

Is current PA education diverse? A Data-Driven Study

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BACKGROUND

- Research has shown that minority groups often face conscious or unconscious biases that impact their educational opportunities.¹⁻³
- These biases can manifest in admissions processes, where systemic discrimination might influence decision-making.⁴
- Although race and ethnicity are central to these biases, they are only one aspect of the broader issue. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of diversity in PA admissions, it is essential to explore factors such as age, gender, degree background, and economic and military status.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine whether racial disparities exist in the admission of PA students
- To assess how racial and ethnic disparities in PA admissions have changed from 2019 to 2023
- To explore whether age, gender, degree background, and economic and military status impact the admission rates of PA students

METHODS

- Admission rates broken down by race/ethnicity, age, gender, economic status, military status, and educational background were calculated for CASPA admission cycles from 2018-19 to 2022-23 using the PAEA Applicant Trend and Matriculant Reports.
- Descriptive analysis was used to summarize and describe the main features of the reports.
- Comparative analysis was used to identify similarities and differences between various groups in their admission rates and to detect potential patterns.
- Trend analysis was used to examine the data throughout five admission cycles to identify patterns or trends. The data of the CASPA admission cycle 2023-24 was not included in this study since the matriculant report for this cycle had not been released by the time of this analysis. Therefore, admission rates could not be calculated. This is an ongoing research project. Here, we report our preliminary results.

RESULTS

- Of 146,515 applicants over five admission cycles, 55,874 (38.1%) were admitted to a PA program. The admission rate was 43% for applicants who self-identified as white, compared with 34.6% for Asians, 31.1% for Hispanics, and 23.1% for Black/African Americans.
- White applicants had a significantly higher likelihood of admission than Black/African American applicants (OR: 2.52, 95% CI: 2.4-2.64).

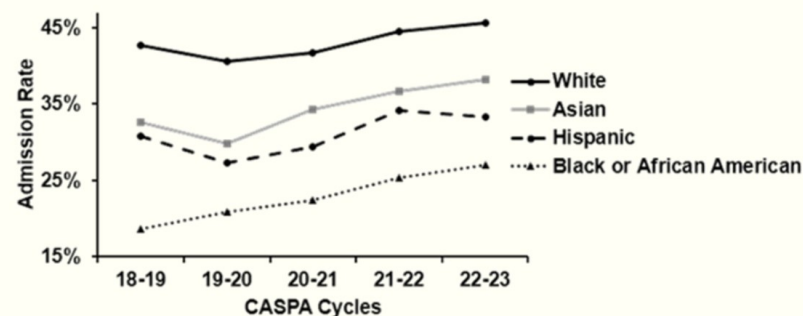


Fig. 1: Comparison of the admission rate trends across five CASPA cycles by race.

- The admission rate was 39.2% for applicants who self-identified as female, compared with 35.6% for males and only 15.5% for applicants who declined to state their gender.
- Female gender was associated with a slightly higher likelihood of admission (OR: 1.16, 95% CI: 1.13-1.19) while declining to state gender was associated with a significantly lower likelihood of admission (OR: 0.29, 95% CI: 0.23-0.37).

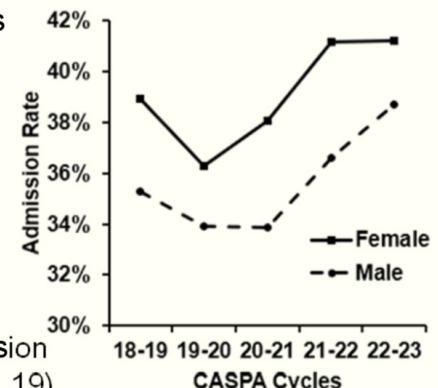


Fig. 2: Comparison of the admission rate trends across five CASPA cycles by gender.

- Applicants aged 25 years or younger had an admission rate of 43.5%, compared with 27.7% for those older than 25. Being 25 years old or younger was associated with a significantly higher likelihood of admission (OR: 2.0, 95% CI: 1.95-2.05).

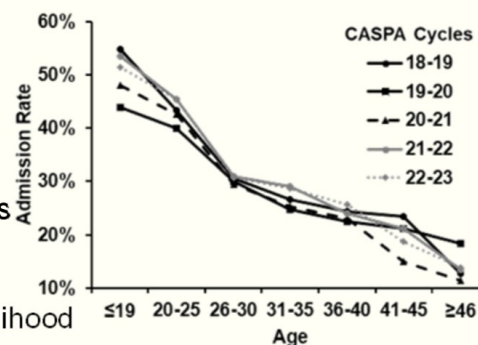


Fig. 3: Age disparity in the admission rate across five CASPA cycles.

- Although the admission rate declined from 37.9% in the 2018-19 cycle to 35.6% in the 2019-20 cycle, it has since increased and reached 40.6% in the 2022-23 cycle. There was no significant difference in the trend of observed disparities.

Table 1: Comparison of the admission rate trends across five CASPA cycles by self-reporting economic and military status and degree background.

CASPA Cycles	Economic Status		Military Status		Degree Background	
	High	Low*	Positive	Negative**	BSc	Others#
18-19	39.3%	30.4%	36.2%	38.0%	37.7%	32.9%
19-20	35.9%	29.1%	31.7%	35.8%	34.9%	31.5%
20-21	39.0%	29.4%	34.7%	37.0%	39.7%	36.0%
21-22	41.7%	33.9%	34.7%	40.2%	39.6%	34.0%
22-23	42.3%	34.6%	35.6%	40.9%	40.3%	34.2%
Total	39.7%	31.5%	34.5%	38.4%	38.4%	33.7%

* The applicant met the criteria for being economically disadvantaged.

** The applicant was not a military member or chose not to report.

#The applicant reported anything but a Bachelor of Science as their background degree.

CONCLUSION

- Racial disparity exists in the admission of PA students, with Hispanic, Asian, and Black/African American applicants experiencing lower admission rates compared to White applicants.
- Age, degree background, and economic and military status disparities also exist in the admission of PA students.
- Additionally, self-identified male applicants experience lower admission rates than female applicants. This rate was even lower among gender-undisclosed applicants.
- The trend of the observed disparities in the PA admission rates did not change over the past five CASPA cycles.

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