**I'm sorry, curry & rice are just not my thing: Online sexual racism as a predictor of body-oriented concerns among East Asian and South Asian sexual minority men**

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# Abstract

Online dating applications routinely expose sexual minority men (SMM) of color to an online culture of body objectification (Anderson et al., 2018) and racial prejudice (Bhambahni et al., 2019). Dating app use (Breslow et al., 2020) and sexual racism (Bhambhani et al., 2019) are related to body-oriented concerns among SMM of color. However, no previous research has focused on experiences of sexual racism and body-oriented concerns among Asian SMM. The main purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between two types of online sexual racism (racist rejection and racist exotification) and five types of body-oriented concerns among Asian SMM. The present study also investigated whether the associations between these variables differed by (a) racial/ethnic identity, (b) levels of racial/ethnic identity salience, and (c) levels of identity conflicts. East Asian (n =100) and South Asian (n = 100) SMM were recruited through online advertisements and completed measures for body-oriented concerns and online sexual racism. We found that, at large, both types of sexual racism were positively associated with all types of body-oriented concerns. Racist rejection more strongly predicted body concerns for South Asian SMM, whereas racist exotification more strongly predicted body concerns for East Asian SMM. In some cases, racial/ethnic identity salience and identity conflicts significantly moderated the links between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns, and some of the moderation effects differed by racial/ethnic identity. Implications for researchers, clinicians, and advocates working with Asian SMM are discussed.

*Keywords*. sexual minority men, body image, sexual racism, online dating, Asian sexual minorities

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"Looking for a big muscular guy." "Twinks only." "No fats. No femmes. No Asians." Such laundry lists of 'turn-offs' or 'preferences' are common in queer men's online dating experiences. Although online dating sites such as Grindr, Tinder, Scruff, etc. have become central to the dating/sexual lives of ***sexual minority men (SMM)***, the effects of these online contexts on SMM's well-being have been little studied. The interface on such apps allows SMM to centralize physical appearance and traits when presenting themselves or when seeking partners (Anderson et al., 2018). This focus on body presentation may explain why SMM strategically misrepresent themselves and their bodies on such apps (Gudelunas, 2012) and experience elevated body image concerns relative to heterosexual men (Breslow et al., 2019; Miller, 2015).

Such appearance related concerns are thought to result, in part, from presence and exchange of discriminatory attitudes that are normalized in these online dating environments (Anderson et al., 2018). Prejudice has historically existed within the dating experiences of SMM. For example, in the days of print classifieds, SMM were often found favoring particular physical characteristics such as the weight, height, body shape, ethnicity, and penis size of potential partners (Hatala & Prehodka, 1996). Such discriminatory attitudes have carried onto current online environments, where SMM continue to encounter appearance-based exclusive commentaries (Callander et al., 2012). These experiences occur differently and at a higher rate for SMM of Color, as it extends to forms such as rejection, fetishization, and objectification of users solely based on stereotypes and attributes associated with one's race or ethnicity (Callander et al., 2015; Han et al., 2015)

Racial prejudice in the context of sexual and romantic experiences can be broadly understood as incidents of *sexual racism*. A small but growing body of research has documented the ubiquity of racial prejudice in online dating spaces (Callander et al., 2012). Sexual racism has also been studied to explain some of the body-oriented concerns experienced by SMM of Color (Bhambhani et al., 2019). However, no known research has specifically explored how online sexual racism impacts Asian SMM and their relationship with their bodies. This study aims to provide an intersectional framework that examines the interrelations among dating app use, online sexual racism, and body-oriented concerns among East Asian and South Asian SMM.

**Body-Oriented Concerns and Sexual Minority Men**

Research suggests that physical traits and global body appearance are more central to SMM as compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Anderson et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2004). For instance, SMM are more attuned to their appearance (Anderson et al., 2018), engage in fatphobic conversations (Foster-Gimbel & Engeln, 2016), and assign higher importance to physical attractiveness in interpersonal relationships (Sánchez et al., 2009).

A growing body of research highlights the prevalence of body-oriented concerns among SMM (Anderson et al., 2018; Alleva et al., 2018; Bhambhani et al., 2019). This strained relationship between SMM and their bodies has been associated with a wide range of body-altering attitudes and behaviors (Brewster et al., 2017; Hadland et al., 2014); for instance, when compared to their heterosexual counterparts, SMM are approximately six times more likely to rely on anabolic steroids for muscularity enhancement (Blashill & Safren, 2015), four times more likely to get and/or wish for cosmetic surgery (Frederick & Essayli, 2016), twice as more likely to have dieted in the past year (Frederick & Essayli, 2016), and report higher rates of risky-eating symptomatology (Bosely, 2011; Watson et al., 2017). These body concerns are also

associated with a variety of psychosocial difficulties, including depression (Blashill et al., 2016; Brennan et al., 2012), anxiety (Blashill, 2010), risky sexual behavior (Blashill & Safren, 2014), avoidance of sexual relationships (Frederick & Essayli, 2016), and increased detachment from their sexuality (Brennan et al., 2012).

Most research on SMM's relationships with their bodies has focused on comparisons with heterosexual men, thus failing to increase knowledge about within-group differences among SMM. One particularly underdeveloped area of inquiry concerns the experiences of SMM of Color, as most research has featured predominately White SMM samples (Brennan et al., 2013). Limited emerging evidence in this research area suggests that SMM of Color have higher rates of body-oriented distress than their White SMM counterparts (Bao, 2012; Bhambhani et al., 2019; Camp, 2015). Increased distress rates among SMM of Color have been attributed to the unique pressures of facing racism (Bhambhani et al., 2019, Brennan et al., 2013), feeling underrepresented in media (Brennan et al., 2013), and having to navigate societal considerations of White and European features as the norm and/or standard of attractiveness (Bao, 2012; Bhambhani et al., 2019; Camp, 2015).

Most of these studies have grouped SMM of Color from different racial/ethnic groups together. Such grouped understanding of SMM of Color may further impede our understanding of processes that are specific to different racial/ethnic groups. The potential value of studying specific groups is suggested by evidence of differences in appearance-based rejection and fetishization across different racial/ethnic sexual minority groups (Phua & Kauffman, 2003). For example, Black SMM are more likely to self-engage and be objectified for their masculinity than Asian or Latino SMM (Miller; 2015; Hunter, 2010), whereas Asian SMM are more likely to be rejected or fetishized for their perceived femininity and passivity than other racial groups (Han,

2008). Despite the value in such intersectional findings and approaches, we must consider that these results are drawn from relatively small and nonrepresentative samples.

### Sexual Racism, Body Image, and Online Dating

Online dating and hook-up spaces have normalized body objectification and centralization of physical appearance in the lives of SMM (Anderson et al., 2018; Prestage et al., 2015), as the interface on these applications allows users to objectify themselves and others and misrepresent their physical appearance (Gudelunas, 2012). For instance, applications encourage the use of body shape/size descriptors, physical preferences, and ability to filter profiles based on body shape/size (Anderson et al., 2018); such body-focused experiences on these applications may help to explain SMM's increased body dissatisfaction (Miller, 2019; Miller, 2015).

Compounding the potential negative impact of this online body-based discrimination is the fact that it often coexists with sexual racism (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Han et al., 2015). This discrimination takes various forms, such as flat-out rejection, exotification, stereotyping, dehumanization, and objectification of users based on racial/ethnic phenotypic features (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Rice et al., 2012). These expressions of sexual racism have been found to be more prevalent in the online profiles of SMM than those of heterosexual counterparts. For instance, on dating profiles, SMM are more likely to racially profile themselves and others (Miller, 2015; Plummer, 2008), have higher rates of having racial preferences (Miller, 2015; Plummer, 2008), and report higher usage of racialized language and descriptors (Miller, 2015; Callander et al., 2012).

Little research has investigated the impact of sexual racism on the well-being and body concerns of SMM of Color; however, some studies have provided evidence that sexual racism is related to muscularity dissatisfaction, global body dissatisfaction, and other appearance altering

attitudes and behaviors among SMM of Color (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Brennan et al., 2013).

Most of this research has not focused on the implications of facing discrimination in online

romantic or sexual spaces. Further, like most research with SMM of Color, the effects of sexual

racism are typically collectively studied for SMM of Color rather than exploring how

experiencing such prejudices manifest in specific racial/ethnic sexual minority groups.

**Sexual Racism in the Lives of Asian American Sexual Minority Men**

Asian Americans are often perceived as a group that experiences racial discrimination at

a comparatively lower rate than other ethnic and racial minority groups (Chen & Tryon, 2012).

The model minority status prescribed to this racial group often reinforces such community

perceptions (Chen & Tyron, 2012; Delucchi & Do, 1996; Lee, 2003). Nevertheless, research

suggests that Asian Americans encounter racial discrimination daily (Wong & Halgin, 2006) and

at an overwhelming frequency (Alvarez et al., 2006). Further, Asian SMM experience racism

and race-based expectations differently than their heterosexual counterparts, as they face the

challenge of having to simultaneously navigate discriminatory events associated with their

multiple minority identities, such as homophobia and heterosexism in their Asian communities

and racism, xenophobia, and other race/ethnicity-based stereotypes in their sexual minority

communities (Chen & Tryon, 2012; Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004).

Research has indicated that Asian SMM are exposed to frequent sexual racism by other

SMM (Choi et al., 2011; Han, 2007). Some of these racist experiences appear to be fueled by

stereotypes and attitudes specific to Asian men (Han et al., 2014), including the view of Asian

SMM as being feminine and submissive, assuming passive roles in relationships, having below

average penises, and as being the receptive partners (i.e., 'bottoms') during sexual intercourse

(Han, 2008; Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). A qualitative study focusing on the online dating

experiences of Asian SMM suggested that all users encountered at least one incident of race-based discrimination, based on their racial/ethnic identity while interacting with other users (Peng, 2013). Other studies exploring online dating experiences among SMM of Color have also suggested that Asian SMM, along with other SMM of Color, are subjected to racialized sexual discrimination on online dating apps (Miller, 2015; Bhambhani et al., 2019).

Little scholarship has explored the impacts of such discriminatory experiences on the body image of Asian SMM. One of the first and the few qualitative studies exploring the impact of race-based discrimination on the well-being of Asian SMM highlighted that some Asian SMM felt the need to work out in order to be accepted and to be found attractive by other White SMM (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). Other qualitative data reflect similar relationships between racism and body-related distress among Asian SMM, as pressures around masculinity, muscularity, thinness, and passivity seem to be recurrent themes for this specific population (Brennan et al., 2013; Drummond, 2005). To my knowledge, no quantitative work has explored the relationship between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns among Asian SMM, although some research has offered indirect evidence. For example, Asian SMM have been found to have a significantly higher drive to attain masculine ideals and muscularity that their white counterparts, which may reflect an effort to counter the feminine expectations placed upon this group (Brennan et al., 2013; Drummond, 2005, Kelly et al., 2015). Brennan et al. (2013) found that Asian SMM reported a strong desire for weight loss and lean body shape, suggesting that they may have internalized White appearance standards. The racialized nature of body-oriented concerns within Asian SMM underscores the need to explicitly explore the link between encountering race-based prejudice and levels of body-oriented concerns among this population.

The limited research on Asian LGBQ individuals has done much to inform understanding of the experiences of Asian sexual minority individuals, but it is also important to note that this body of work has collectively studied Asian subcultures and has failed to explore differences across different Asian ethnic groups (Huang et al., 2010; Szymanski & Gupta, 2009; Szymanski & Sung, 2010). Virtually no research has specifically focused on South Asian LGBQ individuals and their experiences. This is particularly harmful as these two racial/ethnic groups significantly differ in terms of spiritual and philosophical concepts (Uba, 2003), thereby suggesting a need to explore differences in the experiences of East Asian and South Asian individuals. Similar to other areas of South Asian LGBQ research, South Asian SMM's body-related concerns and dating experiences are severely understudied and underrepresented. Results from a qualitative study indicated that South Asian SMM are subjected to rejection, fetishization, and other forms of racialized oppression from other SMM in social contexts (Brennan et al., 2013). No studies, however, have examined South Asian SMM's experiences on online dating spaces and their potential impact on body image concerns and how they differ from those of East Asian SMM.

**Present Research**

Online dating applications provide SMM with a ready means of identifying potential sexual and romantic partners. However, as indicated by the literature reviewed here, use of these apps also exposes SMM to an environment that encourages objectification of others and the self—one where bodies are judged by restrictive standards of attractiveness. Moreover, growing evidence suggests that racial stereotypes and prejudice fuel the behavior of many users, leading, at times, to fetishization and outright rejection of potential partners. However, little is known regarding how the experiences of sexual racism on online dating/hook-up apps may impact Asian SMM's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors towards their bodies. The current study will

investigate perceived experiences of sexual racism in relation to the body-oriented concerns experiences by East Asian and South Asian SMM. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the five domains of body-oriented concerns that have been most often studied with SMM and other body image research (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Blashill & Vander Wal, 2011; Breslow et al., 2019; Tylka & Andorka, 2012): (a) general body dissatisfaction, (b) muscular dissatisfaction, (c) body fat dissatisfaction, (d) eating disorder symptomatology, and (e) body checking.

Race-related research done within the SMM community suggested that Asian SMM are perceived to be at the bottom of the sociocultural ladder in SMM spaces (Payne, 2007) and regularly encounter anti-Asian sentiments on dating apps from other SMM (Riggs, 2013). Therefore, due to the exposure of racialized sexual discrimination faced by Asian SMM on online dating apps and its previous association with body-related distress, the following hypothesis will be tested:

> *Hypothesis 1:* **Among East Asian and South Asian SMM, body-oriented concerns will be predicted by and directly positively associated with online sexual racism experiences**

No investigations have explored interracial group differences in body-related concerns among Asian SMM or in links between sexual racism and body-related concerns. Existing literature has largely focused on the presence of appearance-based stereotypes and experiences specific to those of East Asian SMM (Han et al., 2008), and there has been no known research conducted to examine body image concerns specifically in South Asian SMM. Therefore, due to this lack of understanding of such concerns across Asian racial groups, the following research questions will be investigated:

**Research Question 1:** **Are there differences between East Asian and South Asian SMM in terms of the association between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns?**

**Research Question 2:** **Are there differences between East Asian and South Asian SMM in their average levels of body-oriented concerns?**

To investigate for any race/ethnicity-specific protective and resilience factors, the present study also explored the potential role of Asian SMM's relationship with their racial/ethnic identity in shaping their body-oriented concerns. Specifically, the current study tested (a) racial/ethnic identity salience and (b) identity conflicts as potential moderators of the links between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns.

Racial/ethnic identity salience, or the perceived connectedness and commitment to one's racial/ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992), has been studied as a moderator of associations between racist events and mental health concerns (Woo et al., 2019). Findings from this research suggest that racial/ethnic identity salience can exacerbate or buffer the impact of racist events on various psychological concerns and disorders (Carter, 2007; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; Woo et al., 2019) and that these links might differ across different racial/ethnic groups (Woo et al., 2019). A recent meta-analysis suggested that, overall, racial/ethnic salience—particularly the commitment aspect—buffers people of color from adverse impacts of racism on mental health (Yip et al., 2020). However, to my knowledge, no previous research has studied racial/ethnic identity salience as a moderator for the links between experiences of racism and body-oriented concerns. To test this potential moderating effect, the following research question was studied:

**Research Question 3:** **Does the relationship between experienced sexual racism and body-oriented concerns differ by reported levels of racial/ethnic identity salience?**

The present study also tested the potential protective or intensifying role of one's perceived relationship with their multiple minority identities. Conflicts in allegiances, or identity conflicts, refer to an individual feeling that their racial/ethnic identity is incompatible with their sexual identity (Ramirez & Galupo, 2019). Experiencing identity conflicts has previously been positively correlated with experiences of racism (Sarno et al., 2015) and with adverse mental health outcomes among sexual minority individuals of color (Santos & VanDaalen, 2016). Although not previously researched, due to these correlations, it is speculated that one's perceived identity conflicts could potentially exacerbate the impact of racist events on one's well-being. Previous research has suggested that it possible that identity conflicts potentially act as a discrete moderator for psychological health outcomes among LGBQ people of color (Ramirez & Galupo, 2019), and future research is warranted to empirically test for these links (Ramirez & Galupo, 2019). Therefore, in the present study, we explored the following research question:

> ***Research Question 4:* Does the relationship between experienced sexual racism and body-oriented concerns differ by reported levels of identity conflicts?**

Although not the main focus of the study, we also tested associations between the five types of body-oriented concerns and both racial/ethnic identity salience and identity conflicts. Previous research with racial/ethnic identity salience among SMM of Color has shown that SMM of Color with a stronger connection to their racial/ethnic identity experienced lower levels of psychological distress (Lira de la Rosa, 2017). On the other hand, research has highlighted that identity conflicts between one's racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity are related to negative mental health among sexual minority people of color (Santos & VanDaalen, 2016).

Given these previous findings on identity salience and identity conflicts, we proposed the following hypotheses about their relation to body-oriented concerns:

*Hypothesis 2:* **Among East Asian and South Asian SMM, body-oriented concerns will be negatively associated with reported levels of racial/ethnic identity salience**

*Hypothesis 3:* **Among East Asian and South Asian SMM, body-oriented concerns will be positively associated with reported levels of identity conflicts**

Finally, to date, there is no known validated scale that explicitly measures experiences of online sexual discrimination among SMM. Previous sexual racism research has used measures that broadly capture experiences of sexual racism (Bhambhani et al., 2019) but fail to exclusively focus on the racial prejudice that is encountered by SMM on online dating/hook-up apps. Therefore, another goal of the present study was to develop a new measure that would assess experiences of sexual racism on SMM dating/hook-up apps.

**Method**

**Recruitment & Procedure**

Participants were recruited through targeted advertisements on social media websites (Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, etc.) and announcement posts on electronic mailing lists, online message boards, and social media pages of LGBTQ+ and/or Asian community organizations. The study was advertised as a 15-to 20-minute study focused on online dating experiences of Asian sexual minority men and noted that participants could receive a $5 Amazon Gift Card for attentive completion of the survey. People interested in participating could access the study via a link to an online Qualtrics survey. As people accessed the survey, they were first asked to report their demographic characteristics for inclusion and data purposes (see Appendix A). To advance to the main survey, participants must have indicated that they identify as (1)

men, (2) between the ages of 18 and 40 years, (3) sexual minority, (4) East Asian or South Asian, (5) dating or hook-up app users in the past year, and (6) currently living in the United States or Canada. For the purposes of this study, SMM refers to men who are not exclusively attracted to women and is inclusive of gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, trans, and other non-heterosexual men. Current app use is defined as using at least one dating or hook-up app, at least once in the past month, where usage further captures a variety of user behaviors such as downloading an app, creating a profile, browsing others' profiles, romantic/sexual communication with other users, and/or physically meeting a user (Finkel et al., 2012). Participants who did not meet the eligibility requirements were automatically taken to the end of the survey, were informed of their ineligibility, and thanked for their interest in the study.

All eligible participants that accessed the main survey were asked to read a statement describing the study and to provide their informed consent electronically. Participants were then asked to respond to a range of items intended to measure app use, general body dissatisfaction, muscular dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, eating disorder symptomatology, body checking, sexual racism, ethnic identity strength, and conflicts in allegiance. Participants were also asked to complete existing racism measures to provide convergent validity evidence for the developed sexual racism measure. To account for ordering effects, all items within each scale were randomized when presented in Qualtrics. Throughout the survey, participants were asked to respond to attentiveness check items. Participants whose responses demonstrated inattentive responding were not included in the final analyses and were deemed ineligible for compensation. Lastly, no identifiable data was collected other than participants' email addresses, which was only required of participants who wished to receive compensation for conscientious survey completion or of those who wished to be contacted regarding participation in a potential follow-

up study. Upon completion of data collection, these addresses were detached from the data file containing participants' survey responses.

**Participants**

Upon completion of data collection, the data file was scanned for valid and attentive participant responses. The final sample consisted of 200 Asian sexual minority men, with 50.0% of the participants identifying as East Asian ($n = 100$) and 50.0% of the participants identifying as South Asian ($n = 100$), and with respect to sexual identity, participants in this sample identified as gay ($n = 154$, 77.0%), bisexual ($n = 27$, 13.5%), queer ($n = 14$, 7.0%), pansexual ($n = 2$, 1.0%), other ($n = 2$, 1.0%), or as questioning ($n = 1$, 0.5%). Participants identified as either cisgender men ($n = 190$, 95.0%) or transgender men ($n = 10$, 5.0%). All participants in our sample reported dating app use in the past year, with 173 (86.5%) participants reporting active dating app use in the month that they participated in the study. Regarding romantic relationship status, 128 participants reported being single (64.0%), 20 reported being in a casual relationship with one partner (10.0%), 7 reported being in a casual relationship with multiple partners (3.5%), 40 reported being in a committed relationship with one partner (20.0%), 1 reported being in a committed relationship with multiple partners (0.5%), and 4 participants did not respond to this item (2.0%).

Participants reported currently living in the United States ($n = 165$, 82.5%) or Canada ($n = 35$, 17.5%). Participants reported their educational level as high school degree or GED ($n = 11$, 5.5%), some college but no degree ($n = 35$, 17.5%), associate's degree ($n = 5$, 2.5%), bachelor's degree ($n = 80$, 40.0%), professional degree ($n = 51$, 25.5%), doctoral degree ($n = 14$, 7.0%) or did not report their educational level ($n = 4$, 2.0%). Finally, regarding socioeconomic status, participants identified as lower class ($n = 8$, 4.0%), working class ($n = 46$, 23.0%), middle class

($n$ = 99, 49.5%), upper middle class ($n$ = 39, 19.5%), upper class ($n$ = 4, 2.0%) or did not respond

to this item ($n$ = 4, 2.0%).

**Measures**

   Measures are listed below in the order that they appeared on the online survey, with the

exception of the attentiveness check items. The attentiveness check items were equally divided,

and half were presented at the beginning of the main survey and half were presented at the end of

the main survey.

   ***Demographics questionnaire.*** Participants completed a variety of standard demographic

questions, including questions concerning age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation,

level of education, and dating app use. Gender, age, location, dating app use, sexual identity, and

racial/ethnic identity were used as eligibility criteria items to ensure that a participant met the

specified requirements for inclusion in this study and analyses (see Appendix A).

   ***General body dissatisfaction.*** General body dissatisfaction was assessed using the

Appearance Evaluation (AE) subscale of the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations

Questionnaire (MBSRQ; Brown et al., 1990, Cash, 2018; see Appendix B). The MBSRQ is a

widely used measure with subscales assessing various elements of body image. The 7-item AE

subscale assessed overall satisfaction with one's looks and body appearance. Participants

responded to items (e.g., "I like my looks just the way they are") on a 5-point Likert scale

ranging from 1 (*definitely disagree*) to 5 (*definitely agree*). Participants' responses to items were

reversed, summed, and averaged such that higher scores on the AE indicated lower satisfaction

with one's body. Cronbach's alpha, for men in the instrument development study, was .88

(Brown et al., 1990; Cash, 2018). The AE subscale has been widely used in studies with sexual

minority men. Reliability evidence from such studies suggested good internal consistency for the

AE subscale ($\alpha = 0.92$; Blashill & Vander Wal, 2011; $\alpha = 0.91$; Levesque & Vichesky, 2006; $\alpha = 0.90$; McArdle & Hill, 2009). Cronbach's alpha in the present study was determined to be 0.90. Convergent validity for the AE subscale with SMM has been supported through positive correlations with media use (McArdle & Hill, 2009).

    ***Muscular and body fat dissatisfaction.*** Men's muscularity and body fat dissatisfaction was measured using the Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS; Tylka et al., 2005; see Appendix C and Appendix D respectively). Participants responded to items on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). The development study suggested that the measure should be scored for the following three subscales (Tylka et al., 2005): muscularity (e.g., "I think my arms should be larger, i.e., more muscular"), low body fat (e.g., "I think I have too much fat on my body"), and height (e.g., "I am satisfied with my height"). For the purposes of this study, only the muscularity and body fat subscales were used. The muscularity subscale was used to assess muscular dissatisfaction and the low body fat subscale was used to assess body fat dissatisfaction. Responses for each subscale were appropriately reverse scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score, with higher scores indicating higher rates of dissatisfaction.

    Both the muscularity ($\alpha = 0.90$; Blashill & Vander Wal, 2009) and the low body fat subscale ($\alpha = 0.94$; Blashill & Vander Wal, 2009) have been widely used with diverse samples of SMM. Reliability evidence suggested good internal consistency for the muscularity subscale for SMM of Color ($\alpha = 0.92$; Bhambhani et al., 2019). Similarly, for the low body fat subscale, the evidence suggested good internal consistency for SMM of Color ($\alpha = 0.92$; Bhambhani et al., 2019). Additionally, the development study reflected good convergent, construct, and discriminant validity for all items (Tylka et al., 2005).

Reliability evidence for the present study demonstrates good internal consistency reliability for both the muscularity subscale ($\alpha = .85$) and the low body fat subscale ($\alpha = .94$).

***Eating disorder symptomatology.*** The Eating Attitudes Test–26 (EAT-26; Garner et al., 1982; see Appendix E) was used to measure the level of eating disorder symptoms among our sample. The EAT-26 is a 26-item measure of eating disorder-related attitudes and behaviors (Siever, 1994; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). Items (e.g., "Feel extremely guilty after eating"; "Give too much time and thought to food") were rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). *Always, usually*, and *often* are coded as 3, 2, and 1, respectively, and *sometimes*, *rarely*, and *never* are each coded as 0 (Garner et al., 1982). Scores on each item were summed to obtain an overall score, with higher scores indicating greater disordered eating behaviors and attitudes. EAT-26 has been widely used in assessment of eating disorder symptomatology among SMM and have consistently demonstrated evidence of good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .86$; Tylka & Andorka, 2012). Similarly, the scale demonstrated evidence of good internal consistency reliability in the present study ($\alpha = .88$). Convergent validity of the EAT-26 measure has been previously supported through negative correlations with mesomorphic shape idealization and body shame (Tylka & Andora, 2012; Wiseman & Moradi, 2010).

***Body checking.*** Body checking attitudes and behaviors were captured using the 8-item Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996; see Appendix F). Participants were asked to rate their response to items (e.g., "I rarely think about how I look"; "During the day, I think about how I look many times") on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scores on each item were reversed-scored as needed, summed, and averaged to obtain a composite score. Higher scores on

this subscale indicated higher rates of body checking behaviors and attitudes. Internal

consistency was adequate for scores from the first male sample to respond to the measure ($\alpha$ =

0.79; McKinley, 1998). The subscale has demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency in

samples of SMM ($\alpha$ = .82; Breslow et al., 2019). In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was

determined to be 0.87. Additionally, the Surveillance subscale in SMM has previously

demonstrated good convergent validity evidence, as it has been positively associated with body

dissatisfaction, objectification, and body shame (Breslow et al., 2019; Wiseman & Moradi,

2010).

*Sexual racism.* A new measure of online sexual racism was developed using modified

items from two measures of sexual racism that were created for men with sexual and racial

minority identities. Two measures were used because of a desire to have an item pool with

diverse content.

Six items were drawn from Han et al.'s (2015) Stress from Racism in the Gay

Community Measure (see Appendix G) and were rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly

disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) (e.g., "I've been turned down for sex because of my race or

ethnicity"). Two items from the original scale were not included in the pool. One of these items

was dropped because it assesses the stress individuals experience due to such racist incidents

rather than the occurrence of the incidents. The other item was dropped because it was specific to

West Hollywood standards ("I've felt unwelcome or that I didn't fit into West Hollywood

because of my race or ethnicity"). Most items were slightly reworded to suit the purposes of this

study. A few items in the original measure limits these racist experiences to be only perpetuated

by White men or gay men (e.g., "I've felt white gay men have acted as if they're better than me

because of my race or ethnicity). However, such items were adapted to account for various

racialized experiences (e.g., "I've felt *sexual minority men of other races or ethnicities* have acted as if they're better than me because of my race or ethnicity). Lastly, as done in a previous study assessing sexual racism experienced on sexual minority dating apps (Bhambhani et al., 2018), items were adapted to focus on online dating spaces (e.g., "Sexual partners on online dating apps have wanted me only because of my race or ethnicity; they pay no attention to other personal characteristics"). Bhambhani et al. (2018) found that their modified scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .89$). Moreover, results suggested good convergent validity for modified scale as it was positively associated with measures of muscularity-oriented behaviors, muscularity-oriented attitudes, muscularity dissatisfaction, and body fat dissatisfaction (Bhambhani et al., 2019). Reliability evidence for this scale in the present study suggests good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .87$).

The item pool also included items from the sexual racism subscale developed by Hidalgo et al. (2019; see Appendix H). Items are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*many times*) to indicate the frequency of different sexual racism experiences. Items were modified to reflect a focus on online dating spaces (e.g., "While using dating/hook up apps, how often have you been made to feel sexually objectified (like a piece of meat) because of your race or ethnicity?").

To capture the perceived frequency of encountering sexually racist events, a 6-item sexual racism subscale developed by Hidalgo et al. (2019) will be used (see Appendix H). Individuals use a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*many times*) to indicate the frequency of different sexual racism experiences (e.g., "How often have you been made to feel sexually objectified (like a piece of meat) because of your race or ethnicity?"; "How often did you hear sexual comments about your race or ethnicity?"). This subscale was identified through an

exploratory factor analysis of items from a measure developed to assess frequency of social

discrimination occurring among adult SMM (Diaz & Ayala, 2001; Diaz et al., 2001). The

analysis suggested a two-factor solution, where items focused on sexual racism loaded strongly

on one factor and items focused on institutional racism loaded strongly on the other factor.

Scores on the 6 items will be scored by averaging items. In the development study, the

Cronbach's alpha was .83 (Hidalgo et al., 2019) and .82 in the present study.

     *Convergent validity evidence.* Since the previously described sexual racism measure

were developed for the present study, we used preexisting scales to assess the new scale's

convergent validity. First, the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale (Balsam et al.,

2011; Appendix I). This 18-item self-report scale assesses various types of intersectional

stressors experienced by racial/ethnic minority LGBT adults. Responses were collected on a 6-

point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Did not happen/Not applicable to me*) to 6 (*It happened, and it

bothered me extremely*). Higher scores indicated worse outcomes related to distress due to

LGBT-POC microaggressions. The measure comprises three subscales: (a) Racism in LGBT

communities, (b) Heterosexism in Racial/Ethnic Minority Communities, and (c) Racism in

Dating and Close Relationships. The original measure demonstrated good overall internal

consistency (α = .92; Balsam et al., 2011). For the purposes of this study, only the Racism in

Dating and Close Relationships subscales was used. Reliability evidence from the original study

suggested good internal consistency for Racism in Dating and Close relationships (α = .83;

Balsam et al., 2011) subscale. Similarly, evidence from the present study demonstrated good

internal consistency for the subscale (α = .83).

     The Gendered Racism Scales for Asian American Men (GRSAM; Liu et al., 2018; See

Appendix J) was also used for convergent validity purposes. The 18-item measure consist of

items (e.g., 'I have heard offensive jokes about Asian American men's lack of manliness,' 'I have heard the stereotype that Asian American men are not sufficiently masculine.') that capture the frequency and stress level of gendered racism perceived by Asian American men. Responses were collected on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very often*) to 4 (*Never*). The original measure was rated on two separate scales, one indicating frequency of racist experiences and one indicating stress resulting from the racist experience; factor analyses suggested the following three factors for both: Psychological Emasculation, Perceived Undesirable Partner, and Perceived Lack of Leadership (Liu et al., 2018). Reliability evidence from the original measure indicated high internal consistency for both GRASM-Frequency ($\alpha = .94$; Liu et al., 2018) and GRASM-Stress ($\alpha = .96$; Liu et al., 2018) scales. For the purposes of this study, only the Perceived Undesirable Partner factor items from the GRASM-Frequency scale were used. As to our knowledge, the present study was the first to use this scale specifically with Asian SMM. Cronbach's alphas for this measure in the present study was .87.

**Racial/Ethnic Identity Salience.** Racial/Ethnic identity attitudes were captured using the 12-item Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992; see Appendix K). The MEIM assesses one's ethnic identity salience based on their participation with and commitment to their racial/ethnic group. Participants responded to items (e.g., "I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group."; "I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.") using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from "*Strongly disagree*" to "*Strongly agree*." Scores on the scale were averaged, with higher scores indicating greater ethnic identity salience. Cronbach's alpha in the development study was .80 (Phinney, 1992). Additionally, this scale has previously been used with Asian SMM and has demonstrated evidence for good internal consistency

reliability ($\alpha$ = .86; Chung & Szymanski, 2007). Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was .92.

*Identity Conflicts.* Perceived conflicts among one's social identities was assessed using the 6-item Conflicts in Allegiances measure (CIA; Sarno et al., 2015; see Appendix L). This scale assesses the extent to which individuals experience conflict between and attempt to separate their multiple minority identities. In this case, the measure focused on conflicts between a participant's racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity. Participants were asked to rate their response to items (e.g., "I often feel like I am either betraying Asian people or LGBQ people"; "I separate my racial/ethnic identity and my sexual identity") on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Scores on each item were reversed-scored as needed, summed, and averaged to obtain a composite score. Higher scores on this scale indicated higher rates of conflicts between one's racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity. The development study demonstrated good reliability evidence ($\alpha$ = .86) and face and construct validity (Sarno et al., 2015). Reliability for this scale in the present study was .85.

*Attentiveness checks.* To avoid analyzing data from participants who responded inattentively, the Attentive Responding Scale (ARS-18; Maniaci & Rogge, 2014; see Appendix M) was used to screen data. The ARS-18 identifies general inattentiveness in responding and inattentiveness indicated by selecting the same response to entire blocks of items. For the infrequency subscale, participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very true*) to 6 items that are expected to capture highly skewed similar responses (e.g., "I enjoy the music of Marlene Sandersfield"; "I'd rather be loved than hated"). Items for the infrequency subscale were summed for a composite score. The inconsistency subscale consists of 6 pairs of items with near identical content (e.g., "I am very energetic person" and "I

have a lot of energy") that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very true*). Differences within scores on pairs of the inconsistency subscale are summed for a composite score. Half of these attentiveness check items were presented at the beginning and the other half were presented at the end of the survey. Based on the original measure and evidence, cut-scores for the ARS-18 inconsistency subscale is 6.5 and for the frequency subscales is 7.5. Higher scores on these two subscales indicated higher participant inattentiveness, thereby suggesting possibility of invalid data. All responses that exceeded the cutoff score for either subscale were excluded from the final dataset and analyses.

Further, at the conclusion of the survey, all participants were asked, "In your honest opinion, should we use your data?" (Meade & Craig, 2012). Data collected from participants who suggested not using their recorded responses were removed from final analyses.

## Results

### Development of the Sexual Racism on Dating Apps Measure

To develop the new measure of sexual racism on dating apps, I began by assessing the factorability of the pool of sexual racism items with a principal components analysis of scores on all 12 items using SPSS version 27. The factorability of the data was satisfactory, as indicated by the high Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of 0.90 and by the statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2[66] = 1253.22$, $p < 0.001$).

Parallel analysis was used to determine the number of factors to extract, given evidence from simulation analyses that it typically performs better than other methods (Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011). The parallel analysis was conducted by generating 1000 random normally distributed datasets with the same number of items and participants as the original dataset and conducting principal components analysis on the original and generated data. Only the first two

eigenvalues from analysis of the original data were higher than the 95th percentile of

corresponding eigenvalues from analysis of the random datasets, indicating that components

beyond the first two in our data did not explain variance any better than the randomly generated

data. In other words, this analysis suggested a 2-factor solution.

Therefore, I proceeded with a 2-factor EFA with principal axis factoring and a promax

oblique rotation. Structure coefficients were used to interpret and label the factors (see Table 1).

I labeled the first factor Racist Rejection, as the items with strongest loadings emphasized overt

negative reactions from others based on one's race/ethnicity. I labeled the second factor Racist

Exotification, as the items with strongest loadings emphasized the experience of having one's

race/ethnicity be fetishized. I retained items only if their highest structure coefficient was at least

.50 in absolute magnitude (to ensure a strong relation of each item to the construct it assessed)

and if the difference between the absolute values of the two strongest structure coefficients was

at least .20 (to maximize subscale distinctiveness). Using these criteria, 4 items were dropped

and the final scale, Sexual Racism on Dating Apps Measure, consisted of 8 items. Internal

consistency alpha was .89 for Racist Rejection (5 items) and .77 for Racist Exotification (3

items). The two subscales were moderately correlated ($r = .41$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the two

facets of sexual racism are interrelated yet distinct.

To provide preliminary convergent validity data, the two new subscales were correlated

with two established measures of similar constructs. Racist Rejection was correlated with both

the Racism in Dating and Close Relationships subscale of the LGBT People of Color

Microaggressions Scale, $r = .671$ ($p < .001$), and the frequency version of the Perceived

Undesirable Partner subscale of the Gendered Racism Scales for Asian American Men, $r = .660$

($p < .001$). Similarly, Racist Exotification was correlated with both Racism in Dating and Close

Relationships, $r = .575$ ($p < .001$), and the Perceived Undesirable Partner, $r = .430$ ($p < .001$).

The lower validity coefficients for Racist Exotification reflect the fact that the content of the two

validity scales focused more on rejection than fetishization.

## Descriptive Findings

Descriptive statistics for and intercorrelations among main study variables for the entire

sample appear in Table 2. The full range of possible scores on the sexual racism subscales was

reported by the current sample, and the mean scores were approximately near the center of the

range of possible scores. Thus, on average, participants experienced moderate levels of racist

rejection and racist exotification on online dating/hook-up apps, though some reported very low

levels and some reported very high levels. Similarly, the full range of possible scores was

represented for all of the body-related outcomes except for the measure of disordered eating. The

means, however, were generally near the center of the range of possible scores, suggesting that,

on average, participants endorsed moderate levels of body-related concerns. For eating disorder

symptomatology, the full range of possible scores was not represented due to the lack of scores

representing the very highest levels of disordered eating. The mean reported value on this scale

fell below 20, which is the cutoff score typically used to indicate the need for further evaluation

by a qualified professional (Garner et al., 1982). However, approximately 15% of the sample had

scores at or above this threshold.

Fully supporting Hypothesis 1, correlations among body image and sexual racism

variables for the broader sample were positive ($r$s = .17-.35, $p$s < .001-.02).

## Sexual Racism and Body-oriented Concerns

To test Research Question 1, bivariate correlations between the two sexual racism

variables and the five body-oriented concerns were calculated separately for the two racial/ethnic

groups (see Table 3). For East Asian SMM, racist rejection was not significantly correlated with any of the five body-oriented concerns; however, racist exotification was significantly and positively correlated with all of the body-oriented outcomes ($r$s = .22-.37). Conversely, for South Asian SMM, racist rejection was significantly and positively correlated with all of the body-oriented outcomes ($r$s = .29-.52). Additionally, for South Asian SMM, racist exotification was significantly and positively correlated with muscular dissatisfaction ($r$ = .27) and eating disorder symptomatology ($r$ = .37). Therefore, as predicted, sexual racism was positively associated with each of the body-oriented concerns for both East Asian and South Asian SMM, although each dimension of sexual racism was not consistently related to each of the outcomes for both groups.

This pattern of correlations suggested that racist rejection and racist exotification were not equally predictive of body-oriented concerns, and that the dimension of sexual racism most predictive of body-oriented concerns might differ for East Asian and South Asian SMM. I explored this possibility by testing the difference between the correlations for and the racist rejection corresponding correlations for racist exotification. Differences between correlations were tested with Zou's (2007) modified asymptotic method of generating confidence intervals of the difference between dependent correlations. For each pair of related correlations, I generated a 95% confidence interval of the difference of correlations (subtracting the correlation for racist exotification from that for racist rejection). Confidence intervals containing zero suggest that the difference between sample correlations is not large enough to conclude that they are different in the population.

Results for East Asian SMM indicated that, compared to racist rejection, racist exotification was a stronger predictor of general body dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.50, -.06]), body fat dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.60, -.18]), and eating disorder symptomatology (95% CI [-.56, -

.14]). However, no such differences were found among East Asian SMM for muscular dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.35, .08]) and body checking (95% CI [-.39, -.05]). In contrast, results for South Asian SMM indicated that, compared to racist exotification, racist rejection was a stronger predictor of general body dissatisfaction (95% CI [.13, .50]), body fat dissatisfaction (95% CI [.15, .52]), and body checking (95% CI [.21, .57]). However, no such differences were found among South Asian SMM for muscular dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.17, .21]) and eating disorder symptomatology (95% CI [-.19, .18]). In short, results suggested that, when differences exist in the impact of the two dimensions of sexual racism on body-oriented concerns, racist rejection is likely to be more consequential for South Asian SMM whereas racist exotification is likely to be more consequential for East Asian SMM.

Inspection of correlations also suggested possible racial/ethnic group differences in the links between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns. To test for such differences and address Research Question 1, I used Zou's (2007) modified asymptotic method for generating 95% confidence intervals around the difference of correlation coefficients from independent samples. No racial/ethnic group differences emerged for correlations involving racist exotification: general body dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.07, .46)], muscular dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.26, .26)], body fat dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.09, .43)], eating disorder symptomatology (95% CI [-.24, .24)], and body checking (95% CI [-.18, .36)]. In contrast, for effects involving racist rejection, correlations were stronger for South Asian SMM than East Asian SMM for four of the five body-oriented concerns: general body dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.66, -.14)], body fat dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.80, -.30)], eating disorder symptomatology (95% CI [-.59, -.07)], and body checking (95% CI [-.71, -.23)]. No racial/ethnic group differences were found, however, for the correlation between racist rejection and muscular dissatisfaction (95% CI [-.42, .11)]. In summary, the only

racial/ethnic differences to emerge were cases where racist rejection impacted body-oriented concerns more strongly for South Asian SMM than East Asian SMM.

To address Research Question 2 and investigate if East Asian and South Asian SMM significantly differed with respect to exposure to sexual racism and body-oriented concerns, I conducted independent samples t-tests to compare the mean differences between the two groups for these main variables (see Table 4). Results from the independent samples t-test indicated only one significant difference between the two racial/ethnic groups. That is, South Asian SMM ($M =$ 3.34) reported experiencing muscular dissatisfaction at a higher rate than East Asian SMM in our sample ($M = 3.08$), $t(198) = 2.32$, $p = .02$.

### Moderating and Main Effects of Racial/Ethnic Identity Salience

First, bivariate correlations between racial/ethnic identity salience and the main variables for the overall sample were calculated (see Table 2). Partially consistent with expectations, racial/ethnic identity salience was negatively correlated with general body dissatisfaction ($r = -28$, $p < .001$) and body fat dissatisfaction ($r = -24$, $p < .001$) but was unrelated to other body-related concerns. Racial/ethnic identity salience was not significantly related to any of the sexual racism variables.

This pattern of correlations differed when examining results separately by racial/ethnic group (see Table 5). For East Asian SMM, racial/ethnic identity salience was significantly and negatively correlated with general body dissatisfaction only. For South Asian SMM, racial/ethnic identity salience was significantly and negatively correlated with general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, and eating disorder symptomatology. These results were consistent with notion that strength of racial/ethnic identity may protect Asian SMM from some body-oriented concerns, despite null results for specific types of concerns. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially

supported. Lastly, no significant correlations were found between racial/ethnic identity salience

and the two sexual racism groups for both the racial/ethnic groups.

Racial/ethnic identity salience was investigated as a possible moderator of the link

between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns (Research Question 3). Moderation was

tested by a set of ten hierarchical regression analyses: one for each combination of sexual racism

and body-oriented concern variables (see Table 6). In Step 1, racial/ethnic identity salience and

the sexual racism variable were entered as predictors. In Step 2, the two-way interaction between

racial/ethnic identity salience and sexual racism was entered. In Step 3, race/ethnicity was

entered as a predictor, along with the two-way interactions between race/ethnicity and both

racial/ethnic identity salience and the sexual racism variable. Finally, in Step 4, the three-way

interaction between race/ethnicity, racial/ethnic identity salience, and sexual racism was entered

into the regression. The key steps in these analyses were Step 2 and Step 4. A statistically

significant change in $R$-squared at Step 2 would indicate that racial/ethnic identity salience

moderates the relation between sexual racism and the body-oriented concern. A statistically

significant change in $R$-squared at Step 4 would indicate that race/ethnicity moderates the two-

way interaction tested in Step 2 (i.e., that the moderating role of racial/ethnic identity salience

differs for East Asian SMM and South Asian SMM). Statistically significant interaction effects

were interpreted by calculating simple slopes at low (16th percentile), medium (50th percentile),

and high (84th percentile) levels of racial/ethnic identity salience.

As indicated in Table 6, none of the focal moderation effects arose for the relation

between racist exotification and any of the five body-oriented concerns. However, for effects

involving racist rejection, statistically significant interactions were found for two of the outcome

variables. Specifically, a two-way interaction was found between racial/ethnic identity salience

and racist rejection when predicting body fat dissatisfaction, such that racist rejection was unrelated to body fat dissatisfaction for low levels of racial/ethnic identity salience ($B = 0.11$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .287$) but positively related to body fat dissatisfaction for medium ($B = 0.23$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$) and high levels ($B = 0.37$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$). a three-way interaction was found between race/ethnicity, racial/ethnic identity salience, and racist rejection when predicting body checking. specifically, a two-way interaction between racial/ethnic identity salience and racist rejection was found for South Asian SMM ($B = 0.61$, $SE = 0.17$, $p < .001$) but not for East Asian SMM ($B = -0.08$, $SE = 0.18$, $p = .679$). Simple slopes analysis indicated that, for South Asian SMM, racist rejection was unrelated to body checking for low levels of racial/ethnic identity salience ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = .462$) but positively related to body checking for medium ($B = 0.51$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .001$) and high levels of racial/ethnic identity salience ($B = 0.94$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .001$).

In short, racial/ethnic identity salience did not moderate links between most pairs of sexual racism and body-oriented concern variables. However, in the two instances where interaction effects arose, identity salience strengthened the relation between racist rejection and body-oriented concerns. This effect occurred for both racial/ethnic groups when predicting body fat dissatisfaction but only for South Asian SMM when predicting body checking.

### Moderating and Main Effects of Identity Conflicts

As with racial/ethnic identity salience, I first tested the bivariate correlations between identity conflicts and the main variables assessed in the study for the overall sample (see Table 2). Consistent with Hypothesis 3, Identity conflicts were positively correlated with all five types of body-oriented concerns for the overall sample ($r$s = .27-.42, $p$s < .001) and both types of sexual racism ($r$s = .28-.31, $p$s < .001).

Then, I individually tested for correlations between identity conflicts and these variables for the two racial/ethnic groups (see Table 5). For East Asian SMM, identity conflicts were significantly and positively correlated with all body-oriented and sexual racism variables. This pattern of results was identical for South Asian SMM, except identity conflicts were not associated with Muscularity Dissatisfaction.

Identity conflicts were investigated as a potential moderator of the association between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns (Research Question 4). Two-way and three-way interaction effects were tested with the same approach used for racial/ethnic identity salience. Significant moderation effects arose for identity conflicts with respect to both forms of sexual racism assessed in the present study.

For moderation effects involving racist exotification, statistically significant interactions were found for general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, and body checking (see Table 7). A two-way interaction was found between racist exotification and identity conflicts when predicting general body dissatisfaction, such that racist exotification was positively related to general body dissatisfaction at low levels of identity conflicts ($B = 0.36$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .021$) but unrelated for medium ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .187$) and high levels ($B = -0.07$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .507$) of identity conflicts. A three-way interaction was found between race/ethnicity, identity conflicts, and racist exotification when predicting body fat dissatisfaction. Specifically, identity conflicts moderated the link between racist exotification and body fat dissatisfaction for South Asian SMM ($B = -0.15$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .032$) but not for East Asian SMM ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .192$). Simple slopes analysis indicated that, for South Asian SMM, racist exotification was positively related to body fat dissatisfaction for low levels ($B = 0.48$, $SE = 0.23$, $p = .037$) of identity conflicts but unrelated for medium ($B = 0.15$, $SE = 0.14$, $p = .294$) and high levels ($B = -$

0.11, $SE = 0.16$, $p = .507$) of identity conflicts. A similar pattern of results emerged for the three-way interaction for body checking. Identity conflicts moderated the link between racist exotification and body checking for South Asian SMM ($B = -0.26$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .002$) but not for East Asian SMM ($B = 0.06$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .646$). For South Asian SMM, racist exotification was positively related to body checking for low levels ($B = 0.75$, $SE = 0.27$, $p = .006$) of identity conflicts but unrelated for medium ($B = 0.19$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .258$) and high levels ($B = -0.25$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = .209$) of identity conflicts.

For moderation effects involving racist rejection, statistically significant interactions were found for general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, body checking, and muscular dissatisfaction. A two-way interaction was found between racist rejection and identity conflicts when predicting both general body dissatisfaction and body fat dissatisfaction. Simple slopes analysis indicated that racist rejection was positively related to general body dissatisfaction at low levels of identity conflicts ($B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .002$) but unrelated for medium ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .854$) and high levels ($B = -0.14$, $SE = 0.97$, $p = .136$) of identity conflicts. Similarly, racist rejection was positively related to body fat dissatisfaction at low levels of identity conflicts ($B = 0.29$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) but unrelated for medium ($B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .451$) and high levels ($B = -0.12$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .268$) of identity conflicts. Furthermore, a three-way interaction was found between race/ethnicity, identity conflicts, and racist rejection when predicting body checking. Specifically, identity conflicts moderated the link between racist rejection and body checking for South Asian SMM ($B = -0.24$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$) but not for East Asian SMM ($B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .915$). Simple slopes analysis indicated that, for South Asian SMM, racist rejection was positively related to body checking for low levels ($B = 0.88$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .001$) and medium levels ($B = 0.37$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .001$) of identity conflicts

but unrelated for high levels ($B = 0.37$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .892$) of identity conflicts. Finally, a three-way interaction was found between race/ethnicity, identity conflicts, and racist rejection when predicting muscular dissatisfaction. However, identity conflicts did not moderate the link between racist rejection and muscular dissatisfaction for South Asian SMM ($B = 0.06$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .098$) or East Asian SMM ($B = -0.06$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .165$). Because the two-way interaction effect did not reach statistical significance for either racial/ethnic group, simple slopes were not interpreted.

In short, identity conflicts moderated links between many pairs of sexual racism and body-oriented concern variables, particularly when predicting general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, and body checking. In all cases, identity conflicts weakened the relation between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns. This effect occurred for both racial/ethnic groups in some cases, and for South Asian SMM only in other cases.

## Discussion

The present study joins a small but growing body of research providing evidence of links between sexual racism experiences and body-oriented concerns in racial/ethnic minority SMM (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Brennan et al., 2013). Unlike previous research, this study focused on online sexual racism experiences of Asian SMM and investigated potential differences between East Asian and South Asian SMM. Diverse body-oriented concerns were found to be related to sexual racism. Racial/ethnic group differences emerged with respect to the type of sexual racism that was most predictive of outcomes and of the strength of the relations between racism and outcomes. Moreover, in some cases, links between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns differed depending on participants' connections to their ethnic identity, as well as their experience of conflicts between their ethnic and sexual orientation identities.

**Sexual Racism on Dating Apps Measure**

Existing quantitative research on sexual racism has explored the impacts of racist events as they take place in broader settings but has not specifically focused on these events as they take place on online dating apps (Bhambhani et al., 2019). Therefore, current measures fail to explicitly capture and study incidents of online sexual racism on dating apps. In the present study, we developed a new measure using exploratory factor analysis to assess SMM's experiences of sexual racism on online dating apps. The factor analyses revealed two factors present in our data set. Relying on previously cited research on SMM's experiences with sexual racism and results from the factor analyses, we identified two subscale factors. The developed 8-item Sexual Racism on Dating Apps Measure (SRDAM) captures experiences of SMM with two different forms of racism: racist rejection and racist exotification. The five items loaded on the Racist Rejection subscale assess how excluded, unaccepted, or rejected one feels on dating apps because of one's race/ethnicity. For the Racist Exotification subscale, the three items assess how fetishized, glorified, or exotified one feels on dating apps because of one's race/ethnicity. To our knowledge, this study is the first to develop a multi-item measure to assess these two domains of sexual racism within the context of online dating apps. Individually assessing racist rejection and racist exotification is particularly important as SMM of Color regularly encounter both types of sexual racism on dating apps (Callander et al., 2015; Han et al., 2015), and as shown by the results in this study, each type may have different outcomes and effects on one's psychological well-being.

The findings of the present study provide preliminary reliability and validity support for the assessment of experiences of racist rejection and racist exotification among Asian SMM. Convergent validity was supported via positive correlations between the two subscales and

existing measures of similar constructs (Balsam et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2018). Structural validity was supported via exploratory factor analysis. Lastly, scores on both subscales displayed good reliability support. These findings provide strong initial support for the developed scale's psychometric properties.

## Sexual Racism and Body-Oriented Concerns

Results for the overall sample indicated that the two domains of sexual racism were related to all five types of body-oriented concerns assessed in this study. These results are consistent with previous studies that show that sexual racism has deleterious effects on body-related outcomes among SMM of Color (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Brennan et al., 2013). However, it is important to note that these previous investigations did not study the links between different types of sexual racism and body-oriented concerns. Therefore, our results provide nuance to these previous efforts by establishing links between two types of sexual racism and diverse indicators of body-oriented concerns.

The current study is also the first to investigate intergroup differences between East Asian SMM and South Asian SMM with respect to their perceived experiences of sexual racism and body-oriented concerns. Muscular dissatisfaction was the only variable for which the two groups' mean scores were statistically significant. Specifically, South Asian SMM reported greater muscular dissatisfaction than East Asian SMM. Although the two groups were mostly similar with respect to their mean scores, bivariate correlations among our variables highlighted important differences between East Asian SMM and South Asian SMM in the impact of sexual racism on body-oriented concerns. Correlations between racist rejection and racist exotification with each of the five body-oriented concerns suggested that East Asian and South Asian SMM may differ in which kind of sexual racism most strongly predicted body-oriented concerns for

their racial/ethnic group. Results from dependent correlations revealed that racist rejection more strongly predicted body-oriented concerns for South Asian SMM, whereas racist exotification more strongly predicted body-oriented concerns for East Asian SMM. Lastly, when tested if the relationship between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns differed by race/ethnicity, we found significant interactions for racist rejection. In all cases, racist rejection was positively related to outcomes for South Asian SMM but not East Asian SMM.

Previous research with South Asian sexual minority individuals highlights mechanisms that may explain the interrelations between racist rejection and body-oriented concerns for this racial/ethnic group. Research has suggested that South Asian sexual minority individuals report feeling socially excluded from the LGBTQ+ community due to their racial/ethnic identity (Hart et al., 2021; Sandil et al., 2014). These feelings of social isolation, rejection, and exclusion have been used to suggest why incidents of racial prejudice may exacerbate psychological distress among this group (Sandil et al., 2014). Additionally, racism from the LGBTQ+ community has previously been studied to explain why SMM of Color may feel pressured to prescribe to White standards of attractiveness (Bhambhani et al., 2019; Camp, 2015). Thus, South Asian SMM's experiences of racist rejection on online dating/hook-up apps may intensify their feelings of lack of belongingness to the SMM community and enhance the pressure to conform to these perceived norms of attractiveness in order to be accepted.

This framework may also help to explain why exotification did not act as a strong predictor for all body-oriented concerns for this group. It is possible that feeling exotified or wanted by other SMM for their race/ethnicity increases a sense of belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, which in turn decreases certain body-oriented concerns. At the same time, exotification may signal to South Asian SMM that acceptance is contingent on restrictive

stereotypes, which could contribute to conflicts in allegiances and, ultimately, increases in body-oriented concerns. These opposing effects of exotification may explain its overall null association with body-oriented concerns. Future studies should explore how South Asian SMM identify, process, and internalize experiences of racist rejection and racist exotification.

Similarly, previous research on East Asian SMM offers potential explanations for why racist exotification, rather than racist rejection, emerged as a stronger predictor of body-oriented concerns among this racial/ethnic group. Scholarship exploring romantic and sexual experiences of East Asian SMM within the SMM community has highlighted how East Asian men report feeling exotified, objectified, and fetishized by other SMM due to stereotypes around body hair, submissiveness, body structure, and femininity that are prescribed to this racial/ethnic group (Han, 2008; Tseng, 2019; Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004). These previous findings suggest that East Asian SMM experience exotification that is usually associated with their bodies and physical appearance. Therefore, experiences of racist exotification may make East Asian SMM more aware of their physical appearance, which in turn increase body-oriented concerns. Research has also indicated that East Asian SMM are routinely exposed to racist rejection. Although our findings do not support a significant relationship between racist rejection and body-oriented concerns, it may be possible that racist rejection is associated with other mental health outcomes for this group. For example, some research has suggested that experiences of race-based discrimination within the gay community have been associated with increased symptoms of depression (Chae, 2008) and anxiety for this racial/ethnic group (Choi et al., 2013). Therefore, future studies should continue to study the impact of exotification on body-oriented concerns among East Asian SMM but should also study the associations between racist rejection and other psychological factors.

**Racial/Ethnic Identity Salience, Sexual Racism, and Body-Oriented Concerns**

Consistent with previous research highlighting racial/ethnic identity salience as a potential protective factor (Lira de la Rosa, 2017), correlations between racial/ethnic identity salience and the five-body oriented concerns reveal that identity salience may protect Asian SMM from some of the body-oriented concerns. Specifically, for East Asian SMM, greater racial/ethnic identity salience was associated with lower general body dissatisfaction only. For South Asian SMM, greater racial/ethnic identity salience was associated with lower general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, and eating disorder symptomatology.

The present study also tested racial/ethnic identity salience as a potential moderator of the links between the two types of sexual racism and five types of body-oriented concerns. In most cases, racial/ethnic identity salience did not moderate the links between sexual racism and body-oriented concerns. However, identity salience strengthened the relationship between racist rejection and body fat dissatisfaction for both racial/ethnic groups and strengthened the relationship between racist rejection and body checking only for South Asian SMM. One potential explanation to this magnifying effect of racial/ethnic identity salience could be that individuals with greater identity salience are more adversely impacted by racist events. That is, due to their greater connection to their racial/ethnic group it is possible that they internalize racist events more intensely and thereby experience greater psychological toll of racial discrimination.

These mixed findings with respect to racial/ethnic identity salience as a moderator between racism and body-oriented outcomes remain consistent with previous research. For instance, a meta-analysis exploring identity salience as a moderator between perceived discrimination and mental health revealed that identity salience had no effect on the links between these variables in some cases or acted as a buffer in some and exacerbator in other

(Pascoe & Richman, 2009). Similarly, in this case, greater racial/ethnic identity salience exacerbates the impact of sexual racism for a few body-related outcomes but has no significant effects between sexual racism and the other body-related outcomes. Future research should explore if there are other racial/ethnic identity-related resilience and protective factors that could buffer the impact of sexual racism on body-related distress among Asian SMM and other SMM of Color.

### Identity Conflicts, Sexual Racism, and Body-Oriented Concerns

Overall, the positive associations observed between identity conflicts and most of the assessed body-oriented concerns remain consistent with previous research highlighting the deleterious effects of identity conflicts on psychological distress among sexual and racial minority populations (Santos & VanDaalen, 2016). Additionally, across the two groups, results indicate that identity conflicts were positively associated with body-oriented concerns, except our findings did not support a significant correlation between identity conflicts and muscular dissatisfaction for South Asian SMM.

To my knowledge, this was the first study to test identity conflicts as a moderator between experiences of racist events and body-related outcomes. Our results revealed significant moderation effects for both domains of sexual racism, mainly when predicting general body dissatisfaction, body fat dissatisfaction, and body checking. At large, identity conflicts weakened the relationship between the sexual racism variables and body-oriented concerns. These effects were seen for the overall sample for some cases and only for South Asian SMM in some cases.

These interaction effects suggest that identity conflicts may eliminate the impact of sexual racism on body-oriented concerns; however, this should not be taken as a sign that conflicts between one's racial/ethnic and sexual orientation identities are beneficial. Inspection

of the simple slopes revealed a situation in which high levels of identity conflicts generally

raised the level of body-oriented concerns to a point that overrode any potential negative impact

of sexual racism experiences. Indeed, levels of body-oriented concerns were similar for

participants who were high in identity conflicts, sexual racism, or both; in contrast, body-

oriented concerns were lowest for participants who were low in both identity conflicts and sexual

racism. These results point to the potential importance of identity conflicts as factor maintaining

poor body image among Asian SMM. However, this is the first study to test identity conflicts as

a moderator between such variables; thus, further testing for similar effects is warranted.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the many unique contributions of this study, it is essential to interpret our

findings in light of some limitations. The Sexual Racism on Dating Apps Measure is newly

developed and warrants additional validity and reliability assessment. Additionally, although not

a limitation of this study, the scale's psychometric properties may be significantly different for

other racial/ethnic minority groups, as the scale was procured using a sample exclusively

consisting of East Asian and South Asian SMM. Thus, future studies should examine if the scale

operates similarly for SMM of Color belonging to other racial/ethnic groups.

The present study was cross-sectional and correlational, limiting the ability to infer

directionality and causality among variables. This research design raises the possibility of

alternative interpretations of findings. For example, it is possible that SMM who are more

dissatisfied with their bodies are more likely to perceive and internalize experiences of racial

prejudice, as opposed to experiences of racism impacting body-oriented concerns. Therefore, to

strengthen inferences about direction of influence between experiences of sexual racism and

body-oriented concerns, future studies should adopt longitudinal and experimental designs.

Another limitation of the study is that all participant data was retrieved solely from self-report questionnaires. Self-report data presents the risk of socially desirable and inaccurate participant responses, and this should be taken into account when interpreting our results.

Since the main focus of the study was body-oriented concerns among Asian SMM, the sample does not include SMM from other racial/ethnic minority groups. Therefore, these results may not generalize to other SMM of Color. As suggested by previous research on SMM of Color, SMM of different ethnic/racial groups differ in the experiences of appearance-based rejection and fetishization (Han, 2008; Hunter, 2010; Miller; 2015; Phua & Kauffman, 2003) and also differ with respect to the impact racism has on their psychological well-being (Choi et al., 2013); therefore, it is possible that two domains of sexual racism assessed in this study impact body-oriented concerns differently across different racial/ethnic minority groups. Future studies should examine these constructs among more racially/ethnically diverse samples of SMM. Further, our results may also not be generalizable to all Asian SMM, as it is important to note that our sample only consists of East Asian and South Asian SMM and fails to include and reflect the experiences of Southeast Asian SMM. Thus, our results may not be applicable to Southeast Asian SMM, and future studies with Asian SMM should study the interrelations among these variables among Southeast Asian SMM. Lastly, our sample was entirely recruited via social media webpages, listservs, and community organization announcements. These recruitment strategies may further reflect some biases in the characteristics of our participants (e.g., greater behavioral and emotional connection to the LGBTQ+ and/or Asian community organizations, higher sexual/racial/ethnic identity salience, more presence on social media, etc.) and may not be representative of Asian SMM that are not active in such spaces.

Finally, a growing body of research provides evidence suggesting that COVID-19 could potentially be a confounding variable in the present study with respect to all three of our main variables (i.e., dating app use, racism, and body-oriented concerns). Research on SMM's dating and sexual behavior has shown that SMM have reported substantial changes in their dating and sexual behaviors during the pandemic (McKay et al., 2020), with many SMM reporting either increased or decreased dating/hook-up app use (Sanchez et al., 2020). Additionally, pandemic-related stress has previously been associated with negative body-related outcomes among adults (Swami et al., 2020). Lastly, the pandemic has caused a surge in anti-Asian sentiments and anti-Asian racism on offline and online platforms (Ziems et al., 2020). Asian American individuals have reported an increase in mental health concerns since the beginning of the pandemic (Wu et al., 2020), and experiences of COVID-19-related racism have been studied to partially explain this increased rate among Asian American individuals (Wu et al., 2020). Given these previous research findings, future studies must re-examine the constructs in this study outside the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Implications**

Despite the limitations discussed above, the present research has significant implications for researchers, practitioners, and advocates working with Asian sexual minority populations. Previous studies with Asian sexual minority individuals have noted adverse consequences of homogeneously categorizing various Asian subcultures (Szymanski & Gupta, 2009; Szymanski & Sung, 2010) and have especially discussed the paucity of research on the experiences of South Asian LGBQ individuals (Sandil et al., 2014). The present results highlight substantial differences between East Asian and South Asian SMM and thereby reinforce the importance of researching East Asian and South Asian cultures separately. These findings should act as a call to

all researchers to continue making efforts to study and highlight different racial/ethnic minority groups' nuanced experiences and to avoid monolithic representations of different minority groups. Additionally, our findings should motivate the development of empirically supported interventions to facilitate coping with body-objectification and racial prejudice among Asian SMM and other SMM of Color.

These findings should also speak to clinicians and social workers working with Asian SMM. In clinical work, attention needs to be paid to the impacts of online sexual racism, dating, and body-related distress on the well-being of these populations. Clinicians should also avoid making assumptions regarding similarities between these two Asian subcultures or between other SMM of Color and their identity-related experiences. Lastly, our results should further motivate for change at systemic levels. App developers should take note of the exclusive experiences that SMM of Color are currently facing on such apps and should consider developing changes or new apps that make such online communities feel safer and more inclusive of SMM of Color. Given that the experiences of sexual racism are associated with body-related distress in our sample, advocates should make continued efforts to learn and educate individuals about sexual racism and the adverse impacts it has on SMM of color within the LGBTQ+ community.

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**Tables**

Table 1

*Structure Coefficients from Exploratory Factor Analysis*

| Items | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|
| **I've been made to feel unwanted on online dating/hook-up apps because of my race or ethnicity** | **0.89** | 0.44 |
| **I've felt ignored or invisible on online dating/hook-up apps because of my race or ethnicity** | **0.89** | 0.38 |
| **I've been turned down for sex on online dating/hook-up apps because of my race or ethnicity** | **0.75** | 0.40 |
| **I've felt men of other races or ethnicities on online dating and hook-up apps have acted as if they're better than me because of my race or ethnicity** | **0.73** | 0.45 |
| While using dating/hook-up apps, How often have you been turned down for sex because of your race or ethnicity? | 0.68 | 0.51 |
| **While using dating/hook-up apps, I've felt that men of other races or ethnicities are uncomfortable around me because of my race or ethnicity** | **0.67** | 0.39 |
| While using dating/hook-up apps, how often have you had trouble finding lover relationships because of your race or ethnicity? | 0.64 | 0.47 |
| While using dating/hook-up apps, how often have you been made to feel uncomfortable because of your race or ethnicity? | 0.59 | 0.55 |
| **While using dating/hook-up apps, how often have you been made to feel sexually objectified (like a piece of meat) because of your race or ethnicity?** | 0.48 | **0.85** |
| **While using dating/hook-up apps, in sexual relationships, how often do you find that people pay more attention to your race or ethnicity than to who you are as a person?** | 0.43 | **0.69** |
| **While using dating/hook-up apps, how often did you hear sexual comments about your race or ethnicity?** | 0.29 | **0.69** |
| Sexual partners on online dating/hook-up apps have wanted me only because of my race or ethnicity; they pay no attention to other personal characteristics. | 0.37 | 0.53 |

*Note.* Bolded items were retained in the final version of the scale.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations*

| Variable | *M* | *SD* | *Min* | *Max* | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. General Dissatisfaction | 2.89 | 0.90 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .32*** | .76*** | .40*** | .61*** | .22** | .17* | -.28*** | .42*** |
| 2. Muscular Dissatisfaction | 3.21 | 0.78 | 1.00 | 5.00 | -- | .31*** | .36*** | .35*** | .20** | .25*** | -.01 | .31*** |
| 3. Body Fat Dissatisfaction | 3.12 | 1.03 | 1.00 | 1.03 | | -- | .54*** | .64*** | .25*** | .23** | -.24*** | .39*** |
| 4. Disordered Eating | 10.56 | 10.28 | 0.00 | 46.00 | | | -- | .45*** | .20** | .35*** | -.10 | .27*** |
| 5. Body Checking | 4.67 | 1.23 | 1.00 | 7.00 | | | | -- | .33*** | .16*** | -.13 | .38*** |
| 6. Racist Rejection | 3.51 | 1.02 | 1.00 | 5.00 | | | | | -- | .42*** | -.00 | .31*** |
| 7. Racist Exotification | 2.10 | 0.70 | 1.00 | 4.00 | | | | | | -- | -.04 | .28*** |
| 8. Identity Salience | 3.08 | 0.60 | 1.17 | 4.00 | | | | | | | -- | -.16* |
| 9. Identity Conflicts | 4.37 | 1.62 | 1.00 | 7.00 | | | | | | | | -- |

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 3

*Bivariate Correlations among Body-oriented Concerns and Sexual Racism Variables by Race/Ethnicity*

| Outcomes | Rejection | | Exotification | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | *East Asian* | *South Asian* | *East Asian* | *South Asian* |
| General Dissatisfaction | -.01 | .30*** | .28*** | .08 |
| Muscular Dissatisfaction | .13 | .29** | .27** | .27** |
| Body Fat Dissatisfaction | -.07 | .49*** | .33*** | .16 |
| Disordered Eating | .02 | .36*** | .37*** | .37*** |
| Body Checking | .05 | .52*** | .22* | .13 |

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations of the Main Variables by Racial/ethnic Identity*

| Variable | East Asian | | South Asian | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | *p* |
| Rejection | 3.53 | 1.00 | 3.48 | 1.05 | 0.30 | 198.00 | 0.77 |
| Exotification | 2.18 | 0.67 | 2.02 | 0.72 | 1.63 | 198.00 | 0.10 |
| Body Dissatisfaction | 2.96 | 0.80 | 2.82 | 0.99 | 1.07 | 198.00 | 0.28 |
| Muscular Dissatisfaction | 3.08 | 0.79 | 3.34 | 0.74 | -2.32 | 198.00 | 0.02 |
| Fat Dissatisfaction | 3.13 | 0.91 | 3.12 | 1.14 | 0.06 | 188.35 | 0.95 |
| Disordered Eating | 9.30 | 9.53 | 11.83 | 10.87 | -1.75 | 198.00 | 0.08 |
| Body Checking | 4.65 | 0.99 | 4.69 | 1.44 | -0.25 | 175.60 | 0.80 |
| Ethnic Identity | 3.04 | 0.55 | 3.12 | 0.64 | -0.98 | 193.54 | 0.33 |
| Identity Conflicts | 4.30 | 1.49 | 4.44 | 1.75 | -0.59 | 198.00 | 0.56 |

Table 5

*Bivariate Correlations between Proposed Moderators and Main Variables by Race/Ethnicity*

|  | Identity Salience | | Identity Conflicts | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Outcomes | East Asian | South Asian | East Asian | South Asian |
| Racist Rejection | .18 | -.14 | .21* | .39*** |
| Racist Exotification | .06 | -.10 | .32** | .27** |
| General Dissatisfaction | -.22* | -.31** | .46*** | .41*** |
| Muscular Dissatisfaction | -.14 | .09 | .45*** | .18 |
| Body Fat Dissatisfaction | -.14 | -.31** | .38*** | .40*** |
| Disordered Eating | .05 | -.23* | .31** | .23* |
| Body Checking | -.08 | -.16 | .47*** | .34*** |

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 6

*Hierarchical Regression Analyses Testing Racial/Ethnic Identity Salience as a Moderator of Links between Sexual Racism and Body-oriented Concerns: Change in R-squared*

| Regression Step | Body Dissatisfaction | Muscle Dissatisfaction | Fat Dissatisfaction | Disordered Eating | Body Checking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Models for Racial Rejection | | | | | |
| 1 | .128*** | .042* | .122*** | .051** | .128*** |
| 2 | .017 | .005 | .017* | .000 | .037** |
| 3 | .026 | .061** | .064** | .057** | .051** |
| 4 | .000 | .000 | .006 | .000 | .029** |
| Models for Racial Exotification | | | | | |
| 1 | .103*** | .061** | .107*** | .131*** | .041* |
| 2 | .001 | .009 | .000 | .000 | .002 |
| 3 | .016 | .055** | .016 | .041* | .006 |
| 4 | .002 | .000 | .004 | .004 | .000 |

*Note.* Step 1 = Ethnic Identity Strength and the sexual racism variable; Step 2 = interaction between Ethnic Identity Strength and sexual racism variable; Step 3 = ethnicity and its interaction with both Ethnic Identity Strength and the sexual racism variable; Step 4 = three-way interaction between ethnicity, Ethnic Identity Strength, and the sexual racism variable.

Table 7

*Hierarchical Regression Analyses Testing Identity Conflicts as a Moderator of Links between Sexual Racism and Body-oriented Concerns: Change in R-squared*

| Regression Step | Body Dissatisfaction | Muscle Dissatisfaction | Fat Dissatisfaction | Disordered Eating | Body Checking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Models for Racial Rejection | | | | |
| 1 | .188*** | .107*** | .171*** | .088*** | .199*** |
| 2 | .037** | .000 | .037** | .001 | .053*** |
| 3 | .034* | .064** | .062** | .049* | .060** |
| 4 | .012 | .019* | .006 | .000 | .029** |
| | Models for Racial Exotification | | | | |
| 1 | .181*** | .121*** | .166*** | .155*** | .151*** |
| 2 | .020* | .000 | .005 | .002 | .022* |
| 3 | .013 | .057*** | .006 | .024 | .001 |
| 4 | .012 | .000 | .022* | .011 | .018* |

*Note.* Step 1 = Identity Conflicts and the sexual racism variable; Step 2 = interaction between Identity Conflicts and sexual racism variable; Step 3 = ethnicity and its interaction with both Identity Conflicts and the sexual racism variable; Step 4 = three-way interaction between ethnicity, Identity Conflicts, and the sexual racism variable.

**Appendices**

*Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire*

1. **Which of the following best describes your gender?*** *Select one answer only.*
   a. Woman
   b. Man
   c. Gender non-binary or genderqueer
   d. Questioning or uncertain
   e. None of the above options accurately describe my gender. I describe my gender as

   _____

2. Do you identify as transgender?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. **Please write in your age (in years):*** _____

4. **Do you currently live within the United States?***
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. **Do you currently live in Canada?***
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. **What is your race/ethnicity? Select as many as apply*:**
   a. African American/Black
   b. Middle Eastern
   c. East Asian/East Asian American
   d. South Asian/South Asian American
   e. Southeast Asian/Southeast Asian American
   f. Native American Indian or Alaskan Native
   g. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   h. Multiracial and/or Multiethnic
   i. White
   j. Hispanic or Latino/a/x
   k. None of the above options accurately describe my race/ethnicity. I describe my race/ethnicity as _____

7. **Which of the following best describes your sexual identity/orientation*?**
   a. Bisexual
   b. Gay
   c. Lesbian
   d. Heterosexual
   e. Pansexual

     f.  Queer
     g.  Asexual
     h.  Questioning or uncertain
     i.  None of the above options accurately describe my sexual identity/orientation. I describe my sexual identity/orientation as _____.

8. **How would you define your sexual orientation\*:** *Please check all that apply.*
     a.  Attracted to men
     b.  Attracted to women
     c.  Attracted to non-binary people
     d.  Other

9. *What gender identity have your sexual partners identified as?* *Please check all that apply.*
     a.  Never had sex
     b.  Men
     c.  Women
     d.  Non-binary people
     e.

10. How important is your sexual identity (e.g., gay, queer, pansexual, bisexual, etc.) to you?
     a.  Not at all important
     b.  Slightly important
     c.  Moderately important
     d.  Very important
     e.  Extremely important

11. What is your current relationship status?
     a.  Single
     b.  In a casual relationship with one partner
     c.  In a casual relationship with multiple partners
     d.  In a committed relationship with one partner
     e.  In a committed relationship with multiple partners

12. **In the past month, did you use any mobile application(s) ("apps") intended to meet romantic or sexual partners (e.g., Tinder, Bumble, Grindr, Scruff, Hinge, HER, etc.)?\***
     a.  Yes
     b.  No

13. In the past year, did you use any mobile application(s) ("apps") intended to meet romantic or sexual partners (e.g., Tinder, Bumble, Grindr, Scruff, Hinge, HER, etc.)?\*
     a.  Yes
     b.  No

14. Which of the following best describes your preferred sexual position?
     a.  Top

      b. Vers Top
      c. Versatile
      d. Vers Bottom
      e. Bottom
      f. Prefer not to say

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
      a. Less than high school
      b. High school graduate or GED
      c. Some college
      d. Associate's degree (AA)
      e. Bachelor's degree (BS or BA)
      f. Professional degree (MA, MS, JD, MD, MBA, etc.)
      g. Doctoral degree (PhD)

16. What area do you live in?
      a. Urban
      b. Suburban
      c. Rural

17. What is your current employment situation? (Please select all that apply):
      a. Part-Time Student
      b. Full-Time Student
      c. Employed Part-Time
      d. Employed Full-Time
      e. Self-Employed
      f. Unemployed
      g. Furloughed
      h. Looking for work
      i. Unable to work
      j. Caretaker
      k. Retired

18. What socioeconomic class have you spent the majority of your life in?
      a. Lower class
      b. Working class
      c. Middle class
      d. Upper middle class
      e. Upper class

19. What is your approximate yearly income (in U.S. dollars)?
      a. I do not have any income
      b. Less than $10,000
      c. $10,000 -$19,999
      d. $20,000 -$29,999
      e. $30,000 -$39,999

f. $40,000 -$49,999
g. $50,000 -$59,999
h. $60,000 -$69,999
i. $70,000 -$79,999
j. $80,000 -$89,999
k. $90,000-$99,999
l. $100,000 -$149,999
m. More than $150,000

Note = Bolded items used to assess participant eligibility

### *Appendix B: General Body Dissatisfaction*

<u>Measure:</u> Appearance Evaluation subscale of the Multidimensional Body Self-Relations

Questionnaire-Appearance Evaluation Subscale (MBSRQ; Brown et al., 1990, Cash, 2018)

<u>Scale:</u> 5-point scale; definitely disagree to definitely agree

<u>Items:</u>

1. My body is sexually appealing.
2. I like my looks just the way they are.
3. Most people would consider me good-looking.
4. I like the way I look without my clothes on.
5. I like the way my clothes fit me.
6. I dislike my physique.*
7. I am physically unattractive.*

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scoring: responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

## *Appendix C: Muscular Dissatisfaction*

Measure: Muscularity Subscale of the Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS; Tylka et al., 2005)

Scale: 6-point scale; never to always

Items:
1.  I think I have too little muscle on my body
2.  I wish my arms were longer
3.  I think my legs are *not* muscular enough
4.  I think my chest should be broader
5.  I think my shoulders are too narrow
6.  I think my arms should be larger (i.e., more muscular)
7.  I think my calves should be larger (i.e., more muscular)
8.  I think my back should be larger and more defined
9.  I think my chest should be larger and more defined
10. I feel satisfied with the definition in my arms*

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scoring: responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

## *Appendix D: Body Fat Dissatisfaction*

Measure: Low Body Fat Subscale of the Male Body Attitudes Scale (MBAS; Tylka et al., 2005)

Scale: 6-point scale; never to always

Items:

1. I think my body should be leaner
2. I feel satisfied with the definition in my abs (i.e., stomach muscles)*
3. I am concerned that my stomach is too flabby
4. I feel dissatisfied with my overall body build
5. I think I have too much fat on my body
6. I think my abs are *not* thin enough
7. I feel satisfied with the size and shape of my body*
8. Has eating sweets, cakes, or other high calorie food made you feel fat or weak?
9. Have you felt excessively large and rounded (i.e., fat)?
10. Have you felt ashamed of your body size or shape?
11. Has seeing your reflection (e.g., in the mirror or window) made you feel badly about your size or shape?
12. Have you been so worried about your body shape or size that you have been feeling that you ought to diet?

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scoring: responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix E: Eating Disorder Symptomatology*

Measure: Eating Attitudes Test -26 (EAT-26; Garner et al., 1982).

Scale: 6-point scale, always to never

Items:

1. Am terrified about being overweight
2. Avoid eating when I am hungry.
3. Find myself preoccupied with food.
4. Have gone on eating binges where I feel that
I may not be able to stop.
5. Cut my food into small pieces.
6. Aware of the calorie content of foods that I eat.
7. Particularly avoid food with a high carbohydrate
content (i.e. bread, rice, potatoes, etc.)
8. Feel that others would prefer if I ate more.
9. Vomit after I have eaten.
10. Feel extremely guilty after eating.
11. Am preoccupied with a desire to be thinner.
12. Think about burning up calories when I exercise.
13. Other people think that I am too thin.
14. Am preoccupied with the thought of having
fat on my body.
15. Take longer than others to eat my meals.
16. Avoid foods with sugar in them.
17. Eat diet foods.
18. Feel that food controls my life.
19. Display self-control around food.
20. Feel that others pressure me to eat.
21. Give too much time and thought to food.
22. Feel uncomfortable after eating sweets.
23. Engage in dieting behavior.
24. Like my stomach to be empty.
25. Have the impulse to vomit after meals.
26. Enjoy trying new rich foods.*

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scoring: responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix F: Body Checking*

<u>Measure:</u> Body Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996)

<u>Scale:</u> 7-point scale; strongly disagree to strongly agree

<u>Items:</u>
1. I rarely think about how I look.*
2. I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good on me.*
3. I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks.*
4. I rarely compare how I look with how other people look.*
5. During the day, I think about how I look many times.
6. I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good.
7. I rarely worry about how I look to other people.*
8. I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks.*

<u>Note:</u> * = item is reverse-scored

<u>Scoring:</u> responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

## *Appendix G: Sexual Racism*

Measure: Stress-from-Racism in Gay Community Measure (Han et al., 2015)

Scale: 5-point scale; strongly disagree to strongly agree

Items:
1. Sexual partners [on online dating/hook-up apps] have wanted me only because of my race or ethnicity; they pay no attention to other personal characteristics.
2. I've been turned down for sex [on online dating/hook-up apps] because of my race or ethnicity.
3. I've been made to feel unwanted [on online dating/hook-up apps] because of my race or ethnicity.
4. I've felt [men of other races or ethnicities] have acted as if they're better than me because of my race or ethnicity.
5. I've felt ignored or invisible [on online dating/hook-up apps] because of my race or ethnicity.
6. I've felt that [men of other races or ethnicities] are uncomfortable around me because of my race or ethnicity.
7. ~~I've felt unwelcome or that I didn't fit into West Hollywood because of my race or ethnicity.~~
8. ~~Overall, when you have been treated differently based on your race/ethnicity, how stressful have these experiences been for you?~~

Note: items slashed-through were included in the original measure but will not be used in this project.

Scoring: scores are summed and average to produce a total score.

Measure: Social discrimination (racism, police brutality, discrimination due to sexual identity) occurring among adult MSM (Diaz & Ayala, 2001)

Scale: 4-point scale; never to many times

Items:
1. How often have you been made to feel uncomfortable in a gay bar or club because of your race or ethnicity?
2. How often have you had trouble finding lover relationships because of your race or ethnicity?
3. In sexual relationships, how often do you find that people pay more attention to your race or ethnicity than to who you are as a person?
4. How often have you been turned down for sex because of your race or ethnicity?
5. How often did you hear sexual comments about your race or ethnicity?
6. How often have you been made to feel sexually objectified (like a piece of meat) because of your race or ethnicity?

Scoring: Responses to all six items were averaged to create a sexual racism subscale score

### *Appendix H: LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale*

<u>Measure:</u> LGBT-POC Microaggressions Scale-Racism in Dating and Close Relationships subscale (Balsam et al., 2011)

<u>Scale:</u> 6-point scale; Did not happen/Not applicable to me to It happened, and it bothered me extremely

<u>Items:</u>
1. Being rejected by other LGBT people of your same race/ethnicity
2. Being rejected by potential dating or sexual partners because of your race/ethnicity
3. Being seen as a sex object by other LGBT people because of your race/ethnicity
4. Reading personal ads that say "White people only"
5. Feeling like White LGBT people are only interested in you for your appearance
6. Being discriminated against by other LGBT people of color because of your race

<u>Scores:</u> Responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix I: Gendered Racism Scales for Asian American Men*

<u>Measure:</u> Gendered Racism Scale for Asian American Men-Frequency; Perceived Undesirable Partner Subscale (Liu et al., 2018)

<u>Scale:</u> 4-point scale; 1 = Very often, 4 = Never

<u>Items:</u>
1. Others do not perceive me as physically attractive because I am an Asian American man.
2. People have hinted that I am not romantically attractive because I am an Asian American man.
3. I have noticed that people prefer men from other racial groups as romantic partners compared to Asian American men.
4. I have had difficulties finding potential dating partners because I am an Asian American man.
5. I know people who stereotype Asian American men as sexually unattractive.
6. Others have hinted that Asian American men tend to have trouble finding romantic partners.

<u>Scores:</u> Responses are appropriately reverse-scored, summed, and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix J: Racial/Ethnic Identity Salience*

Measure: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992)

Scale: 4-point scale; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree

Items:
1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
5. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
7. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
8. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
9. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
10. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
11. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
12. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

Scores: Responses summed and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix K: Identity Conflicts*

Measure: Conflicts in Allegiances (CIA; Sarno et al., 2015)

Scale: 5-point scale; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Items:
1. I feel little or no conflict between my [participant's reported racial identity] and [participant's reported sexual identity]*
2. I have not yet found a way to integrate being [participant's reported sexual identity] with being a member of my racial group
3. It is easy for me to be both [participant's reported sexual identity] and a member of my racial group*
4. I separate my [participant's reported racial identity] and [participant's reported sexual identity] identities
5. I often feel like I'm betraying either Asian people or LGBQ people
6. I feel as if my sense of [participant's reported racial identity] is at odds with my [participant's reported sexual identity]

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scores: Responses summed and averaged for a composite score.

### *Appendix L: Attentiveness Checks*

Measure: Attentive Responding Scale (ARS-18; Maniaci & Rogge, 2014)

Scale: 5-point scale; not at all true to very true

Items:
Infrequency Subscale:
1. I don't like being ridiculed or humiliated*
2. My favorite subject is agronomy
3. I enjoy the music of Marlene Sandersfield
4. I don't like getting speeding tickets*
5. It feels good to be appreciated*
6. I'd rather be hated than loved

Note: * = item is reverse-scored

Scoring: responses are appropriately reverse-scored and summed for a total score.

Cut-score: 7.5

Inconsistency Subscale:
Item pairs:
1. I am an active person
2. I have an active lifestyle

3. I enjoy the company of my friends
4. I like to spend time with my friends

5. I enjoy relaxing in my free time
6. In my time off I like to relax

7. I spend most of my time worrying
8. I worry about things a lot

9. It frustrates me when people keep me waiting
10. It's annoying when people are late

11. I am a very energetic person.
12. I have a lot of energy.

Scoring: absolute differences within pairs are summed across pairs.

Cut-score: 6.5