A Case Study of Visibility, Diversity, and Inclusion: *Live From New York!*

An Analysis of the Chinese Hosts on Saturday Night Live

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Abstract

With a runtime of 47 years, Saturday Night Live has long served as a societal mirror that captures and creates popular culture. In recent years the show has been criticized for its lack of diverse hosts, cast and staff. Out of 930 episodes only seven episodes have been hosted by an Asian host, four of whom identify as Chinese. This research examined those four episodes through quantitative analysis, finding that the qualities of each of the hosts' characters range from just below neutral to moderately positive. The use of stereotypes and satirical racial humor varied. Jackie Chan and Lucy Liu's episodes had the highest concentration of both overt and covert stereotypes, while Awkwafina had a similar number with a lower concentration. The infrequency of Chinese representation on the show is a social issue. Such a small sample size does not allow for conclusions to be drawn. Rather, this research paints a picture of how the four Chinese hosts are portrayed on SNL as influenced by their own unique identities and the year of their appearance. In addition, the insights this case study offers has implications for shows performed in colleges and K-12 schools. Directors and sponsors of school based shows can learn from this case study how to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and how to advance diversity, equity and inclusion at their institutions.

Introduction

In the fall of 2019 Bowen Yang joined the Saturday Night Live (SNL) cast and became the first Asian cast member 44 years after the show's inception (Griffith, 2019). The addition of Yang illuminated a greater issue at 30 Rock, SNL's clear lack of diversity among cast members and hosts. SNL serves as a mirror for popular culture, its content both influences and is influenced by what is trending in the United States (Kreller, 2014). This societal interaction shapes the public perception in a variety of ways. By creating dozens of characters viewed by mainstream audiences every week it plays a role in strengthening and weakening stereotypes depending on what actors play which characters. This role, along with its consistent format and leadership, makes the late-night comedy a prime archive to analyze.

Two years after Yang's historic addition, Marvel's first Asian superhero Simu Liu (SL) addressed the lively Studio 8H crowd (Liu, 2021). After telling the crowd how he landed the role in the first place, he paused to acknowledge his role in SNL's history.

"I'm also the first Chinese host on SNL…" SL said, taking a breath as the crowd erupted in cheers, "To be the fourth Chinese host on the show."

The moment revealed both the lack of representation and time that had elapsed since the other three Chinese hosts took the stage. The first Chinese host graced the stage 21 years earlier, none other than actor Jackie Chan (JC). Chan addressed the rowdy crowd as the first martial artist to host the show with no mention of his ethnicity. Seven months later, actress Lucy Liu (LL) stepped onto the same stage and delivered a monologue that sharply contrasted Chan's (Wang, 2018). It featured a satirical video montage of her time as the first Asian woman to host the show. Dressed in traditional Chinese clothing, LL ironed cast member's clothes, served a dog for dinner and painted producer Lorne Michaels's nails.

Almost two decades would pass before another Chinese host appeared on the show. Awkwafina's 2018 episode opened with her recounting waiting outside 30 Rock during Lucy Liu's episode.

"So thank you Lucy for opening the door," she said, "I wasn't able to make it into the building back then but 18 years later I am hosting the show."

The four Chinese hosts of Saturday Night Live represent a research sample that crosses decades and genders. JC's appearance in 2000 as a middle aged Chinese martial artist whose first language is not English contrasts with SL's appearance as a young Chinese actor in 2021. Comparatively, the episodes starring LL and A use their Chinese ethnicities in very different connotations. By analyzing the characters they are cast as and the societal stereotypes that exist in American media, these four episodes give insight into how Chinese people are represented in popular American television.

Asian Representation in American Television

*T*he absence of Chinese hosts on SNL is a symptom of a greater problem. Looking at the literature surrounding Asian representation in American television, the issue dates to television's creation. L.S. Kim analyzed Asian

American representation on TV in the decades since the 1960's by documenting the major (or lack thereof) representation of Asian people and culture in American television (Kim, 2004). Before the 60's, housekeeper and "help" roles were typically filled by Black Americans. The Civil Rights Movement and the NAACP changed that narrative in the media (Kim, 2004). The movement opened a void for these domestic roles and throughout the 60's and 70's Asian Americans were primarily featured as servants in white households. Most notably *The Courtship of Eddie's Father* starred Oscar Award-winning actress Miyoshi Umeki as the motherly figure in a bachelor father-son household.

With the backdrop of the Vietnam War, the following decades lacked Asian representation on the silver screen. The wildly popular anti-war comedy M*A*S*H* spanned the entire decade. Taking place in Korea, it was one of the only shows that featured Asian characters on a regular basis. Despite its location, the show centered around the American and white soldiers, featuring countless nameless Korean characters. One credited actress was Rosalind Chao, who played Soon-Lee Klinger in the last two episodes of the show. She appears as an incarcerated Korean refugee who is put under the watch of Sgt. Maxwell Klinger, who ends the show by staying in Korea to find Soon-Lee's parents. Chao found later success in various television shows, including Star Trek: Next Generation.

Moving into the 90's, Margaret Cho's *All-American Girl* (1994) was the first American sitcom to feature an Asian American family. Despite the show's poor reviews, it paved the way for creating complex Asian characters. It was a far jump from the previous decades where the assigned tropes were foreigner, domestic servant and model minorities.

Nielsen ratings provided reports on viewership, specifically on who watches television shows and when. At the time of L.S. Kim's (2004) publication on Asian American representation in television, special reports were released on the viewership of African Americans and Hispanic Americans, but none on the viewership of Asian Pacific Americans. Nielsen put out its first report on AAPI (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) viewership in 2020 (Nielsen 2020).

Kwak, (2004) unpacks the nature of Asian Americans in television by examining the role of the media in culture and its relationship with Asian Americans. Kwak notes that Asian Americans have not had the same reckoning with humor that Latino and Black Americans have. She points to the "model minority" myth as the reason for this. Harvard Law School defines the model minority myth as such:

> "Since its introduction in popular media more than a half century ago, the term "model minority" has often been used to refer to a minority group perceived as particularly successful, especially in a manner that contrasts with other minority groups. The term could, by its definition and logic, be applied to any number of groups defined by any number of criteria, but it is perhaps most commonly used to frame discussions of race. In particular, the model minority designation is often applied to Asian Americans, who, as a group, are often praised for apparent success across academic, economic, and cultural domains-successes typically offered in contrast to the perceived achievements of other racial groups (2019)."

Kwak said that this myth feeds into the fact that much of the public does not acknowledge the existence of anti-Asian discrimination. This complacency allows tired stereotypes to continue to exist, almost under the radar. Stereotypes include the "passive, scholarly foreigners who cannot assimilate" or "characters restricted to cliched occupations and marginalized with comical accents and mannerisms" (Kwak, 2004). The role of Asian Americans in television media can be sorted into side characters or foreigners. In news media they fall into a similar role, either perpetual foreigners or model minorities.

Wu (1997) also examined the personifications of Asian characters in American media. Through content analysis, he used a five point scale to measure positive and negative traits. He measured this against European American characters and found a gap in the perceptions. Asian American characters skewed slightly towards the negative traits such as stupid, poor and weak. European characters, on the other hand, skewed towards the positive traits such as smart, rich and strong. The only negative traits attributed to European Americans were aggression and unhappiness, while Asian Americans were attributed entirely negative traits.

Jenn Fang's piece for Teen Vogue (2018) looked at the enduring practice of "yellowface" in American media. Yellowface is the practice of non-Asian, primarily white people dressing and acting as Asian characters. It can be traced back to the mid-18th century where white actors performed *The Orphan of China* in yellowface and popularized its use in American theater. The practice was regarded as a bonafide makeup technique as recently as 1995. The negative implications of yellowface are highlighted by the severe underrepresentation of Asian Americans in American television and cinema. University of Southern California researchers found that only 4.4% of speaking characters are Asian, despite the fact that they are the fastest growing population in the U.S. (Fang, 2018). The practice is still used, as seen in 2017 when Scarlett Johansson played *Ghost in the Shell's* Japanese protagonist and Matt Damon's portrayal of a Chinese warrior in *Great Wall*, (2016).

Saturday Night Live and Representation

Awkwafina was the first Asian American woman to host Saturday Night Live in over 18 years during her 2018 episode. She was also the second Asian American woman to host, following Lucy Liu in 2000. Saturday Night Live has long struggled with diversity and inclusion, both within its cast and its selection of hosts.

"According to a 2016 study by Indiewire, 90 percent of the show's hosts between 1975 and May 2016 were white. Only 6.8 percent of the 826 total hosts counted were black, while 1.2 percent were considered Hispanic and 1.1 percent 'other.' In recent years, the show has made an effort to diversify its cast, which is now 63 percent white. Since 1975, SNL has aired over 800 episodes across 44 seasons" (Kilkenny 2018)."

This exclusion is not new for SNL. Gates et al. (2013) examined Eddie Murphy's tenure on the show and how African American humor is represented. Gates offered a perspective on how minority cast members are marginalized and put into certain boxes as comedians. According to Gates, Murphy was able to navigate around this by toeing the line of white, "mainstream" humor and black humor and social commentary. His experience on the show was successful for a number of reasons. Murphy is undeniably talented and exudes star quality, but he also made it clear to the producers that he saw how Garrett Morris, the first African American cast member and Murphy's predecessor, was treated and that he would not accept the same treatment. He was able to work with writers to put his own voice into sketches, so his characters were not all cookie cutter stereotypes.

Bowen Yang's addition to the cast was similarly significant. He is the son of Chinese immigrants and the first Asian American to join the cast (Coleman, 2019). The news was unfortunately overshadowed by revelations of past racist jokes made by Shane Gillis, another new cast member. These revelations revealed the dissonance between where SNL is going in terms of diversity and what it still needs to address to get there. The outcry after Gillis's comments entered the mainstream highlighted the shift in public opinion concerning Asian American representation. Framke's 2020 interview with Yang gives insight into his views on being the first Asian cast member, as well as the first openly-gay member. He said that he had exhausted many of his Asian celebrity impersonations when auditioning. Yang expressed his disdain for the idea that he is the "token" Asian cast member. Previous to Yang, production designers and white men were cast to play Asian public figures and characters like Kim Jong-Un and Star Trek's Sulu.

Yang's inclusion on Saturday Night Live's cast begs the question of how the portrayal of Asian people has shifted since Jackie Chan's appearance back in 2000. To examine this, the researcher analyzed the episodes of the only four Chinese people to host the show: Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, Awkwafina and Simu Liu. These four hosts represent Chinese women, men, immigrants, and Americans, giving a scope for the intersection of these identities. Though some hosts are given creative liberty, the roles assigned to them are crafted by SNL's writers. This paper will look at how their ethnicity is connected to those roles.

Stereotypes and Archetypes

According to Rohrbacher, (2015), ten archetypes can be found in comedy. They range from The Anchor, a character who is rooted in reality as a means for the audience to relate with, to The Buffoon, a character who exists to be laughed at. The archetypes provide a framework to understand different characters' purposes, rather than define the character. Many characters fall under multiple archetypes, while others fall under none.

Media Action for Asian Americans (MANAA) put out a memo in 2017 describing common stereotypes of Asian people in American media and how to combat them, (Media Action Network for Asian Americans, 2017). Among them include the foreigner who cannot assimilate into modern society, predatory immigrants who steal jobs, unattractive male leads and cliched occupations like Korean grocers or laundry workers. MANAA created the list in response to the unbalanced portrayal of Asians in mainstream media. Some stereotypes are more covert than others, but have been associated with Asian Americans due to their frequency in television and film.

MANAA is a volunteer-based media watchdog that has combated negative portrayals of Asian people in media since 1992. Their work spans decades, including successfully pressuring the major networks to air shows with Asian leads (first name in the credits) in their primetime slots, organizing protests over the whitewashed The Last Airbender movie, and getting CBS radio to mandate sensitivity training for employees and on-air talent after a racist segment was allowed to air in 2006 (History of MANAA, 2006).

Terms

Throughout this paper, the terms Chinese, Asian and Asian Americans are used interchangeably. To keep consistency, anytime a host's ethnicity is referenced it is referring to their Chinese ethnicity. The content analysis conducted only focuses on Chinese representation, though nuances from Asian American culture are included as Chinese people make up about 24% of Asian Americans (Pew, 2022). The terms Asian and Asian American are umbrella terms that encapsulate all descendents of Asia, including Chinese people. The literature the researcher gathered mainly focused on Asian American representation rather than specifically Chinese representation, hence both terms are used throughout the paper.

Research Questions

RQ 1: How does Saturday Night Live cast its Chinese hosts and are they portrayed as covert or overt stereotypes?

RQ 2: When a Chinese host's ethnicity is used for comedic purposes, how is it portrayed?

The Anchor The anchor is intelligent and grounded. This character is often the pillar of their group and uses sarcasm as a comedic weapon.	**The Dreamer** The dreamer is an eternal optimist with a healthy dose of self-deprecating humor. While all characters have desires, this character is defined by desire.	**The Neurotic** The neurotic is defined by insecurity, filtered through intelligence. This character has a big brain that can process all possible outcomes at once, which can be quite overwhelming!	**The Rebel** The rebel has a God complex. Their disdain for life's rules drives them to danger and deceit. They think they can do anything they want and get away with it.	**The Innocent** Sweet and lovable, the innocent is made of love. Pure as the driven snow, they have no inherent negative qualities. They can be naive, but you can trust them with your life.
The Eccentric The eccentric is unique, which by definition means rare. Far from spacey, this character is hyper-connected to the world, invested, and curious.	**The Buffoon** Dimwitted is my favorite word to summarize this character. They're not dumb—no character is. To call any character that is judgmental and generally inaccurate. Buffoons are socially inept with often iffy intentions.	**The Cynic** The Cynic is a world-weary defeatist. While often negative, they are simultaneously wonderful friends, strong allies, and invested in life. The mistake actors make with this character is playing like they don't care about anything. Untrue.	**The Narcissist** They love themselves and things in exactly that order. Entitled is a very particular quality, which this character exhibits to an inordinate degree.	**The Player** This character lives in pursuit of just one thing: sex with no strings attached. They're fun, bold, and sexually charged, but generally lack substance, even more so than the narcissist.

Figure 1. (Rohrbacher 2015)

Method

To answer these questions the researcher examined the episodes of Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, Awkwafina and Simu Liu. The category was narrowed to hosts of Chinese ethnicity, as "Asian American" excluded Canadian Simu Liu and expanded the category to hosts of all Asian countries, many of which hold different stereotypes. Chinese people make up about 24% of the US Asian population (Pew, 2021). The four episodes were watched in chronological order, beginning with Jackie Chan's 2000 episode.

To accurately depict each host's appearance on the show, the researcher chose to conduct a content analysis of the episodes. Content analysis is a research method used to understand all aspects of a certain show by establishing the presence of certain phrases, costume choices and characteristics (Berelson, 1952). For this particular content analysis, the researcher began by watching the episode all the way through and taking notes on any themes. Then each was rewatched, with the researcher noting the occupation, ambition and characteristics of the roles. The character's role in the skit and any distinctive personality traits were coded. Examples of these are loud, silly, reserved, studious or serious. To determine the comedic role each character played, the researcher used Rohrbacher's ten comedy archetypes (Rohrbacher, 2015, see **Figure 1**). The researcher also noted if the character's ethnicity was a central part of the character.

On third watch, the researcher examined the comedic purpose of the character: are jokes made at their expense? If their ethnicity is important to the sketch, is the connotation negative, positive or neutral?

After watching each episode three times, the researcher identified categories from noted trends in characters. Looking at the personalities of each character, the researcher noted where they fell on Wu's positive-negative 5 point scale for each trait, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive (Wu, 1997). For example, if the character is depicted as being athletic and strong, they receive a 5 on the scale from weak-strong. After examining the personality traits, the character's average score revealed how positively or negatively they were portrayed.

The next step the researcher took was examining the occupations and ambitions of the characters and comparing them to historical stereotypes. Examples of these are the passive domestic worker and the foreigner who cannot assimilate or speak English. MANAA defines common stereotypes and the researcher used the list to identify them within the episodes. The number of explicit stereotypes were totaled between all episodes.

Finally, the researcher looked at the host's role in each sketch. If their ethnicity is used for humor in the sketch, the researcher noted whether it was positive, negative or neutral. If the host was explicitly the butt of the joke then the researcher flagged it for emphasis. The number of times hosts appeared with another Asian person was also noted. Synthesizing all of this information into a table provides a broader look at representation within the episodes. Looking at the number of positive attributes, number of times characters were explicit stereotypes and comedic role in each sketch allowed the researcher to conclude how Chinese hosts are cast on Saturday Night Live.

This study cannot be extricated from the implicit biases that the researcher holds. To strengthen the findings, the researcher (Z) trained another researcher to conduct the same study. The second researcher (X) read the same MANAA and Vogue articles on common Asian stereotypes, then filled out blank versions of the tables Z used to follow the same steps. Throughout the findings, the first table is done by Z and the second is done by X.

It must be acknowledged that judging character traits will inherently be biased. Between the two studies, it became clear that there is a gray area when it comes to determining a character's comedic role or defining personality traits. What one researcher saw as a display of aggression, another saw as a display of power. Their judgements were informed by their own life experiences. When watching Jackie Chan's parody of Calgon, researcher X, who is a part of Generation X, immediately identified the reference while researcher Z, who is a part of Generation Z, did not.

Findings

Upon initial viewing, the progression in representation is clear. Jackie Chan (JC) starred in four sketches in his 2000 episode. Lucy Liu (LL) was featured in five. Awkwafina (A) and Simu Liu (SL) each appeared in seven. JC did not play the lead role in any of his sketches. It's important to note that English is not Chan's first language so there was a language barrier, leading to a greater use of physical comedy in his sketches.

Using Wu's method, the researchers measured the traits of each character on a five-point scale to see how positively each was portrayed. **Figures 2 and 3** display these findings. Lucy Liu was the only host to fall below the neutral 3 on both studies, with a 2.92 and 2.86 as her average score. LL fell in the stupid/smart category, with a 1.2 and 1.6 reflecting the other ditzy characters she portrayed. In the irrational/rational category researcher Z scored JC a 1.25 while X scored him a 2.75. JC often played characters that exploded into

	repulsive/ attractive	weak/ strong	powerless/ potent	stupid/ smart	unhappy /happy	poor/ rich	dependent/ independent	disobedient/ obedient	aggressive/ meek	Irrational /rational	Average
JC	3	4.5	4	3	3.5	2	3	3.25	3	1.25	3.05
LL	3.8	3.2	2.8	1.2	2.8	3.6	3.2	2.8	3.4	2.4	2.92
A	4.286	4	3.571	3.429	3	2.857	4.143	2.571	3.285	3.286	3.443
SL	3.857	3.143	3.143	3.571	3.143	3.714	3.571	3.143	3.571	2.714	3.357
Average	3.736	3.711	3.379	2.8	3.111	3.042	3.479	2.941	3.314	2.413	3.193

Figure 2, by researcher Z

	repulsive/a ttractive	weak/ strong	powerless/p otent	stupid/ smart	unhappy/ happy	poor/ rich	dependent/ independent	disobedient/ obedient	aggressive/ meek	irrational/ rational	Average
JC	2.25	3	3.5	3	4.25	2.75	3	3.25	3	2.75	3.075
LL	3.4	2.4	2.4	1.6	3.4	3	2.6	3.8	3.2	2.8	2.86
A	3.429	3.571	3.857	3.143	3.143	3.143	3.571	2.571	2.571	2.714	3.171
SL	3.857	3.571	3.429	3.571	3.286	3.714	3.286	3	3.286	2.857	3.386
Average	3.234	3.136	3.296	2.829	3.52	3.152	3.114	3.155	3.014	2.78	3.123

Figure 3, by researcher X

Average	3.193
Women (LL/A)	3.181
Men (JC/SL)	3.203

Figure 4

Average	3.123
Women (LL/A)	3.016
Men (JC/SL)	3.23

Figure 5

	Innocent	Buffoon	Rebel	Anchor	Narcissist
Jackie Chan	1	1	1	0	0
Lucy Liu	0	2	1	0	2
Awkwafina	2	0	2	2	0
Simu Liu	1	0	0	2	0

Figure 6, Z

	Innocent	Dreamer	Rebel	Anchor	Eccentric
Jackie Chan	2	1	1	0	0
Lucy Liu	2	1	0	0	1
Awkwafina	1	0	2	3	1
Simu Liu	1	0	0	3	1

Figure 7, X

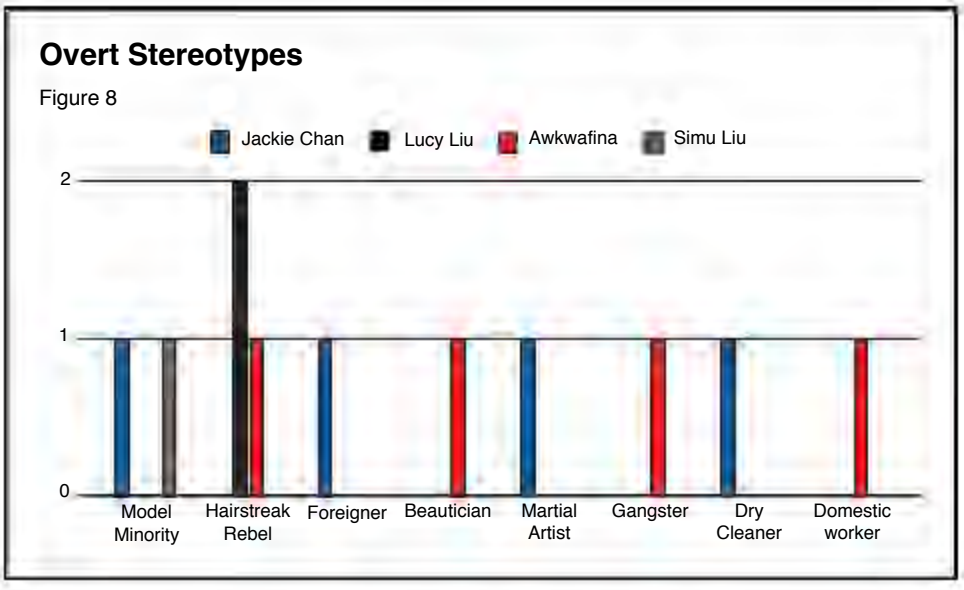
aggressive or strange outbursts at times, but typically remained mellow which explains the discrepancy. JC also scored low in the poor/rich category, as most of his characters were in low-paying occupations such as dry cleaning and a worker digging a hole to the center of the Earth. JC and LL's characters can generally be sorted into two categories. They are either quiet and timid, following the shadow of the other characters or they are aggressive and over the top. A's and SL's characters were more complex, making it harder to distinguish clear traits.

The average score **(Figures 4 [Z] and 5 [X])** of the characters skewed positively, just above neutral. The men scored a little higher than the women in both studies, leading by an average of 0.118. The lowest average scores by category in ascending order were irrational/rational, stupid/smart, and disobedient/obedient. The highest scores varied among researchers. Researcher Z found that the highest in descending order were repulsive/attractive, weak/strong, and dependent/independent. Researcher X found that the highest in descending order were unhappy/happy, powerless/potent, and repulsive/attractive.

Figures 6 and 7 measured the top five comedic archetypes (described in Figure 1) that the researchers identified in characters. For researcher Z, the buffoon and the narcissist only appeared in the earlier episodes where LL plays a ditzy lumberjack and JC plays an equally ditzy yoga instructor. The anchor only appeared in later episodes, such as SL's role as a frustrated game show contestant. Both researchers only identified the anchor in A and SL's episodes. In general, the archetypes were pretty diverse with the rebel, anchor and innocent appearing most often.

Lucy Liu and Awkwafina were the only hosts to impersonate celebrities. They played Catharine Zeta Jones and Sandra Oh, respectively. LL impersonated a white woman, while A impersonated a Korean woman.

Moving onto stereotypes, **Figure 8** displays the overt stereotypes identified by the researcher using MANAA's list of common tropes. The researchers identified the same stereotypes so only one chart was required. All four of Jackie Chan's roles fell into a common stereotype, while only one of Simu Liu's seven characters were identified as stereotypes. SL played roles that were starkly different from his predecessors. He played a professor, a "finance bro" and a highly decorated army official. Lucy Liu's monologue was excluded from this section for its potential to skew the data. The intention of the skit was for LL to



	Overt	Covert
Jackie Chan	2	2
Lucy Liu	1	3
Awkwafina	2	1
Simu Liu	2	0

Figure 9, 2

	Overt	Covert
Jackie Chan	3	1
Lucy Liu	1	1
Awkwafina	1	1
Simu Liu	2	0

Figure 10, 2

impersonate as many Chinese stereotypes as possible, with upwards of eleven identifiable instances.

The researchers then noted how many sketches, including the monologue, the host's ethnicity was brought in. An example of the overt references were when Jackie Chan played a man digging a hole from China and did not speak English. Lucy Liu's aforementioned monologue is another example. An example of a covert reference is the Chinese decorations in JC's dry cleaning sketch and gong noise (**Figures 9 and 10**). Jackie Chan was the only host to not mention his ethnicity in his opening monologue. Every other host's introduction centered around their ethnicity. Instead, he talked about his martial arts background and being the first martial artist to host SNL.

Simu Liu was the only host to appear in a sketch with another person of Asian descent. He and cast member Bowen Yang appeared in three together. Jackie Chan, on the other hand, was the only cast member to appear alongside a non-Asian person playing an Asian person. Horatio Sanz appeared as martial artist, Sammo Hung, during JC's monologue.

Appearances also played a role in stereotypes, particularly with the women. In Hollywood there is a common trope of "rebellious Asian women with colorful hair" that stems from the idea that Asian women must Westernize themselves to be seen as independent thinkers (Chen, 2017). Two of Lucy Liu's characters fell under this trope and embodied its rebellious nature. One of Awkwafina's characters fell under the trope, though not as overtly.

Discussion

As seen from the data, Saturday Night Live casts their Chinese hosts in moderately positive roles. They aren't vilified or idolized, with many characters falling close to neutral. Roles have become more positive and more frequent over time. Despite the increased positivity, the hosts cannot escape stereotyping. Explicit stereotypes have declined over the years, but they still exist. Awkwafina fell into the same number of stereotypes as Jackie Chan did in 2000, though hers were less frequent.

This progression could be due to several factors. For one, Bowen Yang was a writer when Awkwafina hosted and a cast member when Simu Liu hosted, meaning there was at least one Chinese person in the room when these sketches were created. Additionally, Asian representation has become a bigger conversation in Hollywood along with the societal reckoning with diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's important to note that these hosts do not represent Chinese people in general. Their individual identities also influence the characters they are written as portraying.

Hosts' ethnicities have always been central to their appearance on the show but it's shifted with each host. Beginning with Jackie Chan, he was the only host to not mention his ethnicity during his monologue. Being Chinese was central to all of his characters though often through covert stereotypes such as the IT guy and nicknames such as "my Chinese checker". Even though his martial arts background took center stage, it still holds connotations associated with Chinese people.

Lucy Liu opened the show with an overtly stereotypical skit. She played on all the different tropes associated with Chinese people and announced her historic feat as the first Asian woman to host to thunderous applause. The audience's reaction reflected the excitement. Despite the tongue in cheek opening, LL was cast in various tropes throughout the episode and boxed into two types of characters- the docile, obedient one and the over the top, dyed hair one.

Awkwafina's connection to her ethnicity came up during her opening monologue where she praised Lucy Liu for opening the door for her. The roles she played were different and every character she played was not overtly linked to her ethnicity. Some of her roles aligned with common tropes but for the most part her Chinese ethnicity was not central to the comedy. In MANAA's memo to Hollywood where they addressed Asian stereotypes, they said the way to combat tropes is by casting Asian people in a variety of roles. Awkwafina's episode is an example of that goal. It must be acknowledged that outside of SNL Awkwafina has come under fire for using a "blaccent" and appropriating black culture. This external publicity may have influenced which roles were written for her.

There was a high level of polarity in Simu Liu's episode. For the most part his ethnicity was not used as a defining feature in his characters. There were no covert references and the only times it was mentioned was when it was central to the sketch. His aforementioned monologue highlighted his historic role as the first Asian Marvel superhero. Later in the show he and Bowen Yang starred in a sketch where they celebrated the first time an Asian host and Asian cast member appeared in a sketch together. It devolved into a competition over who had more "First Asian" awards, poking fun at the vast number of "firsts" each actor had.

The use of ethnicity as a comedic device for Chinese hosts on SNL was different in each episode. When Jackie Chan graced that stage 22 years ago, his ethnicity was central to the majority of characters he played. JC relied more on physical comedy and appearances, which could be due to the language barrier. Lucy Liu relied on stereotypes for her monologue, but scrapped them for the most part in the sketches she starred in. Covert instances of stereotypes were apparent in LL's, A's and SL's episodes, but the declining instances of them could mark a shift in their use. Every host aside from Jackie Chan acknowledged and celebrated their ethnicity in their opening monologue.

Future research could extend the category to all people of Asian descent, which would include hosts Sandra Oh, Aziz Ansari and Kumail Nanjiani. This research was limited to shows broadcast from 2000. Researchers would find early impersonations of Asian people on Saturday Night Live, particularly before Jackie Chan's 2000 appearance.

The aforementioned implicit biases of researchers emphasize the importance of conducting this study with a larger, more diverse set of researchers. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to recommend that producers, and directors of college and secondary school shows examine this research to help them avoid stereotypical casting of students that reinforce bias within the institution.

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