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Prejudice Toward Asian American Women: Clothing Influences Stereotypes

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ABSTRACT. Clothing type can have a significant impact on the way people are perceived. In this study, we were interested in the effect of business versus casual clothing on the perception of Asian American women, given various stereotypes about them. We used a between-subjects design with a sample of college students from a university in the United States. Participants saw 3 Asian American women (and 1 European American woman to distract from the nature of the study) in either business attire or casual outfits, and rated each woman on a series of descriptors based off various stereotypes of Asian American women. We used the Scale of Anti-Asian American Stereotypes to measure internal prejudice toward Asian Americans and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to measure sexism. The Scale of Anti-Asian American stereotypes was a significant covariate, $F(4, 233) = 6.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Participants rated models in business attire as less stereotypically Asian, $F(1, 239) = 46.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, less sexualized, $F(1, 239) = 12.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, and less invisible, $F(1, 239) = 42.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. Our results show that stereotypes can indeed be influenced by business attire. It is important to note that future research may be oriented toward changing the attitudes of those who hold harmful stereotypes, rather than the actions (i.e., clothing choices) of the subjects of prejudice.

Open Data and Open Materials badges earned for transparent research practices. Data and materials are available at https://osf.io/kr2uc

Keywords: Asian-American, women, stereotypes, prejudice

摘要. 服装类型会对人们的看法产生重大影响。在这项研究中，鉴于人们对亚裔美国女性的各种刻板的印象，我们对商务服装与休闲服装对亚裔美国女性看法的影响感兴趣。我们对来自美国一所大学的大学生样本使用了学科间设计。参与者看到 3 名亚裔美国女性（和一名欧洲裔美国女性）穿着商务装或休闲装，并根据对亚裔美国女性的各种刻板印象对每位女性进行一系列描述。我们使用反亚裔美国人刻板印象量表来衡量对亚裔美国人的内部偏见，并使用矛盾性别歧视量表来衡量性别歧视。反亚裔美国人刻板印象的程度是一个重要的协变量，$F(4, 233) = 6.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$。参与者认为亚裔模特穿着商务装不那么刻板。$F(1, 239) = 46.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, 不那么性感，$F(1, 239) = 12.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$，并且不那么不可见 $F(1, 239) = 42.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$。我们的结果表明，刻板印象确实会受到商务着装的影响。重要的是要注意，未来的研究可能会着眼于改变持有有害刻板印象的人的态度，而不是偏见主体本身的行为（例如服装选择）。

关键词：亚裔美国人、女性、刻板印象、偏见

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MAHIRAP UNAWAIN. Ang uri ng pananamit ay maaaring magkaroon ng isang makabuluhang epekto sa paraan ng pag-iisip ng mga tao. Sa pag-aaral na ito, interesado kami sa epekto ng pang-negosyo kumpara sa kaswal na damit sa pang-unawa ng mga kababaihang Asian American, na may iba't ibang mga stereotype tungkol sa kanila. Gumamit kami ng disenyo ng pagitan ng mga paksa na may isang sample ng mga mag-aaral sa kolehiyo mula sa isang unibersidad sa Estados Unidos. Ang mga kalahok ay nakakita ng 3 mga kababaihang Asian American (at isang babaeng European American upang makaabala mula sa likas na katangian ng pag-aaral) sa alinman sa pananamit sa pang-negosyo o kaswal na mga kasuotan, at na-rate ang bawat babae sa isang serye ng mga naglalarawan batay sa iba't ibang mga stereotype ng mga kababaihang Asian American. Ginamit namin ang Scale of Anti-Asian American Stereotypes upang masukat ang panloob na pagkiling sa mga Asianna American at ang Ambivalent Sexism Inventory upang masukat ang sexism. Ang Scale of Anti-Asian American stereotypes ay isang makabuluhang covariate, $F(4, 233) = 6.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Ang mga kalahok ay nag-rate ng mga modelong nakapanamit pang-negosyo bilang less stereotypically Asian, $F(1, 239) = 46.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, less sexualized, $F(1, 239) = 12.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, at less invisible, $F(1, 239) = 42.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. Ipinapakita ng aming mga resulta na ang mga stereotype ay maaaring maimpluwensyahan ng kasuotan sa negosyo. Mahalagang tandaan na ang pagsasaliksik sa hinaharap ay maaaring nakatuon sa pagbabago ng mga pag-uugali ng mga may hawak na nakakapinsalang mga stereotype, sa halip na mga pagkilos (ibig sabihin, mga pagpipilian sa pananamit) ng mga paksa ng pagtatangi.

Ang mga keyword: Asian American, kababaihan, stereotype, pagtatangi

The United States has had a longstanding history of stereotyping Asian women (Chang, 2015; Prasso, 2005). Throughout this history, there have been many stereotypes associated with Asian and Asian American women including but not limited to exotic, sexualized, the servile "Geisha Girl," the model wife, and the cute and tiny Asian girl (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018; Nguyen, 2016). Although these stereotypes have their roots in the Western portrayal and ideas of Asian women from the European colonization of Asia to Hollywood in the midtwentieth century, the effects of all these stereotypes are seen even today through modern media and through prejudiced attitudes of the public (Chang, 2015). In the present study, we sought to explore ways to modify stereotypes specific to Asian American women. We specifically investigated if professional clothing could influence stereotypes of Asian American women because clothing can have a significant impact on how one is perceived (Gurung et al., 2017; McDermott & Pettijohn II, 2011).

Asian American women find stereotypes influence their personal lives, professional careers, opportunities, academic careers, and relationships with others (Hommadova & Davydova, 2018; Nguyen, 2016). Consequently, it is important to understand these stereotypes as well as the prejudice and discrimination behind them. Because these stereotypes may include Asian American women as being invisible, powerless, submissive, and sexualized (Hommadova & Davydova, 2018; Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018; Prasso, 2005), we tested if portraying them in clothing incongruent with these stereotypes, business attire, would influence perceptions in any way because business attire has been shown to increase perceptions of one as competent and authoritative (Kwon &

Johnson-Hillery, 1998). When women are dressed in business attire and follow workplace dress codes, they are also perceived are more hardworking and powerful (Gurung et al., 2017). Given previous research on how clothing can affect an impression of someone and stereotypes about them (Kahn & Davies, 2017; McDermott & Pettijohn II, 2011) along with the specific way business or more formal wear can influence an impression (Gurung et al., 2017), we sought to predict certain stereotypes by putting models in formal business wear. Although research has been done on the prevalence and impact of discrimination caused by stereotypes in general (Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Fiske, 1998; Kim, 2002; Steele, 1997; Van Knippenberg et al., 1999), we were interested in seeing how they might differ within a particular context (e.g., clothing).

The Experience of Asian American Women

Although the topic is still being explored, some research exists that explores stereotypes of Asian Americans in general, which include people from a wide variety of different countries. A prominent stereotype is that of the "model minority," in which Asian Americans are seen as intelligent, successful, high-achieving, high-earning model citizens (Sue & Kitano, 1973; Suzuki, 1977). However, there is evidence that Asian Americans may internalize these seemingly positive stereotypes as they anticipate discrimination, resulting in a reaction that may cause negative symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2008). The internalization of these positive stereotypes is also related to somatic symptoms and psychological distress (Gupta et al., 2011).

However, more targeted research is needed in exploring stereotypes pertaining specifically to Asian American women because the multiple identities of race and gender create a separate experience for Asian American women. Previous research has confirmed that the intersectionality between race and gender can have a significant effect on how individuals are perceived, especially when it comes to stereotypes (Lei et al., 2020; Rattan et al., 2019). There has been few empirical studies conducted to gauge the prevalence of these stereotypes as they are held by the public today. Further, little research has explored the effects of stereotypes on Asian American women or what can be done to diffuse them. In a sample of 20 women from East Asia at an American university, 13 reported some form of discrimination or sexual harassment based on their gender or on being Asian, clearly demonstrating that these stereotypes have serious implications (Hommadova & Davydova, 2018).

One qualitative research study concerning Asian Americans and racial microaggressions, defined as "brief, commonplace, and daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental slights and indignities," found a central theme focused around Asian American women (Sue et al., 2008, p. 329). With focus groups of participants identifying as Asian American, the discrimination Asian American women faced resulted in feelings of being exoticized, fetishized, and sexualized (Sue et al., 2007). One Asian American woman stated that such treatment "equates our identities to that of passive companions to white men" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 95). Asian or Asian American female faculty may also face prejudice in the university setting because they are expected to be nonconfrontational and submissive to authority, often being viewed as passive, exotic, and less credible, especially if they are a nonnative English speaker (Nguyen, 2016).

Another qualitative study looking at the experiences of discrimination through stereotypes for Asian American women found three distinct themes of discrimination: racism against Asian Americans shared by Asian American women, Asian American women-specific experiences, and experiences from within the Asian American group or family (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). The notable point of interest in the results shows consistent themes of stereotypes in regard to the intersectionality between gender and race when considering the experience of Asian American women in particular. The core themes found within the study were "exoticized and fetishized," "not a leader/way too young," "submissive and passive," "cute and small," "invisible and silent," and "service workers" (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). Clearly, the stereotypes that originated decades ago still hold power today. They reduce the identities of Asian American women to a one-dimensional stereotype, which can have adverse negative effects. Unfortunately, a great gap exists in empirical research specifically aimed at the stereotypes of Asian American women, their effects, and how to dispel them.

The Nature of Stereotypes

Stereotypes are "schemas that allow for easy, fast, processing of information about people, events, or objects, based on their membership in particular groups" (Grison & Gazzaniga, 2019, p. 299) and are a common part of how people judge others. Consequently, it is important to understand how

stereotypes operate when applying them to a certain group, in this case Asian American women.

Considering how stereotypes work within social structures, they are often false and demeaning, revealing the deeper prejudice of those who hold them (Adorno et al., 1950). Bordalo et al. (2016) maintained that stereotypes represent a set of generalizations that people use to more efficiently process information about others, often focused around the most distinctive differences between groups. It is generally understood that stereotypes are based around specific character traits that affect behavior, (e.g., Americans are aggressive; Westra, 2017). Given the wide range of definitions and attributes of stereotypes, it is easy to see how they can quickly become a more complicated matter.

Additionally, it is important to consider the cognitive aspect of stereotypes. Stereotypes have been shown to reveal both conscious and unconscious attitudes toward another person or group (Banaji et al., 1993). Even simple characteristics such as facial features or skin color can instantaneously trigger stereotypical judgements in a person (Mason et al., 2006). Bordalo et al. (2016) confirmed that, when making predictions about a group, people put more weight on the most distinctive and stereotypically representative aspects within a group, and that context played an important part in determining people's judgements. Once stereotypes have been activated, people rapidly make biased judgements, effectively impacting a range of cognitive processes such as physical behaviors and attention allocation (Bargh et al., 1996; Donders et al., 2008). It is clear that stereotypes are a complex cognitive process and must be taken seriously in order to negate the adverse consequences that may accompany them.

Stereotypes and Discrimination

When considering the situation of Asian American women, it is important to consider how stereotypes may be a legitimately important factor in determining their experiences. Although stereotypes at times may appear seemingly harmless, they can in fact have serious effects (Chan, 1988; Steele, 1997). Holding stereotypes can be highly indicative of a person's underlying prejudice, which can be defined as "an unfair negative attitude toward a social group or a member of that group" (Dovidio & Gaertner 1999, p. 101).

This underlying prejudice may easily lead to discrimination, which can significantly alter how targets of stereotypes are perceived by others in general (Fiske, 1998; Van Knippenberg et al., 1999). For example, one study showed that participants holding stereotypes judged Asian American individuals to have higher math abilities (Ryan et al., 1996). Discrimination can also have significant effects on the victim as well. For example, the idea of "stereotype threat" holds that performance (such as academic) in targeted groups may be lower simply by the primed expectation of the stereotype in the individual (e.g., equally capable women will perform lower than men on a math test; Steele, 1997).

Racial discrimination, closely based around such prejudice, is also related to physical and psychological health and may contribute to stress, depression, and anger in those targeted (Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Kim, 2002). A 4-year longitudinal study in the United Kingdom demonstrated that cumulative exposure to racial discrimination can be significantly detrimental to one's mental health (Wallace et al., 2016). As a particular psychological effect of such cultural stereotypes, Asian American women may even internalize them. It has been observed through interviews and first-hand accounts that women may unconsciously place blame for feelings of worthlessness or vulnerability caused by racial discrimination not on society, but on themselves (Chan, 1988). However, little quantitative research has been done in regard to how this discrimination affects Asians or Asian American women specifically.

The Influence of Clothing on Perception

When looking at factors that may influence perceptions, and consequently what stereotypes may be activated in an observer, previous research has suggested that clothing can have a significant impact on how people are perceived (Abbey et al., 1987; Kahn & Davies, 2017; Livingston & Gurung, 2019; McDermott & Pettijohn II, 2011). Even very minor changes in one's clothing may greatly alter judgements made about that person (Howlett et al., 2013). More specifically, clothing can either enhance or mitigate racial stereotypes held by observers, as observers often have strong reactions to clothing associated with a specific group (i.e., stereotype congruent clothing; Gurung et al., 2020; Kahn & Davies, 2017). In one study, African Americans wearing stereotype incongruent formal clothing (suit coat, tie, dress shirt, dress pants) were rated significantly lower on a composite prejudice score by participants than African Americans in stereotype congruent clothing (baggy shirt, bandana, gold chain, baggy pants), as the baggy clothing is

stereotypically associated with African Americans (Livingston & Gurung, 2019). In a university setting, students are more likely to trust a Black professor in formal wear (suit jacket and tie) as opposed to a casual T-shirt (Aruguete et al., 2017).

Studies have also shown the effects of specifically formal business attire on perceptions. Those in such formal clothing are generally viewed as more intelligent, interesting, attractive, and successful (Bell, 1991; Harris et al., 1983). Kwon & Johnson-Hillery (1998) found that college students perceived models in formal business wear as more authoritative, competent, responsible, trustworthy, friendly, credible, and efficient. Considering the case of women specifically, Glick et al. (2005) compared models wearing slacks and a business jacket with women wearing a "sexy outfit": a tight skirt, low cut blouse, makeup, and heels. When participants believed the model worked in a high-status managerial position, they regarded the woman in the nonsexy business outfit more positively, with higher levels of competence and intelligence (Glick et al., 2005). High-status women in even slightly more provocative business clothing may be seen as less competent than women in a similar conservative business outfit (Howlett et al., 2015). In a study in Italy, women in a nonsexy, professional outfit were perceived as more competent, more likely to get better grades, and more likely to work harder on and receive a higher mark on their graduation thesis (Fasoli et al., 2018). In general, people view the professional appearance of women as more important than that of men (Kwon & Johnson-Hillery, 1998).

However, little research has been conducted focusing on the effect of clothing on Asian Americans, much less Asian American women. Given the evidence for clothing as a factor in changing perceptions, we decided to use this variable to try to first document the existence of stereotypes of Asian American women, then begin to address ways to influence them by manipulating outfits. With the effect that business wear has both in general and on women specifically, we were interested in seeing its effect when including race as a variable.

The Current Study

The current study integrates the impact of clothing on perceptions and racial stereotypes of Asian American women. Because context plays a key part in judgements of others (Bordalo et al., 2016), we investigated if stereotypical judgements of Asian American women differ with their style of clothing by showing models with formal business wear and casual wear. Additionally, although we realized that the term "Asian" or "Asian American" can encompass a wide variety of nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, we used this term in a broad sense, as determining the differences between these ethnicities is beyond the scope of our study.

We controlled for possible confounding variables by including the Scale of Anti-Asian American Stereotypes (SAAS; Lin et al., 2005) to measure participants' levels of prejudice toward Asians, as well as a question in the survey designed to measure participants' personal experiences with and exposure to Asians. The SAAS was developed as a scale to gauge prejudiced attitudes toward Asian Americans specifically. It was constructed around the work of the stereotype content model, which theorizes that outgroups are often seen as either warm but incompetent, or cold and competent (Fiske et al., 2002). Asian Americans fall into this second category, as they are commonly perceived as cold and unsociable, but also intelligent and respected, which demonstrates the multidimensional nature of prejudice toward Asian Americans (Lin et al., 2005). Therefore, it uses two subscales, a Competence score and a Sociability score, to accurately assess to what degree participants hold these stereotypes.

Findings from the SAAS have commonly been used in research expanding on the Asian American experience including topics of discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, communication and social interaction, especially as they relate to mixed feelings toward Asian Americans (Alt et al., 2019; Kohatsu et al., 2011; Sy et al., 2017; Zhang, 2016). Various studies have used the scale to assess negative stereotypes of Asian Americans, as well as anti-Asian American prejudice (Kohatsu et al., 2011; Zhang, 2016), and has been able to detect the presence of strong negative stereotypes in participants. For example, Kohatsu et al. (2011) found that certain racial attitudes were significant in predicting both competence and sociability subscores. Through its conception, the SAAS has been used to prove the negative effects of both positive and negative stereotypes on Asian Americans (Lin et al., 2005). It has been validated alongside other measures such as the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and the Subtle Prejudice Scale (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Overall, it was found to be accurate in predicting prejudice as it manifests in social behaviors toward Asian Americans (Lin et al., 2005).

We had two major research questions. First, we wanted to gauge to what extent and which stereotypes of Asian American women are currently held. Secondly and most importantly, we sought to investigate if these stereotypes would be influenced by displaying models in formal business attire, and if so, which of them would differ. We hypothesized that the Asian American models in the formal business wear would be rated lower on submissive (e.g., passive, obedient), invisible (e.g., shy, likely to be a team player), and sexualized (e.g., promiscuous, attractive) stereotypes of Asian American women. Given that Asians Americans in general are stereotyped as intelligent, successful, and high-achieving (Sue & Kitano, 1973; Suzuki, 1977), we hypothesized that business attire may actually increase this specific group of stereotypes because business wear can increase perceptions of being intelligent and successful (Bell, 1991; Harris et al., 1983).

Method

Participants

Participants (N = 252) included undergraduate students at a midsized, western university in the United States enrolled in introductory psychology courses. Participants' ages ranged from 18–50 (M = 22.18, SD = 6.38). The sample was 74.31% women, 24.90% men, and 0.78% transgender or other. Participants were 38.34% first-year students, 21.74% second-year students, 22.13% third-year students, 14.23% fourth-year students, and 3.56% students of another year. The sample was 60.87% European American, 16.21% Asian or Asian American, 9.49% Hispanic or Latino, 9.09% two or more races, 2.76% of another race, 1.19% African American, and 0.39% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. We recruited participants through the university's research sign-up website. Participants received course credit for their participation and instructions told them that "this study is interested in testing personality traits in regards to presentation" and they were to "look at different people and rate their personalities based on how they present themselves."

Materials

Visual Stimuli

Our study was one of two separate studies being administered through a single online survey. We recruited four undergraduate students who were friends of the researcher, three Asian American women (two Korean, one Chinese/Filipina) and one European American woman (as an effort to distract participants from the nature of the study). The order in which the pictures appeared was randomized by Qualtrics survey software. College aged students agreed to serve as models for the study and were of relatively the same height with an average body structure. The lead author took full body pictures of all four models in front of a blank white background. All models stood facing forward with a neutral expression, looking into the camera with their hands relaxed at their sides. In Condition 1, all models dressed in business attire. For example, the first Asian American model wore a striped shirt, a black blazer, grey slacks, and black heeled boots. Condition 2 included all four of the exact same models wearing casual clothing (e.g., jeans, leggings, sneakers, and T-shirts). All stimuli material and survey questions are available on https://osf.io/kr2uc.

Dependent Variables

We measured stereotypes of Asian American women drawn from previous research as an indicator of prejudice. Participants answered a series of questions regarding each model. Below each model's picture were the instructions "Please indicate the extent to which you believe this person is the following:" followed by a series of descriptive words. The descriptors included words based off various stereotypes of Asian American women (Chang, 2015; Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018; Nguyen, 2016; Prasso, 2005) such as "submissive," "feminine," "promiscuous," "obedient," and "likely to be a team player," as well as antonyms of the stereotypes: "authoritative," "powerful," and "likely to be a leader." The descriptors also included stereotypes associated with the Asian American population in general such as "intelligent," "studious," and "hard working." We included unassociated descriptors such as "fun," "friendly," and "funny" as distractors. Participants rated each word on a Likert rating scale ranging from 1 (s*trongly disagree)* to 5 (*strongly agree*).

We averaged scores for each descriptor across all three Asian American models, in an effort to generalize across the Asian American women. We then grouped these descriptors into four main categories of stereotypes: general Asian stereotypes (intelligent, studious, and hardworking), sexualized Asian women stereotypes (feminine, promiscuous, seductive, and attractive), submissive Asian women stereotypes (obedient, agreeable, compliant, submissive, and passive) and invisible, nonleader-like Asian women stereotypes (likely to be a team player, powerful, authoritative, polite, shy, leader).

We created composite scores for each category, and the resulting scores showed acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha = .91 for general Asian stereotypes, .56 for sexualized stereotypes, .63 for submissive stereotypes, and .77 for invisible stereotypes. We reverse scored antonyms of stereotypes (e.g., "authoritative," "powerful"). After these descriptors, we asked participants to rate the outfits on six qualities: "professional," "tight-fitting," "exposed," "modest," "fashionable," and "casual" as a manipulation check.

Covariates.

We used the SAAS (Lin et al., 2005) to measure participants' attitudes toward Asian Americans. The scale used a Likert rating scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). It included 25 statements such as "in order to get ahead of others, Asian Americans can be overly competitive," or "oftentimes, Asian Americans think they are smarter than everyone else is." Statements such as these added up to produce a Competence subscore. Statements such as "Asian Americans do not interact with others smoothly in social situations" added up to produce a Sociability subscore. Reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha was .82 for the total score.

Participants also completed the Ambivalent Sexism Scale (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) to measure sexism. The ASI consists of two subscales, the Hostile Sexism scale and the Benevolent Sexism scale. The Hostile Sexism scale is related to negative images of women and consists of 11 statements such as "Women are too easily offended" rated on a 4-point Likert scale of 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). The Benevolent Sexism scale is related to positive images of women and consists of eleven statements such as "Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores" rated on a 5-point scale 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). We averaged responses to create subscale scores. Subscales showed moderate to high internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha = .65 for Benevolent Sexism, .86 for Hostile Sexism, and .86 for the total ASI score. Although low, the reliability of Benevolent Sexism is within the acceptable range and may be due to contemporary perceptions of the individual questions in that subscale, which may vary from the time it was developed.

To measure participants' personal exposure and experiences with Asians, we also included a question asking how many of the participants' close friends were African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, White, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino.

Procedure

After being approved by the institutional review board, students picked the survey, titled "Attitudes and Perceptions of Clothing" from a list of studies available through the psychology department's research recruitment Sona website. We used a between-subjects design and randomly assigned participants to either condition. All surveys were administered using Qualtrics software online. Participants first read a consent form, and if agreeing, read brief instructions to answer honestly about their perceptions of the following pictures. We randomly assigned participants to either the control condition (models in casual wear) or the experimental condition (models in business wear).

After rating the models, participants completed some basic demographic information (age, year in school, ethnicity, gender), the SAAS, a short separate study, and the question concerning the ethnicities of their friends. Participants read a debrief on the nature of the study and the variables and had the option to have their data deleted, due to the deceptive element. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. All responses were anonymous, and students received class credit for participating.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

We first conducted preliminary tests for gender differences on our covariate measures, followed by examining relevant correlations. We did not perform any analysis with transgender participants or those of another gender, due to the small number of those participants. Consistent with past research, we found significant differences between men and women's responses on the ASI. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) of the sexism subscales was significant, Hotelling's Trace $F(1, 235) = 7.28$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Men's sexism scores on both subscales were significantly higher than women's scores, $F(1, 236) = 14.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$ (Hostile Sexism), $F(1, 236) = 6.06$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$ (Benevolent Sexism). Men and women did not vary on any subscales of the SAAS. Table 1 contains the mean ratings and standard deviations for each of the covariate scales and subscales.

Given the relative novelty of measuring both sexism and Asian American stereotypes, we examined the correlations between these measures and

TABLE 1

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations for Covariate Measurement Scales

Scale	Business Attire *M* (*SD*)	Casual Attire *M* (*SD*)	Total *M* (*SD*)
SAAS Competence	3.40 (0.83)	3.40 (0.86)	3.40 (0.84)
SAAS Sociability	2.91 (0.77)	2.96 (0.77)	2.94 (0.76)
SAAS total	6.28 (1.48)	6.36 (1.41)	6.32 (1.44)
ASI Benevolent	24.19 (5.33)	23.97 (5.84)	24.09 (5.57)
ASI Hostile	23.35 (7.91)	23.12 (8.45)	23.24 (8.15)
ASI total	47.60 (11.45)	47.07(12.61)	47.35 (12.00)

Note. SAAS = Scale of Anti-Asian American Stereotypes. ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Scale.

TABLE 2

Correlations Between Scale for Asian American Stereotypes, Sexism, and Number of Friends

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. SAAS Sociability	–									
2. SAAS Competence	.72**	–								
3. SAAS total	.91**	.95**	–							
4. ASI Hostile Sexism	.41**	.39**	.43**	–						
5. ASI Benevolent Sexism	.24**	.23**	.25**	.49**	–					
6. ASI total	.39**	.38**	.41**	.91**	.80**	–				
7. African Am. friends	.02	.06	.05	.07	.16*	−.07	–			
8. Am. Indian/Alaskan Native friends	.00	.15*	.09	.01	.04	−.02	.25**	–		
9. Hispanic/Latino friends	.07	.06	.07	.05	.06	.07	.20**	.07	–	
10. Asian/PIslander friends	.03	.25**	.16*	.12	.17**	.16*	.16*	.02	.18**	–
11. White friends	.02	.02	.01	.05	.16*	.06	.30**	.13	.22**	.24**

Note. AM. = American. SAAS = Scale for Asian American Stereotypes. ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. PIslander = Pacific Islander.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

TABLE 3

Mean Ratings of Models in Each Condition by Stereotype Group

Stereotype Category	Business Attire *M* (*SD*)	Casual Attire *M* (*SD*)
General Asian***	1.78 (0.51)	2.25 (0.61)
Sexualized***	2.96 (0.50)	3.13 (0.42)
Submissive	2.70 (0.53)	2.64 (0.42)
Invisible***	2.34 (0.46)	2.73 (0.49)

Note. Higher scores indicate a more stereotypical rating for each category (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).
*** $p < .001$.

also explored if stereotypes would vary with the number of friends of color a participant had. Table 2 illustrates the main correlations. Both forms of prejudicial perceptions, sexism and stereotyping, showed significant correlations. Individuals higher in sexism also tended to have higher stereotyping scores. Of note, having more Asian American friends was associated with significantly higher levels of two forms of stereotyping, both overall and competence related stereotyping.

Although we did not run pilot tests of the images confirming perceptions of the outfits as "casual" or "business," our manipulation check showed that, overall, participants viewed the business outfits as more professional, $F(1, 251) = 791.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .76$, more modest, $F(1, 251) = 11.20$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, less exposed, $F(1, 251) = 7.93$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, and more fashionable, $F(1, 251) = 39.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$.

Hypothesis-Driven Analyses

We tested our hypothesis that Asian American women would be seen as less submissive, invisible, and sexualized in stereotype incongruent business wear using a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). We used clothing type as the fixed factor and mean ratings from each stereotype category (general Asian, sexualized Asian women, submissive Asian women, invisible/nonleader Asian women) as dependent variables. We controlled for gender, sexism, and Asian American stereotypes using the total scores for each scale.

We found a statistically significant multivariate effect, Hotelling's Trace $F(4, 233) = 18.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$. Both gender, $F(4, 233) = 3.42$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and Asian stereotypes, $F(4, 233) = 6.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$ were significant covariates. Sexism was not a significant variable.

Tests of between subjects effects showed that three out of four types of stereotypes significantly varied across conditions. Models in casual attire were rated higher on general Asian stereotypes, $F(1, 239) = 46.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$. We also found a significant effect on sexualized stereotypes, $F(1, 239) = 12.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, with higher mean ratings of models in casual attire. Finally, there was a significant main effect for the invisible stereotype category, $F(1, 239) = 42.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, with lower mean ratings in the business attire condition. There was not a significance difference between conditions in the submissive category of stereotypes. Means and standard deviations for both conditions are shown in Table 3.

Exploratory Analyses

Although we used the White model images as a distractor, having a comparison race in the design afforded us the opportunity to conduct a post hoc test of race. We conducted four 2 (Race: Asian American, European American) x 2 (Clothing: business, casual) repeated measures analyses of variance controlling for gender, sexism, and Asian American stereotypes using the total scores for each scale.

We found a statistically significant interaction for race and clothing for sexualized stereotypes, Hotelling's Trace $F(1, 235) = 5.70$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, for generalized stereotypes, Hotelling's Trace $F(1, 235) = 8.04$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, and for invisible stereotypes, Hotelling's Trace $F(1, 235) = 19.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Examination of means show that participants stereotyped the Asian American women less when casually dressed. This indicates that race and clothing operate together in predicting perceptions of sexualized, general, and invisible stereotypes. None of the covariates were significant in any equation, and there no were significant effects on submissive stereotypes.

We also ran the major analysis using only the Asian and Asian American sample of participants, although only 16.21% of the sample was Asian or Asian American (32 participants). There was a significant main effect of condition, Hotelling's Trace $F(1, 36) = 4.24$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .38$, with only general stereotypes showing a significant difference across categories parallel to the main analyses, $F(1, 36) = 7.29$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$.

Discussion

Racial discrimination propagated by stereotypes is indeed an issue for Asian American women, and it is important to explore these issues as well as possible solutions for them. Our results are in line with past research that suggests clothing can have a significant impact on how one is perceived (Gurung et al., 2020; Kahn & Davies, 2017). However, in adding the dimensions of race and gender, our study demonstrated how clothing can have a considerable effect on the way Asian American women specifically are perceived and can in fact be used as a means to influence these stereotypes.

In general, participants viewed models in the business attire as less stereotypically Asian American than those in the casual wear. Perhaps the business clothing influenced subjects to view the models as more autonomous, powerful individuals whose race was not as important. In casual clothing, the models' race might have been more evident because there was less attention on the outfit. Results from the invisible and sexualized stereotype category were in line with our original hypothesis that Asian American women in business wear would be seen as less invisible and more leader-like, as well as less sexualized. It is possible that participants associated business clothing with authority and power, which negated the invisible stereotypes of Asian American women (Gurung et al., 2017). Additionally, our manipulation check confirmed that the business attire was perceived as more modest and less exposed, which likely influenced the lower sexualized ratings. This was indeed a novel finding, as these are prominent stereotypes of Asian American women that can negatively impact their everyday lives (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018; Sue et al., 2007). It is also important to note that, even though mean ratings varied between conditions for each stereotype, in the general Asian, submissive, and invisible stereotypes, mean ratings for both conditions remained below 3, indicating overall disagreement with the stereotype. Only in the sexualized category of stereotypes did the mean ratings differ between business attire (lower than 3, indicating disagreement) and casual attire (higher than 3, indicating agreement).

Contrary to our hypothesis, we did not find a significant effect for submissive stereotypes. It is possible these submissive stereotypes were not as prevalent as initially thought, or simply were not prevalent within our sample. It is also possible that our manipulation did not manage to shift this particular aspect of stereotyping as conversely because they were too strong to be shifted. It is of theoretical interest that we managed to shift some stereotypes and not others, and future research can aim to pull apart the processes and mechanisms for this finding.

It is indeed interesting to note that having more Asian American friends was associated with both overall and competence-related types of stereotyping. It was possible that some type of confirmation bias was involved, in which people paid more attention to stereotypically Asian traits in their Asian American friends, ignoring traits that might be incongruent with such stereotypes. If people had more Asian American friends, they might automatically be more used to searching for more stereotypically Asian traits in each of those friends. Additionally, the strong influence of such stereotypes might have caused these labels to become internalized, a common occurrence in

Asian Americans (Chan & Mendoza–Denton, 2008; Pyke & Dang, 2003). Therefore, Asian Americans may behave closer in accordance with such stereotypes, even unconsciously, as a result of this internalization (Chan, 1988; Pyke & Dang, 2003; Shen, 2015). People observing these behaviors such as those with more Asian American friends are then more likely to have stronger stereotypical views of Asian Americans.

Additionally, the interaction effects found in the study indicate that race and clothing worked together in shaping perceptions of individuals. What may create a certain perception for one race may create a different perception for another. The fact that these interactions were significant in predicting sexualized stereotypes, general Asian stereotypes, and invisible stereotypes may indicate something about the nature of these such labels and how different races are measured by similar traits. Given we only had one White model, these exploratory analyses should be interpreted with caution.

Our design represents a first step into using a relatively simple variable, clothing, to predict perceptions. The sizable research literature on the linkage of clothing to sexism, and newer research showing how formal clothing may attenuate racist perceptions (Gurung et al., 2020) was matched here where professional clothing short circuits commonly held beliefs about Asian American women. This was a first step in examining the power of clothing in this respect, and the current design sets up some key next steps.

The major limitations of our study included the demographics of our models and the overall makeup of our sample. Our sample was comprised of college students at one specific West Coast college, with the greatest number of participants being young, European American women, limiting generalizability. Although the West Coast has a higher number of Asian American individuals making the face validity of the study higher, the use of primarily Asian American models limited our generalizability. Additionally, we only used female models in the study, so our results cannot be generalized to Asian American males or people of other non-Asian races. Although we included one European American model to alleviate suspicion, it is possible participants might have been alerted to the focus on Asian Americans in the study due to the higher number of Asian American models. Finally, the simple "look" of each model might have lent itself toward a certain perception (e.g., a younger looking model vs. an older looking model), and additional work with models varying in age would be prudent.

There are many ways future research may explore this study and its results further. First, steps could be taken to gather a more diverse sample size to expand the generalizability of the results. It may be worth considering using male models, to explore stereotypes of Asian American men or Asian Americans in general. Although this study focused on Asian Americans in their own right, future research could compare results against other races to explore whether certain clothing does have a different impact on Asian Americans versus other races, both those of color and those that are not. Additionally, given that this study used a between-subjects design, future studies may utilize a within-subjects design to verify that the effects continue to exist within the same participants.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to note is that further research should look into ways to change the mindset of those who hold stereotypes that may negatively influence the lives of the subjects in any way, whether they be obviously unfavorable or seemingly positive, such as that of the "model minority." Our results suggest that using certain factors to influence stereotypes is indeed possible, which is a vital first step. However, relying on the victims of discrimination to alter their actions and appearance to avoid prejudice would certainly be an undesirable precedent, as Livingston and Gurung (2019) noted in their study of a similar nature. Instead, it is essential to reconsider how people think about the ways they deal with stereotypes and prejudice. Future research may be directed at exploring different ways to stop discrimination at its source such as rewiring how people think about others as well as increasing people's awareness of internal biases.

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