

Asian American Women's Antiracist Solidarity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Predictors and Mental Health Implications

Hsiu-Lan Cheng

Department of Counseling Psychology
University of San Francisco

P. F. Jonah Li

Department of Social Sciences
University of Washington Tacoma

Lou Felipe

Doctor of Psychology Clinical Psychology Program
University of Denver

Abstract

The year 2020 marked the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and racism targeting Asian and Black communities ravaged the United States, highlighting the urgency for antiracist solidarity. This study examined antiracist solidarity engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic among Asian American women, a group often fetishized and portrayed as submissive and apolitical. Pre-pandemic experiences with Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity were examined as predictors of antiracist solidarity engagement and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic. In a sample of 146 Asian American college women, a directed content analysis revealed the three most prevalent forms of solidarity engagement: collective activism, communicative advocacy, and financial activism. Regression analyses indicated that Asian fetishism positively predicted collective activism, financial activism, and communicative advocacy, while racial self-negativity positively predicted financial activism. A significant interaction between racial self-negativity and collective activism emerged when predicting anxiety symptoms. Contrary to assumptions of activism as a protective factor, this study found that partaking in collective activism worsened, rather than buffered, the longitudinal link between racial self-negativity and anxiety symptoms. Practice implications and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: Asian American women, solidarity, activism and advocacy, Asian fetishism, internalized racial self-negativity, anxiety

Asian American Women's Antiracist Solidarity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Predictors and Mental Health Implications

The emergence of the coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) brought the devastation of a worldwide pandemic, killing millions worldwide; such widespread tragedy brought a spotlight to the inflamed racial tensions in the United States (U.S.), particularly for Black Americans, who were ravaged by ongoing police brutality, and Asian Americans who were systemically blamed for the rise and spread of COVID-19 (Pew Research Center, 2020). Anti-Asian hate crimes and racist incidents (e.g., verbal attacks to brutal acts of life-threatening violence) spiked to unprecedented heights with more than 1,800 racist incidents within the initial eight weeks (Borja et al., 2020) and about 3,800 racist incidents within the first year of the pandemic (Jeung et al., 2021). Concurrently, police brutality against Black Americans, including the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, intensified public demands for police accountability and strengthened the Black Lives Matters (BLM) movement (Buchanan et al., 2020), a movement that emerged following the 2013 acquittal of the man who killed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin (Khan-Cullors & Bandele, 2018). By July 2020, the Pew Research Center's survey (2020b) showed that Asian and Black Americans experienced more racist discrimination than other racial groups in the U.S. during the outbreak of COVID-19. Cheng and colleagues (2021) proposed that racism outbreaks, such as the anti-Asian and anti-Black racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, presented an opportunity for increased critical consciousness of the fact that racial oppression is a common fate faced by racial minorities. This shared awareness of a common fate may have compelled antiracist solidarity to support one's ingroup (e.g., Asian Americans) and other oppressed groups (e.g., Black Americans). Moreover, antiracist solidarity may foster psychosocial resilience and empowerment against the harmful impact of racism (Cheng et al., 2021). In the present study, we examined antiracist solidarity engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic among Asian American women, a group often fetishized and portrayed as submissive and apolitical. Asian American women have a unique history of intersectional oppression (e.g., the fetishization of Asian American women; Keum et al., 2018), and during the COVID-19 pandemic, they also endured increased violence and social targeting (i.e. Borja et al., 2020; Jeung et al., 2021). During the same time period, the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum (Buchanan et al., 2020), resonating with many Asian American women who experienced adjacent forms of racial targeting. Taken together, these discriminatory incidents created increased opportunities for Asian American women to engage in antiracist solidarity in support of Black Americans. Recognizing the racist targeting of Black Americans and Asian American women during the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to better understand Asian American women's engagement with antiracist solidarity. We explored how Asian American women's pre-pandemic experience with Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity were associated with their antiracist solidarity engagement and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic.

Asian American Women and Activism

Asian Americans are often seen as disinterested in civic engagement (Park et al., 2008), non-confrontational, and avoidant of public demonstrations of discontent (Wang et al., 2008). Asian American women, compared to Asian American men, due to their intersectional minority status, face additional stereotypes regarding their sociopolitical participation. Often seen as submissive, unassertive, incapable of leadership, and sexually fetishized and objectified (Cheng & Kim, 2018; Liang & Peters-Hawkins, 2017), portrayals of Asian American women as apolitical ignore a deep history of Asian American civil rights campaigning (Maeda, 2016) and solidarity with other Communities of Color. For example, Asian American women activists, Grace Lee Boggs and Yuri Kochiyama, supported Black liberation by joining the Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s and 1970s (Boggs, 2016; Kochiyama, 1994). Despite this committed sociopolitical engagement, Asian American women often face gendered and racialized discrimination. Asian fetishism – the sexual objectification and exoticization of Asian-descent women (Keum et al., 2018) – is a form of racial microaggressions commonly and specifically experienced by Asian American women, while other forms of racial microaggressions targeting Asian-descent people (e.g.,

alien in own land, ascription of intelligence, second class citizenship, invisibility) are experienced across genders (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, the racialized contexts in the U.S. often insidiously socialize racial minority individuals to agree with White dominant narratives such that they adopt racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about themselves and their own racial groups, a phenomenon called internalized racism (Choi et al., 2017). An example of internalized racism is *racial self-negativity* among Asian Americans that manifests as devaluation of one's Asian descent, idealization of whiteness, and a dislike of other individuals of Asian descent (Choi et al., 2017). As such, Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity are uniquely, yet commonly, experienced by Asian American women and have important implications for psychosocial outcomes and mental health (e.g., Keum et al., 2022; Wong et al., 2025). The present study examined how Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity experienced before the COVID-19 pandemic were associated with antiracist solidarity engagement and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic.

Solidarity, Advocacy, and Activism

Solidarity has been defined as an active internal mindset and external behavioral engagement that builds coalitions among diverse groups and prompts collective action against oppression, combating White supremacy, and achieving racial justice (Araiza, 2009; Demanarig et al., 2024). Advocacy and activism are common strategies for solidarity among communities, including advocating for policies and rights for one's group and/or other minoritized groups and participating in activism against shared oppression (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; Kiang et al., 2022). McKeever et al. (2023) recognized advocacy and activism as behaviors intended to influence decision making (e.g., antiracist movements), each being unique approaches to social change. Specifically, advocacy involved persuasion to shift ideology, whereas activism challenged oppressive ideologies, which created social pressure to influence ideological positions.

McKeever and colleagues (2023) proposed six domains to conceptualize advocacy and activism. The first three describe advocacy efforts, where an element of persuasiveness undergirds each domain. *Communicative advocacy* (also referred to as dialogical advocacy) involves active or passive forms of seeking and sharing information with others, giving expansive groups of people access to information to sway opinion. The second domain, *symbolic advocacy*, raises awareness of an issue to amplify the visibility of an oppressive system (e.g., using public displays of signs and symbols). The third domain, *political advocacy*, addresses the political or legislative processes underlying a social problem (e.g., voting, lobbying).

The latter three domains are forms of activism, in which pressure is used to challenge systemic injustices (McKeever et al., 2023). *Collective activism*, the fourth domain, seeks to improve the social, economic, or political circumstance of a collective group. The fifth domain, *financial activism*, involves intentionally moving or restricting the flow of money to impact social change. Finally, the last domain, *unconventional activism* (also known as adversarial or oppositional activism), incorporates high-cost, high-risk, unconventional behaviors. Property destruction, for example, is a form of unconventional activism (McKeever et al., 2023).

In the present study, we were interested in understanding the forms of advocacy and activism that Asian American college women used to engage in solidarity against anti-Asian and anti-Black racism during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Antiracist solidarity, whether combating anti-Asian or anti-Black racism, espouses the goal of resisting White supremacy through joint acts of advocacy and activism; such acts honor the uniqueness of a group's experiences with racism without assuming commonality of marginalization and oppression across racial groups (Demanarig et al., 2024; Mohanty 2003). The nature of oppression is upheld by the three mainstays of White supremacy: 1) slavery/capitalism, 2) orientalism/war, and 3) colonialism/genocide (Smith, 2006). Antiracist solidarity, whether resisting anti-Asian or anti-Black racism, is an important avenue of empowerment and resilience that may protect against the otherwise harmful mental health impacts of racism (Cheng et al., 2021). In the present study, we explored Asian American women's solidarity against anti-Asian and anti-Black racism separately to understand the frequency and forms of advocacy and activism in which they engaged. However,

we focused on examining the overall role of antiracist solidarity rather than differentiating between the two areas of solidarity (i.e., against anti-Asian and anti-Black) efforts when examining how solidarity engagement was associated with Asian fetishism, racial self-negativity, and anxiety symptoms. Theoretically, the two areas of solidarity (i.e., against anti-Asian and anti-Black) are interconnected, and conceptual models have not postulated different effects of the two areas of racial solidarity on mental health (e.g., Cheng et al., 2021).

Asian Fetishism, Racial Self-Negativity, and Engagement in Advocacy and Activism

Experiencing prejudice, unfair treatment, and oppression can compel engagement in advocacy and activism to confront inequities; in addition, encountering mistreatment can enhance one's awareness of group-based injustice and oppression, which, in turn, motivates advocacy (Duncan, 1999, 2012; van Zomeren, et al., 2008). Research with Asian Americans supports these thoughts. For example, Asian Americans with more experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination were: (a) more likely to engage in advocacy on issues such as racial equality and immigrant rights, and (b) more likely to report greater levels of awareness of systemic racism and inequality, which, in turn, was associated with stronger collective identity which further motivated advocacy (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Qualitative interviews with Asian American activists also revealed that awareness of racism was an impetus for solidarity with pan-Asian groups and investment in their activist identities (Rhoads et al., 2002). Moreover, Asian Americans who perceived linked fate with members of their own group and with other racial minorities were more likely to be aware of anti-Black racism in the U.S. and support the BLM movement (Merseeth, 2018). Data from a survey of 200 parents of Asian American adolescents indicated that greater awareness of anti-Asian discrimination post-COVID-19 was connected to greater racial-ethnic identity exploration and less minimization of the importance of race in their parenting practices. Moreover, Asian American parents who reported greater cognizance of discrimination against other Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) groups reported greater post-COVID-19 activism (Kiang et al., 2022).

No empirical studies have examined the connection between Asian fetishism and antiracist solidarity engagement. However, because previous studies have discovered linkages between racial discrimination awareness and activist engagement (e.g., Kiang et al., 2022; Rhoads et al., 2002; Tran & Curtin, 2017), it can be inferred that experiencing Asian fetishism may motivate antiracist advocacy and activism engagement. Specifically, experiences with Asian fetishism among Asian American women may facilitate increased awareness and recognition of other oppressive treatments, including anti-Asian and anti-Black incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, such awareness and recognition, according to the extant literature, may compel antiracist advocacy and activism. This inference is also consistent with research on *overlapping approximations* that describes the process where individuals draw upon their own marginalization-related experiences that are not necessarily race-based (e.g., due to gender, sexual orientation, ability status) to advocate for racial justice and other forms of justice for marginalized groups (Hogan & Netzer, 1993, as cited in Feagin & Vera, 1995).

In comparison, how racial self-negativity informs antiracist solidarity may not be as clear. One study (Yoon et al., 2024) found that Asian Americans with higher levels of global internalized racism and greater adherence to the model minority myth, reported more anti-Black attitudes. However, while higher levels of internalizing the model minority myth through achievement orientation (i.e., attribution of Asian Americans' success to hard work, cultural work ethic) was associated with less cross-racial solidarity *attitudes* with Black Americans, the relationship between global internalized racism and cross-racial solidarity attitudes was not statistically significant. That is, there was no connection between global internalized racism and cross-racial solidarity (Yoon et al., 2024). Notably, Yoon et al. measured cross-racial solidarity attitudes – not solidarity *actions* – as assessed in the current study. It is unknown if racial self-negativity is linked with solidarity actions. From one perspective, a desire to distance oneself from one's Asian American identity may prevent individuals with racial self-negativity from engaging in solidarity actions to support Asian American or other minoritized groups (e.g., Black Americans). Alternatively, racial self-negativity may function less as a genuine desire to

reject one's Asian American identity and more as a survival mechanism in response to racialized pressures (Chou & Feagin, 2015; Millan & Alvarez, 2014). Even when expressing such self-negativity, individuals may perceive a shared fate with other Asian and Black communities and may still participate in potentially more covert forms of solidarity.

Advocacy and Activism Engagement and Mental Health

Related research has demonstrated that engagement in protests, collective gatherings, or political advocacy was linked to greater self-esteem, positive emotions, a sense of purpose in life, perceived likeness with others, and strengthened shared group identity (Klar & Kasser, 2009; Páez et al., 2015). Integrating this with previously discussed findings suggests that awareness of discrimination can compel antiracist advocacy and activism, and such engagement can foster favorable psychosocial outcomes. Cheng et al. (2021) postulated that advocacy and activism serve as protective factors, buffering the relationships between racism stressors and adverse psychological outcomes.

Although research has suggested that experiences of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity were associated with higher levels of psychological distress (e.g., Choi et al., 2017; Keum et al., 2018, 2023; Wong et al., 2025), participation in advocacy and activism against COVID-19 Asian- and Black-targeted racism may shield Asian American women from such distress (Cheng et al., 2021). That is, advocacy and activism may buffer the effects of racism on mental health. In this study, we examined whether advocacy and activism moderated the effects of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity on anxiety symptoms among Asian American college women. We focused on anxiety symptoms because the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to being a health crisis, was a crisis of racial victimization and scapegoating (e.g., concerning the origin of the virus) that placed individuals of Asian descent in heightened discrimination-related stress and anxiety (Bhattacharyya et al. 2025; Sims et al., 2022). Qualitative interviews with Asian Americans indicated that fear of becoming a victim (for themselves or loved ones) of anti-Asian violence fueled constant hypervigilance and anxiety in their everyday life (Sims et al., 2022). Moreover, some studies suggested that Asian Americans, compared to other racial/ethnic groups, might be more susceptible to developing anxiety concerns in the face of racism. For example, despite reporting similar levels of racial/ethnic discrimination, Asian American college students were at higher levels of risk for trait anxiety than their Latinx counterparts (Hwang & Goto, 2009). Another study found that longitudinal trends for anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic declined over time among other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., White, Black, Latinx) but persisted among Asian Americans (Cheslack-Postava et al., 2024).

Research Question and Hypotheses

The aforementioned literature informed our research question and hypotheses. Our research question was: in which kinds of advocacy and activism did Asian American college women engage to resist anti-Asian and anti-Black racism during the COVID-19 pandemic? Because our first research question was exploratory and descriptive, we did not postulate a specific hypothesis. Instead, we used qualitative methods to explore how participants' responses mapped onto existing forms of advocacy and activism identified in prior scholarship. In addition to the research question, we investigated three hypotheses based on the foregoing literature. First, we predicted that pre-pandemic experiences of Asian fetishism would be positively associated with engagement in advocacy and activism during the pandemic. Second, we hypothesized that pre-pandemic racial self-negativity would be related to engagement in advocacy and activism; however, we did not specify the direction of this association (e.g., positively or negatively) because of contradictory literature concerning such relationships (e.g., Chou & Feagin, 2015; Yoon et al., 2024). And third, we predicted that engagement in advocacy and activism would buffer the effects of pre-pandemic experiences of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity, respectively, on anxiety symptoms during the pandemic.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants included 146 Asian American college women ($M_{age} = 21.13$ years, $SD_{age} = 4.19$, range = 18-47) from a U.S. West Coast university. A portion of the study sample's data (i.e., only concerning racial self-negativity) was included in a previously published study (Cheng, 2023). Regarding ethnicity, the majority of the sample identified as Chinese (46.6%), followed by Filipina (25.3%), Vietnamese (18.5%), and other Asian American ethnicities (e.g., Korean, Indian, Japanese, Indonesian, multiethnic; 9.6%). Regarding generation status in the U.S., 65.1% of participants were second generation (i.e., U.S.-born individuals with at least one foreign-born parent), 18.5% were first generation (i.e., foreign-born individuals), 11.6% were third generation (i.e., U.S.-born individuals with two U.S.-born parents and at least one foreign-born grandparent), and 4.2% were fourth generation or above (i.e., self, parents, and grandparents all U.S.-born). When examining family socioeconomic status, most of the sample identified as middle-class (41.8%), followed by middle-upper class (24.7%), lower-middle class (22.6%), lower-class (9.6%), and upper-class (1.4%). In terms of relationship status, most were single (49.0%) or in a committed relationship (46.9%), with only 4.1% reported being married.

Following institutional review board approval, a recruitment email with a link to the study's survey was sent to an institutional listserv of 1,867 female Asian American students. Students were told that the purpose of the study was to understand Asian and Asian American students' interpersonal, cultural, and ethnic experiences and psychological wellbeing. To incentivize participation, twenty \$20 gift cards were raffled. A total number of 556 (30%) of the 1,867 students completed the surveys, but 126 respondents' data were unusable (i.e., 74 were entirely blank and 52 did not pass validity checks), resulting in 430 participants with valid, usable data at Time 1 (approximately 1.5 to 2 months before COVID-19 was declared a U.S. national emergency).

Time 2 data were collected approximately eight months after the Time 1 data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, students were told that the purpose of the study was to understand Asian and Asian American students' interpersonal, cultural, and ethnic experiences and psychological wellbeing. At Time 2, only 299 participants from Time 1 could be contacted (i.e., 119, or 28%, of the Time 1 participants graduated; 12 emails were returned as invalid). To encourage research participation, each participant was offered a seven-dollar gift card at Time 2. Initially, 156 respondents (52% of the 299 emailed) submitted surveys, but only 146 participants were retained for Time 2 because (a) eight submissions were entirely blank, (b) one respondent failed the validity check, and (c) one signified a multivariate outlier ($p < .001$) as indicated by their Mahalanobis-distance scores (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Procedures and Instruments

We used mixed-methods research (Creswell & Clark, 2007) to conduct the current study by incorporating quantitative questionnaires (i.e., to assess Asian fetishism, racial self-negativity, anxiety symptoms) and qualitative questions (i.e., to understand advocacy and activism). The following instruments were administered using an online survey created in Qualtrics. The order of the scales was randomized in Qualtrics.

Quantitative Measures

Asian Fetishism (Time 1). The Asian Fetishism measure was administered at Time 1 of the study's data collection. It is a four-item subscale of the *Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Asian American Women* (GRMSAAW; Keum et al., 2018) which assesses microaggressions experienced by Asian American women with intersectional – gender and race – minority statuses. The Asian Fetishism subscale focuses on fetishization and stereotypical treatment of Asian women. One item reads, "Others express sexual interest in me because of my Asian appearance." Each item is accompanied by a 6-point scale ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*) with higher scores indicating increased frequency of gendered racial microaggressions in the form of Asian fetishism. The construct of Asian fetishism as measured by the GRMSAAW has been found to be correlated ($r = .34$ to $.64$)

with similar constructs assessed by other scales (Keum et al., 2018) providing support for its convergent validity. Studies with Asian American women reported good internal consistency reliability for the total scale scores (.90; Keum et al., 2023; .91; Le et al., 2020) and the Asian Fetishism subscale scores (.90; Gamst et al., 2021). For this sample, the internal consistency (coefficient alpha) was .85.

Racial Self-Negativity (Time 1). The racial self-negativity measure was administered at Time 1 of the data collection. Racial self-negativity was measured using a subscale linked with the *Internalized Racism in Asian Americans Scale* (IRAAS; Choi et al., 2017). This subscale assesses the dimension of internalized racism involving an overall depreciation of one's Asian American identity, wishing to be a different racial identity than Asian, and displaying negative thoughts and feelings toward other Asian Americans. The Racial Self-Negativity subscale has four items, including, "I sometimes wish I weren't Asian." Items are evaluated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly agree*); higher scores indicate increased internalized racial self-negativity. Studies with Asian Americans indicated that internalized racism as measured by the IRAAS was negatively correlated with collective self-esteem ($r = -.21$ to $-.72$), providing evidence for its convergent validity (Choi et al., 2017). The IRAAS also has been found to have an internal consistency reliability of .90 for the total scale score (Keum et al., 2018). In this study, the Racial Self-Negativity subscale scores showed acceptable internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .76).

Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7; Time 2). The GAD-7 scale was administered at Time 2 of the current study's data collection. The GAD-7 is a measure of generalized anxiety disorder symptomatology, using seven self-report items on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 3 (*Nearly every day*); higher scores denote increased anxiety symptoms over the past two weeks (Spitzer et al., 2006). Total scores were used in the current study. There is evidence for the GAD-7 scale's convergent validity. Positive correlations have been discovered between generalized anxiety symptoms as measured by the GAD-7 and related anxiety constructs assessed by other measures ($r = .72$ to $.74$). The GAD-7 scores has been found to have an internal consistency of .92 among the general U.S. population (Spitzer et al., 2006). Previous studies with Asian Americans reported good internal consistency reliability for the GAD-7 scores (e.g., .91; Cheng et al., 2022) and also predictive validity as indicated by higher levels of GAD-7 scores significantly predicting higher levels of depression over time (Arora et al., 2017). In the current study, very good internal consistency (coefficient alpha = .93) was discovered for the GAD-7.

Qualitative Questions

The Time 2 survey included qualitative questions to explore participants' involvement in antiracist solidarity during the 8-month interval between Time 1 (early February 2020; before COVID-19 was declared a national emergency and a pandemic on March 11, 2020) and Time 2 (mid-October 2020). To assess solidarity engagement against anti-Asian racism, we asked, "Since taking our first survey in February 2020 until now, have you participated in any solidarity and/or racial justice work (e.g., activities, programs, gatherings, protests, petitions, webinars, initiatives, campaigns, etc.), in person or online, to challenge COVID-19 anti-Asian racism?" This question was followed by "Please specifically describe the solidarity and/or racial justice work that you have participated in, in person or online, to challenge COVID-19 anti-Asian racism." We repeated this same assessment pattern for solidarity engagement against anti-Black racism. We asked, "Since taking our first survey in February 2020 until now, have you participated in any solidarity and/or racial justice work (e.g., activities, programs, gatherings, protests, petitions, webinars, initiatives, campaigns, etc.), in person or online, to challenge anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness)?" This was followed by "Please specifically describe the solidarity and/or racial justice work that you have participated in, in person or online, to challenge anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness)." These qualitative questions were developed by the first author and sent to be reviewed by two Asian American scholars who suggested minor wording adjustments. The adjusted questions were then piloted with two Asian American graduate students who indicated the questions were clear and they did not provide further feedback. We used an

online survey to collect written responses to these qualitative questions. Since interviews were not conducted, no transcript procedures were required.

Data Analytic Strategy

Qualitative Data Analysis

Positionality of researchers. The positionality of researchers includes their worldviews and location within the sociopolitical context (Holmes, 2020). Taking a reflexive approach, we must examine how our positionality had a unique and undeniable influence on this research process (Holmes, 2020). We, the researchers, are of Asian descent and represent diverse Asian ethnicities: Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwanese, and Filipinx American. Among us, two of us are first-generation immigrants, while the third is second generation (parents are foreign-born). We were all educated in the U.S. with influences from Mid-western and Western universities. Regarding gender, two of us are cisgender (female and male) and one non-binary person, who was raised female. Notably, each of us has research interests in multicultural psychology with relative expertise on the mental health experiences of minoritized groups, particularly Asian Americans. Additionally, our cultural and ethnic backgrounds represent significant histories with colonization. This, taken together with our lived experiences as minoritized Asian-descent individuals in the U.S., prompts unique interests and motivations in exploring the impacts of racist oppression and the connected anti-racist activist and advocacy behaviors to address it. This conjecture aligns with suggested practice in qualitative research – that variables such as gender identity, race, educational background, and class status influence the research process and should be acknowledged (Bourke, 2014). As psychologists and researchers who recognize that the sociopolitical context has a meaningful impact on a person's mental health, our positions racially, ethnically, and educationally shaped the research questions, design, and data interpretation of this study. Additionally, we acknowledge that our specific intersections of identity may give us unique insider knowledge as Asian-identified individuals exploring the behaviors of other Asian Americans (Yip, 2024).

Directed content analysis. We used directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to understand participants' advocacy and activism experiences. Directed content analysis leverages "existing theory or prior research" to help researchers identify and operationalize "key concepts or variables as initial coding categories" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). Importantly, responses "that could not be categorized with the initial coding scheme would be given a new code" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281), allowing researchers to remain open to responses not previously captured in the literature. Although no theory had specified the forms of antiracist solidarity engagement among Asian American women during the COVID-19 pandemic, directed content analysis allowed us to draw on existing scholarship, while allowing us to remain open to exploring new findings not previously captured in the literature. Specifically, previous studies on solidarity and/or racial justice work (Corning & Myers, 2002; Kim & Grunig, 2011; McKeever et al., 2023), resistance against COVID-19 anti-Asian (e.g., Cheng et al., 2021, 2022; Lee et al., 2022) and anti-Black racism (e.g., Mosley et al., 2021) provided us with a theory-informed framework and also allowed us to remain open for new concepts to emerge from the data. This methodology fit our study well as we could consult the above literature to guide our analysis.

Coder background and training. Qualitative coding was conducted by the second author, with intercoder reliability checks performed by the third author and oversight by the first author. All coders hold doctoral-level training in counseling or clinical psychology and have knowledge of qualitative analysis, including content analysis. The second author has specialized training in directed content analysis and has prior peer-reviewed publications involving the use of coding manuals. Prior to data coding, the second author provided a one-hour training to the third author on using the coding manual, which included operational definitions, decision rules, and example responses for each category. In addition, all authors met to review the study aims, qualitative prompts, relevant literature, and the initial coding framework. This structured and collaborative training process ensured consistent understanding and application of the coding categories across coders throughout the coding process.

Steps taken in conducting directed content analysis. Following Hsieh and Shannon (2005), we took several steps when conducting our qualitative analysis. As a first step, all authors met to review and discuss the qualitative data to identify the main categories of advocacy and activism experiences reported by the participants. Second, based on our discussion and the literature on solidarity and/or racial justice work against COVID-19 anti-Asian and/or anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness), the second author developed a detailed coding manual with an initial list of theory-informed categories (also known as “predetermined codes;” Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281) to organize participants’ reported advocacy and activism experiences. These categories included (1) unconventional activism, (2) collective activism, (3) financial activism, (4) symbolic advocacy, and (5) communicative advocacy, each with distinct operational definitions and example responses (see Table 1). The first and third authors subsequently reviewed and provided feedback on the coding manual, collaborating with the second author to collectively refine all details of the categories in the coding manual. As a third step, after revising the coding manual, we initiated the qualitative data coding process using an online Excel spreadsheet. In this data coding process, we assigned only one category to each meaning unit of a response. To illustrate, we present two scenarios. In scenario one, a qualitative response --“signing petitions” -- has one meaning unit; we coded “1” for collective activism and “0” for all other categories. In scenario two, we coded a response to multiple categories because it contains several meaning units (indicated by commas, conjunctions, or other relevant indicators), meeting the definition of multiple categories. For instance, a qualitative response --“...I have signed petitions, donated money, and attempted to spread awareness online” -- has three meaning units: regarding “signed petitions,” we coded “1” for collective activism; as for “donated money,” we coded “1” for financial activism; with respect to “attempted to spread awareness online,” we coded “1” for communicative advocacy; all other categories were coded “0.” Hence, for all qualitative responses corresponding to our open-ended questions, we coded “1” for a particular category if a unit met the definition of that category and “0” if the unit did not meet that category’s definition. For participants who did not provide qualitative responses to the open-ended questions ($n = 11$ and 22 , respectively, for anti-Asian racism and anti-Black racism), their missing values were coded as “0” (i.e., did not meet any category’s definition of advocacy or activism).

Intercoder reliability. Consistent with recent studies applying directed content analysis (e.g., Cheng et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021), the second and third authors independently coded 10% of a randomly selected subset of qualitative responses based on the coding manual. Using SPSS, we computed the Cohen’s Kappa coefficient to assess intercoder reliability. The intercoder reliability was high ($\kappa = .87$), and discrepancies were resolved by subsequent discussion and consensus. The second author then coded the remaining data. Throughout and at the end of the data coding process, the first author audited the coding of the data and reviewed all codes using both the Excel spreadsheet and the SPSS. Our coding strategy aligned with the conventional practice of intercoder reliability in qualitative research as discussed by O’Connor and Joffe (2020, p. 5): “...there is little consensus regarding the proportion of the data set that facilitates a trustworthy estimate of [intercoder reliability in qualitative research]” due to reasons such as “resource constraints.” It is “typical” to have 10% of data coded by two researchers and the remaining data coded by one researcher.

Because the qualitative data consisted of brief, open-ended survey responses rather than in-depth interviews, we did not conduct participant member checking, which is more commonly used in interview or focus-group-based studies to verify interpretive accuracy of narratives (Motulsky, 2021). In this study, we established trustworthiness by using a theory-informed coding manual, high intercoder reliability, and iterative discussion to resolve coding discrepancies.

Quantitative Data Analysis

We used point biserial correlations to examine the associations of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity, respectively, with advocacy and activism engagement. We then used hierarchical multiple regressions (HMR) to examine whether advocacy and activism moderated the relationships of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity,

respectively, with anxiety symptoms. Upon encountering significant moderation effects, we used PROCESS (an SPSS macro) and the Johnson-Neyman's analysis to probe the meaning of significant moderation effects (Hayes, 2018).

Results

The descriptive characteristics of the current data are summarized in Table 2, showing the means, standard deviations, values of kurtosis and skewness, as well as bivariate correlations among the study constructs. As shown in Table 2, other than symbolic advocacy and unconventional activism (both had very low frequency; see Table 1), the remaining variables demonstrated reasonable descriptive characteristics.

Results for Research Question 1

Our first research question explored the forms of advocacy and activism with which Asian American women engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 1 shows the frequency count for solidarity against anti-Asian and anti-Black racism, respectively, as well as the combined frequency count. Only the combined frequency count was reported in the main text and used for subsequent quantitative analyses (i.e., for testing hypotheses 1 to 3). A combined frequency count was used because we were primarily interested in the overall role of antiracist solidarity, not the distinction between solidarity against anti-Asian and anti-Black racism, in mental health. For our research question, we identified the prevalence of advocacy and activism as follows. Collective activism was most common ($n_{\text{combined}} = 68$; $n_{\text{anti-Asian racism}} = 22$; $n_{\text{anti-Black racism}} = 64$; e.g., “attended BLM protests,” “signed petitions”). This was followed by communicative advocacy ($n_{\text{combined}} = 52$; $n_{\text{anti-Asian racism}} = 24$; $n_{\text{anti-Black racism}} = 42$; e.g., “Posting anti-Asian racism propaganda,” “spread awareness on social media”) and financial activism ($n_{\text{combined}} = 31$; $n_{\text{anti-Asian racism}} = 6$; $n_{\text{anti-Black racism}} = 28$; e.g., “donations,” “donating to bail funds”). Symbolic advocacy ($n_{\text{combined}} = 4$; $n_{\text{anti-Asian racism}} = 1$; $n_{\text{anti-Black racism}} = 4$; e.g., “created posters,” “reposted infographics”) and Unconventional activism ($n_{\text{combined}} = 2$; $n_{\text{anti-Asian racism}} = 0$; $n_{\text{anti-Black racism}} = 2$; e.g., “I am trying to change my family's racism and discrimination towards the Black community”) were reported infrequently.

Results for Hypotheses 1 and 2

Our first hypothesis concerned the associations of Asian fetishism with engagement in advocacy and activism. Results from point biserial correlations revealed that experiencing Asian fetishism at Time 1 was positively correlated with collective activism ($r_{pb} = .19$, $p = .020$), financial activism ($r_{pb} = .24$, $p = .003$), and communicative advocacy ($r_{pb} = .19$, $p = .025$) at Time 2. Our second hypothesis focused on the relationships between racial self-negativity and engagement in advocacy and activism. Results indicated that experiencing racial self-negativity at Time 1 was positively linked to financial activism at Time 2 ($r_{pb} = .19$, $p = .026$). The results showed partial support for our first and second hypotheses because although Asian fetishism was positively linked to some forms of solidarity engagement as hypothesized, it was not significantly associated with all forms of solidarity engagement. Similarly, racial self-negativity was only associated with financial activism, but not all forms of solidarity engagement.

Results for Hypothesis 3

Our third hypothesis examined whether engagement in solidarity would moderate the relations between experiencing Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity (i.e., predictors) at Time 1 and anxiety symptoms (i.e., criterion variable) at Time 2. We used HMR to address this hypothesis. The predictors entered at each step are listed in Table 3. To understand whether Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity predicted anxiety symptoms, each predictor was entered at Step 1 in separate regression models. At Step 2, the three most frequent forms of solidarity (collective activism, financial activism, and communicative advocacy) were entered to examine their contributions to the regression model, after accounting for the effects of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity in

Step 1 in their respective regression models. Symbolic advocacy and unconventional activism were not examined as moderators because of their low frequency count (see Table 1). At Step 3, the interaction terms (i.e., Asian fetishism $\times$ forms of solidarity, racial self-negativity $\times$ forms of solidarity, respectively) were entered in separate regression models to understand whether these variables significantly predicted anxiety symptoms above and beyond the predictors in Step 1 and the moderators in Step 2. As significant interaction effects emerged, we used an SPSS macro, PROCESS, and the Johnson-Neyman's analysis to probe the meaning of significant moderation effects (Hayes, 2018). The Johnson-Neyman's analysis specifies the precise region of significance of the interaction effect. Using the simple slopes method (Frazier et al., 2004), we examined the moderation effect at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the predictor to depict higher (1 = participation) and lower levels (0 = no participation) of the moderator (Frazier et al., 2004).

Subsequently, two HMR analyses were performed and the results are reported in Table 3. In the first HMR, at step one, Asian fetishism was entered as the predictor and it contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(1, 144) = 8.95$, $p = .003$; $R^2 = .06$. At step two, the three most frequent forms of solidarity (i.e., collective activism, financial activism, and communicative advocacy) were added to the regression model and they explained an additional 5% of the variance in anxiety, $F(4, 141) = 4.08$, $p = .004$; $R^2 = .10$, $DR^2 = .05$. Financial activism was the only form of solidarity that was significantly and positively related to the anxiety symptoms ($B = .44$, $SE = .18$, $p = .017$) at this step. At step three, the interaction terms (i.e., Asian fetishism $\times$ forms of solidarity) were added to the model and they explained an additional 2% of the variance in anxiety, $F(7, 138) = 2.90$, $p = .007$; $R^2 = .13$, $DR^2 = .02$. However, none of the specific interaction terms involving Asian fetishism as the predictor were statistically significant at step three in the HMR (see Table 3).

In the second HMR, racial self-negativity was entered at step one as the predictor and it contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(1, 144) = 7.18$, $p = .008$; $R^2 = .05$. At step two, collective activism, financial activism, and communicative advocacy were added to the regression model and they explained an additional 5% of the variance in anxiety, $F(4, 141) = 3.61$, $p = .008$; $R^2 = .09$, $DR^2 = .05$. As in the first HMR, financial activism was the only form of solidarity that was significantly and positively related to the anxiety symptoms ($B = .45$, $SE = .18$, $p = .014$). At step three, the interaction terms (i.e., racial self-negativity $\times$ forms of solidarity) were added to the model and they explained an additional 7% of the variance in anxiety symptoms, $F(7, 138) = 3.72$, $p = .001$; $R^2 = .16$, $DR^2 = .07$. Of the tested moderation effects, only the racial self-negativity $\times$ collective activism moderation effect was significant ($B = .44$, $SE = .18$, $p = .010$; see Table 3). The Johnson-Neyman analysis indicated that racial self-negativity was significantly and positively associated with the anxiety symptoms only for participants who partook in collective activism ($B = .49$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$), but not for participants who did not engage in this form of activism ($B = .02$, $SE = .12$, $p = .862$; see also Figure 1). No other significant moderations were found ($ps > .05$). Therefore, our third hypothesis was not supported in that (a) there was no moderation effect for advocacy or activism engagement on the link between Asian fetishism and anxiety symptoms, and (b) although a moderation effect was discovered for collective activism on the link between racial self-negativity and anxiety symptoms, the direction of this finding was the opposite of our prediction.

Discussion

This study examined Asian American college women's antiracist solidarity and how pre-pandemic experiences with Asian fetishism and internalized racial self-negativity impacted their engagement with antiracist solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research question focused on the forms of advocacy and activism that Asian American college women used in their solidarity work. Results indicated that the three common forms utilized were collective activism, communicative advocacy, and financial activism. According to McKeever et al. (2023), collective activism (e.g., joining a BLM protest) and financial activism (e.g., donating money) involve committed, direct, and vigorous actions that are more high-cost and high-risk because they require more effort, money, and/or time. Comparatively, communicative advocacy (e.g., talking to others about BLM) is lower-

risk and primarily reflects behaviors aimed at amplifying, promoting, or dialoguing about an issue. Contrary to the stereotypes of Asian American women being submissive and apolitical (Leigh et al., 2021), our findings suggested otherwise: high-risk and high-cost behaviors of collective activism and financial activism were the top one- and third-most-used forms of solidarity in the women's efforts to resist anti-Asian and anti-Black racism during the pandemic. Overall, this result subverts the stereotypes of Asian American women being acquiescent on sociopolitical issues and suggests a need for future research to better understand their experiences.

Our first and second hypotheses concerned the influences of pre-pandemic experiences with perceived Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity, respectively, on engagement in antiracist solidarity. Our findings indicated that Asian American women who experienced more Asian fetishism before the pandemic were more likely to engage in collective activism, financial activism, and communicative advocacy during the COVID-19 pandemic to resist anti-Asian and anti-Black racism. This result is consistent with related theoretical (e.g., Cheng et al., 2021; Duncan, 1999, 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008) and empirical (e.g., Kiang et al., 2022; Rhoads et al., 2002; Tran & Curtin, 2017) literature, indicating that experiencing prejudice and injustice can motivate racial advocacy and activism. Asian fetishism is a group-specific, intersectional form of gendered and racialized oppression targeting women of Asian descent, denigrating them to the hypersexualized and conniving "Dragon Lady" or as the docile "Lotus Blossom" (Espiritu, 2008)—long-held stereotypes contributing to the underrepresentation of Asian American women in sociopolitical research. To our knowledge, the present study was the first empirical endeavor to demonstrate that increased experience with Asian fetishism predicted higher levels of antiracist activism and advocacy, signifying Asian American women rechanneled the effects of Asian fetishism toward collective empowerment.

Compared to Asian fetishism, pre-pandemic experiences of racial self-negativity were only positively linked to financial activism but not to other forms of solidary engagement. One previous empirical study (Yoon et al., 2024) examined internalized racism and solidarity attitudes. This study found that global internalized racism was not associated with solidarity attitudes in supporting Black Americans, although higher levels of internalized model minority myth in the form of achievement orientation (i.e., attribution of success to Asian Americans' hard work, cultural work ethic) was associated with lower levels of solidarity attitudes. It should be noted that Yoon et al. (2024) examined solidarity attitudes – not actions – as done in the current study. As such, our study was the first to discover that – contrary to the logic that racial self-negativity drives Asian Americans away from supporting other Asians or BIPOC groups – higher levels of racial self-negativity were actually linked to greater financial activism in resisting anti-Asian and anti-Black racism among Asian American women. It may be because racial self-negativity can be both a desire to distance oneself from one's Asian identity (Choi et al., 2017) and a survival mechanism within a White supremacist environment (Chou & Feagin, 2015). Perhaps racial self-negativity curbed overt forms of solidarity (e.g., collective activism, communicative advocacy) for fear of being negatively associated with other Asians or minorities – and, hence, a more visible target for oppression – but it did not deter them from financial activism (e.g., donating money), a relatively covert way of showing solidarity.

Our third hypothesis posited that antiracist solidarity engagement would moderate the effects of pre-pandemic experiences of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity, respectively, on anxiety symptoms (mental health) during the pandemic. Our findings (see Table 3) indicated that higher levels of pre-pandemic experiences of Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity predicted higher levels of anxiety symptoms during the pandemic, consistent with prior research indicating that gendered racial microaggressions and internalized racism were positively associated with psychological distress (e.g., Choi et al., 2017; Keum et al., 2018, 2023). Unexpectedly, Table 3 showed that financial activism was positively associated with anxiety symptoms, while the other forms of solidarity engagement were not. This result contradicts related literature suggesting that solidarity engagement (e.g., protests, collective gatherings, political advocacy) is linked to favorable outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, positive emotions; Pérez et al., 2015).

Moderation analyses further revealed that collective activism (e.g., serving at an anti-racist organization, joining a BLM protest) significantly moderated the association between pre-pandemic racial self-negativity and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic. However, the direction of the moderation was contrary to the theoretical literature (e.g., Cheng et al., 2021), which postulated that advocacy and activism engagement may buffer the effects of racism on adverse mental health. Instead, we found that racial self-negativity was significantly and positively associated with anxiety symptoms only when participants engaged in, not refrained from, collective activism (see Figure 1). In other words, collective activism worsened, rather than mitigated, the effects of pre-pandemic racial self-negativity on anxiety symptoms during the pandemic. Perhaps engaging in antiracist solidarity, while personally and collectively empowering (Páez et al., 2015), also can involve facing pushback, opposition, vicarious victimization (Joscelyne et al., 2015) as well as activism-related stress, guilt, and exhaustion (Conner et al., 2023) which can potentially trigger stress and apprehension, intensifying the association between racial self-negativity and anxiety symptoms. It is also possible that collective activism (i.e., collective efforts to enhance the status, power, or influence of Asian and/or Black Americans) runs against one's beliefs of racial self-negativity (i.e., devaluation of one's Asian identity with the idealization of Whiteness) such that a psychological dissonance (i.e., between one's beliefs and activism actions) further triggered, rather than alleviated, anxiety symptoms. However, this speculation should be examined in future research before any further assumptions are made. So far, no known empirical studies have investigated the moderator role of collective activism (and related constructs) in the relationships between racism and mental health outcomes; future research in this area is sorely needed.

Limitations

Our study has several limitations. First, our sample was from a racially diverse student body from U.S. West Coast, so the findings have limited generalizability to Asian American women from other universities or U.S. regions with less racial diversity. Also, the use of a college student sample likely has further limited the current study's external validity, particularly findings concerning advocacy and activism. Statistics show that college students are more likely to engage in advocacy and activism than other demographic groups (United Way NCA, 2024), so our findings may not be generalizable to non-college student populations. Second, our sample had mostly (65.1%) second-generation students (i.e., born in the U.S. with at least one parent from another country) and nearly half (46.6%) identified as ethnically Chinese, implying that our findings may have limited generalizability to Asian American women of other generation statuses or ethnic origins. Relatedly, our small sample size prevented the examination of potential sub-group differences (e.g., by generation status in the U.S., ethnicity, etc.) to reflect the diverse and broad Asian American population.

A strength of our study was its longitudinal design, though there was significant attrition from Time 1 to Time 2 data. It should be noted, however, that about 28% of the attrition was due to student graduation (see the Procedures section). If looking at the survey response rate based on available emails for Time 2 contact, the response rate of 52% is markedly higher than previous longitudinal research with college students using similar incentives (e.g., 22.7% response rate after 13 months in Wang et al., 2012). Also, data was collected based on self-report and may be susceptible to social desirability (e.g., social expectations to portray oneself as an antiracist). Relatedly, mono-method (e.g., self-report as sole source of data) and mono-operation bias (e.g., limited questions to operationalize advocacy and activism) were also threats to the study's design (Heppner et al., 2008). Further, it should be noted that the COVID-19 shelter-in-place context of the Time 2 data collection (i.e., mid-October 2020) may have impacted participants' solidarity engagement in that more online forms of solidarity activities – than in-person activities – may have been accessible to them. In our assessment, we asked participants to report their solidarity activities without specifically asking them to differentiate between online versus in-person engagement, preventing us from examining potential differences between the forms of solidarity engagement.

Another limitation of our study concerns the sample size and effect size. Specifically, according to Soper (2020), our sample size ($N = 146$) was adequate to detect a medium-sized moderation effect, but not a small

moderation effect. Hence, the null moderations between the predictors (Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity) and two of the solidarity engagement variables (financial activism or communicative advocacy) may be due to the small sample size rather than real null findings. Yet, the significant interaction found between racial self-negativity and collective activism added 7% of additional variance in the anxiety symptoms (see Table 3), larger than the 1% to 3% added variance in the criterion variable of moderator effects typically observed in non-experimental studies (McClelland & Judd, 1993). However, this moderator effect is still considered small according to Cohen (1992) and should be tested and replicated in future research.

Another limitation was that we used combined frequency counts of advocacy and activism across the areas of anti-Asian and anti-Black racism because of our focus on understanding the overall role of antiracist solidarity; however, results in Table 1 suggest potential limitations of this approach. The frequency counts were notably higher in the area of solidarity against anti-Black than anti-Asian racism (see Table 1) and combining the two areas of solidarity may mask potential differences — though theoretically the two areas of solidarity are interconnected, and conceptual models have not postulated different effects of the two areas of solidarity on mental health (e.g., Cheng et al., 2021). Our small sample size, low non-combined frequency counts, and Type-I error concerns (e.g., doubling the number of analyses performed) prevent us from performing ad-hoc analyses separately for solidarity against anti-Asian and anti-Black racism to examine our hypotheses in more nuanced ways. Likewise, we were only able to include the three most frequent forms of solidarity in our interaction analyses (see Table 3) because the frequencies of symbolic advocacy and unconventional activism were too low. Future studies with larger samples are needed to determine whether our findings are replicable or are sample-specific.

It is unknown whether the higher frequency count in the area of resisting anti-Black racism than the area of resisting anti-Asian racism reflects real differences in regard to interest in combatting anti-Black racism compared to anti-Asian racism, or if it was due to other factors. For example, could the high-profile killings of George Floyd and other Black Americans in 2020 have prompted our participants to engage more in antiracist solidarity against anti-Black racism than anti-Asian racism because the latter comparatively received less media attention? Is it possible that our Asian American women sample may have felt that anti-Asian racism was not “as bad” as anti-Black racism, such that they were less likely to engage in solidarity against the previous area of racism than the latter (e.g., *“I’ve always felt guilty speaking about anti-Asian racism because Black Americans have it way worse”* reported by Wang & Santos, 2023, p. 352)? Could the participants have harbored an internalized invisibility of anti-Asian racism—that is, internalizing society’s tendencies to minimize, overlook, or even deny the racist experiences of Asian Americans (Kim, 2018; Wang & Santos, 2023) such that they minimized the existence of COVID-19 anti-Asian racism and, thus, did not engage in solidarity efforts to confront anti-Asian racism? Alternatively, could it be that the frequency count difference in Table 1 did not indicate real differences in interest in resisting anti-Asian versus anti-Black racism? Other research exploring Asian Americans’ experiences with anti-Asian racism and discrimination during COVID-19 also revealed that standing up against anti-Black racism was an important theme for demonstrating one’s commitment to antiracist activism (Bhattacharyya et al. 2025). The complexity of these possibilities needs to be examined in future research to advance anti-racist solidarity scholarship.

We also acknowledge that history effects may have influenced participants’ advocacy, activism, and anxiety symptoms. Historical contexts (e.g., the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic as U.S. national emergency) may have affected participants’ antiracist solidarity engagement and mental health that our analysis could not capture. We also cannot rule out maturation effects because participants’ mental health and antiracist solidarity engagement may have changed over time due to external factors unrelated to our variables.

Finally, we note some limitations regarding our qualitative analysis. Our qualitative data analysis was based on two brief, open-ended survey questions, instead of in-depth interviews or focus groups. Although we were able to identify the prevalence of participants’ advocacy and activism work, our approach limited the depth

and contextual richness of participants' narratives (e.g., intensity, duration, ongoing challenges, or other related experiences) and missed the opportunity to conduct member checking of our findings (Motulsky, 2021).

Practice Implications

When working with Asian American college women, particularly within racially charged climates, it may be important to explore their engagement in racial solidarity, including collective activism, communicative advocacy, and financial activism as common channels for expressing solidarity. Such an approach pushes practitioners to challenge potentially held stereotypes about Asian American women being apolitical (Leigh et al., 2021). Practitioners also should attend to Asian American college women's experiences with unique forms of racial oppression, including Asian fetishism and internalized racial self-negativity, and how these gendered/racialized experiences may shape their solidarity engagement.

The current findings that Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity were associated with anxiety symptoms also encourages practitioners to assess anxiety concerns when working with Asian American women who may have racially fetishized and minoritized experiences. Although prior studies on diverse communities suggest that activism is linked with favorable outcomes (e.g., positive affect and self-esteem; Klar & Kasser, 2009; Páez et al., 2015), practitioners should not assume that such outcomes would necessarily apply to Asian American women because the present study revealed a connection between financial activism and greater anxiety symptoms. This does not imply that activism engagement should be discouraged to curb potential anxiety symptoms, but it suggests that practitioners should support Asian American women clients in their anti-racist efforts, including financial activism, by helping clients address potential preexisting or ensuing anxiety concerns. Relatedly, the finding that racial self-negativity was significantly and positively associated with anxiety symptoms *only* for participants partaking in collective activism, but not for those refraining from such activism, suggests that practitioners should provide additional support to their Asian American women clients harboring negative racial attitudes about being Asian while engaging in collective antiracist activism. Encouraging clients to explore potentially conflicting values between their internalized racist attitudes (i.e., racial self-negativity) and their antiracist solidarity engagement (i.e., collective activism) from a lens of critical consciousness (the critical awareness of systemic racism, one's place in perpetuating it [including internalized racial self-negativity], and actions to confront systemic racism and oppression; Freire, 1970) may help externalize the internalized self-oppression and resolve the potential values conflict to alleviate anxiety symptoms.

Future Research Directions

Our study is the first known longitudinal investigation of how Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity can predict anti-racist solidarity engagement. Building on this study's strengths, future studies could employ longitudinal designs with three waves of data collection to deepen the understanding of the moderation effects revealed in the present study. Future research also could examine how gendered, racialized, and intersecting minoritized experiences affect solidarity engagement among other Asian American subgroups (e.g., men, LGBTQ individuals). Future research can replicate the present study with a particular demographic group (e.g., a specific Asian ethnicity) or conducting subgroup comparisons within large samples (e.g., comparing across generation or nativity statuses, levels of acculturation) to tap into the diversity within the Asian American population and provide nuanced understandings of specific communities.

Our study focused on the overall role of antiracist solidarity, rather the differential roles of solidarity against anti-Asian versus anti-Black racism, in connection with Asian fetishism and racial self-negativity in understanding mental health (i.e., anxiety symptoms). Extending the current study, a valuable direction for future research is to compare participants' solidarity in resisting these two areas of racism and examine whether there are potentially meaningful differences. Future research also could compare in-person versus online antiracist solidarity engagement and how the type of engagement relates to individuals' prior experience with marginalization and subsequent mental health and psychosocial outcomes. For example, could experience with the perpetual foreigner

stereotype (a form of xenophobia) increase Asian Americans' potential to engage in online versus in-person anti-racist solidarity for fear of being viewed as "foreigners" at in-person events? Finally, other research designs and methodologies are needed to replicate and extend the current study. In-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups may complement the short-answer questions used in the current collection of qualitative data. Future studies employing diverse methodologies will significantly complement the dearth of empirical research around Asian American women's anti-racist solidarity and represent a form of justice for this understudied population in the scholarship of sociopolitical collective action.

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Hsiu-Lan Cheng, Department of Counseling Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94117, United States. Email: hcheng13@usfca.edu

Author ORCID iDs

Hsiu-Lan Cheng: hcheng13@usfca.edu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0167-929X>

P. F. Jonah Li: jonahli@uw.edu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7023-4919>

Lou Felipei: lou.felipe@du.edu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0511-3149>

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Table 1***Content of Respondents' Qualitative Responses to the Open-Ended Question***

Q: Solidarity and/or racial justice work that the respondents participated in, in person or online, to challenge COVID-19 anti-Asian and/or anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness).

Coding category	Definition	Verbatim Example	Anti-Asian racism (n)	Anti-Black racism (n)	Combined (n) ^a
1. Collective activism	One's engagement in collective efforts to enhance the status, power, or influence of Asian Americans and/or African Americans and to enact changes on COVID-19 anti-Asian racism and/or anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness) (McKeever et al., 2023)	Signing petitions; attended BLM protest	22	64	68
2. Communicative advocacy	One's behaviors related to a variety of communication activities, involving information sharing and elaboration, performed online and/or in person (McKeever et al., 2023)	Posting anti-Asian racism propaganda; spread awareness on social media	24	42	52
3. Financial activism	One's behaviors such as providing monetary donations, raising money for sociopolitical issues or organizations, purchasing or boycotting products or companies related to COVID-19 anti-Asian racism and/or anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness) (McKeever et al., 2023)	Donations; donating to bail funds	6	28	31
4. Symbolic advocacy	One's behaviors such as using symbols or public displays of support (McKeever et al., 2023)	Created posters; reposted infographics	1	4	4
5. Unconventional activism	One's engagement in "active and unconventional behaviors" (Corning & Myers, 2002, p. 704) related to COVID-19 anti-Asian racism and/or anti-Black racism (or anti-Blackness) that "could compromise a relationship with family or friends" (McKeever et al., 2023, p. 585)	I am trying to change my family's racism and discrimination towards the Black community	0	2	2

^aNote. The n of the "Combined" column is not necessarily equal to the sum of the ns of the anti-Asian racism and anti-Black racism columns. This is because for participants who reported solidarity and/or racial justice work in both the anti-Asian and anti-Black racism areas, their combined frequency for a given coding category would be 1 instead of 2.

Table 2***Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables***

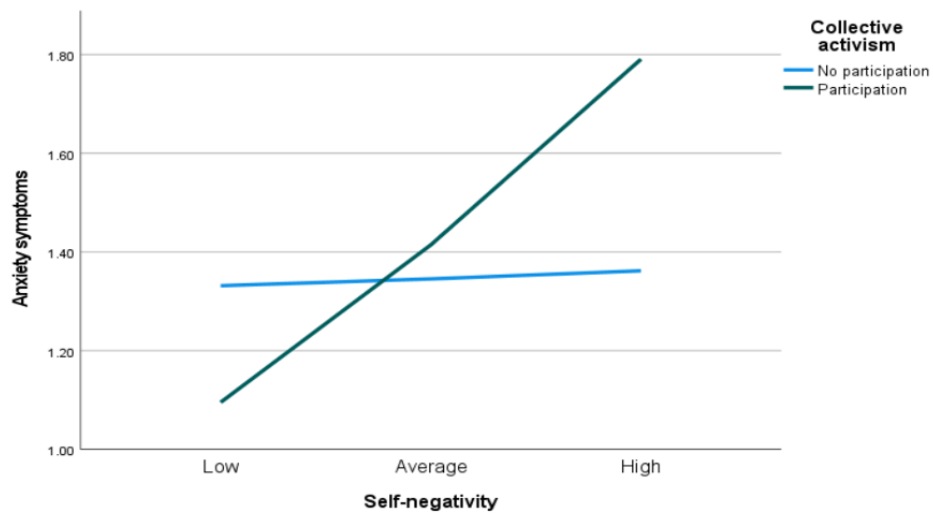
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Collective activism†	--							
2. Communicative advocacy†	.31***	--						
3. Financial activism†	.36***	.17*	--					
4. Symbolic advocacy†	.10	.14	.02	--				
5. Unconventional activism†	.01	.16	-.06	-.02	--			
6. Asian fetishism	.19*	.19*	.24**	-.01	-.04	--		
7. Racial self-negativity	.07	.04	.19*	.04	-.06	.28***	--	
8. Generalized anxiety disorder symptoms	.06	-.04	.23**	.16	.07	.24**	.22**	--
<i>M</i>	.47	.36	.21	.03	.01	1.54	1.65	1.39
<i>SD</i>	.50	.48	.41	.16	.12	1.10	.77	.85
Skewness	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	.56	1.30	.55
Kurtosis	N/A 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-.21	1.15	-.81

Note. $n = 146$. †binary variable (coded 1 = "Yes" and 0 = "No"); * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. N/A = Not applicable.

Multiple Regression Models Predicting Severity of Generalized Anxiety Symptoms

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Model 1							
Step 1					.24	.06**	
Asian fetishism	.19	.06	.24**	2.99			
Step 2					.32	.10**	.05**
Collective activism	-.04	.15	-.03	-.28			
Financial activism	.44	.18	.21*	2.41			
Communicative advocacy	-.19	.15	-.11	-1.25			
Step 3					.36	.13**	.02**
Asian fetishism $\times$ Collective activism	.24	.14	.20	1.78			
Asian fetishism $\times$ Financial activism	.05	.16	.03	.30			
Asian fetishism $\times$ Communicative advocacy	-.06	.14	-.05	-.42			
Model 2							
Step 1					.22	.05**	
Racial self-negativity	.24	.09	.22**	2.68			
Step 2					.31	.09**	.05**
Collective activism	-.01	.15	-.01	-.09			
Financial activism	.45	.18	.22*	2.49			
Communicative advocacy	-.14	.15	-.08	-.94			
Step 3					.40	.16**	.07**
Racial self-negativity $\times$ Collective activism	.44	.18	.27*	2.44			
Racial self-negativity $\times$ Financial activism	.40	.22	.18	1.84			
Racial self-negativity $\times$ Communicative advocacy	.06	.19	.03	.31			

Note. *n* = 146. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01.

Figure 1***A Simple Slope of the Moderation Effect***

Note. A visual depiction of the moderating role of collectivism activism on the relation between racial self-negativity and anxiety symptoms. Racial self-negativity was significantly and positively associated with anxiety symptoms only for participants who engaged in – not for those refraining from – collective activism.