Qualitative Document Analysis on Cambodian Survivors and Trauma

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Introduction

❖ The Cambodian Genocide occurred between 1975-1979 and took over 3 million lives. Pol Pot, leader of the Khmer Rouge, wanted citizens to all be the same and destroyed any foreign culture and technology.1
❖ My parents were both children at the time. My grandfathers, my uncles, and an aunt on my mom’s side had died during the genocide.
❖ 6.1% of people in the US identifies as Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI). 15% of those people, about 2.9 million, have reported mental illness.2
❖ Some issues that impact the mental health of AAPIs include: Trauma passed down from generations, expectations on youth, and stigmatized by Asian stereotypes.2

Methods

❖ Trauma: “Emotional response to terrible event.”3
❖ Coping Mechanisms: Techniques a person used in order to move on from their stimuli. It does not mean that they are healed.
❖ Over a 10 week period, I read multiple memoirs written by survivors of the Cambodian Genocide.
❖ Choosing the book
  ➢ Eyewitness accounts written in English
  ➢ Published from well known publishing companies
  ➢ Written from different ages when the event occurred to get a broad perspective
❖ Conducted a qualitative document analysis
  ➢ Analyzing documentary evidence to answer specific questions.3
  ➢ Categorizing the evidence into themes

Research Question

After a traumatic event such as the Cambodian Genocide, how do survivors cope with the aftermath? Are they truly able to move on or is there hidden trauma that they hide?

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No matter how much survivors run and continue on with their lives, survivors are still haunted by the memories of their experience.

Future Plan and Limitation

❖ Future Plan
  ➢ Talk to Cambodian American young adults about their experience with and their understanding of mental health.
❖ Limitations
  ➢ Only one side to a story
  ➢ Bias or the author’s intent to writing the book
  ➢ Limited time to read multiple memoirs and peer reviewed articles
  ➢ Some books do not hold the answers
  ➢ Limitations on authors’ memory

References