reason isn't exactly clear (Yaya 2020, 3).

Quach (2021) alternatively emphasizes how there isn't a lot of aggregate data in regard to Asian Americans and the disparities that they face in regard to COVID-19 and aims to fill in the gap of missing scholarship and data. Quach finds that COVID-19 has had repercussions regarding healthcare and mental health for Asian Americans. Quach's study was conducted in

the San Francisco and Bay area, and addressed not only socioeconomic factors, but also other more generalized demographics. Through the study, Quach discovered that language barriers made it difficult for some Asian American residents to get access to vaccination centers and testing centers. In this study's survey, the data shows that of the 72 people that said they experienced discrimination or violence, only 1 of them reported it to the police (Quach 2021, 7).

In the wake of the coronavirus being detected in the United States, anti-Asian rhetoric, and implicit bias against Asian Americans both increased. This may be in relation to narratives that have conflated the COVID-19 virus with China exclusively targeting Asians and Asian Americans. Darling-Hammond (2020) argues that trends of implicit bias suggest a sudden increase after a relatively long period of decline, which coincidentally was at the same time during the March 8th period when several political figures in the United States addressed the virus as "Wuhan Virus" and "Chinese Virus" (Darling-Hammond 2020, 876).

In the same line of thought, Gover (2020) also investigates how social media impacts and incites xenophobic attitudes. This is specifically in reference to tweets from President Trump's twitter account. Gover (2020) further to argues that anti-Asian sentiment is deeply rooted in relation to the Chinese Exclusion Act which was not solely sourced from economic fears, but also lingering psychological fears of previous Chinese immigrants who had brought opium, and eventually the U.S. had a drug panic, so people were still blaming the Chinese immigrants about that (Gover 2020, 651).

As immigrants, Asian Americans have historically and consistently been seen as a threat in the United States. Namely, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the Japanese internment camps of 1942-1945. Fear of Asian Americans is nothing new. In recent events, the Trump Administration's efforts to conflate fear of the coronavirus with existing sinophobia, has fueled

the rise of attacks and anti-Asian sentiment. Enacting entry bans in the United States on Chinese travelers has further created a divide.

Being Asian in Ohio

Ohio, being a rural American state away from coastal cultural centers, has a notably small Asian population. Namely, with just over 345,000 Asians and Asian-Americans living there, Ohio ranks 32nd in terms of Asian population by state (Budiman 2021). Most of the recent scholarship surrounding anti-Asian racism, both stemming from COVID-19 and otherwise, focuses on larger Asian population centers around the American coasts (Hwang 2001, Le Espiritu 1992, Yaya 2020, Quach 2021, Darling-Hammond 2020). The experiences of Asians and Asian Americans in Ohio have subsequently been overlooked within the scholarship. Instances of anti-Asian racism have been documented in various Ohioan news media, but in-depth ethnographic research on the pandemic-era experiences of midwestern Asians has yet to be conducted. My study, by focusing on such experiences, effectively fills this gap in the literature while simultaneously shedding light on the value of community in combating racism and stigma. The next chapter will delve into the study's methodological design.

Chapter III: Methods

To complete my study, I used two diverging methods. Ethnography, and digital archival methods, to observe and record the unique experiences of individuals of East Asian descent who live domestically in the States, and abroad. The purpose of my study was to examine the effects of heightened racism during COVID-19 and its influence on Asians and Asian American identities, and sense of Asian identity. While focusing on the overall experiences and hardships that Asians and Asian Americans have experienced during the pandemic, I examined the main attitudes and reflections that have surfaced because of racism, and stigma during the pandemic. In this chapter, I provide justification for the use of ethnography, and a digital archive, describe the study's participants, and explain the specific methodological steps of conducting ethnographic interviews.

Justification of Method

Ethnography in a simple definition is “the study of people in their own environment through the use of methods such as participant observation and face-to-face interviewing” (NPS 2019). Through qualitative interviews and participant observation, the researcher can grasp a more in-depth insight on the experiences of the people they interview. It should be noted that “ethnographic data is inherently social: much more than survey research, it is created through encounter and experience, [and] it is vulnerable to contingency and circumstance” and further, “successful ethnographic work depends upon a wide range of collaborations” (Gupta 2014, 395). Since ethnographic data is influenced socially, this provides a deeper understanding of participants’ attitudes and responses, however, it also opens the door for more influence and less objectiveness on providing truthful answers. Furthermore, ethnographic research is a direct result of the researcher’s own observations, and interpretations, and so it can easily be

misinterpreted and analyzed with leading intentions. By spending time speaking with both individuals of Asian and Asian American identities, I was able to gain new insight on the major challenges and attitudes people were facing during a rise in anti-Asian racism and hate in the United States, and abroad.

Because my research focused on the personal experiences of my contributors, it was pertinent that I utilize a methodology for data collection that had the most flexibility as well as clarity. And while I mentioned that qualitative interviews are subject to social push factors, which can influence the responses, it was incredibly important that I be able to amend the questions and definitions on the spot and tailor them specific to each contributor. Had I utilized a survey for my data collection, with predetermined prompts or answers, I would not have received such a wide variety of responses.

As mentioned in the introduction and abstract, the main purpose of this project is to promote visibility for Asians and Asian Americans in the United States. My advisor suggested that I incorporate a creative element to my project. At first this was just drawings of my contributors, but as the issue of anonymity surfaced, we decided it would be best to just preserve the audio recordings and transcripts in a digital archive, and add the drawings related to the interviewees as a visual aid. The digital archive would serve to preserve and present the stories of my contributors not only visually, but auditorily. I would upload all the transcripts, interview recordings, and a picture that is significant to the contributor to give each interview a human touch, and tangibility. The digital archive also functions to create a more interactive experience for the reader or viewer. Furthermore, it makes my project more accessible for the public, and for other Asians and Asian Americans who are experiencing similar situations.

Participants

In this study, I conducted ethnographic interviews with eighteen participants, Asian and Asian American students, and staff at The College of Wooster--- as well as outside of the college, online and in person. For in-person interviews, I interviewed people in and outside of Andrews Library. I conducted the virtual interviews on Zoom. To start off, I initially messaged handful of contributors by text, and reached out to other contributors either in person, through Microsoft Teams, or through email. Of the thirty people I reached out to, twenty-two of them agreed to be interviewed, and eight people declined. I ended up interviewing eighteen of the twenty-two people that agreed to be interviewed, due to time and logistical constraints. Additionally, due to logistic constraints, three of the eighteen conducted interviews were not transcribed.

The interview participants, all above the age of eighteen, included both domestic, and international college students, as well as staff, from The College of Wooster, that identify as belonging to East Asian descent. Interviewing ethnically and nationally “Asian” students and staff was critical to my study because I gained a more comprehensive insight on how both international and domestic identities understand stigma and anti-Asian hate, considering racial lumping, and anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic.

Specific Methodological Steps

In late September 2021, when I began outreach for potential interlocutors, I had an extremely difficult time recruiting. I had originally planned to examine how Asian-owned businesses were being affected by anti-Asian racism during the pandemic. After calling forty-four Asian-owned businesses, I got the following results:

1. (10 Businesses): Hung up the phone, or said they weren't interested.
2. (4 Businesses): Agreed to being interviewed, but never responded to the email (or follow-up email, or call) about setting up the interview.
3. (2 Businesses): Agreed to being interviewed, but only if I went to the restaurant (which was an hour away) and the interview had to be in Cantonese (which I don't speak) or Mandarin (which I am studying, but still not proficient enough to interview someone properly).
4. (28 Businesses): Told me to either call back at a different time, only to decline or hang up later, saw the message I sent them on Facebook and didn't reply, never responded to the voicemails I left them, or in some cases, agreed to be interviewed, but did not want to give me information to contact them to set up the interview...

After these results I was highly discouraged and frustrated. I took a break from recruiting as it was clear that due to several interlinked factors, of language barrier, business hours, and outreach methods and message, were keeping me from efficiently recruiting participants for my study. After expressing these concerns with my advisor, we decided it would best to expand the scope of my topic to a more general population of East Asians in Ohio, and the United States. After expanding my potential pool of interlocutors, I was able to find more and more contributors

by the technique of “snowballing” where you basically find contributors by referral of people you already know or are interviewing (Dilley 2000, 132).

After shifting my study, in early December 2021, I began again by reaching out to people either by text, in person, or over Microsoft Teams. I explained my vision of creating the digital archive, the purpose of the project, the confidentiality agreements, and sent them the interview questions for review. After I received confirmation for an interview, I scheduled a time to meet with eighteen of my contributors based off our varying schedules. Most interviews were conducted in the evening when contributors did not have class, but some were conducted on the weekends during the afternoon.

Once the interviews were scheduled, I down at a table with them in or outside of the library or at a coffeeshop to begin our interview. Virtual interviews were conducted on Zoom. Interviews lasted between 10 to 45 minutes, and each interview was recorded via voice memos. To keep the interview on track, I prepared a list of questions on paper for the interviewee to view. Some interviews have bits of Mandarin in them for clarity of questions, however most of the interviews are conducted in English. My questions were kept constant throughout each interview with room for follow-up questions tailored to each contributor’s unique perspective. My consistent interview questions probed at themes of stigma related to the pandemic and related to being seen as an Asian or Asian American in the United States or abroad. I also aimed to discover if there were any common experiences of anti-Asian hate or sentiment during the pandemic, and how it was affecting my contributor’s mental health. For the list of questions, please see Appendix B.

The transcription and interviewing process ended up overlapping since I was not sure how many people were still interested in being interviewed. In an ideal situation I would have

just interviewed as many people as were interested in contributing. After completing the interviews, my next step was transcribing the interviews and finding themes among the contributors' stories. I transcribed and edited all the recordings for conciseness, using an application called Descript. From each interview, I then exported an audio and text file onto my computer. I uploaded the text files straight to the digital archive and uploaded the audio file onto Soundcloud. After uploading to Soundcloud I inserted each interview recording onto the website via an embed code that was linked to the original Soundcloud track. After this lengthy process, I started compiling quotes from each of the interviews, and sorted them into main themes and started writing a detailed analysis, complete with reflection and new insights from the transcripts.

Positionality

It must be noted that my positionality had an impact on the response and interpretation of the responses my contributors gave. Namely, because I am a female Chinese adoptee. I am ethnically Chinese, but culturally I am American. So while I was able to foster a sense of familiarity and solidarity with my contributors due to my ethnicity, I feel that due to the underlying language barrier, and general cultural divide, this might have hindered my ability to frame the questions in an appropriate manner, and consequentially this may have impacted the breadth of possible answers that I received during the qualitative interviews. I therefore believe that my positionality both aided and hindered me in my research.

This chapter has provided an explanation and reason for the methodologies utilized in my research. My following chapter contains reflective notes from my qualitative interviews. It also summarizes, analyzes, and identifies the overarching themes found within my fifteen interviews. I also give insight on how data collection might have been influenced based on post interview reflections.

Chapter IV: Analysis & Discussion

I chose to conduct ethnographic research on international and domestic students and staff living in Ohio and abroad, specifically belonging to East Asian descent. Although there is a general increase of xenophobia in the United States, I wanted to focus on East Asians because this group is the one that is perceived the most ambiguously among the American consciousness. Ethnographic research methods allowed me to understand my contributors and record their experiences in a conversational manner. Following the interviews, I was able to compile a list of themes and common stories regarding the shared experiences during the pandemic from the perspective of a diverse group of Asian identities.

My project focuses on stigma and anti-Asian hate during a rise of anti-Asian sentiment due to anti-Asian rhetoric fueled by the pandemic. I investigated the stories of narratives from both international and domestic students of Asian American and East Asian descent. The purpose of this research is to examine the concept of Asian solidarity in the United States, and how racial lumping is affecting identities that are encompassed in the term “Asian”. Further, it aims to examine how racism has affected my contributor’s identity, mental health, and well-being during the pandemic. The previous chapter outlined the methods, reasoning for methodological procedures, and specific chronological steps of the research project. The first portion of this chapter will provide background bios to the contributors of my study. This portion of the chapter will be preceded by an analysis, and summary of my participant’s responses.

Contributor Bios

Before delving into the themes that surfaced in my study, and my analysis, I would like give background about each of my contributors. The interviews took place from December 6, 2021, to February 21, 2022, in Wooster, Ohio for in person interviews, and on Zoom for virtual interviews. Participants in my study were all individuals belonging to Asian, and more specifically East Asian descent. While all participants shared the common background of spending a period of their time in the United States during the pandemic, each participant had characteristic and backgrounds unique to their identity. These backgrounds and differing demographics shaped participant responses during the interviews.

The purpose of sharing the individual backgrounds of my contributors is to highlight the different nationalities, and diverse demographics that make up the term “Asian,” or more specifically “East Asian.” So often is this term thrown around, and pluralized, and even using it to frame this study has proved as a difficult category, because it encompasses a much larger group of people who have diverging identities and experiences.

I will be sharing my contributors’ backgrounds in the form of short bios. These bios were crafted from responses to an email that I sent out in March 2021. For a copy of the email, please see Appendix C. In the email, I stated that my contributors should feel free to respond with as little or as much information as they were comfortable sharing. I know more information about my contributors than what is listed in their bios, however, I will only be sharing the information that they explicitly said they would be comfortable having posted on the digital archive as a way of respecting their privacy. Not all contributors share their specific background in terms of nationality, or pronouns, so it is not as clear when showcased through the bios, but they are all

touched upon through the actual interviews in the digital archive, and in their individual transcriptions. For a list of the transcriptions, see Appendix D.

From the responses that I received, here are the simple bios that I created for my contributors:

Alicia (She/Her/Hers)

Alicia's hometown is in Chicago, IL (USA). Alicia is a sociology and early childhood education double major at The College of Wooster. Alicia is class of 2022, and her favorite animal is a panda.

Anna (She/Her/Hers)

Anna's hometown is in Wuhan, China. Anna is a former actor and film-star for several TV shows in China. Currently she is a part of the staff at the College of Wooster, in Ohio. One of her favorite foods is 清蒸鱸魚 (Chingzheng Luyu), which is Chinese steamed bass.

Sarah (She/Her/Hers)

Sarah's hometown is in Virginia, (USA). Sarah is a chemistry major at The College of Wooster. Sarah is class of 2024, and her favorite animal is a polar bear. She enjoys spending time outdoors, watching the sunset, and taking pictures of nature.

Zhongting (Unspecified)

Zhongting's hometown is in Beijing, China. Zhongting is an English major at The College of Wooster. Zhongting is class of 2025. One of Zhongting's favorite foods is 红烧牛肉面 (hongshao niuroumian) which is a noodle dish that contains beef braised in soy sauce.

Zhongting would like to mention that they are a good and caring person.

Naomi (She/Her/Hers)

Naomi's hometown is in Ohio, (USA). Naomi is an anthropology major at The College of Wooster. Naomi is class of 2023, and during the beginning of the pandemic in 2019, she enjoyed making baked goods (mainly cookies) with her family.

WeiDi (She/Her/Hers)

WeiDi's hometown is in Kunming, Yunnan, China. WeiDi was a global and international studies major with a focus in political science, and music minor at The College of Wooster. WeiDi is class of 2021, and one of her favorite foods is mango.

Zhenze (He/Him/His)

Zhenze's hometown is in Zhengzhou, Henan, China. Zhenze a business economics major at The College of Wooster. Zhenze is class of 2023.

Moro (She/Her/Hers)

Moro's hometown is complicated. Moro is a global and international studies major with a focus in political science at The College of Wooster. Moro is class of 2022.

Siyan (He/Him/His)

Siyan's hometown is in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. Siyan is a global and international studies major with a focus on economics at The College of Wooster. Siyan is class of 2023, and his favorite food is 过桥米线 (guoqiao mixian) which is a rice noodle soup originating from the Yunnan province in China.

Karen (She/Her/Hers)

Karen's hometown is in Japan and Vietnam. Karen is a computer science major and studio art minor at The College of Wooster. Karen is class of 2022, and her favourite foods are sushi, any noodle dish, and spring rolls. Karen's favourite hobbies are drawing and painting.

Little Orange (Unspecified)

Little Orange's hometown is in Urad Front Banner (also known as Urad Qianqi). Urad Qianqi is a banner of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China. Little Orange is a business economics major at College of Wooster. Little Orange is class of 2022, and their favorite animals are cute cats and pigs. During the pandemic their favorite foods are noodles and dumpling.

Xuan (He/Him/His)

Xuan's hometown is in Henan, China. Xuan is a mathematics major at The College of Wooster. Xuan is class of 2023, and his favorite animal is a panda.

DSM (Unspecified)

DSM's hometown is in China. DSM is class of 2025 at The College of Wooster. Their favorite foods consist of dishes that are made during the Chinese New Year, including steamed prawns, braised pork, and bok choy among other dishes.

Zoombi (He/Him/His)

Zoombi's hometown is unspecified, however if you listen to his interview, you can find out the general area. He is class of 2022 at The College of Wooster, and his favorite animal is a jellyfish.

Eric (Zimu) (He/Him/His)

Eric's hometown is in Beijing, China. Eric is a psychology major at The College of Wooster. Eric is class of 2024, and his favorite animal is a panda. Eric also wanted to note that Batman is his favorite superhero.

In the following section, my participants' responses will be analyzed (see Appendix D), and participants experiences with anti-Asian racism and stigma during the pandemic will be examined. In my analysis, I focus on three main themes: experiences of racism and anti-Asian

hate, the pandemic's impact on physical and mental health, and my contributor's own perception of stigma related to both COVID-19 and being Asian in the United States and abroad.

Part I: Anti-Asian Rhetoric and Hate

In Wooster, Ohio, 3% of the population identifies as “Asian.” This is only slightly larger than the entire state of Ohio's average which has a 2.2% Asian population which looks like 260,347 in numbers (Ohio Population 2020). That being said, 3% pales in comparison to other cities in the United States like San Francisco, whose second largest racial demographic is 34.40% Asian (San Francisco Population 2022). From 2020-2021, the amount of anti-Asian hate crimes in all fifty states totaled to about 4,000 incidents. At the time this was a 150% increase from the previous year (Mura 2021, 119). Now, in 2022, the number has more than doubled. “From March 19, 2020 to December 31, 2021, a total of 10,905 hate incidents against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) persons were reported to Stop AAPI Hate. Of the hate incidents reflected in this report, 4,632 occurred in 2020 (42.5%) and 6,273 occurred in 2021 (57.5%).” (Yellow Horse 2021) It is no surprise that states that have larger Asian population are reporting a larger number of anti-Asian hate incidents. According to STOP AAPI Hate's National report, Ohio makes up 1.2% of hate incident reports, which totals to 130 incidents (Yellow Horse 2021). So in the event that each incident is equivalent to one person, that would suggest that only 130 out of 260,347 Asian Americans or Asians are experiencing anti-Asian hate in Ohio. Which mathematically translates to 0.049% of the population is experiencing anti-Asian hate. With this in mind, it seems unlikely that the number “130” for hate incidents is completely accurate. Since underreporting is such a widespread issue, I thought it was necessary to speak with my contributors regarding anti-Asian hate and racism.

When asked about racist experiences during the pandemic, my contributors shared a wide range of responses, including racial epithets, verbal harassment as well as physical and psychological threats, and xenophobic comments. Some experienced it firsthand:

My friend and I, we went to-- we were in a suburb of Chicago. We went to a mall, and I was ordering my McDonald's, the cashier who was taking my order, raised up the collar of her t-shirt up to her face--- up to her nose-- as she was taking my order. And I was like, bruh?? But also, my friend and her sister are Hispanic, but they're White-passing, when they took [said] their orders, she did not do the same thing. It was only for me because I'm Asian. (Alicia)

I've had [00:11:00] people spit at me. Yeah, like spit at me and say, "Go back to---" a lot of racist--- I'm not going to say the slur but they said like stuff like, "go back to China-- you filthy C-word." Um, a lot of really negative things. (Alicia)

I was walking down Beall [...] this car slows down, unrolls the window and goes, "you filthy fucking--", [...] I--- I had my airpods in, so I was like, "what....??" And I keep walking, but I got really sad. (Alicia)

When the COVID-19 begin, I studied abroad in Germany, and one day when my, uh, another Asia friends and I go back home, there is a guy, sit in cafe, and shouted to us like "virus" (WeiDi)

She shouted to us like, "where are you come from?" In English! And "are you come from China? [...]" And she began shouting us, like. "Go back to China", something... and dirty words in English. (WeiDi)

Um, so right before, when I left back home in sophomore year, my friends and I were walking downtown and we had like, people like honking their cars at us and somebody was making like, pig noises at us-- and it was weird. (Karen)

I've noticed that like, places I used to go to, like the Friendtique downtown, like they used to be really friendly... to me at least. And-- but like recently I've.... received a bit like of like hostility. You know? Like they weren't being very nice to me [...]. (Karen)

Yeah. Actually, the discrimination happened all the time in Wooster, [...] someone drive his car and, uh, and shouted to me. "Fuck [00:06:00] you, Asian." (Little Orange)

As you can see, the experiences of my contributors were diverse in their location. Some experienced racism abroad, while studying abroad, while others experienced racism in big cities like Chicago. Others frequently experienced anti-Asian hate in more rural environments. Racism

can happen anywhere. The majority of in person incidents exhibited xenophobic comments about Asians being told to “go back” to where they came from. A similar theme of xenophobic comments is seen on the internet. Others experienced racism first-hand online, or they saw racist rhetoric on social media:

Uh, I think I have experienced, discrimination. Uh, I, I last winter break. I played, I play a game called, uh, Grand Theft Auto-- 5, with my friend. And we--- and we met, we met a person, I don't know where he from, but probably um the USA. And, uh, he, he, he just says say some word to discriminate China. And, and say that's the COVID it's, it's from China. (Zhongting)

Yeah, definitely. Since I'm a-- in Chinese-- and I saw a lot of comments about, you know, "the Chinese bad", "the Chinese virus" -- something like that. And, uh, I don't know, I mean, we don't want that. Right? We don't want that-- but I did saw a lot of like, comments like that. Yeah. But in real life. I didn't, I didn't hear about that. (Xuan Han)

I don't have much feeling like how people treat to me. I just like [left untranscribed] news from internet. Like people say "Chinese virus" like that but in the real-world I didn't have much really. Yeah. (Siyan)

Anti-Asian rhetoric seen online mostly focuses on the association of the virus with China. This may be in consequence of the virus being referred to as a “Chinese virus” in widely circulated twitter posts by former president Donald Trump.

On the other hand, some contributors did not experience anti-Asian hate or racism firsthand, however they knew of someone else who had experienced it.

Yeah, I mean I had a friend. That apparently was chased down Beall (Beall Avenue, main street on The College of Wooster campus) This is her story though, so it's not exactly mine. Um, but she is of Asian descent and- it wasn't an open carry, but he had a gun on his back and , he was like, "get out of this country", or like, "you don't belong here". ...similar, similar, connotations of that. And, it obviously scared her. (Naomi)

Um, that friend in New York. Yeah. Apparently he'd be called , uh, he be called "chink" and stuff, on the subway, apparently like-- when I visited him, uh, man, he would just have the whole set up, he'd just have the hoodie, the glasses, the mask, and every pr-- yeah. (Zoombi)

Um, yeah, I think like one of my high school classmates who is also Asian, have experienced like discrimination in COVID-19. [00:03:48] Yeah. He was talking about

like when he was on a bus and there was people shout out to him like "get out our country" something like that." (Eric)

Um, I have heard a student, but I'm not sure if that is true. She said she, um, her car had been scratched by key, and they said something dirty words about Asia on her car. (WeiDi)

Further, some contributors found that they didn't face racism at all or experience any kind of different treatment:

Um, I don't think I've had that much direct experience with that-- with Asian -hate, but definitely with all the Asian-hate going around on social media, it definitely affects how I feel I would carry myself in the room? , but it's also a weird dynamic since I'm adopted [...]. (Naomi)

Not really? I don't think so, because first of all, I did not go outside the house, often----- So I did not have to interact with like strangers... and I would always wear a mask. So I wouldn't get scolded in public spaces saying wear your mask! Cause I've seen people experience that. (Moro)

I don't think I got negative experience. Yeah. I mean, for the racist, one were no, I didn't get that got that. (Siyan)

The contributors who shared that they had not experienced anti-Asian hate might have shared this experience for a few reasons. The first being the inverse relationship of the increase of isolation leading to less interactions with the outside world, and in turn less chance for anti-Asian hate to occur in the first place. I will also note that during the transcription of my interviews, I initially cut out some of the sections where people mentioned that they did not experience anti-Asian hate, which I realize now was a mistake. So there is a significant amount of more interviewees who have voiced not experiencing anti-Asian hate. Despite not including all of their original quotes, I will go on to argue that it is possible that some individuals in fact have experienced or seen anti-Asian hate, but they might not have realized it. As well as the fact that perhaps the questions were not worded carefully enough in a manner that was understandable for the interviewee. There are several probable possibilities for why contributors

might have shared this response. Also, it should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Students that experienced racist incidents firsthand, also saw racist comments and messages in social media, as well as knew of someone else who experienced racism during the pandemic. Aside from anti-Asian hate, my contributors also expressed differing views about how they understood stigma in relation to the identity.

Part II: Increased Stigma During COVID-19

Even without the appearance of COVID-19, the habit of linking Asian bodies to disease has long been predicated by the United States. In the initial SARS outbreak of 2002, anti-Asian racism and stigma was equally rampant, and had spread globally (Man 2021, Zhang 2021). Since COVID-19's inception, the significant increase of anti-Asian rhetoric in the United States that has associated the coronavirus with China, and consequentially, "Asians", has led to a wave of anti-Asian violence, especially in cities that contain significant Asian populations. This wave has no doubt been instigated from the slew of anti-Asian rhetoric promoted by former president Donald Trump who referred to the coronavirus as "Wuhan virus," and the "Kung Flu," (Mura 2021, 119). It is terms like these that have led to an increase of stigma for a wide range of individuals. Firstly, and most obviously, contracting the virus itself has some first-hand stigma. This is seen the following contributor responses:

Um, actually, I didn't tell a lot of [00:02:00] people because I was scared people would judge me, but I told some of my close friends [...] (Alicia)

So also, I feel like there's the stigma of telling a person: "oh yeah, I tested positive." So it's scary to tell, who you would trust enough to say that. (Naomi)

Apart from the face value stigma of contracting the virus, there is the added layer of people thinking that you have the virus because you are Asian. This sentiment was shared among the following contributors:

Yeah, whenever you like cough and sneeze, people look at you, like they glare at you. And then you're like, [...] if anyone else is coughing or sneezing, you would not glare at them the way you're glaring at me. (Sarah)

You're afraid to kind of like cough or sneeze, because you feel that people might make assumptions that you have like the virus when you don't. [...] they don't even have to be Chinese [--] because people just hate Asian people, because they feel that we're responsible for bringing the virus over. (Sarah)

Personally I would feel more conscious of my appearance when I am in like airport or something, especially when I'm traveling-- the way people look at me, they might not mean anything, but then I would be very conscious... and like when I wear a mask... it's like -- Oh my gosh, what if people think I'm spreading the virus and stuff? I know that doesn't make sense, but still. (Moro)

Uh, there was news [00:06:00] in, uh, in maybe 2020, uh, which says-- the coronavirus is Chinese virus. So, yeah, so we should to... we should hate Chinese people or, require Chinese people to compensate something. (DSM)

Social media really made me aware of it. The space we have on our phones and screens, that kind of became a hostile place. I guess it's-- seeing videos of old Asian people being assaulted on the street, from the back-- yeah, just seeing all of those videos (Zoombi)

So for me, uh, when the COVID-19 has happened I still in America, cause like I have high school in United State. So--- I feel like some people probably think like I am Asian and will like, uh, you know, like discriminate, but I don't know. Like sometimes they just like use those things through their eyes. They don't really speak, like it's like, uh, against Asian things. So sometimes I was afraid people will like say those things so, yeah. (Eric)

In the United States there is a clear stigma regarding individuals of Asian and East Asian

descent, however general xenophobia is also on the rise. An instance of general xenophobia

while abroad was mentioned by the following contributor:

One people in my city, I don't know his name, but when my city became safe, and he went to my city with coronavirus from abroad, [talking in agreement], from like French, or yeah--[00:04:00] which means we should to keep to continue this person, which make us stay at home. [...] but someone-- someone says, "Ahhh, why you go French, and then why you go back to our city? [...] [reiterating/ explaining what people were saying]: 'you shouldn't be here because you go to French and, uh, pass by a lot of city-- Why you bring this coronavirus to our city? (DSM)

As mentioned above, there is both stigma in the States, and abroad. This increase in xenophobia puts international students in a double jeopardy. International students and contributors are stigmatized in the States for belonging to Asian descent, and then further stigmatized back home because they have been abroad. This common theme was shared among the following contributors:

When I go back home, there are some people in China, they have never have a chance to go abroad and they have some. sort of bias to the student who study abroad. They said they thought, you are study abroad, because you're not at, not good at study, and you didn't take Gaokao. (National College Entrance Examination) And at that time. They said, "oh, those student who go back because of the COVID, you are the virus spreader", and do some of sort of tag on social media. And I think that's also the um cyber-[00:02:00] , violence. (WeiDi)

We had this instance cause like, these Korean American students or Korean students who studied in America or elsewhere, they would come in and they would just like, ignore all the precautions. They would just not wear masks and roam around and go to clubs and make everyone get-- contract the virus. So people were like, they are "black haired foreigners". It's like a term. And they were like, "Get out of the country. You guys are making the situation worse here in Korea." So I know, and I w--- when I heard that, I'd be like, "oh my gosh, I am just a good person staying at home. I'm not going out partying. I'm not sick," but yeah. (Moro)

Among the contributors who returned to their home countries, some of them faced stigma both in person and saw it online, because they had been abroad in the U.S.. So not only were they facing stigma, in the U.S. seeing messages to “go back to China,” they were also seeing messages about people traveling abroad, messages telling them that their hometown or city is safe, and doesn’t want them, because they have been abroad.

Several contributors face stigma unique to their specific identities, including being an adoptee, an international student, or an individual from a nationality not well recognized by Americans:

A big thing would be identity and racism. Because I'm adopted-- I was adopted when I was like one and a half. So my cultural identity is more American than anything. So I was seeing people being racist towards me on the basis of my ethnicity is like-- [00:06:00] kind of a double whammy. It's like, number one, I'm not like from China, but even then, if I was what gives you the right to be racist and rude to me?[00:06:08] But it also really dug at my Chinese-- or lack of-- Chinese identity. So that kind of sucked. (Alicia)

Back in Mongolia, there's also a lot of, um, Anti- Chinese sentiment. I guess it's something that I've wrestled with all my life, it's like, what does it mean to be a Mongolian in the 21st century? You know. [...] And I think I've had to wrestle with that here personally as well. People would-- you know, assume a lot of things [i.e. that he was Chinese, or a different ethnicity] and I'd have to-- , like I guess my first few years, I was always a little bit combative, you know, it's like, "Hey! That's not [right]---", you know, but then after a while you just kinda go along with it... (Zoombi)

"Well, it's not---- I mean, it's more convenience on my end rather than... You know?.... Cause people's ignorance is --- it's not MY job to be like "Hey, that's not right!" Or whatever, you know, I don't know. (Zoombi)

I always worry about how people saw me when they know about my, uh, "tag" or identity. Like I'm a student, I study abroad, and I come back and "would they see me in the bias?", I would worry about that. (WeiDi)

Alternatively, when contributors were asked how other people treated them during COVID-19, a few contributors shared that they did not feel like there was any stigma about being Asian or Asian American, and they were treated the same. One contributor shared that they didn't really notice the stigma about foreigners, because they didn't tell anybody that they had been abroad, and because they had been required to quarantine for a long time when they went back to their home country, so they felt "normal":

I didn't mention that. [...] Yeah, I have to-- like, when I back to China, I have to quarantine for 14 days plus seven weeks stay in my home. So like 21 days. So... When I go-- yeah. So when I go outside, I think I'm normal person. So I didn't notice [think], "oh I come from Am--, I come back from America, [00:02:00] so I just.... like... a normal person. (Siyan)

Another contributor felt that there was not much difference in treatment in comparison to pre-COVID:

So I think, I definitely get sick, like just two months ago, two months ago? It's I got a serious cold and, uh, I think people just treat me like normal, cause a lot of people get cold at that time. Maybe the flu or something. (Xuan Han)

As seen above, stigma has a variety of results. Some people have felt its direct affects in relation to their identity while others felt that there was no change at all. It can be noted that the way people perceive things is highly diverse and it depends on case-by-case scenario to each individual person's experience, and previous experience. Further, some individuals might not realize they are being discriminated against or treated differently in the face of stigmatization and marginalization. With the experiences of both stigma and anti-Asian hate, the state of my contributors' health and mental health was significantly impacted. Their lived stories are detailed in the following section.

Part III: Impact on Physical and Mental Health

Unfortunately, there is little scholarship on how COVID-19 has affected the mental health people in the United States and abroad. Perhaps it is because we are still in the midst of the pandemic, but it is clear that the pandemic has majorly changed people routines and outlooks in regard to everyday life and thinking about the future.

In light of both the drastic change in routine and social life, it is not surprising the my contributors' mental health and well-being would be directly impacted. That being said, the pandemic has been a period of social isolation, which for many has been the source of staleness, and fidgeting as we are social animals. For others, it has been an opportunity for self-reflection and improvement. There is no singular outcome of experience that people are facing in terms of mental health. However, apart from anti-Asian hate, the pandemic has certainly resulted in socioeconomic and academic pressures.

When asked about health during the pandemic, my contributors shared a wide range of responses relating to their physical and mental well beings. Numerous contributors felt that their mental health was affected due to fear of getting COVID. One contributor mentioned that they contracted COVID twice, so they were really worried about their family and their friends, and possibly getting it again.

My mental health has definitely plummeted down a lot, because--- my anxiety went up, this might be very personal as-- I take melatonin to sleep, because I wake up five times in the middle of the night. Cause my stress levels were that high, I can't explain what it was. Maybe it was the fact that, um, COVID is really scary. A lot of people I knew were getting sick left and right. (Alicia)

Others experienced the loss of loved ones during the pandemic:

Yeah, I uh, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety during the pandemic. It seems to be some sort of a universal experience. I've had to deal with grief... um, a friend of mine who went here, like passed away-- (Zoombi)

So, we work uh, Wuhan for [left untranscribed] TV, and, uh, and begin we make movie, you know, we was work together each other. We're good friend, and him dead. [...] This is so sad-- (Anna)

As shown in the above quotes, the pandemic took a serious toll on the mental health of some of my contributors. The quotes that follow detail these direct repercussions. Many of contributors mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic heavily affected their motivation to do schoolwork:

Um, I think it was hard to differentiate between school time and free time, since we were all online. I know some of it was helpful for other people, but for me, It was hard to then put a space that within my household... I'm, okay, I'm working here. And then also not be relaxing there? Since my mom's a professor, she would be teaching downstairs and I would have to either be in my room or in the living room. And that's both places where I do not do schoolwork. So when I did that, my motivation to do the schoolwork afterwards was very bad. (Naomi)

Um, I think, when I take the online class. My time schedule is totally upside down. Uh, and there is no peer pressure on me. So it make me like sometime lazy to study... Too lazy to study! And also when I check the social media it make me feel pretty bad. That interrupt a lot. (WeiDi)

Well, cause, uh, I mean the course online, did change a lot and, uh, give me a lot of like pressure on academic, so made get my mental health a little bit, I got depressed a lot [00:01:00] during that time. Yeah. (Xuan Han)

Some contributors experienced drastic change in their sleep schedules:

It was very bad.... so I became a night person-- to the point that-- if I go to bed, anytime before midnight, I would always end up waking up after one or two hours, regardless of how tired I am. [00:03:00] So that, yeah, so that's affecting me even now. So having a messed up sleep schedule. It's really bad because my energy level is really low and inconsistent sleeping just makes me tired the whole day, and I still haven't been able to recover from that. And that started with COVID. (Moro)

During the pandemic, I back to China and, uh, I study at-- at midnight and sleep at day and, I barely got out.... yeah-- I just stay at my home and, uh, you know, take the course which-- which is really depressing. (Xuan Han)

Cause we do the remote study--- right? And we have like with time difference like in China when America is like [left untranscribed] China is night. So w-- I have to like study in the night and sleep in the [left untranscribed] day, so-- [...] I can't hang out with my friend, cause we will have time difference. (Siyan)

Many of my contributors experienced feelings of isolation during the pandemic:

In China now, [00:01:00] we can't go out. So sometimes we--- our, mental health is uncomfortable, because we can't talk with my friends, or like go see a film with my friends, or have dinner. (DSM)

Also, being a remote student was not fun, very draining and tiring. I was socially distant from a lot of my [00:04:00] friends..... pun intended, but I felt disconnected from a lot of my friend groups, and when I was back on campus it was weird. (Alicia)

Um, my biggest challenge.... I think it was just not having, not being able to like interact with people like socially. [...] all you had [was] like social media or like texting and like that isn't the same. And then coming to college during like the pandemic, like last year... It was my freshman year, it was really hard meeting friends and meeting people [AND] clubs and student orgs couldn't meet in person. And then like our classes weren't in person. So I like didn't know anybody. (Sarah)

Bigger problem from I can't back to China. [...] if uh, COVID-19 don't come here, [...] I-- I can go to China. And I come back here and go-- when I like, if I like-- I want to go and come back. But now I can't. I can't go back to China-- [...] Which make me sad.. Yeah? [...] You know, my friend, my family, my friends..... all at China. (Anna)

I think, yeah, it was definitely like being at home, like stuck. I was stuck at home for like a month? And I wasn't going out and, it was kind of like driving me crazy a little bit.

Like, I felt really isolated and the only people I were, I was talking to is my mom and dad. And there wasn't a lot of things to do in Japan. So... (Karen)

I guess I've tried being more.... It's-- it's kind of a weird thing of trying to be connected with people on the other side of the planet. You know, it's the more you're on Instagram, the more you know, like on video calling... the more weird and--- the stranger, it feels almost. Like a paradoxical. Even if you're talking every day, even if you're, , it's not the same you know? (Zoombi)

Well, like last semester, like the winter--- my mental health is not that good cause like, you know, like, cause there's not much people in the campus and also like it's the winter and you don't really want to do and anything just want to stay in your like dorm and. Yeah, it's kind of lonely feel like that way and not good. Yeah. I don't really want to like, do my [00:02:00] class, do my homework. Yeah. (Eric)

Others, however, felt that their social life was not impacted:

Uh, I think there's still no big difference because before the pandemic I was used to being alone. Yeah. My hobby is like reading books or playing video games-- just by myself. And I, I don't have many friends. I just have like [untranscribed], very close friends.[...] So after a pandemic, we just do the same thing,[...] Yeah. (Zhongting)

So I had no social life at all cause I was studying at home. Which was actually pretty good for me-- cause I'm an introvert, I like, like staying alone, but mental health wise, since I didn't go out at all, like I didn't get fresh air every day. So I would get stuck with my assignments the whole day.... and then I would forget to like, [00:02:00] go look outside and know that there's a world-- and like get some fresh air. Right. But other than that, I think it was like, decent. (Moro)

Physical health was another aspect emphasized by my contributors:

Well, actually I eat too much meat and lack of sport made me become fatter--- during the COVID... Yeah, that's the most significant impact of me [00:02:00] because I can't go outside. And when I go back to China, I need to isolate for about one month. And one month I stay in my room and play some computer games, and eat some junk food. Yeah. (Little Orange)

Yeah, keep staying at home and, um, and the second is to keep my body shape or like, weight, you know...Cause, if you stay at home, you can't do anything you want. Like, you just can have lunch, have breakfast, have dinner-- and you don't do some sports. Yeah. [...] So, the weight problem became the biggest problem for me. I increased uh, 15 kilogram (DSM)

Other contributors felt that they were able pay more attention to their physical health during the pandemic:

Uh, I think I like, uh, eat more vegetables and fruits and, uh, get up already-- sleep early. And sometimes do some sports too, to keep good health. Cause I didn't got a good body. I mean, before the pandemic, I always feel sick, like a cold or fever. Yeah. Maybe two times a year. Yeah. I got probably so after the pandemic I should take care of my body--- more..... You know what I mean? (Zhongting)

In my lifestyle? I began to go to gym more frequently. Like I exercise, a lot to keep me strong. Don't get sick. Yeah. Yeah. And also when I take the online class, I had to get up at like 2:00 or 3:00 AM. Yeah. Cause there are like 12 hours time different between. Yeah. (WeiDi)

During the pandemic, there is no singular factor that impacts mental health. And there is also not a definite outcome of positive or negative effects. Some students felt that they were able to spend more time on themselves, prioritize sleep, and make sure they were paying more attention to their mental and physical health, while others felt that the pandemic exacerbated existing mental health issues, and created new ones, and it put pressure on their physical health. The overall change in routine for a lot of contributors affected their lives in big ways. Some students experienced a change in their sleeping schedule, which resulted in a change in their social life, and ability to hang out with their friends. Some contributors felt isolated, and this also made it difficult for them to be motivated to do work or schoolwork.

Many contributors shared that when trying to cope with isolation they turned to digital devices, and social media for communication and connection, however, while communication via electronic devices is convenient and useful, it is just not the same. Additionally, after spending prolonged periods on their devices for online work or classes, it made it difficult to turn to devices for downtime or seeing friends.

As a result of the pandemic, independent variables such as general anxiety, change in social life, isolation, depression, and academic pressures, all interacted with each other to influence and impact the state of my contributor's wellbeing and mental health. Unfortunately,

all of these issues were being dealt (or not dealt) with simultaneously. And to make it more complicated, my contributors had to work through these issues in relative or virtual isolation. As seen in the next section, a few contributors noted that they wanted to find resources to help themselves or others during the pandemic, but they found it difficult because of lack of representation and comfortability with the existing resources.

Part IV: Lack of Resources for Asians and Asian Americans

In the face of anti-Asian hate, violence, and stigma in the United States, it makes sense that there would be a movement towards Asian solidarity and community during COVID-19. In cities with larger Asian populations, they were able to band together and support each other. This is detailed by one contributor, who didn't find himself in a community, but knew of a friend that found one.

Yeah. Okay. Um, I'm relying on this New York friend I think from my answers, but he was telling me. Actually, he seems to have found a lot of Asian, Pacific Islanders, coalition groups that put up theater works. In a weird way, I guess, as a reaction to the spike in hate crime, you know, there has been some sort of, I don't know, attempt at creating stable environments for young Asians to express themselves. Yeah. (Zoombi)

While this is an intriguing and exemplary scenario in the midst of a pandemic, it was not necessarily a reality for a majority of Asians and Asian Americans. Especially in Ohio, where the Asian community is fairly unintegrated, there is a significant lack of support for individuals of AAPI identities.

When asking my contributors about their mental health during the pandemic, many contributors expressed that the pandemic had a negative impact. A few contributors went on to mention that they felt like they did not have adequate resources or support for Asian Americans during the pandemic. This could have added to the initial stresses of the pandemic.

One contributor shared that due to lack of representation in the mental health platform she was using, it was difficult to really connect and relate to the therapist they were talking to.

This is specifically seen here:

I had seen a counselor and stuff. [...] I just don't think we fit that well, but I've been trying to find a new one. Um, I was trying to get an Asian American therapist, but that's really hard to find in Ohio. When I was[00:05:00] looking it up on better health, And it was, not really people of color or , it was a demographic that I wasn't really interested in. (Naomi)

Administration doesn't really know what's going on, but they'll send you care package reports... and I think if there's anything about the way that my mental health has been treated by the school, I think it's that, it's not very clear what the reaction to central protocol [is] (Zoombi)

Without ways to cope and find support during the pandemic, this could have been a reason for many contributors as to why preexisting mental health issues were worsened or developed.

Aside from mental health, in light of anti-Asian hate, contributors found that there wasn't a clear response from the community, as seen here:

So, then she reported it to security. And then security never got back to her. (Naomi)

Scot Council--- they were not helping me at all. I was like trying to ask them about if they knew about any resources for Asian umm students on campus. And they were like, "um, we don't know any...." [...], and they didn't really offer to help me. (Sarah)

The previous quote was from a contributor who felt that there was a lack of support from peers and administration. After it was clear that no one was going to step in and offer to help, Sarah ended up reaching out to someone in administration, but they only said they would “get back to her” but never did. This led her to reach out to another administrative position, and then that person ended up talking with the President, and then the president sent out an email in support of Asians and Asian Americans during the pandemic. Which is a step, but without her initiative it

never would have happened. Sarah also recalls that no one really supported her throughout the process of finding a resource, or sense of support.

I shared the, like the screenshot of like Sarah Bolton sending out the email and they were like, oh, they just like, "hearted" it. But like throughout that whole time, I didn't have like any support from Scot Council. It was literally me [00:13:00] just doing everything. And then they didn't like, they didn't even know that I was doing this because they didn't really ask, or care. (Sarah)

Sarah's experience in initiating support and solidarity for AAPI individuals during the pandemic marks a clear parallel to the invisibility of Asians and Asian Americans in the United States, and specifically in Ohio.

As seen in the narratives of my fifteen contributors, COVID-19 has had a direct impact on Asians and Asian Americans in terms of experiencing anti-Asian rhetoric, increased stigma, declining mental and physical health, as well as revealing a severe lack of resources for AAPI individuals.

It isn't clear why Asian Americans and Asians have few outlets for support. Some of it may be because AAPI individuals are already minorities in Ohio, so there isn't a lot of support even from their own marginalized group. Another factor could be due to the idea that Asians and Asian Americans suffer from the model minority stereotype, so there is less visibility and recognition for anti-Asian hate and discrimination. Regardless of the reason, it is clear that direct action needs to be implemented to make sure that there is adequate support for AAPI individuals in the future. I will cover a few recommendations to promote a stronger initiative of support for Asians and Asian Americans in the following chapter.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of my study is to examine how racism and stigma during COVID-19 has impacted individuals of East Asian descent in Wooster, Ohio, and create visibility for their experiences and lived narratives. To analyze the impact that anti-Asian racism has had on Asian Americans and East Asians at The College of Wooster, I interviewed fifteen domestic and international “Asian” students and staff to learn about their lived experiences. After conducting interviews and analyzing their experiences, I was able to find common themes about how international and domestic individuals of East Asian descent understand their experiences with racism and stigma in the United States. Ultimately, the responses from my fifteen contributors provided a diverse range of themes. Contributors discussed their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. They shared both their experiences with racism and stigma, as well as the monumental shift in the routines, and how it negatively and positively impacted their mental health and general well-being. In this chapter, I will explain the implications of my research findings, discuss the limitations of my study, provide recommendations for future research, and express my final thoughts.

Limitations

It should be kept in mind that several limitations exist in my cross-sectional study. As mentioned in my methodology, qualitative research and ethnographic methods are deeply socially influenced, so it is impossible to garner their perspectives without influencing them with my own positionality, research design, and interpretation of their responses. Furthermore, the contributors themselves were selected partially out of convenience and social proximity. My study would have benefited from a wider variety of contributors. When conducting the interviews, my questions were somewhat rigid and did not allow for enough background

information to be captured. Doing so would allow me to tailor the interview questions to each interviewee and minimize any leading questions.

Another major limitation to conducting research with Asian and Asian-American individuals is the language barrier. All my interviews were conducted in English, even though many of my interviewees were not native English speakers and sometimes fully capture the nuance of my questions. In an ideal situation I would have interviewed in both Chinese and English or provided a list of questions in Chinese and translated responses later. However, my level of Chinese is not as proficient as I would like it to be, and further my advisor pointed out that my audience will mostly be English speakers so it would make more sense to interview people in English.

I would also like to note that during the editing and transcribing process, I cut out some pieces of the interviews that were lengthy, or when the contributor was saying things that were irrelevant, or if there was repetition. Looking back there should have been more consistency about what was kept in the transcriptions and what was omitted. Initially when people responded to things with just no, or it seemed like there wasn't a significant answer, I cut it out of the transcription to highlight other more compelling parts of the interview. In the future I won't omit any of the interviews.

Implications of Research Findings

In the past, Asian American visibility has been overlooked for a few reasons. First, Asian Americans have historically been one of the smallest populations in the United States, so people aren't as familiar with the kind of discrimination this group faces. Second, racism against Asian Americans and Asians has always been regarded as less severe in comparison to racism towards other ethnicities, and therefore, largely ignored, or unrecognized by

authorities. Third, when a hate incident occurs, Asian Americans are the least likely out of their counterparts to report incidents of hate (Yam 2021). This could be due to a variety of reasons, stemming from language barriers, general mistrust of authorities, as well as incidents of being an undocumented citizen so reporting would inherently put the individual in an even more delicate situation, and or may lead to even more hate.

Despite past Asian American invisibility, the pandemic has pushed anti-Asian racism to the forefront of the news and people are claiming to see a spike in anti-Asian hate crimes and violence. However, this spike is unprecedented, and it is unclear if it is solely due to the stigma from the pandemic, or if people have been experiencing hate crimes the entire time pre-COVID, but they weren't reporting it, or reporting it but not getting recognition for it. Either way, there is no way to know. Among my interviewees, a handful of them experienced anti-Asian hate, or knew of someone who had experienced it themselves. While other experienced no anti-Asian hate, or perhaps the question was not worded appropriately due to language barrier. However, among all my contributors, all were aware of the anti-Asian sentiment and discourse that existed among Americans.

The pandemic did not mark the beginning of anti-Asian hate, but rather only brought attention to a deep pattern of systemic racism that has long targeted Asians and Asian Americans. Although this demographic has historically been small, it is now considered to be the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States. "The Asian population in the U.S. grew by 35.5 percent over the past 10 years" (Yam 2021). With the growing Asian and Asian American population, this racism against Asians only increases if there are not efforts to mitigate it. While visibility of anti-Asian hate has increased during the pandemic, it alone is not enough to combat it. This study succeeds in bringing visibility to Asian experiences, but

as mentioned in the next section, there is still more to be done in order to mitigate anti-Asian hate.

Recommendations

As mentioned in the previous section, visibility for Asian Americans and Asians is not enough to combat anti-Asian hate and racism. Proactive steps need to be taken in order to mitigate anti-Asian hate, both nationally and locally. As seen in a few of my interviews, solidarity for Asian bodies is significantly lacking at The College of Wooster. The first recommendation regarding supporting Asians and Asian Americans is that our institution should specifically vet an Asian American and Asian counselor to talk to provide representation and support for Asian American and Asian students and staff at The College of Wooster. Furthermore, as seen in many of my interviews, language barrier is a significant aspect that should be addressed and taken into consideration. Receiving support in native languages will allow students to better express their experiences without having to translate them into English, and in turn receive support that better suits their needs.

Another recommendation that this study calls for is for the implementation of workshops on how to report hate crimes and racist behaviors. This is because several of my contributors mentioned that after experiencing anti-Asian hate, and racism, they did report it to security, because they felt that security would not take any action. Our college should also mandate curriculum changes so that people must take anti-racism classes and be exposed to the realities of anti-Asian hate.

Structurally there needs to be change in how hate crimes, and anti-Asian hate is addressed, both locally on campus and nationally. Locally, there needs to be a more organized system for reporting anti-Asian hate, with actual resolutions and mechanisms

for accountability. Nationally, the way that hate-crimes are defined and investigated needs to be changed and restructured, because many anti-Asian hate crimes go under the radar as general crimes and aren't identified as being racially motivated.

Final thoughts

While this research attempts to highlight the experiences of many Asian and Asian American students living in rural Ohio during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is by no means a conclusive study but rather a jumping off point for further research in the same vein.

The main themes that arose in my project were: anti-Asian hate and discrimination, physical health and mental health, and stigma about being Asian and Asian American during the pandemic. The most significant theme that stood out to me was the subtheme of identity. It directly related to my literature review in that it exposed the relationship of racial lumping. There are also two other significant themes, however they can be found on the digital archive. I would argue that any of the themes that arose in my project could be further explored as their own project. I also think that in future projects it would be interesting to look at anti-Asian hate pre-COVID to see if there has been a spike or not.

Even though my study may not have an extraordinary number of contributors or an exceptionally solid theoretical base, it showcases fifteen unique stories from fifteen unique individuals. The fact that these fifteen contributors were open and willing enough to share their stories with me was incredible. My hope is that any continuations of this project will contribute to a network of solidarity, familiarity, and further visibility and support for the Asian community at The College of Wooster and beyond.

Chapter VI : Digital Archive

To access the digital archive follow this link: <https://lianglij.weebly.com/>
Homepage (preview)



WELCOME TO

The past 2-3 years of the pandemic through the lens of Asian and Asian American college students and staff, at the College of Wooster. With some contributors from outside the school.

The purpose of this website is to document the experiences of both domestic and international students and staff of East Asian and Southeast Asian descent, specifically in light of Anti-Asian racism and hate. The hope is that through sharing these unique experiences, people will not only be able to see similarities in their own experience during the pandemic, but they will also gain insight on the realities COVID-19's stigma in relation to Asians and Asian American's, especially in light of it being referred to as a "Chinese virus" by the former president.

You can find these stories under the "Interviews" tab.

The interviews are listed from longest to shortest duration. If you're looking to find stories that mention specific topics, search for said topic in the search bar.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything you find on this website, please contact me at ljiang22@wooster.edu.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

Impact of racism during the COVID-19 pandemic on Asian and Asian American students and staff of East Asian descent in the United States and abroad.

Principal Investigator: Liang Jiang, Department of Chinese Studies

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a research study where the main purpose is to analyze and document your experience as an Asian American business owner / worker in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to understand how racism has affected Asian Americans' experience during this period of time. Your story will also be saved in an online archive for public use.

Procedures

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to discuss your experience during the time between March 15th 2019 to the present. You may request to access the interview questions beforehand, and during the interview you do not have to answer any question you do not wish to respond to. The interview will then be slightly edited, (for long pauses, background noise, etc) and uploaded to a public online archive.

You may choose if you like your interview to be shared with audio, or without. Interviews will either be virtually conducted on Zoom, phone call, or in person, abiding by COVID-19 safety protocols. **Each interview will take around 10-15 minutes to complete.**

Risks

Some people that participate in this study may become upset remembering tragic or personally troubling aspects of the pandemic. You are not required to share these aspects of your story. These interviews will also be published in an online database, so if you decide to share your name, it will be accessible online. Only your first name will be provided. You can choose to be anonymous, and your name can be changed.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for your participation. An indirect benefit is that we may learn about your experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic and advocate for social justice in Asian and Asian American communities in the United States.

Compensation

There is no monetary compensation for this study. However, at your request you will be provided with the link to the website.

Confidentiality

Your recording will remain available to the public online. Only your first name will be provided. If you decide to participate anonymously, your name will be changed. You will be provided information on how to access this database once it has been constructed. If you would like to have your information removed from the site, you may contact me, and I will delete the recording. Unique names will be stored on a password-protected Microsoft Word file. This file will be destroyed once all data is collected. Audio recordings will be stored securely on a password-protected computer. The unedited audio recordings and select transcripts will be destroyed after the conclusion of the study.

Costs

There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure described above.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may refuse to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind about being in the study and withdraw at any point during the interview.

Questions

If you have any questions, please ask me. If you have additional questions later, you can contact me by email at ljjiang22@wooster.edu . You may also contact my advisor, Ziying You, at zyou@wooster.edu.

Consent

Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research subject, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age.

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

You will be provided a copy of this form.

Appendix B: Interview Questions 采访问题

1. Do you want to use your real name or stay anonymous?
2. What year are you?
1. How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?
2. Did you ever get sick during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. How did people treat you when you were sick, or experiencing cold symptoms?
3. How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19? (i.e. wearing gloves, masking, social distancing? Loss of job?)
4. In what ways was your health + mental health + social life affected during COVID-19?
5. How has COVID-19 impacted the way that you treat others, when meeting new people?
6. What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19 if any?
7. What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?
8. How did you overcome it? Or What changes were made to cope/ adapt?
9. Do you know any friends who have the same experience as you?
10. How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?
11. Have you had any negative experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic?
12. Have you, or anyone you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID-19?

(This includes verbal, physical, intimidation etc.)
13. During the pandemic, what did you learn?
14. In the future, if there is another pandemic, what kind of advice would you give people?
15. Is there anything else you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

Appendix C: Intro Blurb Email

Hello all,

Thank you so much for participating in my IS and allowing me to interview you. I am reaching out a second time, because I am currently putting together "bios" for the website. Please send me your responses by Thursday March 10th, at 2pm. I need them as soon as possible to complete my [website](#).

Please respond to this email with as much information as you are comfortable sharing.

Your name (Can be pseudonym)

Pronouns (eg, She/Her/Hers)

Year in school (Eg, class of 2022)

major/minor (Eg. Environmental Science, English minor)

Your hometown (Eg, Minnesota, USA)

A picture of yourself (optional)

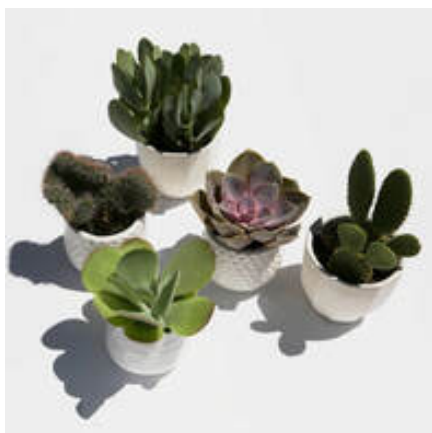
***If you are sending a photo yourself, please also sign the Media Release Form attached to this email.

A picture of your favorite animal favorite or food. (Eg. Sushi, Eg. Capybara)

Any other thoughts you think would be relevant to introduce yourself (Eg. I am from a big city.

I live with a lot of family members. My favorite hobby is biking.)

Bio examples: <https://lianglij.weebly.com/interviews.html>



INTERVIEWS

Naomi (She/Her) Hi, you can call me Naomi. I am Class of 2023 with Anthropology Major, at the College of Wooster. I am from Ohio. During the pandemic I enjoyed making baked goods with family (mainly...
lianglij.weebly.com

□

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out. I look forward to hearing from you!

Best,
Liang

Appendix D: Transcriptions

Alicia

Feb 19, 2022

[00:00:00] Liang: Okay. So the first question is, do you want to use your real name or stay anonymous?

[00:00:06] Alicia: Oh, you can use my real name.

[00:00:07] Liang: The second question is how has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:13] Alicia: I've been met with a lot of racism on and off campus and actually back home-- home for me is Chicago, which is very diverse. So it was very interesting to see racism even back home... Because I always figured racism is more of a rural issue?

[00:00:28] Liang: Right.

[00:00:29] Alicia: No, it is not... No, unfortunately, it is not. Um, I've been treated very differently.. Sometimes like when I go shopping, I have people-- inch away from me and stuff like that. And I've had people say and throw things at me? So, yeah, it's-- it's been a wild pandemic. I can go into further detail. It's --it's nutty.

[00:00:49] Liang: So, did you ever get sick during the pandemic? And it could just be cold or....

[00:00:54] Alicia: I did. No. I got COVID twice.

[00:00:56] Liang: Really?

[00:00:56] Alicia: Okay so my --just background-- I'm not like a party person. [00:01:00] Just get that on record. It---I wasn't me going, maskless drinking or whatever. My dad's job requires him to fix-- he's basically an engineer. He fixes heating and cooling systems for houses and institutions and like-- nursery homes was a big hotspot for COVID.

[00:01:15] Liang: Yeah.

[00:01:15] Alicia: And he went to a nursing home and we assumed he got it from there. This was when it first broke out. Like late May is when my family got sick. And then I got sick again winter break actually with, um, the really contagious one over winter break.

[00:01:30] Liang: The Delta one, or the Omicron?

[00:01:32] Alicia: Omicron probably? It was very contagious though. But to be fair, for undisclosed reasons, I had to stay in the hospital for 13 hours-- to wait on a relative. So it's likely I caught it there and not from like-- running around. I was in the waiting room, so.

[00:01:49] Liang: Aww. That's a long time!

[00:01:53] Alicia: Yeah.

[00:01:53] Liang: Um, so how did people treat you when you had COVID or when you were sick?

[00:01:58] Alicia: Um, actually, I didn't tell a lot of [00:02:00] people because I was scared people would judge me, but I told some of my close friends and they were like, "what happened dude-- are you okay?" And I had to explain, no, I wasn't running around to the streets skipping "I want COVID" without a mask. No. I got it from my family, cause my dad is the one who also makes all our meals and stuff, so he's our indirect contact with like everything my family-- consumes.

[00:02:22] Liang: How would you say your job was impacted during COVID?.

[00:02:26] Alicia: I only worked on campus. Uh, the pandemic overall ruined a lot of things cause we all had to go back home spring of sophomore year, so I didn't work that shift obviously. And actually when I got back to campus junior year, I only stayed for three months because I was very paranoid about catching COVID, having already had it and seeing people in my dorm not know how to act.

[00:02:50] Liang: Yeah, which dorm was that?

[00:02:52] Alicia: It was Holden. Holden is one of the biggest dorms. So yeah I-- I went back home.

[00:02:57] Liang: In what ways would you say your health [00:03:00] and mental health slash social life was affected?

[00:03:03] Alicia: My mental health has definitely plummeted down a lot, because--- my anxiety went up, this might be very personal as-- I take melatonin to sleep, because I wake up five times in the middle of the night. Cause my stress levels were that high, I can't explain what it was. Maybe it was the fact that, um, COVID is really scary. A lot of people I knew were getting sick left and right.

[00:03:26] But also, um, there were a lot of just crazy happenings happening-- specifically in Chicago. Like, correct me if I'm wrong, but George Floyd's murder was around that spring of sophomore year. And a lot of people took advantage of the BLM protests and were wreaking havoc in Chicago. So that also scared me, cause I'd see people say on social media, "this side of Chicago is going to burn," and stuff like that. It was very overwhelming.

[00:03:51] Also, being a remote student was not fun, very draining and tiring. I was socially distant from a lot of my [00:04:00] friends..... pun intended, but I felt disconnected from a lot of my friend groups, and when I was back on campus it was weird. So that would definitely be something to note.

[00:04:10] Liang: How would you say COVID has impacted the way that you meet new people or the way you treat other people now?

[00:04:17] Alicia: I treat people the same, but also I take high notice if you're racist-- cause I don't let that fly. An example would be over the summer. I was hanging out with my friend Jeong, who was a Korean immigrant. She had a friend who was south Asian, and would make COVID jokes as we were in Chinatown. And I said, "if you don't stop, I'm going to punch you." And he thought I--, he thought I was kidding. So when I smacked him, he's like, "what are you doing?" I'm like, "you're being racist in Chinatown dude?" That doesn't make any sense. I can't-- I never tolerated racism at all to begin with, but it got very heightened, like my intolerance has heightened since then.

[00:04:59] Liang: What kind of [00:05:00] changes in lifestyle. Did you make, since COVID-19, if any?

[00:05:05] Alicia: I'm close to my parents, like if COVID has taught me anything, it's to be thankful for what you have and what you could lose easily. Like my parents and I -- our relationship got stronger. Also, what else would I say....? Habits? Life is very unpredictable, so don't be scared about getting what you want to get if you--- shoot your shot. It's like not even romantically, but like, if you want to get a job, go for it. If you want to like go do something, go for it. Don't limit yourself. That's something definitely.

[00:05:35] Liang: That's good!

[00:05:36] Alicia: Yeah. [laughs].

[00:05:38] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of

COVID-19

[00:05:44] Alicia: A big thing would be identity and racism. Because I'm adopted-- I was adopted when I was like one and a half. So my cultural identity is more American than anything. So I was seeing people being racist towards me on the basis of my ethnicity is like-- [00:06:00] kind of a double whammy. It's like, number one, I'm not like from China, but even then, if I was what gives you the right to be racist and rude to me?

[00:06:08] But it also really dug at my Chinese-- or lack of-- Chinese identity. So that kind of sucked. .

[00:06:14] Liang: That's really well put. I never thought about it like that before. The next question is how would you say you overcame it or like-- in what ways did you cope? Um, with facing racism ?

[00:06:25] Alicia: I had a good support of friends. Like-- I'm the president of Asia club, or former president at least cause we had elections and everything. I grew closer to those people because we all have similar backgrounds. At least--- they understand Anti- Asian racism from a way that someone as a White person can't understand or another POC can't-- cause each type of racism is different and distinct versus like anti-black racism or anti brown racism. It's very just-- we have a very distinct position because we're like model minorities, and we're like the butt of [00:07:00] jokes and stuff like that-- versus being outwardly like rude and awful. So I don't know, it was easy to bond over those types of experiences.

[00:07:08] Liang: How would you say that your attitude about COVID 19 has changed over time?

[00:07:13] Alicia: Like my overall attitude, or my attitude towards COVID?

[00:07:16] Liang: It could be both.

[00:07:18] Alicia: I am--- more mellowed out, I guess, by COVID, but I'm still stressed out if that makes sense? Like my outlook in life is way more mellow, but COVID still has me really stressed. My parents are older, so it stresses me out a lot.

[00:07:34] Liang: Are they both working or?

[00:07:35] Alicia: Yeah, they both work, but also-- I was always terrified of planes, but being on a plane now is-- like a hundred times scarier.

[00:07:44] I have a story. I worked in retail over the summer, and we mandate, you have to ask them the store. This woman was a nurse. She literally had a nurses outfit, and my boss asks her, "Hey, ma'am why aren't you wearing a mask?" and she's like, "the masks don't do anything, I'm probably already [00:08:00] exposed." I'm like, "then why are you here? Why are you here? Why are you not masked?" I was like, bro??? Thank God my manager was taking care of it, cause I was like sweating in the background-- I was like, [sighs] wheeeew no.

[00:08:14] People are insane. You still have people denying COVID as they're on their death beds in hospitals. No, it's incredible because I know--- it wasn't Cleveland, it was a big city with a "C", not Chicago though. The hospitals are running out of room for like long-terms, patients who have surgery--- stuff like that because these idiots are not wearing their mask. Respectfully if they don't wear a mask for a different reason, you can defend yourself. But if you can, you should.

[00:08:41] It's the bare minimum thing to do-- in a pandemic. I don't know. I'm just so mad at how dumb people are.

[00:08:50] Liang: Have you had any negative experiences during (the pandemic)-- in relation to racism?

[00:08:56] Alicia: During the pandemic?

[00:08:57] Liang: Yeah.

[00:08:58] Alicia: I actually had four on campus [00:09:00] last semester. And before when I was on campus at least like five.

[00:09:06] Liang: Oh my god..

[00:09:07] Alicia: Yeah. Um, to be fair, we're in a predominately White school, around a White community, but it doesn't give them the licensure to be racist and rude? So, when COVID first started back when it was like March and everyone was like, "oh, it might be real. It might be not. It might be just an issue with Europe and Asia," and we were like la-da-da-da-da.... My friend and I, we went to-- we were in a suburb of Chicago. We went to a mall, and I was ordering my McDonald's, the cashier who was taking my order, raised up the collar of her t-shirt up to her face--- up to her nose-- as she was taking my order.

[00:09:44] Liang: What?

[00:09:45] Alicia: And I was like, bruh?? But also, my friend and her sister are Hispanic, but they're White-passing, when they took [said] their orders, she did not do the same thing. It was only for me because I'm Asian.

[00:09:58] Liang: Oh my god-- that's horrible.

[00:09:59] Alicia: Yeah. And I was like, [00:10:00] "dude, what??" So----- and then as we were leaving the mall the same day, people were walking past me and going [coughing noises] "COVID," and saying stuff like that. And I was like----- I wanted to cry because I'm like, bro??

[00:10:15] And another incident-- I think we went to, it was Applebee's or something like that? I forgot. We went to like a little restaurant in the greater Wooster community, and I'm just chilling there. And I sense someone like staring at me, you know like you can sense people just looking at you-- you get like all antsy? This older White man was glaring at me. And I'm like, are you angry because like, I'm just existing? I'm like, why is he mad at me? Am I doing something wrong? And I'm like, it's cause I'm Asian. I was the only Asian person there and my anxiety got really bad cause sometimes like, I need a fidget-- like I itch.... I got really itchy and my friend was like, "what's wrong?" I'm like, "nothing's wrong... we could talk when we're done with dinner...."

[00:10:54] Um, and then in Chicago, I've had [00:11:00] people spit at me.

[00:11:01] Liang: What?

[00:11:02] Alicia: Yeah, like spit at me and say, "Go back to---" a lot of racist--- I'm not going to say the slur but they said like stuff like, "go back to China-- you filthy C-word." Um, a lot of really negative things.

[00:11:13] I've had people throw-- like flick cigarette butts at me...

[00:11:16] Liang: What?

[00:11:17] Alicia: Yeah, and I got scared cause my hair is already bad from bleach, but like-- I've had people throw beer cans at me....

[00:11:24] Liang: And was it, which part of Chicago?

[00:11:25] Alicia: This was in Chicago-- um, just late at night. I don't know. No, but the Chinatown in Chicago, we have two, they got [raised...?] And a lot of businesses went out of business because of that.

[00:11:38] And what else? Um, the last semester... I was walking down Beall (main street on College of Wooster campus) going towards Babcock because I was having a meeting and I distinctly remember it wasn't even like 7:30 it was like literally, 7:20, or 6:20, something like

that, and this car slows down, unrolls the window and goes, "you filthy fucking--", excuse me, and then [00:12:00] I--- I had my airpods in, so I was like, "what....??" And I keep walking, but I got really sad. And also, um, I've had cars-- cause I work late at night-- cause Campus Access, sometimes, I'll have cars stop and like yell stuff at me. Maybe this isn't racially charged, but it's like creepily slow their car down and just watch me walk--- and it's like, dude??

[00:12:23] And then last semester I distinctly remember, um, there was a frat party going on and at the frat party some guy said, "look at that fucking...", um, He said, something like, "F the Asian one or the C one...". And I was like, in what context?? But whatever context it is not okay to say that. And I looked around, and I was the only Asian one, so I was like, sweating. These are also people on campus, by the way. Like our age.

[00:12:45] Liang: That's terrible.

[00:12:46] Alicia: Yeah. I was like bruv.....?? That's not it... But the worst part is like, I don't report any of it to security because---... there's nothing you can do.

[00:12:56] Liang: That sounds horrible.

[00:12:57] Alicia: Yeah. I mean, [00:13:00] honestly, this is kind of bad to say, but I feel like my experiences in comparison to actual Chinese international students---- is not as bad because-- I remember-- Do you remember Coco? Coco used to tell me, um, or at least remember when we had the March for our lives? And Coco would tell me that--- people would say horrible things to Coco, who was, a Chinese international student. And be like "go back to--,, go back to China" and Coco was like, I can't go cause the borders are closed and I'm scared for my family. Like, that's even, that's even worse. I can't imagine that.

[00:13:31] Liang: That's horrible.

[00:13:32] Alicia: Yeah. Sorry for going on a tangent, but like..... I'm also sorry for cursing. Just put little star star stars.

[00:13:40] Liang: Okay, I will. That's.... yeah.

[00:13:43] Alicia: Yeah, it's nutty.. Have you experienced any racism?

[00:13:46] Liang: I mean, I feel like during the beginning of COVID, when I went back home, there was a little bit, but it wasn't anything explicit. It was more like-- I just remember I was walking down the street and like this, family was walking towards me and [00:14:00] they just were giving me these weird looks. And I went to the other side of the street,

[00:14:02] Alicia: So it was more like passive racism,

[00:14:04] Liang: Yeah. So I don't know, they just looked angry. Cause you know when it's like one of those things where you expect someone to move, but like they were not moving and---

[00:14:10] Alicia: Ohhh-- that's like establishing dominance. So like-- ewww.

[00:14:14] Liang: I literally went to the side of the road.

[00:14:15] Alicia: I'm sorry. That sucks.

[00:14:17] Liang: Yeah, it was just weird. I mean-- at the time, I didn't even think about it like that.

[00:14:19] Alicia: A lot of experiences, at least I had during the beginning of the pandemic, I was like, why are you being rude to me? What did I do? But it's like, it's not me. It's you! You're racist.

[00:14:30] Liang: So you touched on this before, but just to reiterate, um, during the pandemic, what did you learn?.

[00:14:39] Alicia: I learned to not tolerate anyone else's hatred and to not let that hatred spread. But I also learned to value the people I have in my life, and to not waste my time, like use my time wisely.

[00:14:55] Liang: And then if someone is going through a pandemic in the future-- assuming this one ends-- [00:15:00]

[00:15:00] Alicia: Hopefully...

[00:15:00] Liang: Yeah, please. Um, what advice would you give for them-- *to them?

[00:15:05] Alicia: I would say, don't be afraid to reach out to people if you need help. Like a lot of the issues with the pandemic is that mental health is like plummeting and don't be afraid of-- don't, don't go to any last resorts, like talk to someone, cause especially for me, this pandemic has just [puffing noise], it's really bad to my mental health, but I finally have someone to talk to besides my friends, like an actual person, like a therapist. It's been helping me a lot.

[00:15:31] Don't be afraid to use resources, and don't be ashamed of what you're going through or how you're experiencing anything because you're only human and you internalize and you adapt and that's the only thing you can really do.

[00:15:42] Liang: Um, and then, is there anything else you find important that you want to share that wasn't asked in the interview?

[00:15:50] Alicia: Yeah. If you see someone being racist to someone else and you don't---- step in or intervene, you're [00:16:00] just as racist as the person who is saying the things. Like you can't be a bystander. That's what I have to say.

[00:16:06] Liang: Um, that concludes our interview. Thank you so much.

Anna

Feb 20, 2022 (WARNING: mention of death)

[00:00:00] Liang: Okay, so we'll use your real name. So this is Anna's interview. And the first slash second question is how has COVID impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:11] Anna: People treat me? COVID-19.

[00:00:17] Liang: So like maybe before COVID people are more friendly or maybe they're more friendly after COVID

[00:00:25] Anna: No, no.

[00:00:30] Liang: So it hasn't impacted how people -- people treat you the same?

[00:00:32] Anna: Yeah, I'm same.

[00:00:35] Liang: Sorry. Oh, did you ever get sick during the pandemic? And it could be just getting a cold or getting

[00:00:43] Anna: No

[00:00:44] Liang: You didn't get sick?

[00:00:45] Anna: Yes.

[00:00:47] Liang: Um--, how would you say your job was impacted during COVID?

[00:00:53] Anna: My work? My work at Wooster? Oh, [00:01:00] my, you know, I think, uh, my work for [this part left untranscribed] everything's very safe, you know, at my work, [left untranscribed]. Yeah. We-- you know we get [untranscribed] keep us mask-- every single, every single hours. Yeah

[00:01:28] Liang: Besides mask everything else is kind of the same?

[00:01:30] Anna: Yes. .

[00:01:31] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health slash social life affected during COVID-19?

[00:01:42] Anna: My house?

[00:01:43] Liang: Mhmm,

[00:01:43] Anna: Oh my house is uh --

[00:01:45] Liang: Oh, health. Health

[00:01:46] Anna: Health? My health? Oh my health is pretty good.

[00:01:52] Liang: Pretty good? [laughing] [part left untranscribed]]

[00:01:55] Anna: I never-- I never get, uh, sick, you know?

[00:01:59] Liang: You [00:02:00] never got sick. That's good! That's really good.

[00:02:02] Anna: Yeah.

[00:02:02] Liang: Um, would you say that your social life was impacted-- like before COVID?

[00:02:08] Anna: Before?

[00:02:10] Liang: Was it different than it is now or---

[00:02:12] Anna: I think not.

[00:02:12] Liang: --what kind of changes?

[00:02:15] Anna: I think not, not different, but I feel-- I feel different only---- for my life, you know? I have some different have changed. You know if-- okay, so if I want [to go] back [to] China, I can't, I can't go, because.... China's closing -- now ---

[00:02:38] Liang: Yeah.

[00:02:39] Anna: So it's, it's a big difference-- for me -- you know?

[00:02:43] Liang: How long has it been since you've been back there?

[00:02:46] Anna: Uh, three..... three years.

[00:02:49] Liang: Three years?

[00:02:50] Anna: Yep.

[00:02:51] Liang: Oh my god. That's a long time. How has COVID-19 impacted the way that you meet new people or like [00:03:00] you treat other people in your life?

[00:03:01] Anna: I only meet two. My husband family you know. Cause I don't have, I don't have friend over here.

[00:03:09] Liang: You don't have friends over here? Oh no! What?. Um, but you said your husband is he-- in China?

[00:03:19] Anna: No.

[00:03:20] Liang: Or is he here?.

[00:03:20] Anna: Him from here. From Wooster.

[00:03:23] Liang: Oh, he's from Wooster?

[00:03:24] Anna: Mhmm.

[00:03:24] Liang: Whoa. That's crazy.

[00:03:25] Anna: So why I come here-- cause him, and, him uh, parent is old. And him-- him father is a-- ninety old years.

[00:03:39] Liang: So is he like taking care of them?

[00:03:41] Anna: Yeah. them-- they just, oh, he, come here just only for-- take care of- to them. Yeah.

[00:03:49] Liang: Um, What kind of changes in lifestyle. Did you make since COVID, if any?

[00:03:57] Anna: Oh, [00:04:00] you say, after COVID-19? I think [untranscribed] nothing. Nothing to me I think, you know, nothing, not have different, big different just sometimes little small you know, of difference.

[00:04:19] Liang: Did you talk to your family a lot?

[00:04:22] Anna: Oh yeah, I called, I was called my family-- you know, maybe.... every week, every weeks,

[00:04:31] Liang: Every week

[00:04:31] Anna: Yeah, I will call them every.

[00:04:33] Liang: Do you call -- like FaceTime or just call--?

[00:04:37] Anna: Oh-- Chinese WeChat you know?

[00:04:39] Liang: WeChat? Oh WeChat.

[00:04:40] Anna: Yeah.

[00:04:41] Liang: Um, what would you say was the biggest challenge that you faced- during the course of COVID-19?

[00:04:49] Anna: Chan--. How-- how let me say?

[00:04:57] Liang: Like [00:05:00] 最大的问题。。。的 COVID-19.

[00:05:02] Anna: Okay. Okay. Let me think. Ah, maybe problem. Bigger problem from I can't back to China, this [left part untranscribed] I-- only this, you know. If, you know, if we, if not, when, when, uh, if everything is okay, if uh, COVID-19 don't come here, don't come in this world. I-- I can go to China. And I come back here and go-- when I like, if I like-- I want to go and come back. But now I can't. I can't go back to China--

[00:05:39] Liang: You can't go back to China....

[00:05:41] Anna: Which make me sad.. Yeah?.

[00:05:42] Liang: It makes you sad-- oh no!

[00:05:44] Anna: You know, my friend, my family, my friends..... all at China,

[00:05:50] Liang: They're all in China.

[00:05:51] Anna: Yeah.

[00:05:53] Liang: Okay. So you said your biggest challenge was probably not being able to go back to China. Um, and how would you say [00:06:00] that you-- what, like, how did you cope with that? With not being able to go back?

[00:06:06] Anna: To go to back from China? Oh, I think maybe couple-- couple months.

[00:06:14] Liang: Couple months..... No-- okay, they're like, uh, [long, long, pause] like, so like, "how did you cope" is like “你。。。你有----“

[00:06:29] Anna: [untranscribed]

[00:06:30] Liang: Cope is like--- "你用什么, 改变的。。。“

[00:06:33] Anna: Change?

[00:06:34] Liang: Yeah.

[00:06:35] Anna: 为什么改变 [why change?]

[00:06:35] Liang: 你有什么改变 [you have a change] ---因为你 [because you] uh, 不能回在 [can't return to ...]

[00:06:38] Anna: 中国? [China?]

[00:06:42] Liang: 中国。 Yeah

[00:06:45] Anna: Oh. 不能回中国, 什么改变? Mmm I think.... I think, uh, nothing for me, but I just, I just only only a little sad. You know?

[00:06:57] Liang: A little sad? Oh no.

[00:06:58] Anna: I really, I miss China.

[00:06:59] Liang: Mmm.

[00:06:59] Anna: Miss [00:07:00] it. I miss my friends and, my family, and I miss-- miss Chinese foods. Oh my God.

[00:07:07] Liang: What's your favorite Chinese food?

[00:07:10] Anna: [Laughs]. I like Chin-- uh, Chinese. I don't know how to speak--- uh speak English for... that.

[00:07:20] Liang: That's okay.

[00:07:22] Anna: Uh, [long pause] some fish. Seared fish.

[00:07:29] Liang: Ohh,,

[00:07:30] Anna: and uh, mmm, and uh, [long pause] shrimps?

[00:07:37] Liang: Shrimp!

[00:07:38] Anna: China-- yeah, shrimp. And that is very good-- I like [something] shrimp. I like fish, uh, I like too many [laughs] I can't speak-- too many for that's Chinese.

[00:07:50] Liang: How would you say that your attitude about COVID has changed over time?

[00:07:57] Anna: Oh, you know it's uh, I [00:08:00] just feel really [is?]. Some stuff is-- it is differenter than before.

[00:08:07] Liang: Like what?

[00:08:08] Anna: Before when COVID-19 come, you know, like..... I-- I don't want to keep mask. See? Now I will keep mask-- one week ago I said that, when I get to work I need to keep mask. [long pause]. Too many things I think. And yeah, before I was very scary, you know?

[00:08:30] Liang: Scared?

[00:08:31] Anna: Yeah, scared.. Uh, oh, yeah. my, my, my-----, coworker--- somebody had get.

[00:08:39] Liang: Oh they got it?

[00:08:39] Anna: COVID-19. Yeah

[00:08:42] Liang: You said your home is Wuhan right?

[00:08:45] Anna: Yes.

[00:08:45] Liang: So how would you say your family was affected-- since they were there during--

[00:08:51] Anna: Wuhan?

[00:08:52] Liang: --The initial outbreak.

[00:08:54] Anna: Outbreak?

[00:08:56] Liang: Mhmm. Of COVID.

[00:08:58] Anna: Oh.....

[00:08:59] Liang: Were they [00:09:00] affected?

[00:09:01] Anna: I don't know, but my family and my friends called me from [left untranscribed].

[00:09:09] Liang: What was it like for them to be there?

[00:09:11] Anna: To be [left untranscribed]?

[00:09:13] Liang: When it was closed and....

[00:09:16] Anna: Aww I want to talk to my..... When that hard year come-- has come.... My friend, him is --- my, my good friend. my--- I just-- my my good friend. Him from ... him is from China, Wuhan. And, uh, him, uh, was a actor.

[00:09:43] Liang: Actor? Oh!

[00:09:43] Anna: For TV.

[00:09:45] Liang: Oh, cool!

[00:09:45] Anna: Yeah. So we was work together, you know, before.... And, um in that year 2--, 2000, 19-- 19 years?

[00:09:59] Liang: [00:10:00] Mhmm.

[00:10:00] Anna: Him was dead--

[00:10:02] Liang: [Gasp].

[00:10:02] Anna: Because COVID-19

[00:10:04] Liang: No--

[00:10:05] Anna: You know? We was uh talk call to each other when China's uh Happy New Year come, you know?

[00:10:13] Liang: Oh no.

[00:10:13] Anna: So-- and after.... him dead, [left untranscribed], you know? First him family-- for him.... father, the father..... get COVID-19... Maybe two weeks-- after two weeks.... him father dead.

[00:10:33] Liang: No---

[00:10:34] Anna: Yeah, and, uh, maybe after 10 days? Him mother get COVID 19. Dead! And uh after two weeks---- my friend have uh, get like COVID-19. And him wife have it, get the COVID-19 and after maybe, probably two [00:11:00] weeks. My friend died, and after her,

[00:11:02] Liang: Oh my god

[00:11:04] Anna: Her sister get COVID-19, and died too. So his whole family-- all family done. It's very sad. You know, my friend talked to me and I have ask, uh, have many news talk about this stor[y], this these things? See. I can't believe [left untranscribed]. I was really-- I can't. I can't even believe a lot, you know? So I just---- I want to saw sure-- make sure? Ask, uh, Google, uh, Google on the Chinese, Baidu, you know? And I look-- news was true.

[00:11:45] Liang: Was true. No--.

[00:11:47] Anna: [left untranscribed] maybe, maybe, uh, maybe three [left untranscribed]. So, so. His whole family, everybody dead.

[00:11:58] Liang: That's crazy though.

[00:11:59] Anna: [left [00:12:00] untranscribed] I think maybe from China, uh, Happy New Year?

[00:12:05] Liang: Happy new-- yeah--

[00:12:06] Anna: because everybody [left untranscribed], each other. I think because him, father get COVID-19, and have to go to hospital, their so him need take a care for him.

[00:12:19] Liang: Oh--

[00:12:19] Anna: I think

[00:12:20] Liang: and that's how he---

[00:12:20] Anna: yeah. So his family only have four person

[00:12:26] Liang: oh my goodness.

[00:12:27] Anna: Four person all done [left untranscribed] I can't believe, you know?

[00:12:31] Liang: That's horrible! After hearing that, were you scared for your parents and like your brother? You said you have a brother?

[00:12:36] Anna: Oh yeah, my brother and my [left untranscribed] were safe, you know?

[00:12:40] Liang: They were safe??

[00:12:41] Anna: Yeah, them sa-- very safe. Oh [left untranscribed]. Yeah, I was so scary for them. [left untranscribed] It's good. I just think about my friend from Wuhan, you know? [left untranscribed] TV. We work together. [00:13:00]

[00:13:00] Liang: You were in TV, too?

[00:13:02] Anna: Yeah..

[00:13:02] Liang: Wow! You're both actors?

[00:13:04] Anna: Oh yeah.

[00:13:05] Liang: That's so cool! Which TV?

[00:13:09] Anna: [Untranscribed] Chinese TV-- maybe you live and not see... Too many TV you know?

[00:13:14] Liang: Ahh that's so cool though! Wow.

[00:13:16] Anna: So, we work uh, Wuhan for [left untranscribed] TV, and, uh, and begin we make movie, you know, we was work together each other. We're good friend, and him dead

[00:13:33] Liang: Oh no--, so--

[00:13:34] Anna: This is so sad--

[00:13:35] Liang: That's horrible.

[00:13:36] Anna: Mmm. [long pause] I just think everything come... back to before you know..... Right?

[00:13:48] Liang: [laughing] [left untranscribed] It's okay..

[00:13:51] Anna: I don't, I don't want to [left untranscribed] about COVID-19 every day, yeah? That's [00:14:00] not good.. I just like easy life.

[00:14:02] Liang: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:14:04] Anna: I like-- a life easy. Everything easy. I don't like-- I don't like hard things and hard life, because COVID-19 make everybody feel hard.

[00:14:18] Liang: Hm.

[00:14:18] Anna: Life-- in life. In this life--

[00:14:22] Liang: So you want things to go back to normal?

[00:14:25] Anna: Yes... yeah. I wish... right. How about you, too huh?

[00:14:33] Liang: Yes! Um, so if the pandemic ends, but then there's another pandemic, what advice would you give to someone who's going.

[00:14:46] Anna: Give some-- someone? In here? In Wooster?

[00:14:52] Liang: It could be in Wooster. It could be.... just in general, wherever they're living.

[00:14:59] Anna: I don't [00:15:00] know, here. [laughing]. I, I don't, I don't have, I don't know how do I... how, how about I -- we do not..... I don't know.

[00:15:14] [laughing].

[00:15:15] Liang: That's fine. Uh, oh, okay. Um, is there anything else that you find important that you want to share that wasn't asked? Like, is there anything else you want to talk about that you think is relevant to the interview?

[00:15:32] Anna: Hmmm.....

[00:15:33] Liang: [Laughing] No? Okay. That's fine. Then that concludes our interview. Thank you so much.

[00:15:39] Anna: You welcome.

Sarah

Dec 8, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: So did you ever get sick during the COVID-19 pandemic?

[00:00:04] Sarah: Yes. I got really sick. I was like stuck in bed for like two weeks. I got a COVID test and it came back negative, but like, I had a really high fever and I like couldn't move.

[00:00:18] Liang: Oh, no.

[00:00:18] Sarah: No, I didn't have a high fever-- I had a flu before in January, but I had like a low fever, but like I had like light sensitivity and stuff. So I like missed like two weeks or something of school. Yeah. This is like right before. It closed or was it after... It was after, so we were already in quarantine and then like I missed two weeks of school.

[00:00:43] Liang: Okay. So how did people treat you when you were sick?

[00:00:46] Sarah: Yeah, so I was just like home for two weeks, so I wasn't really interacting with people, but like my classmates yeah they were just like supportive over like zoom and stuff or like, yeah.

[00:00:58] Liang: [00:01:00] Um, how has your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:01:04] Sarah: I didn't-- I was--- I don't know, I wasn't working, so it wasn't impacted.

[00:01:10] Liang: Um, in what ways was your health and mental health affected during COVID-19?

[00:01:15] Sarah: Um, it was really difficult because like, I was just like, by myself. Um, also like I'm an only child, so I don't have siblings. So I was just like really by myself, um, in-- at home. So I was sad...

[00:01:29] Liang: Awww [laughing]

[00:01:30] Sarah: haha okay okay

[00:01:32] Liang: Oh, how has your social life impacted that? COVID-19 and that could be even now too.

[00:01:38] Sarah: Yeah. Um, it was really difficult cause like you couldn't see your friends and like, you just wanted to like hang out with them. But all you had is like social media or like texting and like that isn't the same. And then coming to college during like the pandemic, like last year... It was my freshman year, it was really hard meeting friends and meeting people because [00:02:00] clubs and student orgs couldn't meet in person. And then like our classes weren't in person. So I like didn't know anybody. I like messaged Giselle, who is my roommate now over Teams-- at the beginning of freshman year, I was like, do you want to eat lunch together? And so then that's how we became friends... over teams. It was very weird because we didn't have any student orientation, so like we didn't really even get to know our class.

[00:02:32] Liang: Dang, so like, do you feel like, you know them better or now, or?

[00:02:35] Liang: Yeah, I feel like being on Scot council has helped me learn my, like, who is in my class.

[00:02:41] Sarah: And then also just like being involved on campus, like being a "Z.I" and then helping, like with new student orientation this past year where I met you.

[00:02:54] Liang: Um, what kind of changes in lifestyle did you make [00:03:00] since COVID-19, if any?

[00:03:03] Sarah: Um, I think the biggest change, I mean, one that's obvious is like, we all wear masks, but like, I think we're all more conscientious about like viruses and stuff. Like hand-washing. Um, just like not being around sick people.

[00:03:21] Liang: Yeah. Um, how has COVID impacted the way that people treat you \ how has COVID impacted the way that you treat others when you meet new people?

[00:03:32] Sarah: Um, COVID-19 has impacted me because, um, people feel that they can now be more like blatantly racist and stuff cause they use like the virus kind of as an excuse. So like, um, I guess like I was like walking down the street and then I don't know what it was, but like this person decided to like, they were like walking on the same side of the [00:04:00] sidewalk, but then they decided to cross and walk on the other sidewalk. Like that could-- that could have been just like them needing to get to the other side, but like, it was like right after they saw me and then they crossed and I was like, okay.... and then also it's just like, you're afraid to kind of like cough or sneeze, because you feel that people might make assumptions that you have like the virus when you don't. And I feel this is because of the rhetoric that like former president Trump used as calling it like the "Chinese virus" so that my people would think it's okay to like hate on Asian people, like it doesn't even, they don't even have to be Chinese because people just hate Asian people, because they feel that we're responsible for bringing the virus over.

[00:04:46] Liang: Right.

[00:04:46] Sarah: When that isn't really the case. When there could have been like governmental things done to stop the virus from getting out of control.

[00:04:58] Liang: Yeah. That is [00:05:00] so true..... Yeah. I feel like--- wasn't it like... people-- -- cause like, obviously, it's, if you're going abroad, it's more likely to like people who are like rich, not rich, but like going abroad are going to be the ones, bringing it back. Not like people who are.....--

[00:05:14] Sarah: Who are Asian, who are already here, who haven't traveled anywhere---

[00:05:18] Liang: make that make sense.

[00:05:19] Sarah: And like, if he [Trump] was really concerned, he would have like made vaccines, like mandatory. But like, yeah, whenever you like cough and sneeze, people look at you, like they glare at you. And then you're like, bruh.... like -- like if anyone else is coughing or sneezing, you would not glare at them the way you're glaring at me.

[00:05:39] Liang: Yeah. Um, what was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID?

[00:05:46] Sarah: Um, my biggest challenge.... I think it was just not having, not being able to like interact with people like socially, um.... ' because like, [00:06:00] we're used to like going to school everyday, seeing the same people, you know, talking to them in person, like you have a routine. And then like when COVID hit then, like that routine stopped and then you had to figure out how to do everything in a different way.

[00:06:14] Sarah: Oh, how did you overcome it? Um, I think it's just kind of like-- you get used to it. And you figure out how, like, what works and what doesn't, and then like... . This situation kind of becomes normal. Because you kind of find your own routine in it.

[00:06:32] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:06:39] Sarah: Um, I guess we thought COVID-19 would be like a short thing, like a year and then it would be done and then everything will get back to normal. But like, I guess my attitude has changed because now I feel like it'll just kind of like be dragged on, like, if there's not a definitive, like, end, and so [00:07:00] then I'm just like kind of like prepared for this to last longer than I dunno, it's been almost like what, three years?

[00:07:10] Liang: Yeah.

[00:07:11] Liang: Oh, so you kind of already talked about this before, but the question is, have you had any negative experiences during COVID-19?

[00:07:18] Sarah: Yeah, like, my friend and I we were walking down Beall, it was my birthday, ugh, it was so sad. And then like there's these dude's in a truck, and then, [sighs] they scream, he screamed to us this like... it's not even a bad word, but it's just like racist because they, like, they yell out of, like, to us out of their truck window, um, "Hi" in Japanese.

[00:07:44] Liang: No---.

[00:07:44] Sarah: And we were like..... it was like aggressive and we were like, that was not needed. And like, that's super racist, but it was just like, people feel like they can do this type of stuff.

[00:07:58] Liang: That's really gross. [00:08:00]

[00:08:00] Sarah: Yeah. And I don't know if it like--- would have been the same, like before COVID-19, cause I wasn't here, but like that's just something that has happened. But don't worry, I filed a bias report.

[00:08:14] Liang: Yes!! [claps]!! As you should. Sorry..

[00:08:17] Sarah: Dean Hernandez was like, um, are you okay? [laughs]

[00:08:23] Liang: So during the pandemic. What did you learn? Even though we're still in the middle of it....

[00:08:30] Sarah: Um, I think during the pandemic I learned that you should, um, just like value people.

[00:08:40] Liang: Mmm.

[00:08:41] Sarah: and like your relationships with them because you never know what can happen. Um, and then like the people who are closest to you can really like provide support. So you should like try and like lean on them.

[00:08:56] Liang: Um, and then in the future, if there's another pandemic, what [00:09:00] advice would you give to someone who's like going through it?

[00:09:03] Sarah: Um, it will get better. [laughing]. This is what I have to tell myself now... that it won't be like this forever. Um, and that hopefully we'll be able to do what we did previously in the future.

[00:09:18] Liang: Yeah. [laughing]. Wow.

[00:09:22] Sarah: We'll get through this.

[00:09:26] Liang: And then, is there anything else you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

[00:09:32] Sarah: Hmm, I don't know. It's just sad. Like the, how hate crimes have like increased, against Asian Americans. Oh, something. That, that I kind of helped with, um, you know, Jill?

[00:09:50] Liang: Yeah, Jill.

[00:09:50] Sarah: Yeah. [[laughing]]. Well, I was like--- last year on scout council. No one really knows this because, oh my [00:10:00] God, Scot council--- they were not helping me at all. I was like trying to ask them about if they knew about any resources for Asian umm students on campus. And they were like, "um, we don't know any...." Ummm, and they didn't really offer to help me. Like, I brought it up to like the racial, and ethnic diversity constituency rep at the time. And they said that they were like, "we're gonna work on it", but they were working on a bunch of stuff at that time, so it wasn't a priority. And I was like, bro, why is there nothing for like Asian students.. And so then I was like, okay, let me just see um, what has been done for Asian

students right now? And then, I was like going through like my email and then I remembered over the summer, they sent a statement about how they don't condone racism against like black students. And there, this was like specifically in relation to like the George [00:11:00] Floyd protest. And they were like talking about how they're anti-racist and then I was like, okay. That's really great. And then I was like, but why haven't they said anything about like anti-Asian racism, because there is a pretty large like Asian . Population on campus and not just of like Asian Americans, but also like international students from like Asian countries. And then I was like, they haven't said anything. And so then I like met with Jill.. And I was like, um, so like y'all released this statement like, um, after like Black Lives Matter protest for against racism. And you had like a list of like things that you're going to implement after and like talking about how you support the black students on campus. And then I was like, the pandemic has been going on since like [00:12:00] 2019, 2020. And this is now 2021 spring. And I'm like, how come the college (College of Wooster) hasn't done anything about this? Or like released a statement in support. She was like, " Oh, okay. Yeah." She was just like taking in all my stuff. And she was like, okay, I'll bring this up.

[00:12:19] Sarah: I forgot who she'll bring it up too. But she was like doing stuff. And then I guess she talked, met with president Bolton and stuff. And then I guess like--- shortly after, then, like president Bolton released the statement. And I was like, " yay"-- like I. "I did something". But literally I sent like-- I told Scot council that I met with Jill and she talked about blah, blah, blah. And then like, I guess I shared the, like the screenshot of like Sarah Bolton sending out the email and they were like, oh, they just like, "hearted" it. But like throughout that whole time, I didn't have like any support from Scot council. It was literally me [00:13:00] just doing everything. And then they didn't like, they didn't even know that I was doing this because they didn't really ask, or care. Yeah. And I was just. Hmm, this is way too much work. Like [untranscribed] Scot council just has like its own issues about like diversity hidden.

[00:13:19] Liang: That's kind of messed up though cause it shouldn't just be about like.... like minorities having to like speak for themselves. Like, I don't know. That's messed up.

[00:13:31] Sarah: But... that was something cool.

[00:13:33] Liang: Yay! I thought you were gonna be like, I thought you were gonna say like, "oh, she didn't do anything" and I was was . Like, "no!", Okay, so that was the last question.

[00:13:41] Sarah: Okay.

Zhongting

Feb 21, 2022 (Note: Issues exporting there are no time markers in this interview.)

Liang: Okay, first question is, do you want to use your real name or would you like to stay anonymous?

Zhongting: I prefer my real name, 王仲亭,

Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

Zhongting: Uh, I think there's no big difference, just, just some small things. Like, I don't like to uh wear masks because I got, uh, rhinitis. I don't know it's the right name, is some problem.

Yeah. This word since, yeah. Since I was very young. So, uh, so, when I wear mask for a long time, I feel breathless.

Liang: Oh no. That's horrible! [laughing].

Zhongting: Yeah. So also, sometime people -- they told me that, you should, uh, put on your mask, but I don't think [left untranscribed] problem I think they are my problem, yeah. So I think there's no big. No big difference.

Liang: That's so sad. Oh my god.. Um, did you ever get sick or like get a cold during COVID-19?

Zhongting: No, I didn't got COVID, but I had a close contact with a person who got COVID, uh, at the beginning of this semester. Yeah, just the same student as him. [motions to Siyan].

Siyan: I got it twice,

Liang: Twice? Oh, no!

Siyan: One time is when I back to China and another time is the beginning of the semester

Liang: Oh, no.

Siyan: You have to cut this.

Zhongting: Oh okay. Sorry. Sorry.

Siyan: You cannot say the name.

Liang: That's so sad.

Siyan: Keep the secret.

Zhongting: Okay okay, sorry. Sorry. My bad.

Liang: Okay. Um, how would you say that your job was impacted during the beginning of, or not the beginning, but basically during all of COVID, like, do you, did you have a job?

Zhongting: Uh, I, I didn't have a job at that time. Uh, uh I'm I was learning English and I think, uh, there's no big difference. I still-- I mean before the pandemic, I, I prefer uh, staying home and, uh, memorizing vocabulary and do some TOEFL test. And I think after the pandemic is it's just similar. Yeah, I still do things like this.

Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health affected--- and social life affected during COVID-19?

Zhongting: Uh, I think I like, uh, eat more vegetables and fruits and, uh, get up already-- sleep early. And sometimes do some sports too, to keep good health. Cause I didn't got a good body. I mean, before the pandemic, I always feel sick, like a cold or fever. Yeah. Maybe two times a year. Yeah. I got probably so after the pandemic I should take care of my body--- more..... You know what I mean?

Liang: Yeah! No, one-hundred-percent. Yeah. Just like pay more attention to your health.

Zhongting: Yeah-- pay more attention. Yeah.

Liang: Yeah. That's-that's good. Um, how would you say that your social life was affected and mental health?

Zhongting: Uh, I think there's still no big difference because before the pandemic I was used to being alone. Yeah. My hobby is like reading books or playing video games-- just by myself. And I, I don't have many friends. I just have like [untranscribed], very close friends. And, and when we are hang out, we are-- we just like working or and talking for like, uh, for a whole morning or whole afternoon. I think that's very good for me. And yeah, we, we don't have much [untranscribed] activity. Yeah. Like--

Liang: I see,

Zhongting: Yeah, yeah

Liang: Like going out or something.

Zhongting: Yeah like going out, like, like going on trip, or in the bar for a whole night. We we don't do things like that. So after a pandemic, we just do the same thing, like, uh, walking to somewhere and working there a whole afternoon and just talking. Yeah, I think there's no difference. Yeah.

Liang: Oh-- that's good. That's good..

Zhongting: Yeah..

Liang: Um, how has COVID-19 impacted the way you like meet new people or like you treat other people when you're meeting a new person.

Zhongting: I think. I may become more careful, since the COVID-19. Uh, I mean, if some person, if, if [left untranscribed] you [untranscribed] to meet him or her. Yeah. Yes. Just remind you of what is the most important thing for you. And if it's, if it's necessary for the social. You can do something that is more important to you or like study or, or doing sports or enjoy your own time here like this, you don't need to like spend, spend time on social. Yes. Spend much time on social. Yeah

Liang: Oh, yeah. And then before you were saying, like you, like, when you were paying more attention to your health, you try to do like more sports and stuff. What kind of sports did you do?

Zhongting: Uh, working, or soccer's um, yeah

Liang: Did you go-- like, how did you do that?

Zhongting: Um, uh, most time I, I do them just myself. Yeah. And sometimes, maybe with friends.

Liang: Um, what kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?.

Zhongting: I don't think there's a big change. Yeah. Just, just be more careful but,. the basic things are still the same.

Liang: Yeah. That's good. Um, what was the biggest challenge that you faced during the pandemic?

Zhongting: Uh, the biggest challenge is, uh, I think is approval, for the college, for the university. uh because I, I, at that time, uh, uh, I didn't-- I didn't got to a good enough TOEFL score at that. At that time at the beginning of after the 2020 and also I'm, I'm, uh, I'm older-- I'm old student. I'm 24 now. I'm 24 now and at that time I'm 22. So I feel, I, I really feel ner--, I mean, nervous and I feel 着急吗? 着急。。。好---急 you know?

Liang: Like pressured?

Zhongting: Yeah, yeah, pressure, pressure. I feel a lot of pressure. Yeah. I think, uh,

Liang: Because like you feel like, like, because of time? Or--

Zhongting: Yeah, because of time. Yeah. If I--, if I'm 18, I won't feel pressure but--

Liang: Oh--.

Zhongting: Yeah. I think I'm old enough--- I should.... yes [left untranscribed] try as--- I mean, how to describe? Try my best-- try my best on study yeah

Liang: Yeah-- is 着急 like worry.....?

Zhongting: Mhmm.. . What? Sorry.

Liang: Or 着急。。。?

Zhongting: Yeah, yeah 着急, yeah. Wo--- worry yeah.

Siyan: Worry.

Liang: Oh worry. Okay

Zhongting: [untranscribed].

Liang: Well, it seems like it worked out. It seemed like you.....

Zhongting: Yeah.

Liang: You're here now.

Zhongting: I have a very, a very long gap year. Yeah, I have a drop out-- dropped out of school for three times.

Liang: Woah, really?

Zhongting: Yeah, I had, yeah, I had attend to a university in China, but I don't like the environment and the-- the ma-- my major, so I choose to drop off and, uh, yeah. and restudy English to... for the approval of the American university or college.

Liang: And do you think you made the right decision or like..... Yeah, do you think that American university is a better environment than the other one?

Zhongting: Yeah, I think so. For the study-- for the subject. Which I interested in, I think, yeah, I can learn more in this environment.

Liang: Oh, that's good! What um, area were you're looking at before?

Zhongting: Uh, I prefer some, I mean, basic knowledge like--- science, like literature, like philosophy, but I, I don't like, I don't like the knowledge of that uh [clicks tongue] that's very practical. Yeah, yeah. like the only thing you learn knowledge is to-- to earn money. I, I don't, I don't like this. Yeah. I, I like to the real knowledge. [laughs].

Liang: No, that's-- that's interesting [laughs] [left untranscribed]. Oh yeah so what's your major now? Like what are you studying now?

Zhongting: Uh it's undecided, but I prefer the English. English major. Yeah.

Liang: How, oh, I guess you kind of , said this, but, so when you're talking about your biggest challenges, like trying to get into university or into college, how would you say that you overcame it? Or like, how did you cope with-- cause what, how, like, which year when you're trying to get into it?, like you said dropped out three, different times.

Zhongting: Uh 2017.

Liang: Okay..

Zhongting: Yeah.

Liang: So that was before the pandemic.

Zhongting: Yeah before the pandemic. Yeah, but I, I, I, at the beginning of, uh, 2020 , also the beginning of the pandemic, I I didn't got enough-- a... a good enough score in TOEFL or SAT. And all-- and all of the --m- most of the exams were canceled after the pandemic.

Liang: Oh--.

Zhongting: Yeah.

Liang: Oh, no! That sucks. So, did you feel like.... so it effected your academics then,

Zhongting: Mhmm.

Liang: Okay. How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

Zhongting: Yeah, at first I think finally human will overcome it... that the COVID will disappear in the world, but now, I don't think so.

Liang: Oh now you dont think so? Oh no!

Zhongting: I think [untranscribed] co-live with COVID. Co-live.

Liang: Ah co-live.....

Zhongting: Co-live with COVID. Yeah. and it may--

Liang: [paused recording because of outside noise] All right, so you said at first you're positive about it and then you were like, we have to co-live.

Zhongting: Yeah.

Liang: And what were you saying about it? Sorry.... I don't [untranscribed]

Zhongting: Because I think, uh, China--- do a really, really good policy of, for the COVID we got-- we got a at least 14 days isolation policy, but there's still more and . More, uh, new patients. Not to mention Americans there, there, uh, I remember that the most.... the day that comes to----- about 1--, 1 million new patients. Yeah. I mean, in the USA. Yeah. So...., but I think the damage caused by COVID, will be less and less in the future. I mean, at first, it may, you, you may have a life. I don't know--- oh, I-I'll check, check word. Sorry.

Liang: No, you're good. [don't know what word it was]

Zhongting: If you -- if you got COVID, but now it's just like a, a, normal cold. I think. Yeah, Yeah.. So

Liang: One of the last questions is have you or anyone, you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID?

Zhongting: Uh, I think I have experienced, , discrimination. Uh, I, I last winter break. I played, I play a game called, uh, Grand Theft Auto-- 5, with my friend. And we--- and we met, we met a person, I don't know where he from, but probably um the USA. And, uh, he, he, he just says say some word to discriminate China. And, and say that's the COVID it's, it's from China.

Liang: And that was last winter break?

Zhongting: Yeah. Yeah. Just the last winter break. Yeah,

Liang: Oh my goodness.

Zhongting: We we play game there [DC], and yeah. and and we meet person I mean--- just online. We, we, we didn't meet the person, but [left untranscribed] yeah.

Liang: That's crazy.

Zhongting: But he type this word.

Liang: During the pandemic, what did you learn?

Zhongting: Uh, first-- uh, be, be more clean and, and second I think--- Oh.... Uh, give me a second. I organized my word. And second, I think that knowledge is always the most important things. Cause many people lose, loses their jobs during the pandemic, but, uh, but some, uh, careers like, uh, professors or teachers, they don't-- they don't lose their job. Yeah. Because we-- we, no matter what time is, we always need to learn new things... . Yeah

Liang: Mmm. Wow. That's so like... deep-- I don't know... Um.... if, if there's another pandemic, what advice would you give to someone who's going through a new pandemic?

Zhongting: I think just a think of what's the most important things for you-- And uh, and so reduce the contactation with people, uh, as less as possible. Yeah.

Liang: Hm. And then, is there anything else you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

Zhongting: I think that is enough. Yeah. All things, all the important things was asked--

Liang: Oh-- yay! Um, then yeah, that concludes our interview. Thank you so much!

Zhongting: Uh, okay.

Naomi

Feb 14, 2022

[00:00:00] Liang: Um, second question is, how has COVID 19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:07] Naomi: Um, I don't think I've had that much direct experience with that-- with Asian - hate, but definitely with all the Asian-hate going around on social media, it definitely affects how I feel I would carry myself in the room? , but it's also a weird dynamic since I'm adopted, so a lot of the people that I hang out with are still White and , they're not obviously racist, you know? So that's nice.... But, um, yeah, there's a lot of other Asian American friends that I have of -- they've had , extroverted, Asian-hate towards them or they were in a grocery store, towards the early part of COVID-19. And a guy was walking down the aisle, saw her and then walked the other side. And I was , wow, that's really extra. She had a mask on and everything. I'm pretty sure, it was the time of COVID where they were like, make sure you save the masks for the essential workers, you know? But also with COVID-19 , since I quarantined a lot, just for my parents, [00:01:00] (immunocompromised), I just wasn't really out that much.

[00:01:02] Oh, do you also want me to say on the record that I'm also adopted? That also changes the influence of, I think maybe how people treat me cause they also see my parents who are White, so they might see that as a buffer to not treat me straight up racist to their faces. If I were to walk into a place without having my parents, would there be more judgment on me as a person? Cause then once they figure out that I'm with them, do they back off more? So I've always wondered that sometimes, especially now, with COVID- 19 with more Asian hate.

[00:01:31] Liang: And then did you ever get sick during, it could be the past two years or when you know COVID was --

[00:01:36] Naomi: With COVID?

[00:01:38] Liang: It could be a cold or COVID ...

[00:01:40] Naomi: Um, I didn't-- I don't-- I haven't gotten COVID so--- wherever there's a piece of wood [*knocks*]... um, uh, but I think when I was coming back home, I had a small cold, but I think that was because I was studying abroad, but I got tested several times and I didn't test positive

[00:01:57] Liang: [whispering]: Right! Because you were [00:02:00] studying abroad. Right. Thailand! Okay. [talking]: Um, and then how did you people treat you when you were sick?

[00:02:05] Naomi: Um, I had stayed home the whole time, so, yeah, I guess it was the second half of freshman year.

[00:02:11] Liang: What did you do for the summer?

[00:02:13] Naomi: Um, I was kept inside the whole time and it was , I mean, it was to protect the people in my household, because , they were they're immuno compromised. They're above the senior citizen age.

[00:02:23] Liang: Yeah.

[00:02:24] Naomi: So I felt responsible to , you know, not go out even , if I had the freedom to--- which I didn't, but , um, I dunno, it was just tough. Cause some of my other friends they could do a little bit more leniency, walk outside with a friend. But in order for me to go outside and meet up with a friend, I would need to be , obviously six feet apart and then walking parallel on the road. So that was , you know, the most I could do. And it was a bit frustrating. Um, cause I couldn't really go anywhere. Yeah, I think out of all my friends, I was one of the most cooped up in the house... and it definitely [00:03:00] affected my, uh, mental health a bit.

[00:03:02] Liang: So this is kind of what you said, but how would you say your mental health was affected?

[00:03:06] Naomi: Um, I think it was hard to differentiate between school time and free time, since we were all online. I know some of it was helpful for other people, but for me, It was hard to then put a space that within my household... I'm , okay, I'm working here. And then also not be relaxing there? Since my mom's a professor, she would be teaching downstairs and I would have to either be in my room or in the living room. And that's both places where I do not do schoolwork. So when I did that, my motivation to do the schoolwork afterwards was very bad.

[00:03:37] Liang: How would you say that COVID has impacted the way that you meet new people or you treat other people?

[00:03:44] Naomi: Now, when you first meet someone, usually if it's not on zoom or teams, [whispers] I do not like Teams (Microsoft Teams), You meet them with a mask on, literally not even metaphorically, as well. So , if they ever have their mask down, I'm like, "oh, that's what you actually look like?", you know? [00:04:00] So it's kind of crazy. Um, but, one of my things that I don't really like how it's become is how polarizing, the mask situation has been. I think it's especially in the United States where it's supposed to be a political thing? When it's more a safety regulation, than political... which is annoying how it got set up that way.

[00:04:22] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID, if any?

[00:04:29] Naomi: Um, while the pandemic was still going on, I think I got to the point where I was like, I think it'd be good for me to talk to someone-- versus just going in circles in my head. I had seen a counselor and stuff. So I guess that's technically a new part of my routine. I think I had seen her for about six months or so, but , I just don't think we fit that well, but I've been trying to find a new one. Um, I was trying to get an Asian American therapist, but that's really hard to find in Ohio. When I was [00:05:00] looking it up on better health, I think they had people [counselors] just in Ohio targeted towards me. And it was, not really people of color or , it was a demographic that I wasn't really interested in, but, um, I still went along with it.

[00:05:14] Liang: Um, what would you say was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID- 19?

[00:05:26] Naomi: Well, being that it's still going on. I think it's my patience or something like that, because , I mean, it's been two years now that I think about it. So I'm really hoping within the next 10 years-- it won't be a thing as much anymore, or it'll be handled better or, be deemed as a cold with less politicized mandates.

[00:05:45] But yeah, definitely events get canceled and opportunities get canceled. So , I was supposed to study at Buenos Aires, two years ago now. So , I didn't go on that. And I think that I was super looking forward to that. Um, and hopefully not another, variant comes along because [00:06:00] that has also been very annoying. People are literally still dying and healthcare workers are overworked, past the extreme and, there's just still new variants going on. Especially with this one with Omicron that was the most, scary. Yeah.

[00:06:12] Liang: Um, how would you say you've made attempts to cope?

[00:06:14] Naomi: I remember before we had FaceTimed a lot-- did movie night and stuff... but yeah, even then though, the thing is screen fatigue. It just started to get boring because , you know, you're stuck inside and you didn't want to be on your laptop as much as you could because all of your classes and work was on there. So yeah, that was hard.

[00:06:33] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:06:37] Naomi: Um, I think I went from panic and fear to--- I mean, I think it goes in waves. It's a lot of the cycles, especially with the variants. You know, panic of" oh, is this safe or not?"

and then , fatigue... The privilege to really have fatigue of being able to not have to be an essential worker, but still tiring to be like, it's STILL going on. And, especially in the United States, [00:07:00] it's, so politicized. I might be romanticizing other countries, but also other countries kinda have more strict mandates than democracy. So, if you do violate them and you're arrested actually then , you know.... um, so it was just frustrating to see that.

[00:07:18] Liang: Well, was it (public attitude towards COVID) different when you were studying abroad?

[00:07:21] Naomi: Yeah! Yeah. That was the one thing I had noticed because I forgot... because when I came back, I remember going into a Walmart or even just at my hometown, actually I think it was a Target and people weren't wearing masks. And I was like, "oh, that, that was strange". And , um, when I was abroad in Thailand, um, people were already used to wearing masks because of the pollution in Shanghai. So that was all before COVID-19 happened. So it was more "socially acceptable", quote -on-quote?... And it wasn't a political statement and you're mandated to have it, or else you would get in some deep trouble. Um, but also if you had your mask pulled down, it was strictly because, it was the weather, it was like 90 degrees [00:08:00] outside. You could not breathe and it was literally , you know-- take a breath and then put it back on.

[00:08:03] Liang: So do you think there was any stigma (abroad) about being a foreigner, I guess?

[00:08:09] Naomi: Um, well, it was funny because in Thailand, When we went, we had to go through all this extra paperwork for the documentation, cause we had to do a two week quarantine before we were able to enter into the country. And, it was all mandated through the country.

[00:08:26] At that point it was in November-- they lifted the ban of tourists who were there for a vacation. Up until November, it was just strictly education. So then after November 1st, we actually saw the integration of tourists -- westernized tourists either from Europe or the United States that were considered "farang", which means like-- it's a Thai term for foreigner, and it's stereotypically blonde blue eyed, Aryan race thing... um, but it can also apply to all the other foreigners, including from other Asian countries that they could tell. But they're like, "oh, there [00:09:00] goes that "farang" being so weird" or whatever. It was funny though, or not funny, but I think it was interesting to, to see how that dynamic played out.

[00:09:09] Um, but also since Thailand's-- a big part of their GDP or economic growth relies on tourism. I think they had to figure out a balance in what it meant to them to still be safe while still getting money. Because, you know, it was like a rock and a hard place where it was like (for the families in Thailand), "well, if I don't open up, then my family will starve..., (i.e.) be unsafe, but if I do open up and we get sick, there's also that danger." So it was really interesting to see that mindset as well.

[00:09:40] Yeah. It wasn't interesting though, because most of the times, growing up, I'm obviously one of the minorities (in the United States), because I have a lot of Caucasian friends... I found it, it was nice being in a predominantly majority of Asian people, even if it wasn't Chinese-- it was Thai. It was nice to have that because I don't think I've ever really had that in my life [00:10:00] before. Um, it was interesting though, because you know, in America they'd be like, "oh, you're Asian", but , when I was there (Thailand), they were like, "you're Chinese," " you're not Thai", but it was almost like they were excited to figure out the guessing game of, what part of Asia are you from? So I noticed that was a key distinction of , figuring out , you

know, to be more specific of your Asian identity since you are in Asia versus in the U.S. they're like, "yeah, you're Asian".

[00:10:27] Liang: Um, I mean, and then I think you talked a little bit about this at the beginning, but do you know of anyone who has experienced any discrimination during COVID??

[00:10:38] Naomi: Yeah, I mean I had a friend. That apparently was chased down Beall (Beall Avenue, main street on The College of Wooster campus) This is her story though, so it's not exactly mine. Um, but she is of Asian descent and- it wasn't an open carry, but he had a gun on his back and , he was like, "get out of this country", or like, "you don't belong here". ...similar, similar, connotations of that. And, it obviously scared her. This was later at [00:11:00] night on Beall, and he also had seen a black student there and then called them the N word. And then, [she] was walking very quickly down, where her house was. And then she just started running and ran back home. And she didn't tell people for a while because---- yeah. It was really scary and was shaken and , then she was at , [an] AAPI meeting, I think and she brought that up, in an interview, she was like, "oh yeah....---". And they were like, "wait, what"? And yeah. So then she reported it to security. And then security never got back to her. Yeah. And, I've also seen that as a similar pattern with the interactions on Beall like them (drivers on Beall) calling black students the N word and just driving away and then the black students report it and then security doesn't do anything.

[00:11:39] Um, but yeah, I guess those are more extreme cases and, it wasn't directly a COVID related situation, but it was definitely heightened with Asian hate and COVID. It happened last semester, apparently.

[00:11:54] Liang: So during the pandemic, what did you learn? Even thought it's still going on? [00:12:00]

[00:12:00] Naomi: Um, I think I've learned about community, because when my neighbors had gotten COVID , just around the block, um, we showed up for them as well as like, "oh, do you need me to run to the store to get you anything? So , it was showing up in that way or like, you know, giving them a hot meal, because you could be really exhausted from that, or just the stress of having it. And the whole world's like "THE PANDEMIC!!", you know? So also, I feel like there's the stigma of telling a person: "oh yeah, I tested positive." So it's scary to tell, who you would trust enough to say that. Um, but it's also, you know, you see also those drives that , people are having to support their own community, so that's encouraging to see that's still happening during the pandemic, even with all the other polarization, there's still good coming out of it.

[00:12:46] Liang: What advice would you give to someone who's going through a pandemic? If that happens again?

[00:12:53] Naomi: I think prioritizing that you keep a schedule so , then you wouldn't be like, "oh, I [00:13:00] don't know what I did today." -- I found it especially hard to keep track of time when , we were just stuck at our house. I mean you can still have those five hour binge, Netflix days, cause like -- relatable... Um, but , you know, taking that time and being aware that you're like, "okay, I'm just going to do this today", and enjoying it versus going on autopilot because, even without COVID, , I've also caught myself, just going on autopilot and, not really getting out as much. So , I think spending that quality time in person has definitely increased more?

[00:13:31] Liang: And then, is there anything else you find important that you would want to share that was not asked?

[00:13:36] Naomi: Um, I can't think anything off the top of my head? I don't think I can think of anything, but yeah. Thanks for asking me though.

[00:13:49] Liang: So yeah, that concludes our interview. Thank you

[00:13:54] Naomi: Yeah. Thank you.

WeiDi

Dec 10, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: The first question is how has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:08] WeiDi : When the COVID-19 begin, I studied abroad in Germany, and one day when my, uh, another Asia friends and I go back home, there is a guy, sit in cafe, and shouted to us like "virus".

[00:00:25] And I take my friend go quickly and say, "don't go back". And, um, my friend go back home one day earlier than me. When I dropped her to the train station, there is a old white woman. I thought she's a Germany and she shouted to us like, "where are you come from?" In English! And "are you come from China?" I was so weird. And be afraid of that, I said, "oh yeah, so [00:01:00] what?" And she began shouting us, like. "Go back to China", something... and dirty words in English. And I at my friends, uh, I could go quickly and disappeared. And I don't think the situation has changed very positive. When I go back home, there are some people in China, they have never have a chance to go abroad and they have some. sort of bias to the student who study abroad. They said they thought, you are study abroad, because you're not at, not good at study, and you didn't take Gaokao. (National College Entrance Examination) And at that time. They said, "oh, those student who go back because of the COVID, you are the virus spreader", and do some some of sort of tag on social media. And I think that's also the um cyber- [00:02:00] , violence.

[00:02:02] Liang: Like cyberbullying...

[00:02:02] WeiDi : Yeah, yeah, yeah. On the internet.

[00:02:04] Liang: Okay.

[00:02:05] Okay, so the second question is, did you ever get sick during COVID?

[00:02:10] WeiDi : Um, I didn't like have any phenomena about COVID-19, but I do worry about that before I back home. I have take some medicine to prepare for that, but I didn't use them.

[00:02:29] Liang: how was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID?

[00:02:34] WeiDi : My job... Maybe, how that affect my study abroad?

[00:02:39] Um, my study abroad program should be take a 4 months in Europe, but because of it, I only spent two months here and the two months online, when I back home.

[00:02:52] Liang: in what ways would you say your health and mental health and social life was affected during COVID?

[00:02:59] WeiDi : I, [00:03:00] right after COVID, I didn't see my friends who have graduate, anymore... And because of that. I don't like online class, so I gapped a semester, but they graduated last semester. ,

[00:03:17] Liang: how has COVID-19 impacted the way that, like you act when you meet new people?

[00:03:25] WeiDi : Meeting new people? I always worry about how people saw me when they know about my, uh, "tag" or identity. Like I'm a student, I study abroad, and I come back and "would they see me in the bias?", I would worry about that.

[00:03:45] Liang: Do you think a lot of people think that way or just....

[00:03:49] WeiDi : I think that become a obstacle in my psychological way, but actually most of the people don't care. The message on internet is only [00:04:00] on internet

[00:04:01] Liang: what kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?

[00:04:09] WeiDi : In my lifestyle? I began to go to gym more frequently. Like I exercise, a lot to keep me strong. Don't get sick. Yeah. Yeah. And also when I take the online class, I had to get up at like 2:00 or 3:00 AM. Yeah. Cause there are like 12 hours time difference between. Yeah.

[00:04:38] Liang: Did you have like the same amount of classes or did you end up like doing less classes cause of the time difference?

[00:04:45] WeiDi : Well, I take the online class. In the half of my Germany program and also the first senior semester I have one-- at that time I have one class, start at like one [00:05:00] half AM. And that suck.... Well the good thing is we have, we have, um, record-- recording, but the thing is when I open the recording, the internet is SO slow. It cut down, like every five minutes. It suck.

[00:05:17] Liang: So like overall, what was the biggest challenge that you've faced? Could be studying abroad or like when you came back here...

[00:05:23] WeiDi : um, I think, when I take the online class. My time schedule is totally upside down. Uh, and there is no peer pressure on me. So it make me like sometime lazy to study... Too lazy to study! And also when I check the social media it make me feel pretty bad. That interrupt a lot.

[00:05:50] Liang: Was that just on WeChat or was that on-- ?

[00:05:55] WeiDi : Like, Weibo .

[00:05:57] Liang: how did you overcome, your [00:06:00] challenge or what changes did you make to cope and adapt with the new lifestyle?

[00:06:05] WeiDi : New life style? I take the gap year. Yeah..

[00:06:07] Liang: So would you say that anyone-- like you or anyone you know, has also experienced discrimination? Like have any of your friends talked about that as well? Or?

[00:06:19] WeiDi : Um, I have heard a student, but I'm not sure if that is true. She said she, um, her car had been scratched by key, and they said something dirty words about Asia on her car.

[00:06:37] Liang: Was it here?

[00:06:38] WeiDi : No, no, she is graduate, but it is only a story I've heard from others.

[00:06:42] Liang: Was it-- how long ago was it?

[00:06:46] WeiDi : Like last year....

[00:06:48] Liang: where was her car?

[00:06:49] WeiDi : Where her car? Is parking outside of Lowry, like the Lowry parking lots. Yeah.

[00:06:57] Liang: Going on to the reflection [00:07:00] questions, the first question is: during the pandemic, what did you learn?

[00:07:04] WeiDi : Ooh, that's a good question. Did-- what I did I learn...?

[00:07:10] Um, I learned how to face the unplanning.... issue? And how to cope with it from a psychological way and be prepared at any time. It, I mean, everything will be a surprise... And treat the friends and any relationship as-- treat/regard them as a last one. Be treasure.

[00:07:41] Liang: So even though we're still in the middle of the pandemic, assuming that it like goes back to normal at some point. And then there's like another pandemic, and people are not used to it, what kind of advice would you give to them-- if someone was going through the pandemic and they never experienced it before?

[00:07:59] WeiDi : Who, have [00:08:00] never experienced it before?.... I would say, um, well, first to protect yourself, in any way you could do.. and contact with friends and family frequently. let them know what's happened for you both in career. or study... Everything. Have

good communication, and also check the--- check the news every day to keep going on what's happened.

[00:08:33] Liang: And then, the last question is, is there anything else you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

[00:08:42] WeiDi : Well, there is a one thing that-- for discrimination. I mean, we-- there are racism always around us, but because of COVID, it brings out the issue... To force people-- you have [00:09:00] to face it. I mean,

[00:09:02] Liang: Yeah, like people are more aware of it?

[00:09:05] WeiDi : Mhmm. And also, um, I'm not sure if we could report the Asia to policy or on internet? Be aware of that, and be acknowledged to you appear.

[00:09:27] Liang: Like you wish that there was more ways to report it, or, what are you saying?

[00:09:32] WeiDi : Uh, I mean like when, when the Asia hate happen on you, don't be afraid of that (reporting).

[00:09:39] It's not, yeah. It's not your fault. It's their bias. Be aware of that and maybe report to police, um, later on and, , protect yourself.

[00:09:51] Liang: Okay. That concludes our interview. Thank you so much!

[00:09:56] WeiDi : Yes (:

Zhenze

Dec 7, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: Okay, this is Zhenze's, interview.

[00:00:03] Zhenze: I'm Zhenze

[00:00:05] Liang: So, did you ever get sick during COVID??

[00:00:07] Zhenze: No I haven't.

[00:00:08] Liang: Okay.

[00:00:08] Zhenze: Yeah.

[00:00:09] Liang: How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:00:13] Zhenze: Cause, during that time I was staying in China. And I worked in a very big company that.... like, for example, like 50 or 60 people stay together in the very open places. But we don't need to wear masks because Zhengzhou's panic is not very good.... It's not very--- I mean, serious. Yeah....

[00:00:37] Liang: Interesting. In what ways was your health and mental health affected during COVID-19? ,

[00:00:43] Zhenze: During the COVID-19 time..... You know, in China, we live in the community like, you know, my community, there are maybe like-- one thousand?. Or yeah. one thousand people. And, because one of the guy that contact [00:01:00] with the affected... affected person... and then our whole community was in quarantine for the 14 days. All of us cannot go outside. Yes, well this happened like---- in August? Yes.

[00:01:17] Liang: Oh, that's recent.

[00:01:19] Zhenze: I cannot do anything outside.

[00:01:21] Liang: You can't do anything..

[00:01:22] Zhenze: Yes..

[00:01:22] Liang: Like no grocery--- nothing?

[00:01:24] Zhenze: Yeah, even though my visa was expired, I cannot go outside.

[00:01:29] Liang: Oh no. How did you get like food and stuff?

[00:01:32] Zhenze: Food? We can just ask other people for help. They will buy the food outside and then give us.

[00:01:40] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?

[00:01:45] Zhenze: I think the most-- the big change is.... I use less, you know, public transportation. Before the COVID-19, whenever I go to school or go to the work I use the bus. But, [00:02:00] I think during the COVID-19 time-- I use taxis more.. Or just driving.

[00:02:06] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:02:11] Zhenze: In China, I think if you don't wear a mask, they may not feel, you know, any changes, they will just let you in.. And umm yeah, but I think when I was in, when I was here there's one time that I didn't wear a mask. And I think one--- workers in the supermarket... they very angry.

[00:02:33] Liang: Very angry?

[00:02:33] Zhenze: Yeah... "you need to wear a mask".

[00:02:35] Liang: In Ohio?

[00:02:36] Liang: .What did they say? Were they just like you need to---

[00:02:38] Zhenze: I think a little bit angry, but not that much. So I think that is a little bit different between two places. Yes.

[00:02:46] Liang: Interesting. Okay. What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?

[00:02:52] Zhenze: I think that is.... It's very, very, very, very, very hard to buy a ticket from China [00:03:00] to United States. Very hard. Yes. Cause maybe I just need to spend like nine hundred dollars... before the [pandemic], but after the [pandemic] it was doubled or tripled. Yes. And we need to, you know, when I, for [left untranscribed] during the [pandemic] I fly from China to Africa, and from Africa to the United States.

[00:03:28] Liang: Oh, to like get around it?

[00:03:30] Zhenze: I spend like more than 50 hours on the way? Yes. But before the [pandemic], I just need to spend like 20 hours? So.

[00:03:42] Liang: That's horrible.

[00:03:44] Zhenze: Yes, I have [left untranscribed] you know, from Zhengzhou, I need to-- firstly I need to fly to Guangzhou. Guangzhou is one of the major city in China. And [from] Guangzhou--- I will fly to Africa?. And Africa-- I fly to United St--there, there were [00:04:00] a lot of cities in Africa. I still need to stay there for like 10 hours or--

[00:04:05] Liang: Oh my god--

[00:04:06] Zhenze: Yes.... really, really hard.

[00:04:08] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:04:14] Zhenze: The COVID-19 happened in China first, and then maybe I think after three or-- three months.... and the United States have begins. And at that time, I think that is during the spring break, right? And there were just like, 10,000 people have affected, coronavirus?

[00:04:35] Liang: Yeah.

[00:04:36] Zhenze: And then, my parents call me that we need to do a choice. Stay here, or go home.

[00:04:41] Liang: Oh no..

[00:04:42] Zhenze: Yes. And umm, you know I just do this choice in 10 seconds. I say, I go home. Yes. I think that is a, yeah, I think it's a good choice [left untranscribed] for now. And then I buy a ticket... but, I buy tickets three times. They all--- have been [00:05:00] canceled.

[00:05:00] Liang: Oh, no!.

[00:05:01] Zhenze: Yes. And then, I buy a ticket. And on that day, I went to the airport..... and..... yeah, they told me, I cannot go to the plane. That is because I don't have a visa in Japan. And that plane, will go to Japan first and then fly to China. So I will not, they will not, they not, would not allow-- me to go to the plane. And then, I say, okay, because I still have a friend. We go together. And so we all cannot go to the plane and then we buy a new ticket in that afternoon. Yeah, that is like \$2,000? And then yeah, we just [laughs] fly to China.

[00:05:46] Liang: Jeez..

[00:05:47] Zhenze: Yes. So at that time I think, "oh, God, what's that?" You know, the coronavirus. But, you know, when I was in China, I think, "okay. That is not a big [00:06:00] problem." It's not a big trouble because I thought the government, the local government and the Zhengzhou's government do very good. So no people will....

[00:06:10] Liang: Mmm no cases?.

[00:06:11] Zhenze: Yeah.

[00:06:13] Liang: But do you think... how would you say your opinion has changed now? Like do you think things are?

[00:06:19] Zhenze: For now?.

[00:06:19] Zhenze: When I came here in August I wear mask everyday everywhere. I think, yeah. Because in China we see, we all see the news every day. What the coronavirus situation in United States. Yeah. How many people, I mean, the [left untranscribe]. And then yeah, when I have stayed here for like four months, I think maybe I, I didn't feel not good in this time, during this time. So I think my attitude become good a little bit. Yeah. So... for [00:07:00] now I think that it's not a very big trouble.

[00:07:03] Liang: Okay. So have you or anyone, you know, experienced any hate crimes during COVID-19?

[00:07:09] Zhenze: Hate crime during COVID-19?

[00:07:12] Liang: Discrimination, verbal, physical....

[00:07:16] Zhenze: Yes. I have a friend, you know, stay in China. He studied in China, too, in the university in China. And you know, in China's university, if uh, for example, in Beijing. Beijing, have some people affected the coronavirus, and the whole city's university will not allow students to go outside. They have to stay in on the campus for, they don't know, maybe four months? Yes, they were not allowed to go outside. So all of the students, including my friends, were not allowed to go home. They have to stay here. They cannot go outside to have good dinner or to have fun with friends.

[00:07:58] Liang: Yeah.

[00:07:59] Zhenze: Yes. [00:08:00] So during that time he--- he feel really, really bad. And he was sicked in that time, very bad.

[00:08:05] Liang: He was sick?

[00:08:06] Zhenze: Yes. And yeah. If you have, you know, you have any circumstances, like..... for example, the parents were sick, you have to ask the schools, ask the local... I don't know the community. And so that, that is a really, really complicated.

[00:08:28] Liang: Oh---.

[00:08:29] Zhenze: You may spend five days..... then you can go home.

[00:08:35] Liang: Okay, what have you learned from the pandemic?

[00:08:39] Zhenze: I think..... one thing I learned is [left untranscribed] I need to, you know, do a very good prep-- preparation before any circumstances. You need to store the food or water.

[00:08:55] Liang: Oh

[00:08:55] Zhenze: Yes.

[00:08:58] Liang: Oh, cause of the quarantining thing?

[00:08:59] Zhenze: [00:09:00] Yeah.

[00:09:00] Liang: Okay. Got it. And then, is there any advice that you would give people [if there is] another pandemic?

[00:09:05] Zhenze: Stay safe.

[00:09:06] Liang: Stay safe?

[00:09:07] Zhenze: Yes. Cause I don't know..... whether the disaster is serious. I think that is maybe in our lifetime, we would not have a.... such a serious pandemic--- again. So I think the most important, just stay safe. Yes. Wear the mask.

[00:09:26] Liang: Okay. And then the last question is, is there anything else you find important that you want to talk about that was not talked about?

[00:09:35] Zhenze: Anything [left untranscribed] that you want to share?.... not-- um no, I think that is a really good interview.

Moro

Feb 1, 2022

Moro

[00:00:00] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:04] Moro: I haven't gone out much since COVID happened, but personally I would feel more conscious of my appearance when I am in like airport or something, especially when I'm traveling-- the way people look at me, they might not mean anything, but then I would be very conscious... and like when I wear a mask... it's like -- Oh my gosh, what if people think I'm spreading the virus and stuff? I know that doesn't make sense, but still.

[00:00:31] Liang: Did you ever get sick during COVID-19

[00:00:35] Moro: I was never sick. Yeah. I never got any cold or like fever. I was very healthy.

[00:00:45] Liang: How would you say your job was impacted during COVID-19?

[00:00:49] Moro: I don't know if this is relevant, but like when COVID first broke out, I had to leave and my job was here on campus, so I had to stop working and then back-- like back at home. [00:01:00] When I tried to look for jobs, it was very difficult for me to find one because people were cutting down on staff because of COVID like economically, it was very hard.

[00:01:09] Liang: Yeah. What kind of jobs were you looking for?

[00:01:11] Moro: Um, like teaching jobs, teaching English at schools, but I couldn't get it. And also, this is just my brother's story--- I don't know if it applies- he had to get vaccinated. Um, yeah, before it was compulsory--- before was made compulsory for everyone, for the safety of students.

[00:01:30] Liang: In what ways would you say your health and mental health and social life was affected during COVID-19?

[00:01:38] Moro: So I had no social life at all cause I was studying at home. Which was actually pretty good for me-- cause I'm an introvert, I like, like staying alone, but mental health wise, since I didn't go out at all, like I didn't get fresh air every day. So I would get stuck with my assignments the whole day.... and then I would forget to like, [00:02:00] go look outside and know that there's a world-- and like get some fresh air. Right. But other than that, I think it was like, decent.

[00:02:10] Liang: How would you say COVID-19 has impacted the way that you treat other people or with you meeting new people?

[00:02:16] Moro: So I think I'm definitely more scared when people start coughing around me, I get really nervous and mad and angry that they're not like covering their mouth , and things like that, I lose my patience... but, with friends, I appreciate them more cause I couldn't see them for a long time. So I would like run to them, be like, "Hey, I missed you so much," so, I was more friendly with friends.

[00:02:41] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?

[00:02:46] Moro: It was very bad.... so I became a night person-- to the point that-- if I go to bed, anytime before midnight, I would always end up waking up after one or two hours, regardless of how tired I am. [00:03:00] So that, yeah, so that's affecting me even now. So having a messed up sleep schedule. It's really bad because my energy level is really low and inconsistent sleeping just makes me tired the whole day, and I still haven't been able to recover from that. And that started with COVID.

[00:03:18] Liang: Was it cause you went back home?

[00:03:19] Moro: Yeah, and I was taking online classes. .

[00:03:21] Liang: Oh no!

[00:03:21] Moro: Yes.

[00:03:24] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID?

[00:03:29] Moro: Um, I think just being separated from my family? Cause they were stuck in India and they couldn't fly back home. Yeah. And then when I needed some emotional support-- I felt very lonely.... and then I couldn't meet friends or anything. Cause when I was back in college, I would just talk with people, talk with the library people and friends and stuff, but I did not have any outlets to you know-- let out my stress or things. All I would do is just call my [00:04:00] parents. And all I did for leisure activity was just watch videos on YouTube. So it was very, it wasn't a healthy lifestyle. And I don't know if I overcame it or not during COVID. I think it gradually ended when I resumed to normal life [untranscribed] when I returned to campus.

[00:04:20] Liang: How would you say that your attitude about COVID has changed over time?

[00:04:25] Moro: I think I've grown, used to it-- yeah wearing a mask and stuff cause now it's normal. It's like a habit to like wear a mask. When I walking out of the door and... apart from that, honestly, I kind of liked it cause its like-- I can be at home the whole day, and no one would tell me to go outside.

[00:04:47] Liang: And then, well, I guess I was just curious, how do you think that, it was handled in Korea versus the United States?

[00:04:57] Moro: I think [00:05:00] definitely containing the virus-wise, people were saying Korea did a better job. And then the U.S. I think it was still trying to cope: "do we tell people to wear masks or not?... it's infringing their freedom.". And then people were like arguing against the governments and you can't [untranscribed] make us. There was so much like social, , disputes going on within the country, but like-- Korea had experienced something similar to this before, so they knew what was going on and they knew how to handle it. But two years later, I feel like now it's getting worse. We're getting like 50,000 positive cases. So I can't.... Like back then it used to appear like Korea was doing a better job, but I don't know if that's working anymore. I was very frustrated when they were like raising the what's that called the social distancing levels. I was like, oh my gosh, stop this!

[00:05:52] Liang: I guess I was also wondering like in Korea, is there any stigma about like foreigners? Because , [00:06:00] I know talking to like other students, they were kind of concerned about like their status as like being an international student and like going back to their home country, they're like, "I'm worried like, what, people will think..." because...

[00:06:11] Moro: Because they were abroad?

[00:06:13] Liang: Yeah.

[00:06:14] Moro: Yeah, definitely. We had this instance cause like, these Korean American students or Korean students who studied in America or elsewhere, they would come in and they would just like, ignore all the precautions. They would just not wear masks and roam around and go to clubs and make everyone get-- contract the virus. So people were like, they are "black haired foreigners". It's like a term. And they were like, "Get out of the country. You guys are making the situation worse here in Korea." So I know, and I w--- when I heard that, I'd be like, "oh my gosh, I am just a good person staying at home. I'm not going out partying. I'm not sick," but yeah.

[00:06:56] Liang: Was that on social media or--?

[00:06:58] Moro: Yeah, social media, news, YouTube [00:07:00] comments. It was very scary.

[00:07:02] Liang: Have you had any negative experiences during COVID-19?

[00:07:06] Moro: Not really? I don't think so, because first of all, I did not go outside the house, often----- So I did not have to interact with like strangers... and I would always wear a mask. So I wouldn't get scolded in public spaces saying wear your mask! Cause I've seen people experience that.

[00:07:26] Liang: Really?

[00:07:26] Moro: So, yeah.

[00:07:28] Liang: One of the last question is, have you or anyone you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID?

[00:07:35] Moro: I haven't experienced one? I don't think I've had friends who've experienced stuff, but I've heard news about like Asian people being beaten up-- early 2021 when it's been a whole year since COVID happened, so I was like scared....

[00:07:51] Liang: Yeah... Was that the one with the video?--

[00:07:54] Moro: Yeah. So I guess when I encountered news like that, I was like, [00:08:00] mentally. Distressed. I mean, like, what if that happens to me when I was flying back to the U.S.. As I've said, I was very conscious of how I look.

[00:08:10] Liang: And then if there's another pandemic, what advice would you give to someone who's going through [it]...?

[00:08:15] Moro: I would-- if a pandemic happens again, I would tell them to calm down, and stock up on necessities, but don't buy the whole store. Otherwise everything will run out and everyone will like get into a panic mode and just like, stay in communication with your family. Just like take care of your mental health, if you need help and things like that.

[00:08:39] Liang: Is there anything else that you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

[00:08:46] Moro: Um, personally, no girl, I just wanted to comment on your project. I don't know what your project is, but I think it's really important for us to like reflect on people's experience during pandemic.[00:09:00]

[00:09:00] Liang: Yeah.

[00:09:00] Moro: Yeah, because I think there's a lot going on other than just managing or containing the virus. Cause like people have-- people lose their loved ones, right, to this virus and they like could lose a good job opportunity. I forgot to mention my study abroad program, got cancelled. I had to make that decision because it was going to remote. So like, you know, yeah. You lose opportunities, you like are separated from families and stuff. So I think it's good to talk about these experiences, so we know how to like handle it and I think it should be addressed, no?

[00:09:35] Liang: Yeah, I mean, especially since it's like ongoing, I think it's a weird place to be like..... in limbo with everything. .

[00:09:43] Moro: Okay we stop recording.

Siyan

Feb 21, 2022

[00:00:00] Liang: Do you want to use your real name or stay anonymous?

[00:00:02] Siyan: I can use my real name.

[00:00:04] Liang: Okay. How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:08] Siyan: Actually I don't have much feeling cause a when the pandemic coming, I was back to China cause.... I think that's my freshman year? And that is spring break so our college was like cancel the semester. So I just book a ticket-- and [fly] back to China, so I don't have much feeling like how people treat to me. I just like [left untranscribed] news from internet. Like people say "Chinese virus" like that but in the real-world I didn't have much really. Yeah.

[00:00:40] Liang: And which part of China are you from?

[00:00:42] Siyan: Uh Yunnan.. Uh the Southwest part in China and the [left untranscribed] to Myanmar and the Laos.

[00:00:48] Liang: During the pandemic, when you went back, was.... were people will kind of like, okay about it [COVID] or were people freaking out about--

[00:00:55] Siyan: I think most people got like freaking about it. Cause like [00:01:00] When I come back to China, like in mainland China, actually they recovered. And I was like, come outside from a country, got a bunch of people who got COVID. So they think, "Oh, you may got COVID, so you maybe virus self...". So like some people in my country said: "don't come back. We-- we don't want the virus like that."

[00:01:27] Liang: From abroad.

[00:01:28] Siyan: Yeah.

[00:01:28] Liang: Okay. So were you scared to like... like, how did you feel about going out if people knew that you had been traveling or that you weren't...?

[00:01:37] Siyan: I didn't mention that.

[00:01:39] Liang: Oh, you didn't mention it.

[00:01:40] Siyan: Yeah, I have to-- like, when I back to China, I have to quarantine for 14 days plus seven weeks stay in my home. So like 21 days. So... When I go-- yeah. So when I go outside, I think I'm normal person. So I didn't notice [think], "oh I come from Am--, I come back from America, [00:02:00] so I just.... like... a normal person."

[00:02:04] Liang: Yeah.

[00:02:04] Siyan: So yeah.

[00:02:06] Liang: And when you quarantined, were you in your house or was it like a specific, like how did that work?

[00:02:10] Siyan: When I was quarantined uh the first two weeks, I was in a hotel and it's good. We can order the delivery food, eat whatever we want and like, after two weeks, I back to my home just stay in my home

[00:02:27] Liang: Oh --

[00:02:28] Siyan: Yeah

[00:02:28] Liang: And you have to pay for the hotel?

[00:02:30] Siyan: Yes. I, we have to pay for the hotel and the [left untranscribed]. Like, uh if you got COVID, [left untranscribed] or insurance will cover the cost for COVID, if you got COVID. Yeah.

[00:02:46] Liang: Did you ever get sick during COVID-19?

[00:02:50] Siyan: Uh, no, but I have close contact with some person when I back to China like they got [left untranscribed], like if in [00:03:00] airplane, if you, like a person near to your seat - seat, so you have to like close contract. But, I'm good.

[00:03:08] Liang: How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:03:12] Siyan: Hmm, actually, no, no, no, no effect by COVID-19. Yeah, I do internship yes, in China when I was come back and that is last year 202[1]. [Interruption from outside source]].

[00:03:26] Liang: So back to your internship...

[00:03:27] Siyan: Yes last year and Chinese is recover so quickly. So I don't, I do not think COVID affect, my job or my internship.

[00:03:38] Liang: That's good. And--- but were you doing it remotely or were you doing it...

[00:03:41] Siyan: uh no--- not remote---- remotely, in person. And I in Beijing.

[00:03:46] Liang: Did you guys have to like wear masks and stuff or?

[00:03:49] Siyan: Yes. Yeah. We do need like wear the mask when we are doing our, work / job..

[00:03:56] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health \ [00:04:00] social life affected by COVID-19?

[00:04:02] Siyan: Ah, yes. Cause we do the remote study--- right? And we have like with time difference like in China when America is like [left untranscribed] China is night. So w-- I have to like study in the night and sleep in the [left untranscribed] day, so--

[00:04:21] Liang: Yeah.

[00:04:21] Siyan: I can't hang out with my friend, cause we will have time difference.

[00:04:26] Liang: Aww..

[00:04:26] Siyan: Yeah. So that's may kind [of] affect my mental health and...

[00:04:32] Liang: Yeah.

[00:04:34] Siyan: Yeah.

[00:04:34] Liang: Did you find it hard to adapt to like trying to sleep during the day or

[00:04:37] Siyan: Uh yes, cause everyone was like work and [left untranscribed] and like that, so it's hard to sleep in [left untranscribed] day.

[00:04:46] Liang: How would you say COVID-19 has impacted the way that you meet people or like treat other people?

[00:04:51] Siyan: [left untranscribed] but when I come back to United States, we have to wear the mask when we are talking. [00:05:00] Yeah, we have to wear the mask when we in classroom. So I don't like that [left untranscribed]. Yeah.

[00:05:06] Liang: What changes in lifestyle have you made since COVID-19, if any?

[00:05:10] Siyan: Wear the mask.

[00:05:11] Liang: Wearing the mask. Okay. What would you say was the biggest challenge that you faced during [COVID]?

[00:05:16] Siyan: I think maybe it's uh, back to China or back to United States cause the United States are lockdown like before, like two years. So I came back to United States for back to college for my study and for now, I can not back to China because the ticket is so expensive.

[00:05:37] Liang: Tickets so expensive? Aww. How much is it to try to go back?

[00:05:40] Siyan: Like... 30, thousand?

[00:05:44] Liang: You're kidding.

[00:05:45] Siyan: Yeah. [No].

[00:05:46] Liang: Thirty thousand?

[00:05:47] Siyan: Yeah.

[00:05:47] Liang: Or three thousand?

[00:05:48] Siyan: Thirty thousand--

[00:05:49] Liang: Thirty thousand!

[00:05:50] Siyan: RMB.

[00:05:51] Liang: Oh ok..

[00:05:51] Siyan: It's like four-- 4,000 U.S. dollars..

[00:05:54] Liang: Oh, my God.

[00:05:55] Siyan: Still expensive, but like before the pandemic, [00:06:00] the ticket I think only got like \$300 or, yeah three, three to six, yeah. It's 10 times [as expensive]..

[00:06:11] Liang: So do you think you will go back like in the summer?

[00:06:13] Siyan: No.

[00:06:14] Liang: No?

[00:06:15] Siyan: Yeah, cause it's so expensive. I'm look, maybe looking for an internship, in United States, maybe just stay on campus and review for the GRE test, because I'm trying to go into a graduate school. So I have to prepare for it.

[00:06:33] Liang: How would you say your attitude about COVID has changed over time?

[00:06:36] Siyan: My attitude? Actually I don't have any opinion about it. It's okay for me. Yeah.

[00:06:44] Liang: That's good.

[00:06:45] Siyan: Cause, uh through the human being's history we got lots like epidemic, so it's okay. We have to face it.

[00:06:53] Liang: Yeah. Have you had any negative experiences during COVID-19?

[00:06:59] Siyan: [00:07:00] So, I don't think I got negative experience. Yeah. I mean, for the racist, one were no, I didn't get that got that.

[00:07:11] Liang: Has anyone, you know, experienced any discrimination due to COVID?

[00:07:18] Siyan: No.

[00:07:19] Liang: No? That's good. The first reflection question is during the pandemic, what did you learn?

[00:07:24] Siyan: Really hard question. [Laughs]. Yeah like the first one I going to say is social justice. Like everyone is equal when they are facing epidemic.

[00:07:35] Liang: Yeah.

[00:07:36] Siyan: Yeah. So everyone is equal... And second I may think. Uh is a good life-- lifestyle, like, wash your hand, like other stuff... help--- to help you to like defense the [00:08:00] virus.

[00:08:00] Liang: Yeah.

[00:08:00] Siyan: So yeah. Good habits and social justice. So that's it.

[00:08:07] Liang: And then if there's a pandemic in the future, what advice, would you give to someone who hasn't gone through it?

[00:08:13] Siyan: Uh, so my advice? Yeah..... Peaceful... to face everyone. Nobody want got the virus.

[00:08:24] Liang: Yeah.

[00:08:24] Siyan: Yeah. So if you know somebody got virus. Okay. Don't like, treat him like a dangerous person like that, just peaceful to face it.

[00:08:36] Liang: Okay. Is there anything else you find important that you want to add to the interview that you think is relevant?

[00:08:42] Siyan: No, not really. [laughs] [haha].

[00:08:44] Liang: That's fine. Um, then that concludes the interview, thank you so much.

[00:08:49] Siyan: Mhmm.

[00:08:50] Liang: Yay!

Karen

Feb 8, 2022

[00:00:00] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:03] Karen: I feel like, I mean, back home things haven't changed, but here at Wooster, I feel like people are a lot, are a bit more I don't know, hostile? A bit more angry, hard to... they're - they're not as friendly. Yeah. That was the word I was trying to look for. Yeah.

[00:00:26] Liang: Okay. And then did you ever get sick during the pandemic?

[00:00:30] Karen: I-- I'm pretty sure I got colds. Yeah, yeah-- I've I caught the cold like once or twice during the pandemic..

[00:00:38] Liang: And then how did people treat you when you were sick or experiencing symptoms?

[00:00:42] Karen: My own friends told me to like, stay away from them until I get better or I got tested. Which... I mean, makes sense. Yeah, I don't know. I haven't really thought of it. That much.

[00:00:54] Liang: How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:00:57] Karen: I mean, I work like... [00:01:00] part-time jobs here on campus, and most of it is just masking and social distancing and sanitizing your hands a lot. My jobs don't, like-- they don't require a lot of like interpersonal stuff.

[00:01:14] Liang: Yeah.

[00:01:15] Karen: I mean, it does require interpersonal things, but it like, it wasn't like a busy job, you know, like not a lot of interactions, so it was okay.

[00:01:25] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health slash social life affected during COVID-19?

[00:01:32] Karen: I guess I feel, I felt a bit trapped at home. It was kind of harder to tell the time sometimes, cause you're just sitting there in one place, looking at your, at your laptop screen or your phone screen all the time. Yeah, I feel like spending more time with myself. Which could be a good thing, but in this case, it sort of like made some of my mental health issues like worse.

[00:01:59] Liang: And where's [00:02:00] home for you again?

[00:02:00] Karen: I--- so I'm from Japan and Vietnam, so

[00:02:05] Karen: yeah.

[00:02:05] Liang: So was it different there? Like with the [pandemic]--- because obviously like, I feel like here, things are very relaxed so..

[00:02:12] Karen: Um, I thought things were pretty relaxed in like both of my home countries, in Japan, everybody is masked and like they sanitize their hands really frequently, but I rarely see... like social distancing, which is kind of interesting. But people just treat it like a normal thing. Like they weren't scared of it or anything. And like I think here and in Vietnam, I think people were panicking over things [left untranscribed]. Right? In Vietnam, it didn't hit----- it didn't hit them as hard initially. So people were just like normal, like living, like normally they weren't masking all that much and things like that.

[00:02:56] Liang: And then how has COVID-19 [00:03:00] impacted the way that you treat others or like if you're meeting new people?

[00:03:04] Karen: I guess when I meet new people, I guess the first thing that I judge them for nowadays is whether they're like, pro or anti- mask. And I think it says a lot about them. I don't know, I guess you're just a bit more careful when you like meet new people. Yeah.

[00:03:24] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?

[00:03:29] Karen: I don't know. What kind of changes in lifestyle? I don't think my lifestyle has changed that much. I don't-- I don't go out there and like interact--- I guess I--- I stopped going to parties out of concern for like COVID and also because the party scene here sucks, but yeah, I think I-- so that's one change in lifestyle.

[00:03:50] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?

[00:03:55] Karen: During, when it was like... at its peak, I feel like which [00:04:00] was junior year, last year? I think, yeah, it was definitely like being at home, like stuck. I was stuck at home for like a month? And I wasn't going out and, it was kind of like driving me crazy a little bit. Like, I felt really isolated and the only people I were, I was talking to is my mom and dad. And there wasn't a lot of things to do in Japan. So...

[00:04:24] Liang: And how did you cope with being at home for the whole month?

[00:04:28] Karen: I mean, school distracted me for like a little. I started picking up like..... new tasks-- like hobbies, I guess I started working out. Yeah [laughs], which helped. And I, I don't know. I would like....., I would, I would watch a lot of YouTube videos to cope with it. Yeah.

[00:04:51] Liang: Anyone in particular?

[00:04:52] Karen: Sometimes I would watch like study videos. So it was kind of like you're studying with somebody... [laughs] or I would watch like a lot of [00:05:00] beauty or fashion content... things that would like help me, like give me tips on how to like improve specific parts of my life so that I can feel a bit better, you know?

[00:05:14] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:05:19] Karen: Yeah. Like when it happened in sophomore year, like the college like..... low key, like kicked us out. They were like, you got to go home. I was freaking out. I was like, "holy crap." Like people were running through all these toilet papers, you know, all this like hand sanitizer, like, how am I going to survive? But then I got home and then Japan was really relaxed about it. They were like super chill. People were going in malls, eating out and everything. It was funny, but yeah, I don't know, it was, yeah, it got relaxed over time, I think... Even with the whole Omicron thing now I think a lot of people are accepting that it's going to be like, what is it called again? An [00:06:00] epidemic, like you kind of had to live with it.

[00:06:02] Liang: Yeah.

[00:06:03] Karen: Yeah.

[00:06:03] Liang: Have you had any negative experiences during the pandemic, like related to masking... or just maybe how people see you?

[00:06:13] Karen: Not really. I think everything was fine. Initially masking a lot did feel uncomfortable, but it was important, right? So it's not like I'm not-- I'm going to stop masking for that sort of thing.

[00:06:27] Liang: Yeah. Have you or anyone, you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID-19?

[00:06:33] Karen: Um, so right before, when I left back home in sophomore year, my friends and I were walking downtown and we had like, people like honking their cars at us and somebody was making like, pig noises at us-- and it was weird.

[00:06:56] Liang: Really?

[00:06:57] Karen: Yeah. And like, and I don't know. [00:07:00] So I don't know if this is related, but I've noticed that like, places I used to go to, like the Friendtigue downtown, like they used to be really friendly... to me at least. And-- but like recently I've.... received a bit like of like

hostility. You know? Like they weren't being very nice to me, even the way they were like handling , like my bag of purchase, like that, the checkout station.

[00:07:37] Liang: So during the pandemic what did you learn?

[00:07:39] Karen: I guess it sorta gave me a time to like reflect on myself, you know? I, I stopped, I I'm trying to stop being very-- like reactive to things. Sort of like calmed me down a little. I don't know. I guess like the importance of like, [00:08:00] just of like day to day interactions, you know?

[00:08:04] Liang: Yeah, for sure. And then in the future, if there's [a] possible pandemic, do you have any advice or suggestions [for people]?

[00:08:11] Karen: I don't know. I yeah, I don't know. I mean, I could say be like kinder to yourself, whatever. [left untranscribed], but I feel like that's very cliché. That's a cliché thing to say, you know?

[00:08:25] Liang: Is there anything else that you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

[00:08:31] Karen: No, not really. I think.

[00:08:33] Liang: Okay.

[00:08:33] Karen: I think that's all I have. Yeah.

[00:08:35] Liang: Sounds good. Then that concludes our interview, thank you so much.

[00:08:38] Karen: Mhmm..

Little Orange

Dec 8, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:06] Little Orange: Uh, just like a people stay me away and we say hi to each other in a very far distance, like two meters. Yeah. And everyone wears a mask -- I think that is

[00:00:18] Liang: Like here or back home?

[00:00:20] Little Orange: Oh yeah. Uh, United States and China, we all stay peoples away. Yeah.

[00:00:30] Liang: During the pandemic, did you ever get sick?

[00:00:34] Little Orange: Uh, I don't get sick during the pandemic, but yeah, people always stay me away. Cause sometimes I smoke on the road. [laughing]. Yeah. Sometimes I smoke. That's a reason.

[00:00:47] Liang: So, how would you say that COVID has impacted the way that you treat other (people)--, like when you meet people?

[00:00:54] Little Orange: Well, I would say, uh, there [00:01:00] is nothing difference, because when I see people, I always say hi and share my hands. And, uh, so there is COVID and I always say hi and share on my hands, and not hug-- instead of... Yeah. Yeah.

[00:01:13] Liang: How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID?

[00:01:19] Little Orange: Well, at the beginning of COVID-19, I think I'm just doing my financial accounting final exam.

[00:01:26] Yeah. That's pretty hard because everyone has gone to home and I stay in Wooster. So it's quiet and the silence, I get well-prepared about my exam... I think that's good.

[00:01:39] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health affected during COVID-19?

[00:01:45] Little Orange: Well, actually I eat too much meat and lack of sport made me become fatter--- during the COVID... Yeah, that's the most significant impact of me [00:02:00] because I can't go outside. And when I go back to China, I need to isolate for about one month. And one month I stay in my room and play some computer games, and eat some junk food. Yeah.

[00:02:16] Liang: How was your social life impacted by COVID?

[00:02:21] Little Orange: Well, I start to meet someone in the internet because we play the game together --or just , we read the same book, so we write letters lighters or, emails.

[00:02:34] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19 if any?

[00:02:40] Little Orange: Well, one, I can say is? I didn't stay up to late night and, uh, I trying to sleep earlier, like around 10 and get up around six because, nothing to do. So I just. So I [00:03:00] just, uh, finish my job and going to bed . Then I get up in the morning , yeah... have my breakfast.

[00:03:08] Liang: So like, you think you started having more of a schedule?

[00:03:14] Little Orange: Yeah, I have more schedule and my life is getting better. I think during the COVID. Cause no one is annoying you, and you can do what you want. So I want to be healthier.

[00:03:25] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID?

[00:03:31] Little Orange: Uh, like I said, its about the visa. Yes. In the beginning of COVID-19 and Chinese border has a very restriction of the passengers' visa and their QR code. I don't know whether (anybody), um, mentioned it, but it's, uh, it's a, it's a code that's you need to report your temperature, or your sickness to the government, and [00:04:00] after 14 days, and you are able to, get into China. Yeah.

[00:04:06] Liang: So, were you were able to get your visa-- or?

[00:04:11] Little Orange: Well, yes. I prepare it for about two weeks. Report my temperatures.

[00:04:18] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed overtime?

[00:04:24] Little Orange: So-- what you mean about attitude?

[00:04:29] Liang: Um, maybe in regards to like feeling scared about it, or maybe feeling annoyed by it, or stressed by it?

[00:04:37] Little Orange: Oh, yeah. Actually a lot of Chinese included-- my parents very scared about it-- if they (the government) find one positive test of COVID-19, and they will block the whole city. Yeah. That's true. In China. But in America is-- uh, the situation is very different. I remember our headmaster [00:05:00] (President Sarah Bolton) sent an email to us-- and it says, last test, uh, "last week test we find only three (people) test positive, and that we are glad to share this good news to you--Right? But they didn't block the Wooster city (campus, or city....)..... ---- Right??

[00:05:17] Liang: Have you had any negative experiences during the pandemic?.

[00:05:21] Little Orange: Yeah, like you should wear mask to go to anywhere. And especially if you want to go, to somewhere else by bus or other public transportation, you need to wear a mask. Otherwise you should walk around, walk to that destination. Yeah.

[00:05:42] Liang: Have you or anyone, you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID-19?

[00:05:49] Little Orange: Yeah. Actually, the discrimination happened all the time in wooster.

[00:05:53] Liang: Really?

[00:05:53] Little Orange: Yeah, someone drive his car and, uh, and shouted to me. "Fuck you, Asian."

[00:06:00] Liang: Noooooo!!

[00:06:00] Little Orange: Yeah, that's true in Wooster (Ohio). And one day I just walk-- just outside the Lowry, and someone drive his car and shout it to me.

[00:06:10] Liang: Like like recently??

[00:06:12] Little Orange: Ah yes, recently.

[00:06:14] Liang: I'm so sorry!

[00:06:17] Little Orange: No it's fine-- it's fine. I-- I don't care because sometimes, I didn't realize, what they are talking, I just heard some dogs. Some dogs are blocking.

[00:06:29] Liang: During the pandemic, what did you learn?

[00:06:33] Little Orange: Uh, what did my learn? Well, I could say that sleep earlier is good for your health. [laughs]

[00:06:43] Liang: That is true.

[00:06:44] The second question is: if there is someone-- so like, even though we're still in the middle of the pandemic, like let's say it's back to normal, but then there is another, really bad pandemic. What advice would you give to someone who's like going through that?

[00:06:58] Little Orange: Well, stay away [00:07:00] from the crowds.

[00:07:01] Liang: Stay away from the crowds?

[00:07:03] Little Orange: Yeah, that's it. That's the only-- like suggestions I could get.

[00:07:10] Liang: So is there anything else you find important that you want to share that was not asked in this interview?

[00:07:18] Little Orange: Yeah, I want to share one opinion: is if someone gets sick or get COVID in China and their pets, like cats and dogs-- will be killed.

[00:07:31] Liang: Really?

[00:07:31] Little Orange: Yeah. Cause a lot of, uh, a lot of Chinese, they believe, this kind of pets will carry the virus. So, during the period of their host, to the isolation, and their pets was nobody cares, and (untranscribed) died in the home. Yeah. That's what I want to share, so even though we know the source of, uh COVID-19 is not a cat or a dog, but [00:08:00] people kill them. Yeah, that's true.

[00:08:05] Liang: Thank you so much.

[00:08:06] Little Orange: Yeah, that's fine thanks!

Xuan Han

Dec 7, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: Did you ever get sick during the COVID-19 pandemic? And how did people treat you when you're sick or experiencing symptoms?

[00:00:08] Xuan Han: So I think, I definitely get sick, like just two months ago, two months ago? It's I got a serious cold and, uh, I think people just treat me like normal, cause a lot of people get cold at that time. Maybe the flu or something.

[00:00:25] Liang: Um, how was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:00:29] Xuan Han: Well, I don't have a job but my study did get affected a lot because, uh, I don't know, the internet course? I mean the internet class, yeah. Changed-- changed a lot. Yeah.

[00:00:42] Liang: Um, in what ways was your health and mental health affected during COVID-19?

[00:00:48] Xuan Han: Well, cause, uh, I mean the course online, did change a lot and, uh, give me a lot of like pressure on academic, so made get my mental health a little bit, I got depressed a lot [00:01:00] during that time. Yeah.

[00:01:02] Liang: And how would you say that, like you coped with stress?

[00:01:06] Xuan Han: During the pandemic, I back to China and, uh, I study at-- at midnight and sleep at day and, I barely got out.... yeah-- I just stay at my home and, uh, you know, take the course which-- which is really depressing.

[00:01:23] Liang: How would you say your social life was impacted by COVID-19?

[00:01:26] Xuan Han: So social life-- cause a lot of the facility is closed, and, uh, I mean, it definitely decreased my social life? I barely got out, during the pandemic. So, yeah

[00:01:43] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-19, if any?

[00:01:48] Xuan Han: Yeah, cause like I said, I studied at midnight and uh got my whole life just-- I don't know how to say it. Yeah, the change of day and night --totally change.[00:02:00]

[00:02:00] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way people treat you? Slash, um, how has COVID-19 impacted the way that you treat others, with like meeting new people?

[00:02:11] Xuan Han: Yeah, I think cause we have to wear a mask? So maybe people treat each other, like cold-- in a cold way, maybe cause like we can't know their facial emotion? Something like that.... And it may seems cold, but I don't know, just, just like that.

[00:02:33] Liang: What, what was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?

[00:02:41] Xuan Han: Well, uh, the biggest challenge is about, uh, like instead off, uh, the online course change challenge, I also have problems with, uh, backing home, cause the ticket the flying ticket at that time is really expensive and hard to get [00:03:00] it. So I spend a lot of time and money to getting me back, during the pandemic

[00:03:08] Liang: Was there also like travel restrictions or ?

[00:03:11] Xuan Han: Yeah travel was like-- travel restriciton like I don't know like four-- four planes a week, at that time? Back to China. Yeah, it's really strict.

[00:03:23] Liang: How did you overcome that challenge?

[00:03:26] Xuan Han: Oh yeah, I got lucky. I didn't overcome it. My luck got me to overcome it. I just get a ticket luckily by the chance.

[00:03:38] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:03:42] Xuan Han: Yeah, I think when I back to China, people still treat the COVID really seriously. You have to wear masks, and if you don't, people will treat you like, not that good?

But, back here-- back to America, I think "it is not that serious", [00:04:00] but not that serious to get COVID... I dunno. Just, yeah, I think when I back here, I think I began to think COVID it's just a-- a serious cold or like-- yeah. Something like that.

[00:04:16] Liang: Have you had any negative experiences related to COVID-19?

[00:04:21] Xuan Han: Like what is a negative experience?

[00:04:25] Liang: So like for example, I was on the plane once and I was flying back to Minneapolis and someone on the plane didn't have a mask, so-- and it was like the person kind of right across from me in the aisle. And I said, "oh, do you need an extra mask, cause you don't have one?" and he just lashed out and was just being really mean about it, and I asked the flight attendant, I was like, "oh, he doesn't have a mask", so the flight attendant got him one. And then he was like, "are you happy?" like all this different stuff and-- it was just nasty, and, so I was wondering if you [00:05:00] had anything like that or--?

[00:05:01] Xuan Han: Um, honestly I didn't met, some things like that. I got lucky. [laughs.].

[00:05:08] Liang: Have you or anyone, you know, experienced any hate crimes during COVID-19? --And this could be like verbal or like...

[00:05:15] Xuan Han: Yeah, definitely. Since I'm a-- in Chinese-- and I saw a lot of comments about, you know, "the Chinese bad", "the Chinese virus" -- something like that. And, uh, I don't know, I mean, we don't want that. Right? We don't want that-- but I did saw a lot of like, comments like that. Yeah. But in real life. I didn't, I didn't hear about that.

[00:05:39] Liang: um, if there was someone who's going to deal with unexpected events, including a possible pandemic in the future. Um, do you have any advice or suggestions for them?

[00:05:54] Xuan Han: Maybe, maybe don't trust some [00:06:00] informal information? Cause back to China-- a lot of people-- once a time, there was a rumor about a specific medicine that people say-- that kind of medicine can help with COVID, but actually it is not. But in China, a lot of people, crazy about that medicine and just buy them all. But it turns out that that medicine doesn't help. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:06:26] Liang: Is there anything else you find important that you would want to share that has not been asked?

[00:06:34] Xuan Han: No, not in my mind.

[00:06:36] Liang: Well thank you.

[00:06:37] Xuan Han: Thank you.

DSM

Dec 7, 2021 (Interview Transcription)

[00:00:00] Liang: So question one is: did you ever get sick during the COVID- 19 pandemic?

[00:00:05] DSM: No.

[00:00:06] Liang: How was your job impacted during the beginning of COVID-19?

[00:00:10] DSM: Uh, when the coronavirus in the 2019, I was in senior high school. Um, so my job is-- is a student, but, um you know in the Chinese government policy, we should stop our class.. And stay at home. Yeah. And sometimes if the virus is seriously, uh, we can't go out from our home. Yeah, in China.

[00:00:39] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health affected during COVID-19?

[00:00:45] DSM: Uh, yeah. Um, obviously we should pay attention to our, uh, body health or something, or like -- like mental health, because you know, in China now, [00:01:00] we can't go out. So sometimes we--- our, mental health is uncomfortable, because we can't talk with my friends, or like go see a film with my friends, or have dinner-- and so, I think maybe, this pandemic makes us pay more attention to the body health and mental health, I think.

[00:01:25] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle have you made since COVID-19?

[00:01:29] DSM: It became slow. Yeah. It became slow, because-- um, because the school is stopped the class and the company also stop, all of the work, so we just need to stay at home all-- whole day. Right. So the rhythm of life became so slow.

[00:01:49] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19

[00:01:54] DSM: First, keep staying at home. [00:02:00] Yeah, keep staying at home and, um, and the second is to keep my body shape or like, weight, you know... Cause, if you stay at home, you can't do anything you want. Like, you just can have lunch, have breakfast, have dinner-- and you don't do some sports.

[00:02:20] Liang: Yeah.

[00:02:20] DSM: Yeah. So, the weight problem became the biggest problem for me. I increased uh, 15 kilogram

[00:02:28] [left untranscribed].

[00:02:32] Liang: Um, so you ended up working out a lot-- is that what you're saying? Okay, got it. Um, and then how has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:02:44] DSM: Uh, my attitude I think. Uh, because they are more, makes me numb. Numb, yeah.

[00:02:54] Liang: Numb?

[00:02:54] DSM: Yeah, numb-- because this problem is during a long time. [00:03:00] When coronavirus first appearance, uh, everyone became so fear. [brief clarification about saying the word "afraid" instead of "fear"]. Uh, but now, I think everyone don't care about that. Yeah, I think in China, just the Chinese government focus on this problem but the citizens of China, maybe don't care about it. Most of the citizens don't care about it which cost the second time of coronavirus or, third time of coronavirus.

[00:03:32] Liang: Have you or anyone, you know, experienced any hate crimes during COVID-19?

[00:03:38] DSM: You know, last question we talk about, the most of citizen, don't care about the coronavirus. One people in my city, I don't know his name, but when my city became safe, and he went to my city with coronavirus from abroad, [talking in agreement], from like French, or

yeah--[00:04:00] which means we should to keep to continue this person, which make us stay at home. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:04:09] Liang: So he was supposed to stay home?

[00:04:12] DSM: Yeah, so

[00:04:12] Liang: Or everyone had to stay home because he had it?

[00:04:14] DSM: No, not everyone, but someone-- someone says, "Ahhh, why you go French, and then why you go back to our city?" Or, yeah.

[00:04:24] Liang: Oh they're mad at him for coming back?

[00:04:27] DSM: Yeah. To hate him.. But it's just a [untranscribed], uh, because a lot of, most of our people, is mad.

[00:04:32] Liang: Mad.... [asking for clarification]

[00:04:33] DSM: Yeah, mad... [reiterating/ explaining what people were saying]: 'you shouldn't be here because you go to French and, uh, pass by a lot of city-- Why you bring this coronavirus to our city?' Yeah. A lot of problems.

[00:04:48] Liang: So, during the pandemic, what is your biggest takeaway?

[00:04:53] DSM: Well I think, I will pay more attention to my family's [00:05:00] body health, uh, than before. And, uh, to keep distance with others. Yes, that's it.

[00:05:09] Liang: And then, in the future, if there is another pandemic, what advice would you give to someone?

[00:05:19] DSM: Maybe-- to follow the policy-- follow the government. Yeah. Uh, if government tell to you, you should stay in home, which means that you should stay at home. Yeah. For the government.

[00:05:35] Liang: And then, is there anything else you find important that you want to share? That was not asked?

[00:05:41] DSM: Uh, yeah, I think the coronavirus is a problem of whole human. Yeah. Uh, so, we shouldn't, to hate each other.

[00:05:57] Uh, there was news [00:06:00] in, uh, in maybe 2020, uh, which says-- the coronavirus is Chinese virus. So, yeah, so we should to... we should hate Chinese people or, require Chinese people to compensate something. So yeah, I want to say the coronavirus is problem. I think we show unite as one. This problem should, whole people to [fight it?] Yeah, and to resolve this pandemic. Yeah.

[00:06:33] Liang: Everyone should work together. I see.

[00:06:36] Okay. Well, thank you so much for interviewing.

[00:06:38] DSM: Okay. No problem. Thank you.

Zoombi

Feb 11, 2022

[00:00:00] Liang: The first question is: how has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:06] Zoombi: Yeah. It's hard to say-- how exactly. Yeah. Cause I don't know. I guess I wasn't really paying too much attention pre-COVID. Social media really made me aware of it. The space we have on our phones and screens, that kind of became a hostile place. I guess it's-- seeing videos of old Asian people being assaulted on the street, from the back-- yeah, just seeing all of those videos

[00:00:28] Liang: It's horrific.

[00:00:29] Zoombi: It's yeah. It's, it's made visceral too by the fact that it's targeted or whatever. Right?

[00:00:34] Liang: Yeah. Was there any stigma about being an international student-- or like going abroad?

[00:00:38] Zoombi: I don't think so-- I don't know. Back in Mongolia, there's also a lot of, um, Anti- Chinese sentiment. I guess it's something that I've wrestled with all my life, it's like, what does it mean to be a Mongolian in the 21st century? You know.

[00:00:51] Yeah.

[00:00:53] We're not Russian, we're not ~Mongolian...---- We're not you know that 13th century, horse-riding, you know.. We're not a strong [00:01:00] nation state like China. We're not Japan. We're not central Asian... I don't know. And I think I've had to wrestle with that here personally as well. People would-- you know, assume a lot of things [i.e. that he was Chinese, or a different ethnicity] and I'd have to-- , like I guess my first few years, I was always a little bit combative, you know, it's like, "Hey! That's not [right]---", you know, but then after a while you just kinda go along with it...

[00:01:18] Liang: That's so sad!

[00:01:19] Zoombi: Well, it's not---- I mean, it's more convenience on my end rather than... You know?.... Cause people's ignorance is --- it's not MY job to be like "Hey, that's not right!" Or whatever, you know, I don't know. I I don't know, I'm not sure if that's a sufficient answer.

[00:01:38] Liang: In what ways was your health and mental health and social life impact[ed]?

[00:01:42] Zoombi: Yeah, I uh, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety during the pandemic. It seems to be some sort of a universal experience. I've had to deal with grief... um, a friend of mine who went here, like passed away--

[00:01:56] Liang: Really?

[00:01:56] Zoombi: --Last semester. Yeah. And it was a weird, weird time. [00:02:00] Um, and back home, you know, being an international student and being stuck here and not being able to go back home has I think--- done some damage there. Um... I think it was just the processes of doing schoolwork became a lot more difficult and , it's kind of hard to accommodate for that. Administration doesn't really know what's going on, but they'll send you care package reports... and I think if there's anything about the way that my mental health has been treated by the school, I think it's that, it's not very clear what the reaction to central protocol [is].

[00:02:37] Liang: So how has COVID-19 impacted the way that you treat others?

[00:02:42] Zoombi: This semester and last semester, trying to you know, be a little bit more, um, social again? Yeah I just forgotten a little bit about the costs of being social or whatever.

[00:02:53] Liang: It's definitely a thing to get used to. I would agree. So what kind of changes in lifestyle did you make [00:03:00] since COVID-19, if any?

[00:03:02] Zoombi: Uh, I've integrated yoga into my weekly schedule... Like I've been--- just anything to keep, you know, [points to head] this guy from thinking. Just things to give me a little bit of structure, I guess. I don't know. I don't think I've made that huge of a lifestyle change other than small things meditations and yoga.

[00:03:24] Liang: Um, what was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?

[00:03:33] Zoombi: I was, I was stuck here in the states for two years. Um, I was in Maryland, for the most part of it, um, I was just stuck really in my brother's flat. And my brother was stuck in Mongolia and his wife, my sister-in-law was stuck in China. I'd have friends visit, but mostly it was just me in that-- white walls. I was slowly going insane there. I didn't have a car there-- America is just not a very walkable place. Um, [00:04:00] so , it's kind of difficult to get around.

[00:04:03] Liang: How would you say that you coped with having to stay.....-- not being able to move?

[00:04:07] Zoombi: I guess I've tried being more.... It's-- it's kind of a weird thing of trying to be connected with people on the other side of the planet. You know, it's the more you're on Instagram, the more you know, like on video calling... the more weird and--- the stranger, it feels almost. Like a paradoxical. Even if you're talking every day, even if you're, , it's not the same you know?

[00:04:30] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID changed over time?

[00:04:32] Zoombi: I think I also had to approach it somewhat, you know, systemically to you know-- it seems this is just a normal thing for our capitalist system, you know. Everyday people are so gaslit. And it's not only-- just Republicans saying, you know, crazy stuff about vaccination and stuff, but it's also Democrats saying it's safe to go out and vote in person and stuff. You know, there's mixed information constantly. And I at times even kind of wonderous why, [00:05:00] everyone isn't a conspiracy theorist or whatever. It's a crazy world we live in.

[00:05:04] Liang: And then have you, or anyone you know, experienced any discrimination?

[00:05:08] Zoombi: Um, that friend in New York. Yeah. Apparently he'd be called , uh, he be called "chink" and stuff, on the subway, apparently like-- when I visited him, uh, man, he would just have the whole set up, he'd just have the hoodie, the glasses, the mask, and every pr-- yeah.

[00:05:25] Liang: When did you visit him?

[00:05:27] Zoombi: He visited me in Maryland, uh, sometime during the pandemic-- while semesters were online.

[00:05:34] Liang: So if things do go back to normal, and someone has to go through another pandemic like this. What advice would you give to them?

[00:05:43] Zoombi: Um, what kind of advice? You know-- take it easy. There's not a whole lot. You can do. There's only so much you can do, you know? And I , yeah, I guess a part of that is depressi--, but also it takes that [00:06:00] weight off your...

[00:06:02] Liang: Is there anything else that you find important that you want to share that was not asked?

[00:06:07] Zoombi: Yeah. Okay. Um, I'm relying on this New York friend I think from my answers, but he was telling me. Actually, he seems to have found a lot of Asian, Pacific Islanders, coalition groups that put up theater works. In a weird way, I guess, as a reaction to the spike in hate crime, you know, there has been some sort of, I don't know, attempt at creating stable environments for young Asians to express themselves. Yeah.

[00:06:42] I think that's a really interesting thing-- that um, antagonism between the anti-Asian American hate, and the Black Lives Matter movement or just-- it-- -- cause--

[00:06:55] Liang: like comparing them?

[00:06:56] Zoombi: Yeah, like-- we know when you do experience racism, I would NEVER

[00:07:00] ever, you know-- compare racist experiences of that I've had to-- a black man in, you know, in America, you know?

[00:07:08] Liang: Yeah.

[00:07:08] Zoombi: It's good to have a United front, it's good to have coalition, but it's-- at the same, I think it defeats the purpose when you start-- when you start comparing and , I don't know. I don't know. It's just two different experiences. It's just not the same.

[00:07:22] Liang: Okay well that concludes our interview.

[00:07:24] Zoombi: Awesome. All right. Look at that. How'd I do? How'd I do?

Eric

Dec 9, 2021

[00:00:00] Liang: Okay, this is Eric's interview. And the first question is how has COVID-19 impacted the way that people treat you?

[00:00:10] Eric: So for me, uh, when the COVID-19 has happened I still in America, cause like I have high school in United State. So--- I feel like some people probably think like I am Asian and will like, uh, you know, like discriminate, but I don't know. Like sometimes they just like use those things through their eyes. They don't really speak, like it's like, uh, against Asian things. So sometimes I was afraid people will like say those things so, yeah.

[00:00:43] Liang: But no one said anything?

[00:00:45] Eric: No one said anything.

[00:00:46] Liang: Did you ever get sick during the COVID pandemic-- and it could be like a cold or ??

[00:00:53] Eric: I think yeah, I catch a cold like this semester.

[00:00:57] Liang: And how did people treat you when [00:01:00] you were sick or when you had like cold symptoms?

[00:01:03] Eric: I don't really tell anyone I'm sick so-- except for my roommate and my roommate is alright.

[00:01:09] Liang: Um, How was your job impacted during the pandemic?

[00:01:15] Eric: Well, at the time, my job is in Lowry and it's all right cause like-- because like it's COVID 19, Lowry need more people, and they increase the salary. Yeah. So it's actually good for me.

[00:01:30] Liang: And in what ways was your health and mental health affected during the pandemic?

[00:01:37] Eric: Well, like last semester, like the winter--- my mental health is not that good cause like, you know, like, cause there's not much people in the campus and also like it's the winter and you don't really want to do and anything just want to stay in your like dorm and. Yeah, it's kind of lonely feel like that way and not good. Yeah. I don't really want to like, do my [00:02:00] class, do my homework. Yeah.

[00:02:03] Liang: How has COVID-19 impacted the way you treat other people when you're meeting new people?

[00:02:10] Eric: I mean, usually we meet without mask, but at this time now-- always with mask. Yes. So sometimes I haven't like see like their real face. I only know what it looks like with mask. So

[00:02:23] Liang: What kind of changes in lifestyle did you make since COVID-- if any?

[00:02:29] Eric: Yeah. Like in COVID-19 I did a lot of food delivery. Yeah, cause I don't want to move.

[00:02:36] Liang: What was the biggest challenge that you faced during the course of COVID-19?

[00:02:44] Eric: Yeah, it's probably like the time. I don't do homework. I wanted to sleep. Yeah. I had to do it. So at that time like, I drink a lot of coffee to like, let me to work like during the night and yeah, it's kind [00:03:00] of struggling, but yeah. I feel like overcome this.

[00:03:05] Liang: How has your attitude about COVID-19 changed over time?

[00:03:10] Eric: I mean, at first, I really hope COVID-19 can just go away like fastly, but now I feel like it's not the easiest thing I can do is just like stay waiting. Yeah. Yeah. Just wear mask and do everything, like I can do in COVID-19.

[00:03:31] Liang: Have you or anyone that you know, experienced any discrimination during COVID?

[00:03:38] Eric: Um, yeah, I think like one of my high school classmates who is also Asian, have experienced like discrimination in COVID-19.

[00:03:48] Yeah. He was talking about like when he was on a bus and there was people shout out to him like "get out our country" something like that.

[00:03:57] Liang: And did he tell [00:04:00] anyone or--? I mean besides you?

[00:04:02] Eric: I'm not sure. Yeah. He told me, but yeah.

[00:04:06] Liang: So for the reflection questions, the first one is during the pandemic what did you learn?

[00:04:13] Eric: Yeah, no, there are a lot of thing, like, I learned how to study online, I feel like the time management is very important and also like I need to focus. Cause sometimes, I think those online class really hard for me to focus. Find a way to focus is very important.

[00:04:35] Liang: In the future, if there's another pandemic, what advice would you give to someone?

[00:04:38] Eric: So I feel like the most important thing is to like, keep you mental health. Cause like in the COVID- 19, it must it must like, uh, big damage to your like mental health. So you need to have those like, uh, protection such as like: Make [00:05:00] more connection to your friends and like talk to them. Like we do talk, FaceTime, and those things, I think like help you to keep your mental healthier.

[00:05:12] Liang: The last question is, is there anything else you find important that you want to share? That was not.

[00:05:22] Eric: I'm not sure. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:05:23] Liang: Then that concludes our interview, thank you so much!

[00:05:26] Eric: Okay, thank you!