

The Impact of Anti-Asian Hate and Racism-Related Stress on Asian American Educators

Quennie Dong, Ed.S., Jin Hyung Lim, M.A., Chunyan Yang, Ph.D., Ella Rho, M.S., & Brittany Liu, B.A.



BACKGROUND

- Asian Americans who have experienced racism are more stressed by anti-Asian hate than the COVID-19 pandemic itself, with one in five experiencing racial trauma and heightened symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.
- Educators, particularly Asian American educators, face challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest, and anti-Asian discrimination and violence.
- Asian American educators face unique challenges in the school system, including racial stereotyping, discrimination, pressure to conform to the model minority stereotype, and lack of representation in leadership roles.
- Compassion fatigue, experienced by educators, can have a significant impact on their well-being and the outcomes of their students.
- There is a need to understand how racism-related stress and occupational stress impact the well-being of Asian American educators.
- Limited research has been conducted on measuring racism-related stress among ethnically heterogeneous Asian American groups.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Asian Critical Theory (AsianCrit; Iftikar & Museus, 2018): consists of seven interrelated tenets, with a focus on transcending invisibility and creating a collective Asian American historical narrative. It helps elucidate how Asian American educators experience anti-Asian violence and racism-related stress.
- Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984): describes how personal and situational factors influence stress perception and evaluation

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is a second-order factor analysis of the Asian American Racism-related Stress Inventory (AARRSI) measure valid among Asian American educators?
- Does the AARRSI measure demonstrate concurrent validity with measures of educator subjective well-being?
- How do Asian American educators experience and cope with racism-related stress in the context of anti-Asian discrimination and violence?

METHODS

- Data were collected among 256 Asian American educators between the Winter of 2021 to the Spring of 2022.
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 Asian American educators between March to June of 2022 via the Zoom platform.
- The original 29-item Asian American Racism-related Stress Inventory (AARRSI) was reviewed and evaluated, resulting in a refined version with 16 items and the brief version of the Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL) was used to measure compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.
- Fit statistics used to decide the optimal model fit were the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean-Square Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). A CFI larger than .90 is considered desirable, and a model with a SRMR and RMSEA below .08 is regarded as a good fit (Chen, 2007; Hu & Bentler, 1998; 1999).
- Semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis guided by AsianCrit and the transactional model of stress and coping.

RESULTS

- CFA results on the hypothesized model (i.e., second-order model) and two alternative models (see Table 1) yielded adequate fit indices for the second-order model and three-factor model.
- The second-order model was chosen as the final model as supported by theoretical frameworks and suggested extant literature
- Items generally also had similar standardized factor loadings across the two halves of the sample
- Concurrent validity result indicated significant associations of compassion fatigue with the AARRSI total score, Socio-Historical Racism, General Racism, and Perpetual Foreigner Racism
- Asian American educators' compassion satisfaction did not demonstrate a significant relationship with the AARRSI total and subscale scores.
- Thematic analysis revealed that approximately 70% of participants identified in particular negative forms of cognitive appraisals after experiencing anti-Asian violence and discrimination, whereas only 48% of participants described engaging in coping dimensions to mitigate such stressors (See Figure 2)

Measurement validation of the AARRSI supports the second-order model and concurrent validity with compassion fatigue.

Table 1. Fit statistics for models tested.

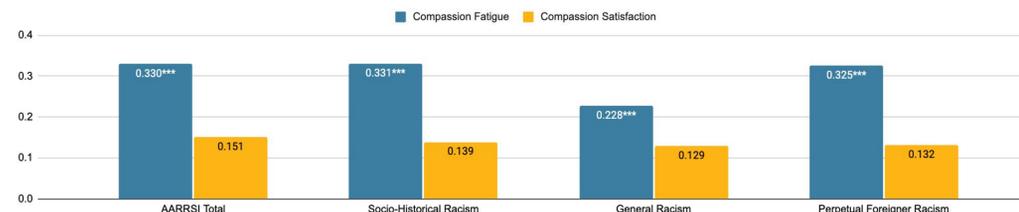
Model	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1: Second-order model	153.999**	101	0.917	0.058	0.068 [.045, .088]
Model 2: Three-factor model	153.999**	101	0.917	0.058	0.068 [.045, .088]
Model 3: One-factor model	191.838***	104	0.862	0.068	0.086 [.066, .105]

Note. Models were tested on one randomly selected half of the sample (N = 116). ***p < .001.

Table 2. Fit statistics between groups for the second-order model.

Model	N	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Full Sample	233	133.060**	101	0.975	0.041	0.037 [.016, .053]
Female	176	137.172***	101	0.960	0.049	0.044 [.023, .062]
Male	54	137.337***	101	0.881	0.072	0.080 [.041, .112]

** p < .01, *** p < .001



** p < .01, *** p < .001

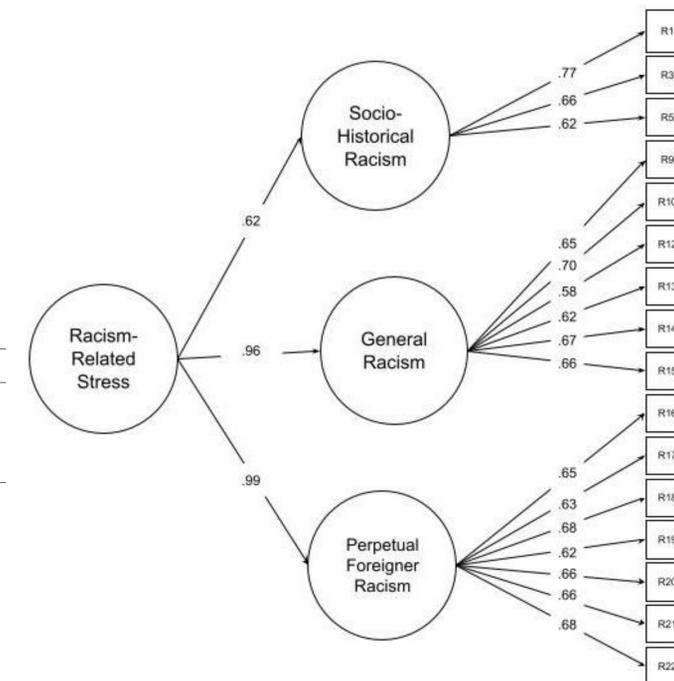


Figure 1. Standardized factor loadings for the second-order model in the full sample.

DISCUSSION

- The study validated the AARRSI (Asian American Racism-Related Stress Inventory) among a diverse sample of Asian Americans, contributing to the literature on racism-related stress measurement.
- The study included a broader range of Asian Americans in terms of age and racial/ethnic subgroups within the Asian American diaspora, supporting the generalizability of racism-related stress constructs.
- Racism-related stress was found to have negative impacts on the social, emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of Asian American educators.
- Coping strategies employed by Asian American educators included deepening connections to their racial/ethnic identity, gathering information about issues impacting the Asian American community, and becoming advocates for marginalized communities.
- Despite the negative impact of racism-related stress, some Asian American educators experienced growth through increased agency, activism, and positive adjustment.
- Thematic analysis provided context and depth to the quantitative findings, enriching the validation process of the instrument and strengthening its construct validity.
- Few studies have examined compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction particularly among educators of color, highlighting the importance of exploring these concepts in relation to racism-related stressors experienced by educators of color.
- The study contributes to the understanding of factors contributing to educator burnout and emphasizes the need to monitor and address compassion fatigue while promoting the well-being of educators experiencing racism-related stressors.

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size and lack of equal representation of Asian American ethnicities.
- Need for measurement invariance testing across various sociodemographic factors such as gender and generational statuses.
- Lack of longitudinal analysis to explore the long-term impact of racism-related stress on well-being.
- Failure to consider other contextual factors that may contribute to racism-related stressors experienced by Asian American educators.

IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Establish systems of support**, such as racial affinity groups, to provide a safe space for sharing experiences and receiving support.
- Provide targeted support, including access to counseling and mental health resources, and address the professional support for Asian American educators.
- Address racism-related stress directly**: Coping strategies that directly address racism-related stressors have been found to be effective in attenuating psychological symptoms (Mekawi et al., 2022).
- Implement stress management interventions**. Training in self-care and stress management techniques, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction, can be beneficial for professionals at risk of compassion fatigue, including teachers of color (Shapiro et al., 2007). These interventions can help individuals develop coping strategies to manage stress and promote their mental health.
- Cultivate a strong professional identity**: Developing a strong professional identity can serve as a protective factor against compassion fatigue (Geoffrion et al., 2015). Encouraging individuals to connect with their professional roles and values can enhance their resilience and well-being.
- Address the lack of disaggregated data** on Asian Americans by collecting and analyzing data that highlights the needs of different subgroups within the Asian American population.
- Use disaggregated data to identify and address the diverse needs of different Asian American subgroups, promoting equity and inclusion in education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is supported by the UC Berkeley Hellman Fellowship and UC Berkeley Asian American Research Faculty Grant awarded to Dr. Chunyan Yang and UC Berkeley Asian American Research Graduate Student Research Grant awarded to Quennie Dong.



[Appendix](#)



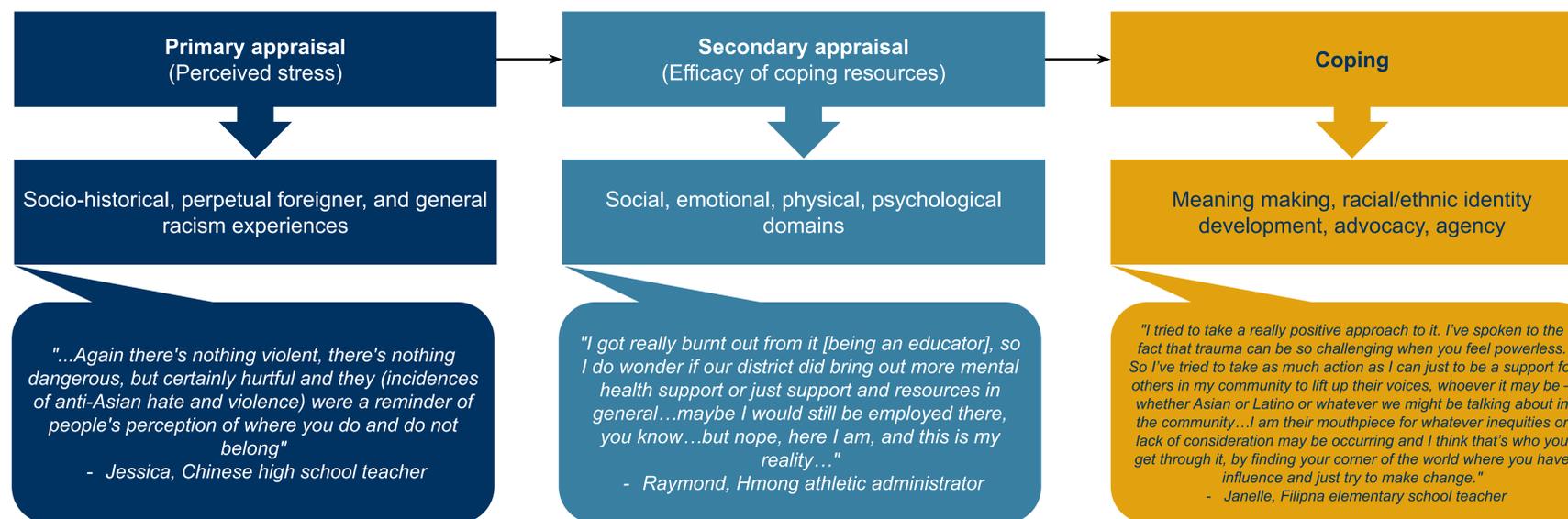
[References](#)



[Resources](#)

Themes of Asian American educators stress and coping with racism-related stress.

Figure 2. A transactional model of coping stress and coping among Asian American educators experiencing racism-related stress.



"...Again there's nothing violent, there's nothing dangerous, but certainly hurtful and they (incidences of anti-Asian hate and violence) were a reminder of people's perception of where you do and do not belong"
- Jessica, Chinese high school teacher

"I got really burnt out from it [being an educator], so I do wonder if our district did bring out more mental health support or just support and resources in general...maybe I would still be employed there, you know...but nope, here I am, and this is my reality..."
- Raymond, Hmong athletic administrator

"I tried to take a really positive approach to it, I've spoken to the fact that trauma can be so challenging when you feel powerless. So I've tried to take as much action as I can just to be a support for others in my community to lift up their voices, whoever it may be - whether Asian or Latino or whatever we might be talking about in the community...I am their mouthpiece for whatever inequities or lack of consideration may be occurring and I think that's who you get through it, by finding your corner of the world where you have influence and just try to make change."
- Janelle, Filipna elementary school teacher