IMPACT OF WARMTH AND COMPETENCE ON JOB CANDIDATES:

RACIAL STEREOTYPE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

ON SOCIALMEDIA

By

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Abstract

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This study investigated the online stereotype management strategies utilized by Asian Americans during the job application process when seeking employment with Caucasian employers. Guided by the Stereotype Content Model, this study aimed to assess how visual cues related to warmth and competence in social media profiles influence the likelihood of Asian Americans of different gender and racial subgroups being hired. Toward this goal, this study posed nine research questions covering a variety of factors that may influence hiring decisions. The findings provide valuable insights into the complex role of social media in the hiring process, as well as the impact of political ideology and beliefs about COVID-19 on hiring intentions. By delving into these nuances, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges Asian Americans face in the job market and the strategies they employ to address them.

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"Vous verrez ce que vaut votre Charles avec ses bottes de maroquin et son air de n'y

pas toucher."

- Honoré de Balzac, Eugénie Grandet.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study tested different cross-racial online stereotype management strategies used by Asian Americans when making job applications to Caucasian employers. The established literature on workplace discrimination has paid little attention to the experiences of Asian Americans, and the few studies that have been conducted have mostly treated Asian Americans as a simple whole, ignoring possible differences between them in terms of gender and ethnic subgroups (Dipboye & Colella, 2014). At the same time, a significant number of employers are using social media screening as part of their recruiting process. Candidates' social media accounts provide employers with highly cost-effective information for background checks (CareerBuilder, 2018). Especially during the pandemic, online recruiting is preferred over face-to-face interactions, and online social media profiles become more important for career development (Al-Shatti & Ohana, 2021). Here, the current study used the Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) to test how the priming of impressions of warmth and competence through visual cues on social media affects the chances of Asian Americans from different gender and ethnic subgroups to be hired by potential Caucasian employers.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study tested the following eight research questions:

Research Question 1: For Asian Americans candidates, what is the effect of social media photo priming type(priming warmth or competence) on the hiring intentions of Caucasian employers?

Research Question 2: Does the gender of Asian American candidates affect the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 3: Does the ethnic subgroup of Asian American candidates influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 4: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and gender influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 5: Does the political ideology of Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

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Research Question 7: Does Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 8: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 9: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Results

The results of this study support the following significant effects: photo priming type and candidate gender interacted to influence hiring intentions ($F(1, 379) = 13.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 p = .07$), and to increase the chances of being hired , Asian males needed priming warmth and Asian females needed priming competence. Employers' conservative political ideology ($F(2, 377) = 36.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 p = .30$) and beliefs that COVID- 2019 is related to Asian-Americans ($F(2, 377) = 19.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 p = .19$) both independently predicted willingness to hire, with the more

conservative and the more accepting of the belief that Asian-Americans are responsible for COVID- 19, the less likely they were to make a hiring decision. There was also a weak interaction effect between candidates' ethnic subgroups and employers' beliefs about Asian Americans and COVID-19-related ($F(2, 371) = 3.32$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 p = .02$), although employers' beliefs about Asian Americans and COVID-19-related impeded the hiring decision, this effect had a much larger impact on East/Southeast Asian candidates than on South Asian candidates.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Discrimination Faced by Asian Americans

Like other minorities, Asian Americans experience discrimination in the workplace (Mandalaki & Prasad, 2022; Prasad, 2023). In a 2000 national survey of 1,218 adult Asian Americans, 40% reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace in obtaining a job or promotion (Lien, 2004). In a Gallup (2005) poll of 1,252 U.S. adults, Asian Americans were the minority group that self-reported the most workplace discrimination.

Asian Americans have long experienced a "glass ceiling" in organizations. Evidence shows that Asian Americans receive lower economic returns than European Americans and African Americans, given the same level of education and job qualifications (Woo, 1994). Reports provided by the Glass Ceiling Commission, which is affiliated with the U.S. Department of Labor, show that although Asian Americans have traditionally been viewed as a racial group that is well-educated and motivated to try for upward class mobility, in fact, the educational success that this stereotype represents is not adequately translated into occupational success (Woo, 1994). Asian Americans encounter artificial barriers to career mobility in the workplace, failing to match the returns on education of other ethnicities, plagued by persistent occupational segregation, often encountering arbitrary and subjective judgments during career advancement, underrepresented in middle or senior management positions, and more likely to be challenged in the exercise of their leadership authority (Woo, 1994; Prasad, 2023).

Despite reports of widespread encounters with work-related discrimination within the Asian American group, existing research on workplace discrimination in the United States continues to focus on Caucasian Americans and minorities represented by African Americans, with little attention paid to Asian American experiences (Lee & Zane, 1998; Prasad, 2023; Yu,

2020). Even when relevant research exists, it is mostly made by Asian American scholars, while scholars of other races rarely focus on this "Asian topic" (Hyun, 2005; Lee & Zane, 1998; Woo, 1994). This bias in scholarly research preferences may be due to the fact that in U.S. society and culture, the issue of race is often reduced to that of Blacks versus Whites, and the experiences of Asian Americans are often viewed as relatively minor (Sue et al., 2007). At the same time, Asian Americans have always enjoyed a reputation as a model minority, an impression that has likely diminished public attention to the actual racialized experiences of Asians. Indeed, even Asian Americans themselves seem to feel obligated to uphold the aura of "model minority" and may choose to remain silent when faced with workplace discrimination (Paek & Shah, 2003).

If some Asians are not inclined to speak out about their struggles, given that it may "tarnish" their reputation as a "model minority," then Asian Americans are actually experiencing more discrimination in the workplace than is publicly reported. At the same time, the prominence of Asians in statistics such as average education level and average income contributes to the public's stereotype of Asians as the model minority (Lee & Zhou, 2015). All of this has ironically led to the workplace discrimination faced by Asian Americans becoming a compelling but unheralded topic.

In working places, Asian Americans are experiencing an invisible mobility barrier: a mismatch between what they contribute and what they are rewarded — whether in terms of job applications or promotions. The barriers that Asian Americans encounter in the workplace make it difficult for them to receive the same rewards as other races, especially Caucasian Americans. With regard to the causes of such obstacles, scholars have pointed to contrived stereotypes and prejudices that impede the careers of Asian Americans: Asians are viewed as permanent aliens and career assessment models favor the mainstream race; stereotypes of model minorities result

in Asian Americans having to cope with high expectations and even intentional exploitation in working; and Asian Americans are stigmatized as being hard-working but lacking in leadership qualities, skilled in technical occupations but socially inept (Bronstein, 2007; Lee & Zane, 1998; Prasad, 2023; Woo, 2000). Others argue that Asian Americans as individuals or as a racial group possess certain "deficits" such as immigrant adjustment difficulties, communication barriers due to language, lack of social and management skills due to cultural differences, and occupational segregation due to a preference for technical engineering jobs (Hyun, 2005; Lee & Zane, 1998; Woo, 1994; Woo, 2000; Varma, 2002). Currently, this study focuses on the former explanation: racial stereotyping of Asian Americans may contribute to the workplace discrimination they experience.

Warmth and Competence: Racial Stereotype of Asian Americans

Job discrimination faced by Asian Americans is often compared to the "glass ceiling" — an artificial promotion barrier based on attitudinal or organizational bias against certain individuals or groups in the workplace (Woo, 2000), or the "bamboo ceiling", an Asian-specific term that exclusively refers to Asian Americans' career mobility barriers (Hyun, 2005). Although "glass ceiling" is a more widely used term in research on job discrimination faced by Asian Americans, the Asian heritage of "bamboo ceiling" suggests something more troubling: in addition to possible deficiencies in one's occupational skills, there are certain Asian characteristics that may inevitably lead to racial stereotyping.

Even though Asian Americans can possess excellent professional skills, what is more important is how their employers will perceive their abilities. Professional ethics require employers to be as objective as possible in evaluating candidates, but due to information processing bias brought by stereotypes, it is inevitable that employers will be subjectively

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influenced by the Asian aspect of candidates (Lai, 2012). So how are Asian Americans perceived? In the following, this study used the stereotype content model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) as a theoretical model to explore the formation of racial stereotypes against Asian Americans.

The SCM proposes that social group stereotypes can be generally categorized as a bimodal space consisting of two indicators of competence and warmth (Cuddy et al., 2007; Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002). This model suggests that people tend to make judgments about social groups in terms of the two social aspects of warmth and competence (Aaker et al., 2012; Fiske et al., 2002; Judd et al., 2005). Warmth reflects a group's social intentions, with high levels of warmth generally associated with traits such as friendliness, socializing, sincerity, caring for others, and kindness, and low levels of warmth typically linked to features such as indifference, detachment, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. In contrast, competence reflects the group's ability to realize the social intentions represented by its warmth level, and the magnitude of this competence is generally determined by the level of intelligence, diligence, skill, creativity, and confidence (Cuddy et al., 2011; Fiske et al. 2007; Glikson et al., 2017). People's impressions of other social groups, formed during the initial interaction, are usually based on this pair of perceptions. While this pair of perceptions is usually spontaneous and unconscious, the process of forming such impressions can extend across multiple social interaction contexts (Cuddy et al., 2008; Holoien & Fiske, 2013; Judd et al., 2005; Cuddy et al., 2011; Min & Hu, 2022; Wang et al., 2016).

While certain social groups can be evaluated as both incompetent and cold (e.g., the homeless) or competitive and enthusiastic (e.g., the White middle class), a large number of studies have demonstrated that social groups tend to be orthogonal on both the dimensions of

perceived warmth and competence, and that positive stereotypes on one dimension do not compensate for, but rather exacerbate, negative stereotypes on the other dimension (Cuddy et al., 2008; Cuddy et al., 2009; Holoien & Fiske, 2013). This negative correlation creates a series of contradictory stereotypes, reflecting a compensatory effect, or trade-off effect (Judd et al., 2005; Kervyn et al., 2009; Kervyn et al., 2010).

According to studies on the SCM, groups such as the elderly, children, and women tend to be viewed as enthusiastic but incompetent, while the rich, and Jews are evaluated as competent but apathetic. Asian Americans, on the other hand, as a model minority group, tend to be perceived as similar to the stereotypes of Jews and the rich, competent but lacking in enthusiasm, and people are jealous of their accomplishments as well as disgusted by their unsociability (Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2002).

Impression Management: Two Competing Models of Stereotype Management

Job Impression management refers to the process by which an individual attempts to control others' perceived impressions of oneself (Singh et al., 2002). It is considered a common feature of most interpersonal interactions, and by "managing" the impressions we present to others, we can influence their perceptions of us somewhat (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). In social interactions, we often control the images we project through intentional or unintentional behaviors in order to portray ourselves in a more favorable light (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Impression Management is diverse and is not limited to conscious or deceptively embellished behaviors; it can be any behavior as long as it is intended to convey a specific impression to a specific audience (Nichols, 2020). IM is also viewed as the sum of multidimensional strategies for presenting either a real or glorified or fictionalized self to others, and while most often the perceived impressions we try to create in the minds of others are based on some real

characteristics of ourselves, the use of impression management strategies is not necessarily bound to authenticity; the selective presentations, fictions, or deceptions also exist (Weiss & Feldman, 2006).

In general, people are all expected to construct an "ideal" public self in the workplace in order to obtain valuable benefits (Singh et al., 2002). Employees who succeed in giving the impression of being ambitious and capable often receive pay raises in their companies, and making employers feel that they fit the image of a successful leader is also a requirement for promotion to management positions (Singh et al., 2002). Impression management is also an integral part of the job application process, as evaluators often form impressions of candidates based on relatively brief background information (Amaral et al., 2019). Job seekers need to both impress in the limited space of a resume as well as skillfully influence an interviewer's decision during a brief interview. Numerous studies have shown that job seekers who have used impression management strategies during interviews are more likely to be perceived as competent, good with colleagues, or compatible with the company's organizational culture (Chen et al., 2010; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Tsai et al., 2005; Weiss & Feldman, 2006).

Although it is ideal for candidates of any race to adopt appropriate impression management strategies (e.g., priming competence or priming enthusiasm according to the SCM) in order to be successful in interviews (Holoien & Fiske, 2013), given the prominence of racial stereotypes in racial minorities, a minority's need to adopt suitable impression management strategies in interviews is more urgent, compared to mainstream race.

Specifically for Asian Americans, although the types of racial stereotypes of Asian Americans are well documented (Lin et al., 2005), workplace impression management strategies derived from stereotypes among Asian Americans have not been fully explored. In job

interviews, candidates often use self-promotion to convey competence or prioritize catering to employers to emphasize warmth (Amaral et al., 2019; Kacmar et al., 1992). In short, candidates can choose to mitigate negative racial stereotypes (Swencionis et al., 2017), or amplify positive racial stereotypes by altering these priming goals (Grandey et al., 2019). Nonetheless, the effectiveness of such strategies for Asian American populations remains unclear. Most of the existing research on impression management strategies has utilized Caucasian and African American candidates as examples. Although scholars generally agree that Asian groups are viewed as high-ability and low-enthusiasm groups, there is still a lack of exploration on how Asians should manage stereotypes at both the enthusiasm and ability levels.

Based on racial stereotypes and employment interview context, two competing models can explain the effects of different racial impression management strategies: the trade-off effect model and the stereotype fit model. The trade-off effect model suggests that in interpersonal interactions (especially cross-racial interactions), those who downplay inherently positive stereotypes and instead focus on improving inherently negative stereotypes may be more impressive to observers (Swencionis et al., 2017). In contrast, the stereotype fit model assumes that individuals may benefit from displaying images that are consistent with their presumed positive stereotypes (Grandey et al., 2019).

The trade-off effect suggests a new type of interpersonal mechanism that is often employed across race, status, and social class divisions. But what are the consequences of such trade-offs? Is it beneficial for all racial groups? Some studies have shown that during social interactions, high-status individuals display less of their competence when confronted with low-status individuals and focus on showing their warmth in an attempt to establish good interpersonal relationships (Aaker et al., 2012). Nevertheless, when a high-status person reduces

their emphasis on competence, they may be perceived as modest. Conversely, a low-status person who tries to promote social warmth in the same way may be perceived as lacking competence. Thus, in cross-racial interactions, trade-off effects can be beneficial for high-race status groups but may be detrimental for low-race status groups. More importantly, this pattern may harm minorities when it comes to employment - where competence is critical.

On the other hand, while trade-off effects seem plausible, contrasting propositions are equally possible. According to stereotype fit model, people tend to form general beliefs or stereotypes about a group (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Sy et al., 2010). People are viewed more positively when their behavior matches stereotypical expectations (Grandey et al., 2019). At the same time, in job application contexts, stereotypes possessed by a candidate's ethnic group provide heuristic, automatic informational shortcuts that inform employer judgments (Hareli et al., 2013; Sy et al., 2010). Here, the candidate's focus on emphasizing the positive aspects of one's racial stereotypes may increase employer satisfaction. These opposing hypotheses should be tested to reveal the best racial stereotype management strategies for minorities.

Furthermore, as anti-bias norms are reinforced in modern society, historically negative racial stereotypes may diminish and positive stereotypes may intensify (Bergsieker et al., 2012). Emphasizing positive stereotypes may become a more effective impression management strategy for Asian American candidates rather than attempting to eliminate negative stereotypes. In short, when candidates' racial stereotype management goals (initiating competence and initiating enthusiasm) in the interview are aligned with their positive racial stereotypes —— despite overlooking the emphasis on the opposite dimension —— the employer's overall favorable impression of the candidate may be amplified. Asian American candidates who demonstrate

competence (as opposed to warmth) consistent with their positive stereotypes are likely to be perceived as more competent and make a better impression on employers.

Then, should Asian Americans focus on demonstrating warmth or competence when facing Caucasian employers in their job applications? Given that the two competing models of racial stereotype management imply contradictory strategies, the following question is posed:

Research Question 1: For Asian American candidates, what is the effect of social media photo priming type(priming warmth or competence) on the hiring intentions of Caucasian employers?

The Paradox of Model Minority and Racial Stereotype Management Strategies

Although the two models of racial stereotype management strategies are competing, the unique racial dilemmas faced by Asian Americans may have implications for their appropriate impression management strategies. Ever since sociologist William Petersen first used the term "model minority" to describe Asian Americans in 1966, Asian Americans have often been stereotyped as hardworking in their job but silent in their interactions, motivated in their career but reticent in the civil rights movement (Ho & Jackson, 2001; Lai, 2013; Tewari et al., 2009).

The term "model minority," which first appeared during the Civil Rights Movement, implied that the self-made "success" of Asian Americans was proof that minorities were not discriminated against, and that the only thing they needed to do was to struggle legally like Asians (Tewari et al., 2009). This seemingly positive stereotype actually leads Asian Americans into a paradoxical dilemma. On the one hand, the "model minority" stereotype assumes that Asian Americans are intellectually and academically superior to other racial groups and are economically successful due to their inherent abilities, hard work, and law-abiding citizenship; this contributes to positive evaluations of Asians compared to other racial groups (Bascara, 2006;

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Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Ho & Jackson, 2001; Lee & Zhou, 2015; Maddux et al., 2008). On the other hand, a growing amount of research suggests that stereotypes of model minorities mask the complexity of the Asian community's experience. People believe that Asian Americans do not need help, while Asian Americans remain silent about the discrimination they experience in order to maintain their model image. The term model minority also portrays Asian Americans as beneficiaries of the existing social system, which exacerbates negative feelings toward Asian Americans including jealousy, resentment, and anger. Those feelings stem from discriminatory perceptions of Asian Americans as a real threat to limited resources and a looter of disproportionate societal wealth. More fatally, Asian Americans are described as model citizens who have legitimately risen within the framework of society, which leads other minorities to believe that Asian Americans only reaffirm the unfairly social system; they are perceived as whitened minorities and co-conspirators with racism and white supremacy (Ng et al., 2007; Tessler et al., 2020; Lee & Zhou, 2015; Prasad, 2023). With the epidemic of COVID-19, inflammatory language comparing Asian Americans to the virus has further exacerbated the problem (Tessler et al., 2020).

As the SCM shows, Asian Americans are often perceived as "low warmth/high competence". Groups with this stereotype are seen as unfriendly competitors who are envied and actively victimized (Cuddy et al., 2008). As "model minorities," Asian Americans are seen as highly competent and hardworking, envied as overly ambitious, and described as unsociable and unfriendly (Cuddy et al., 2008). These stereotypes are harmful because they make Asian Americans as a group threaten to be excluded from mainstream society. In order to minimize the impact of these negative perceptions during the job application process, Asian Americans should perhaps adopt the practices implied by the trade-off effects model: lowering the display of

competence attributes and showing more warmth attributes to compensate for the lack of social skills implied by the stereotypes and to diminish the sense of threat perceived by Caucasian employers. Therefore, in response to **RQ1**(For Asian American candidates, what is the effect of photo on social media priming warmth or competence on the hiring intentions of Caucasian employers?), this study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: For Asian American candidates, priming warmth increases hiring intentions of Caucasian employers more than priming competence.

Effects of Asian American's Gender on Racial Stereotype Management

There are different gender-specific stereotypes in society; according to the SCM, stereotypes associated with women are primarily warm (e.g., nurturing, affectionate, kind, and interpersonally sensitive) and stereotypes associated with men are primarily competent, e.g., ambitious, dominant, independent, and self-sufficient (Johnson et al., 2018).

It is worth noting that most of the above findings are derived from experiments with samples of Caucasian descent. For minorities, on the other hand, race and gender are often interlocking systems of oppression experienced simultaneously (Collins, 2009; Espiritu, 1997; Hooks, 2000). It is never uncommon for the dominant culture to devalue images of non-White males and females (Baker, 2024).

Racialized Gender Stereotype of Asian Males

For Asian American men, they are often viewed as persistently macho, patriarchal, and minimally affectionate within the family, and as taciturn, dull & passive, thin & powerless, and lacking in sexual attractiveness in the outside world (Iwamoto & Liu, 2008; Iwamoto & Kaya, 2016). The seemingly contradictory stereotypes of Asian men as internally cold and externally weak together constitute an emasculation of their masculinity: Asian men's masculinity is

stereotyped as otherworldly, conservative, passive, feminized or even asexual, less capable of sexuality compared to Caucasian men, and a perverse form of masculinity (Chua & Fujino, 1999; Chan, 2000; Iwamoto & Kaya, 2016; Liu & Chang, 2007; Pierson, 2004; Tewari et al., 2009).

In mainstream U.S. culture, Asian men always seem to be on the opposite side of masculinity; they "at their best, are effeminate closet queens like Charlie Chan and, at their worst, are homosexual menaces like Fu Manchu" (Chan, 1991). Asian American males are sometimes vilified as alien invaders representing the yellow plague and at other times viewed as impotent clowns in American society (Chua & Fujino, 1999; Chan, 2000; Suzuki, 2002). From the threatening evil foreigner to the internalized weak sissy, these ostensibly contradictory biases collectively marginalize and invisibilize Asian American men and alienate their masculinity. This psychological domination by gender stereotypes even jeopardizes the identification of Asian men and Asian women with each other. Some Asian men may prove their masculinity by establishing intimate relationships with Caucasian women rather than Asian women because seeking Asian women as partners represents continued Asianization and marginalization, while some Asian women are reported to perceive Asian men as less sexually attractive than Caucasian men, lacking in romance, sexually impotent yet controlling, and representing the Asian style patriarchal oppression (Nemoto, 2006; Nemoto, 2008; Iwamoto & Kaya, 2016).

Gender stereotypes of Asian American men have led to their segregation and symbolic emasculation (Chou, 2015). Although some research suggests that the overall stereotype of Asian men as "high ability/low enthusiasm" still supports Asian men being perceived as competent in the workplace (Lai & Babcock, 2012; Sy et al., 2010; Lee & Zhou, 2015), the irony is that Asian American men's image of being hardworking may be reversed and stretched into work-obsessed misers and socially inept nerds. The stereotype of "high ability" actually exacerbates the

prejudice against Asian men as asexuals, which seriously undermines their perceived level of warmth in the workplace (Chan, 2000). Discrimination against Asian men's masculinity coupled with the "low warmth" stereotype is likely to result in Asian men being less warm than Asian women (Labao, 2017). It has been suggested that this undermining of Asian men's masculinity may prevent them from pursuing careers that require high levels of socialization, such as lawyers, as clients tend to prefer lawyers who are perceived to be "local and aggressive," which is a trait that Asian men are perceived to lack as passive and asexual (Lee & Zhou, 2015).

Racialized Gender Stereotype of Asian Females

Accompanying the sexual unpopularity of Asian men is the hypersexualization of Asian women. During the early nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, when Asian immigration to the United States was severely restricted, Asian women were portrayed in American society as "photo brides" and lowly foreign prostitutes, and they were sometimes showed on screen as evil "dragon ladies" who were both sexually submissive and devious, seducing while eroding white men (Tewari et al., 2009; Zhou & Paul, 2016). By the end of World War II, Western soldiers brought home their fantasies of Asian women as the beautiful, supple, and submissive "China Doll" (Lee, 2018). Here, Asian women are perceived as having hyper-feminine qualities and assumed demure behaviors compared to Caucasian women. They are passive, weak, quiet, and overly submissive in a slave-like manner, with exotic sex appeal as if exclusively reserved for White men (Espiritu 1997; Pyke & Johnson, 2003). From the Dragon Lady, who represents the yellow plague, to the submissive Madame Butterfly, the image of Asian women has always been subject to the sexual gaze. Here, the image of the Dragon Lady seems to be sexually aggressive, but they are still passive objects that tease Caucasian men through superficial aggression. The

seductive and provocative nature of the Dragon Lady and the submissive and vulnerable character of the China Doll are often two sides of the same coin.

In short, Asian women have always been associated with sexuality; they are often portrayed as objects, but rarely as sexual subjects (Yamamoto, 2000). Through the portrayal of two conflicting stereotypes of sexual attractiveness and sexual passivity, Asian women's bodies and desires are confined to fantasies consisting of prejudice: they are unusually rich in exotic feminine warmth, but they exist only to please Caucasian men. This devaluation of Asian women's initiative and capabilities confines Asian women's bodies to a disciplinary norm of conformity based on racial discrimination (Azhar et al., 2020; Azhar et al., 2021). This racialized gender image diminishes Asian women's reliability and leadership in the workplace. Stereotypes of Asian women as exotic reinforce the attractiveness of Asian women in intimate relationships, but when they attempt to be taken seriously in the employment arena, they are instead devalued for contradicting the impression of being a passive sex object (Tewari et al., 2009). Despite the impeccable educational credentials and job skills of many Asian American women, the stereotype of them as meek and demure can lead to more frequent questioning in the workplace, which diminishes their professionalism and authority, and is especially detrimental to their ability to compete for leadership positions (Danico & Ng, 2004; Zinn & Dill, 1994; Lee & Zhou, 2015).

Gender Differences in Racial Stereotype

In summary, there are some gender differences in stereotypes of Asian Americans: Asian males are devalued on the warmth dimension compared to Caucasian males; while Asian females rise on the warmth dimension compared to Caucasian females, this rise comes at the cost of sexualization and objectification, which may lead to a relative decrease in the level of perceived

competence. Still, in general, Asian males and females continue to follow the general gender stereotypes implied by the SCM. Stereotypes of Asian males are relatively consistent with stereotypes of Asians as a whole, and both are stereotyped as being more competent and less warm. In contrast, these stereotypes are inconsistent for Asian women, who are perceived as less competent and warmer. The unique combination of race and gender may alter employers' perceptions of Asian candidates' competence and warmth; therefore, in response to **RQ2**(Does the gender of Asian American candidates affect the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?), this study hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Compared to Asian American male candidates, Asian American female candidates priming competence will increase Caucasian employers' hiring intentions more than priming warmth.

Effects of Asian American's Ethnic Subgroup on Stereotype Management

In addition to gender differences, the varied ethnic subgroups also reflect the diversity of the Asian American community. When the term "Asian American" is used to define the entire race, it seems to apply to all Asian American immigrants and their descendants, but the different Asian ethnic subgroups in the U.S. vary greatly from one another. Race defines Asian Americans more holistically, while ethnicity reflects the heterogeneity within the Asian American community.

Asian Americans as one race consists of two major ethnic subgroups: East/Southeast Asian ancestry, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, Cambodian, Singaporean, and Filipino ancestry; and South Asian ancestry, including Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Bangladeshi, and Sri Lankan ancestry (Barringer et al., 1993; King, 2023; Mani, 2012; Shankar & Srikanth, 1998; Tewari et al., 2009). Although Pacific Islanders and

some groups with origins in the Middle East or Central Asia are also sometimes included (Dhingra & Srikanth, 1998; Ono, 2005; Tewari et al., 2009), the present study still focuses on the two Asian American ethnicity subgroups mentioned above since which are most frequently mentioned in the existing literature and are more closer geographically and culturally.

Overall, most of the existing literature examines Asian Americans as a whole, ignoring the fact that some of them have been in the U.S. since the 1850s and others have arrived in the last week (Hagedorn & Kim, 2004). It has also been suggested that the term "Asian American" originated in racist discourse and was intended to construct Asians as a homogenous group (Espiritu, 1992). Some scholars have further argued that research on Asian Americans has focused on East Asians, and that a single sample limits the generalizability of the results (Ocampo, 2016).

The focus on East Asian Americans has ignored its potential ethnic differences from other Asian Americans, resulting in the diminishment of some Asian Americans as a hidden group, often included in large Asian American families, but easily marginalized. However, so far few studies have been conducted on the stereotyping of different Asian American ethnic groups, and their findings are also contradictory. While Asian Americans tend to be stereotyped as being more passionate about science and engineering majors, studies have also mentioned that the Filipino Americans being are perceived as leaning more toward liberal arts fields (Ocampo, 2013). Some studies have found that South Asian Americans may be stereotyped as more enthusiastic and less competent than East Asian Americans (Lee & Fiske, 2006). On contrary, it has also been argued that in the workplace, South Asian Americans are perceived to be more proactive and assertive than East Asian Americans, and therefore more likely to be promoted (Lu et al., 2020).

At the same time, despite some contradictory pre-existing impressions initially revealed by established research, the image of immigrants from Asia in the workplace continues to be influenced by their culture, place of origin, and immigration history. While Asian immigrants share some of the common cultural perceptions, different ethnic subgroups sometimes collide with U.S. society because of their unique cultural heritage. South Asian immigrants, in particular, have been repeatedly attacked because of their cultural traits and were once considered the least assimilable of all Asian ethnic subgroups (Lee, 2021). Some studies have noted that South Asian Americans, especially men, are particularly vulnerable to stereotypes of foreigners, anti-American terrorists, and dangerous religious extremists than other Asians (Iwamoto & Kaya, 2016; Thangaraj, 2015). The turbaned features of Sikh immigrants from India especially led them to be attacked in the early twentieth century as "Tide of Turbans" — weird foreign cheap laborers. In the aftermath of 9/11, this trait also let them to be conflated with terrorists (Iwamoto & Kaya, 2016; Thangaraj, 2015). This difference in dress code has prompted some Americans to view Indian immigrants as the "least desirable immigrant race", indirectly reinforcing the discrimination South Asians face in the workplace (Lee, 2021; Takaki, 1998; Tewari et al., 2009).

In addition, the shifting international relations between the United States and the places of origin of Asian immigrants may also change the way immigrants are viewed in American society. During the U.S. colonization of the Philippines, Filipino immigrants, as colonial nationals, were viewed as "little brown brothers under guardianship", unlike other Asian workers who were not entitled to U.S. citizenship. Despite the discrimination and injustices they still faced in the job market, Filipinos were the only foreign immigrants allowed to join the U.S. military (Lee, 2021). Similarly, with the outbreak and end of World War II, Asian immigrants

such as Chinese and Filipinos, whose image in propaganda greatly improved out of necessity for wartime allies, received new acceptance by American society, in both terms of wartime and post-war employment (Lee, 2021). Accompanying the improvement in the image of Asian immigrants from allied countries/regions was a deepening of negative perceptions of Asians from hostile countries. The wartime relocation camps excluded Japanese Americans suspected of being "spies" from the labor market. After World War II, the stereotypes of female Japanese Americans as "geisha" and "war brides" followed U.S. soldiers into America. Until now, Japanese American women are still experiencing this double devaluation of gender and race in the workplace and are forced to tolerate mild sexual harassment or racial microaggressions at work (Lee, 2021; Zinn & Dill, 1994).

In sum, stereotypes of Asian Americans across ethnic subgroups are complex, varied, and somewhat contradictory; clear and distinct impressions of different Asian ethnic subgroups are very lacking. Perceived impressions based on ethnic subgroups, which often interact with gender, are so variable and nuanced that it is difficult to formulate clear and rigorous hypotheses in advance on this topic. Therefore, this study only preliminarily poses the following questions:

Research Question 3: Does the ethnic subgroup of Asian American candidates influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 4: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and gender influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Therefore, it is important to note that this study currently limits the distinction between ethnic subgroups of Asian Americans to East/Southeast Asian Americans and South Asian Americans. This approach clearly ignores the distinction between East Asian Americans and Southeast Asian Americans, reducing the rigor of the study. However, a pilot study showed that

it may be challenging for people to distinguish between East Asian Americans and Southeast Asian Americans based solely on visual cues, and that people are far more likely to make errors in distinguishing between the two than in distinguishing between East/Southeast Asian Americans and South Asian Americans in the broad sense. Given that this study focuses on the testing of visual cues, it is necessary to limit the presented stimulus photos to East/Southeast Asian Americans and South Asian Americans.

Effects of Employers' Political Ideology on Racial Stereotype Management

Factors from the Asian American candidates themselves are likely to predict employers' decisions, but studies in the race and politics literature suggest that people's negative feelings toward racial issues may be rooted in their conservative principles rather than perceived group threats from other races (Dei et al., 2002; Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997). Existing findings show that conservatism also contributes, in part, to discrimination against minorities in the workplace, and that conservatism predicts anger toward a racial group even when controlling for the effects of racial stereotypes. Conservatives' stance against immigration may be based on the perception that immigrants are taking jobs away from American citizens. In contrast to liberals, conservatives are more likely to express anger when statements regarding opposition to employment discrimination against Asians emerge. (Carter & Lippard, 2015).

However, while findings on general conservative political ideas and anti-Asian attitudes support the above theory (Carter, 2008; Carter & Carter, 2014), findings on the equality index principle, which is often viewed as part of conservatism, differ markedly from these expectations: the more those conservative interviewees expressed their belief in treating others equally, the more they less likely to express anger at Asian Americans seeking jobs. This finding

is inconsistent with findings from studies on conservative interviewees' attitudes toward African Americans seeking jobs (Carter & Carter, 2014; Kinder & Sanders, 1996). The unique "model minority" status of Asian Americans may play a role in this paradox. Further research is needed to answer this question. Here, this study asks the following question:

Research Question 5: Does the political ideology of Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Effects of Employers' Belief of COVID-19 on Racial Stereotype Management

Since COVID-19 pandemic began, many studies have discussed the radicalization of xenophobia by the threat of the epidemic (Dhanani & Franz, 2021). For Asian Americans in particular, the epidemic has brought about a surge in hate crimes (Gover et al., 2020). Overall, in the era following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to consider whether people's perceptions of the COVID-19 threat may be intensifying their biases against Asian Americans in the workplace. It has been shown that minority employment in the United States was generally undermined during the pandemic, with Asian Americans experiencing more severe employment declines (Gemelas et al., 2021). This point may be related to discrimination that racializes pandemics such as the "Chinese virus," and such discriminatory statements may have an impact on the effectiveness of impression management strategies for Asian Americans in applying for jobs. For example, for Caucasian employers who are more concerned about the threat of COVID-19, does their perceived threatiness of Asian American candidates increase, and does this affect their likelihood of making a hiring decision? Would employers' hiring decisions change if they held beliefs linking the COVID-19 virus to Asians?

Furthermore, despite the amount of existing literature examining the impact of the pandemic on Asian Americans, the majority of self-report makers or models in the stimuli

materials in these studies remain East Asian, particularly Chinese Americans (Gardner, 2022; Kaushal & Huang, 2022; Makhanova, 2022). The remaining few studies that have focused on populations from other Asian ethnic subgroups have found conflicting results; the inconsistencies focusing primarily on South Asian Americans. It has been argued that while racists primarily blamed East Asians for the epidemic, South Asians also suffered from spillover discrimination from xenophobia that rose as a result of COVID-19 (Lu et al., 2021). However, it has also been suggested that South Asian Americans do not face the same level of racial stigmatization related to the pandemic as East Asians because Americans tend not to associate South Asia, represented by India, with Asia (McGee, 2021).

Therefore, the present study speculates that there may be some sort of interaction effect between the three of Caucasian employers' perceived threat of 2019 COVID-19, belief that COVID-19 is associated with Asian Americans, and the ethnic subgroups of the candidate; they would collectively influence the effects of priming warmth and competence. For instance, compared to South Asian Americans, employers' belief about Asian Americans' relevance of COVID-19 might influence the hiring decisions of East/Southeast Asians to a greater extent than South Asians. Here, this study raises the following questions:

Research Question 6: Does the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 7: Does Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 8: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Research Question 9: Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?

Effects of Race-Occupation Matching on Racial Stereotype Management

Regarding how occupational stereotypes are spread across the warmth/competence space implied by the SCM, it has been suggested that work circumstances may have unique characteristics that make employer perceptions of employee or candidate competence more salient than perceptions of warmth (Cuddy et al., 2011). The primary goal of most organizations is to recruit, select, and maintain a highly competent workforce to improve task performance. Therefore, most performance evaluations are naturally determined by employee competencies. Although warmth has also been identified as an important characteristic of employees (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Bolino et al., 2002). However, this aspect of job performance is only important if the required level of competence is also met (Katz, 1964). Therefore, in most job contexts, perceptions of competence should be more salient and more predictive of recruitment outcomes.

However, it is also hard to deny that different types of occupations often have different stereotypes. For example, it is easy to imagine a warm nurse but we always associate a surgeon with coldness. According to the main principles of the SCM, differences in our perceived warmth/competence can correspond to different categories of occupational stereotypes. Service-oriented jobs are often perceived as high warmth and low competence, while jobs such as engineers and technicians would be perceived as low warmth and high competence (Strinić et al., 2022).

Specifically for Asian Americans' occupational choices, studies of Asian American occupational segregation have revealed people have strong expectations about the types of occupations that Asian Americans should pursue. Asians are stereotyped as highly capable but not enthusiastic, and they should be more likely to be in occupations characterized by high technical skills rather than high social skills (Leong & Hayes, 1990). Asian Americans are considered to have the necessary attributes for an engineer career (Fernandez & Barr, 1993; Hsia, 1988; Leong, 2016), but lack the necessary attributes for fields such as sales and public relations (Leong, 2016; Sue & Kirk, 1972). Asian Americans, on the other hand, do have a large representation in the fields of engineers and computer science, tending to hold positions as mathematicians and scientists, while being less likely to hold occupations such as sales, according to their career choice records (Fernandez & Barr, 1993; Hsia, 1988; Leong, 2016).

There are strong stereotypes about the types of occupations that Asian Americans should pursue, and research has shown that this stereotype of the race-occupation match influences potential employers' hiring decisions for Asian Americans, who are more likely to be hired as IT analysts than PR specialists (Lai & Babcock, 2012). Given that Asian Americans are more likely to be associated with "high competence/low warmth" occupations, this study needed to control for the possible impact of this race-occupation match on employers' perceptions of Asian Americans' warmth and competence priming in a virtual job interview scenario. Here, the study plans to design the job posting in the virtual job interview scenario as a Technology Public Relations Specialist. The study plans to provide participants with the Technology Public Relations Specialist job description, suggesting that the position requires the dual skills of an IT engineer and a PR specialist, and to provide information about the candidate's study and work

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experience in both fields to avoid any overmatch or mismatch between the race and occupation of the candidate.

Effects of Candidates' Social Media Use on Racial Stereotype Management

With the introduction of modern information and communication technologies, employers are increasingly engaging in social media screening as part of their hiring process. The number of organizations using social media to screen candidates has risen dramatically from 11% to 70% in a decade (CareerBuilder, 2018). More and more companies are engaging in social media screening, and people's social media activity is impacting their employment. Here, the practice of managing social media records becomes even more important for minorities who are trying to position themselves in the workforce, as they tend to have more difficulty entering the workforce and finding stable, well-paying positions than Caucasians.

Clearly, social media provides employers with access to additional information that was previously unavailable or difficult to find in a resume or interview alone. More importantly, the level of both warmth and competence of a candidate is likely to be displayed more richly and flexibly on social media compared to resumes and interviews.

Furthermore, although employers use social media to screen candidates, there is little knowledge about why specific text or images on social media may influence employers' decisions about candidates. Moreover, in the studies that have been conducted on the impact of candidates' facial visual cues on employers' decisions, the stimuli are almost always resume photos. And the way in which candidates prime personal characteristics similar to warmth and competence in their resume photos, in addition to changes in dress, hairstyle, or accessories, is mostly by making smiling, neutral, or indifferent expressions, or by posing in an extremely limited range of variation to better emphasize certain traits, such as holding the chin in the hand

to highlight competence(Amhorst & Reed, 1986; Filkuková & J ørgensen, 2020; Kyle & Mahler, 1996; Weichselbaumer, 2016).

Therefore, resume photos are small in size and have very strict formatting requirements, and these limitations make it difficult for candidates to be diverse in priming warmth or competence. Social media, on the other hand, provides candidates with a richer opportunity to present their self-image, and life photos posted on social media like Instagram are able to freely express warmth or competence without restrictions. Therefore, this study hopes to examine the effect of Asian Americans' priming of warmth or competence through visual cues on social media on improving stereotypes and enhancing hiring opportunities.

Specifically, this study plans to create virtual East/Southeast Asian American and South Asian American Instagram profiles for male and female. These profiles will contain personal photos that prime warmth or competence. Participants will be asked to pretend to be an employer and will be randomly assigned to view Instagram profiles of Asian Americans from specific gender and ethnic subgroups that prime warmth or competence to test the impact of visual cues on hiring opportunities.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Experiment Design

This study used a 2 (Instagram profile priming: warmth or competence) × 2 (gender: male or female) × 2 (ethnic subgroup: East/Southeast Asian American or South Asian American) between-group design.

Participants

The study recruited 450 participants through the Mechanical Turk (MTurk) online platform and required participants to be over the age of 18 and a U.S. citizen of Caucasian descent, as Caucasian U.S. employers are the type of employers Asian Americans are most likely to encounter in the workplace.

Procedure

After visiting the survey, participants would be told that they were participating in a thinking model experiment that tested how people made decisions based on limited information, and they would be instructed to take on the role of a recruiter for a large company that is looking for someone to serve as a Technology Public Relations Specialist.

As a first step, participants were asked to read the job description: "Technology Public Relations specialists are responsible for promoting and managing the public image of a technology company or product, and they require a combination of solid IT and PR skills. They need a strong understanding of IT concepts to effectively communicate technology information to the media, industry analysts and the public. They also need to employ PR strategies to create compelling narratives, manage crisis communications, and build relationships with key stakeholders."

In the second step, participants would be randomly assigned to 1 of 8 conditions and review the candidate's Instagram profile, including a profile that describes the candidate's race, education, work history, job search intentions, and 9 personal photos (which prime warmth or competence). Participants would be informed that they need to carefully review the candidates' information in order to make an assessment of them. Here, the study described in the Instagram profile that the candidate was an East/Southeast Asian American or South Asian American with a degree in Communications and IT and work experience in two fields and was seeking a relevant position. The study used objective descriptive language in the profiles to avoid creating an priming on warmth or competence in addition to the photos. The only difference between those Instagram profiles was the candidate's name and the flag representing the Asian ethnic subgroup to which they belonged. The East/Southeast Asian American condition had the name Wei Wang (male)/Mei Wang (female) and the flag "CN(China)". The South Asian American condition had Arjun Shah (male)/ Priya Shah (female) and the flag "IN(India)". All other information is the same.

The third step required participants to evaluate candidates after reviewing their Instagram profiles. Specifically, this study asked participants to assess their impressions of the candidate on two dimensions, warmth and competence, and then to assess how likely they were to hire the candidate. After that, participants would be required to complete questionnaires measuring their own political ideology, perceived level of threat on the COVID-19 pandemic, and beliefs on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans. Finally, participants would need to complete demographic questions and also manipulation check questions to test whether they had successfully identified the candidate they just interviewed as Asian-American rather than foreign, as well as identified the candidate's Asian ethnic subgroup.

Stimuli

In order to select the Instagram photos that prime warmth and competence , the study used AI to generate relevant photos and then performed a manipulated check to select the nine most appropriate photos for each of the four candidates (East/Southeast Asian American male and female; South Asian American male and female) in the "warmth" and "ability" conditions respectively.

Studies have shown that it is difficult for people to distinguish real photos from AI-generated photos (Lu et al., 2023), so AI-generated photos that have passed manipulation checks and have not been recognized can be considered to have the similar validity as real photos. At the same time, unlike highly uniformed resume photos, the content of Instagram photos is usually lively and variable, and there are many potential confounds that are difficult to control if similar photos are selected through the Internet. In contrast, generating relevant images with AI can reduce confounds by control the generate model to ensure that photos of candidates from different ethnic subgroups and genders have similar styles.

MidJourney (https://www.midjourney.com/) was used to generate photos for four candidates (East/Southeast Asian American male and female; South Asian American male and female) in the warmth and competence conditions. MidJourney was chosen as the AI image generator because studies have confirmed that MidJourney can generate images of impressive quality (Borji, 2022; Borji, 2023; Ghosh & Fossas, 2022).

Approximately 1,500 photos in total were generated based on the warmth and competence conditions. These photos were initially reviewed by the researcher, and those with unrealistic representations (e.g., distortion of the model's limbs, abnormal proportions of the scene, etc.) were excluded. Meanwhile, the AI in this study exhibited various racial stereotypes,

such as depicting the eyes of models of East/Southeast Asian descent as unrealistically thin (Aquino, 2017), or tending to generate photos of South Asian men with very prominent beards, considering that South Asian men with thick beards are often perceived as more threatening and associated with terrorists (Aziz, 2009; Goh & Trofimchuk, 2022). The researcher eliminated photos that could evoke potentially racially biased associations through qualitative examination.

Here, a total of 144 base photographs for four candidates (East/Southeast Asian American male and female; South Asian American male and female) in the warmth and competence conditions have been kept. A manipulation check by a group of Caucasian American participants were carried to select the 9 photos in each condition that most successfully primed "Warmth" or "Ability" and were not recognized as AI-generated photos.

Then, this study used the selected photos to generate virtual Instagram profiles of the candidates and to create screenshots. Each screenshot of the Instagram profile included 9 photos. The colors and fonts of the candidates' profiles were the same in the different conditions. Also, to eliminate any confounds, the Instagram page screenshots did not show the candidate's avatar, as well as the number of posts, followers and following, as these metrics may affect the evaluation of the candidate.

The following examples of possible Instagram screenshots use photos that have been checked for validation. The Figure 1.1 primes competence, and the Figure 1.2 primes warmth.
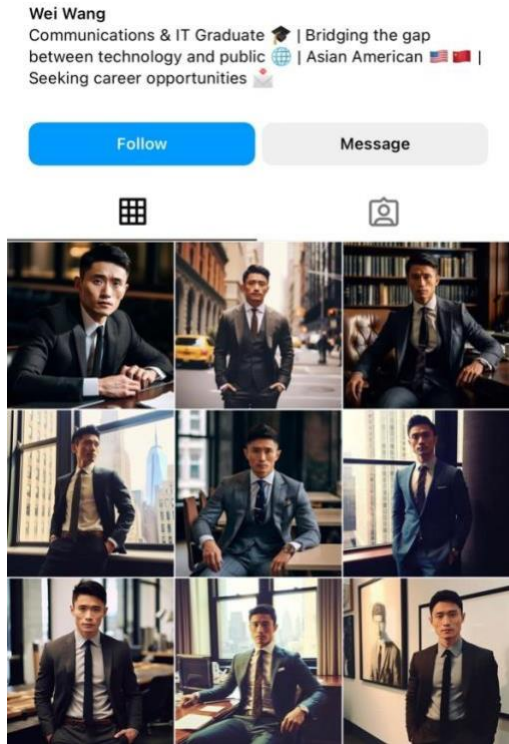
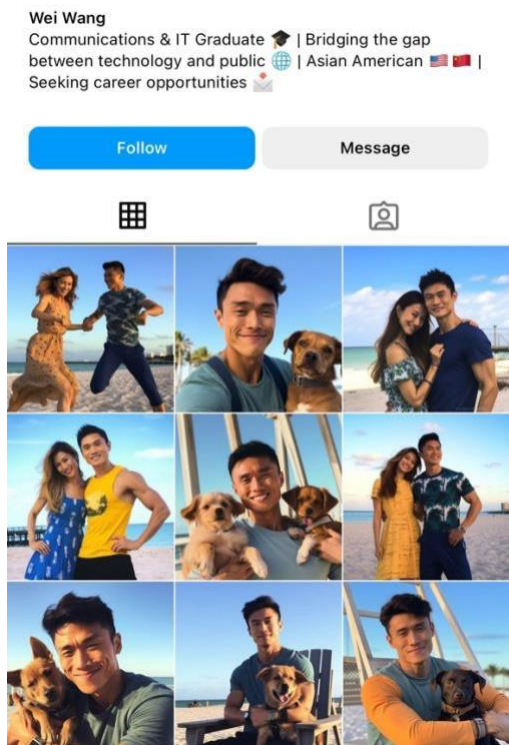Figure 1.1: Example Instagram Photo Priming Competence

Figure 1.2: Example Instagram Photo Priming Warmth

Instruments

Warmth/Competence Questionnaire

      The current survey is largely based on that used by Strinić et al. (2020). The scale contains: (1) a Warmth subscale with four items on how friendly, warm, well-intentioned, and considerate the target person is perceived to be and (2) a Competence subscale with four items on how competent, talented, skillful and ambitious the target person is perceived to be. Participants will be asked to rate the target person on a 5-point Likert scale (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree")($\alpha_{Warmth} = .93$; $\alpha_{Competence} = .86$). The level of perceived warmth and perceived competence of the target model was measured by taking the average of the answers to the four questions in each of these two groups.

Hiring Intention Questionnaire

      Participants were asked to assess their level of agreement with the following statements: Based on the available Instagram information, the applicant looks attractive; I like the applicant's Instagram page; I would like to hire the applicant as a technical public relations specialist. Participants will be asked to respond on a five-item Likert-type scale (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree")($\alpha = .87$). The average of the answers to these three questions was taken to measure participants' overall hiring intentions.

Political Ideology Questionnaire

      Participants reported their political ideology (1 = very liberal, 2 = somewhat liberal, 3 = moderate, 4 = somewhat conservative, 5 = very conservative) on a 5-point Likert scale. The present study took the value of the answer to this question to measure the participants' level of conservatism in political ideology. Although some studies have argued that conceptualized

measures of political ideology should be more complex, the single-dimensional left-right continuum measure used in this study is a model that has been validated in many studies (Fieldman & Johnston, 2014; Gerber et al., 2010). Also given the overall questionnaire length constraints, this study therefore forgoes a complex or multidimensional structural measure of political ideology. Future research could consider targeted testing of the impact of employers' complex structural political ideologies on the assessment of Asian candidates.

At the same time, it has been shown that differences in responses to positive and negative primes are more likely to be detected in participants who are more polarized politically (Tan & Vishnevskaya, 2022). According to the SCM, the two traits of warmth and competence are often orthogonal and can also be seen as sort of opposite primes. In order to strengthen the statistical power, the present study categorized the participants into "liberal", "moderate", and "conservative" categories based on the answers to the five-point Likert scale mentioned above (1 = very liberal/somewhat liberal, 2 = moderate, 3 = somewhat conservative/very conservative), and constructed a political ideology factor with three levels for analysis.

Perceived Threat of COVID-19 Questionnaire

The scale measuring participants' perceptions of the threat of COVID-19 is adapted from the Fear of COVID-19 Scale, FCV-19S, produced by Ahorsu et al. (2022). The scale consists of ten items addressing emotional fear responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., "I am very afraid of COVID-19"). Participants were asked to respond on a five-item Likert-type scale (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree")(α = .89). The mean of the answers to these five questions was taken to measure participants' perceived threat to COVID-19.

Furthermore, political ideology has been shown to be the most important precursor in predicting the level of fear of COVID-19 and anti-Asian bias exhibited by Americans during a

pandemic (Tan et al., 2021; Tan & Vishnevskaya, 2022). Considering the possible link between participants' political ideology and beliefs about COVID-19-related topics (perceived viral threat and agreement with viral threat from Asians), the present study hypothesized that the greater the differences in beliefs participants held about COVID-19-related topics, the more likely they would be to show more varied responses to the prime number, as did participants who were highly polarized by their political ideology. This study repeated the process of constructing the political ideology factor here by categorizing participants into "low perceived threat," " moderate perceived threat," and " high perceived threat" (1 = low perceived threat (score: 1-2.5), 2 = moderate perceived threat (score: 2.6-3.4), and 3 = high perceived threat (score: 3.5-5)), a perceived COVID-19 threat factor was constructed with three levels for analysis.

Belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans Questionnaire

The scale measuring participants' beliefs on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans is largely adapted from the scale developed by Dhanani and Franz (2021). This scale consists of four items to detect COVID-19-specific beliefs about people of Asian descent (e.g., " It is understandable that people are afraid of Asian Americans because of the COVID-19 outbreak"). Participants will be asked to respond on a five-item Likert-type scale (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree")(α = .88). Taking the average of the answers to these four questions measured participants' beliefs that Asian Americans are associated with COVID-19.

Also as previously mentioned, this study categorized participants into "low Asian threat agreement", " moderate Asian threat agreement", and "high Asian threat agreement" based on their overall beliefs on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans (1 = low Asian threat agreement (score: 1-2.5), 2 = moderate Asian threat agreement (score: 1-2.5), and 3 = high Asian threat

agreement (score: 1-2.5)), constructing a three-level factor for beliefs on COVID-19 associated

with Asian Americans.

Manipulation Check Questionnaire

Participants were asked to select the candidate's racial/ethnic identity from the following

options: Caucasian/Black/Hispanic/East or Southeast Asian/South Asian, and the candidate's

national identity from the following options: American/Non-American.

Demographic Information Questionnaire

This study collected demographic data on age, gender, education level, and recruiting

work experience to provide background information on the participant sample, as well as to

examine possible effects from demographic information.

Data Analysis Methods

The study utilized dependent t-tests, independent samples t-tests, factorial ANOVA, and

multiple linear regression. A G-power analysis showed that in the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-groups

factorial design, when using dependent t-test, small effects (0. 25) could be detected at 0.95

power for 210 participants; when using independent t-test, middle effects (0.5) could be detected

at 0.95 power for 210 participants; when using factorial ANOVA, 357 participants could detect

small effects (0.25) at 0.95 power; when using multiple linear regression analysis, a participant

pool of 107 could detect small effects (0.25) at 0.95 power.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Demographic Information of Participants

Age	18-29: 61.1%; 30-39: 27.4%; 40-49: 8.6%; 50-59: 2.3%; 60-60: 0.6%; ≥70: 0%.
Gender	Male: 42.3%; Female: 51.4%; Any other gender identity: 6.3%.
Highest Level of Education	High school: 9.7%; 2-year degree: 13.7%; 4-year degree: 59.4%; Master or Doctorate: 17.1%.
Experience as a recruiter	Yes: 29.7%; No: 70.3%.
Political Ideology	Very liberal: 29.7%; Somewhat liberal: 22.3%; Moderate: 14.3%; Somewhat conservative: 10.9%; Very conservative: 22.9.
Perceived Threat of COVID-19	$M=2.79; SD=.72$
Beliefs on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans	$M=2.91; SD=.99$
Willingness to Hire	$M=3.41; SD=1.03$

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

A total of 450 participants were recruited for this study using the Mechanical Turk (MTurk) online platform, and participants were asked to first self-report their age, race, nationality, and place of residence. Only Caucasian American citizens over the age of 18 and residing in the United States were allowed to participate in the experiment. The "back" button during questionnaire completion was disabled to prevent participants from making false statements in order to continue participating in the experiment. The 35 participants who did not meet the self-reported criteria were asked to withdraw during the questionnaire collection process, and IP checking was used to exclude 16 participants who self-reported that they met the above criteria but had an IP address from outside the United States or were suspected of using a VPN to mask their true IP address. Additionally, 11 participants whose answers were removed

because they failed to pass the manipulation check. Finally, 5 participants were excluded from the sample due to incomplete questionnaire answers.

In conclusion, the study contained a total of 383 valid participants after excluding the above-mentioned invalid samples. The G-power analysis showed that 357 participants could detect small effects (0.25) at 0.95 power. The sample size of this study met the threshold, but in future studies attempts could be made to increase the sample size to enhance significance.

Demographic information showed that the participants were relatively young, with 74.5% between the ages of 18 and 29 and 21.6% between the ages of 30 and 39. The gender ratio was balanced, with 47.1% of participants self-reporting as male and 49% self-reporting as female. Participants generally had a high level of education, with 86% reporting a four-year diploma. 26% of participants self-reported having previous experience as a recruiter. Participants' political beliefs were relatively evenly distributed, with a slight liberal bias. The percentages of self-reported "very liberal," "relatively liberal," "neutral," "neutral," "relatively conservative," and "very conservative" were 29.4%, 21.6%, 9.8%, 13.7%, and 25.5%. Only 29.7% of the participants self-reported having experience as a recruiter. Measured on a five-point Likert scale, participants had a moderate perceived threat of COVID-19(M=2.79; SD=.72) and a slightly higher belief that the COVID-19 is relevant to Asian Americans(M=2.91; SD=.99). Overall, participants had a slightly higher willingness to hire Asian American models in Instagram photos (M=3.41; SD=1.03).

Perceived Warmth/Competence Level of Eight Instagram Photos

		Warmth Level	Competence Level	Willingness to Hire
Group Priming Competence	**East/Southeast Asian Man Priming Competence**	*M=2.09; SD=.42*	*M=4.01; SD=.49*	*M=2.88; SD=.97*
	South Asian Man Priming Competence	*M=2.29; SD=.73*	*M=3.78; SD=.63*	*M=3.29; SD=1.02*
	East/Southeast Asian Woman Priming Competence	*M=2.91; SD=.95*	*M=3.83; SD=.68*	*M=3.47; SD=1.08*
	South Asian Woman Priming Competence	*M=2.56; SD=.49*	*M=4.01; SD=.80*	*M=3.79; SD=1.22*
Group Priming Warmth	**East/Southeast Asian Man Priming Warmth**	*M=3.92; SD=.33*	*M=2.95; SD=.55*	*M=3.75; SD=.76*
	South Asian Man Priming Warmth	*M=3.99; SD=.44*	*M=3.28; SD=.63*	*M=3.65; SD=1.14*
	East/Southeast Asian Woman Priming Warmth	*M=4.01; SD=.39*	*M=2.66; SD=.82*	*M=3.04; SD=.88*
	South Asian Woman Priming Warmth	*M=4.04; SD=.29*	*M=2.46; SD=1.10*	*M=3.26; SD=.76*
Total		*M=3.34; SD=1.15*	*M=3.44; SD=.89*	*M=3.41; SD=1.03*

Table 2: Perceived Warmth/Competence Level of Eight Instagram Photos

The results of the descriptive statistics showed that all eight Instagram profile photos used in this study achieved good priming effects. Each photo had a targeted focus on perceived warmth or perceived competence depending on the type of priming, and the eight photos as a whole were extremely close to each other in terms of both warmth and competence, suggesting that the stimulus material as a whole achieved relatively homogeneous priming effects in both priming types. To test whether the gap between perceived warmth and perceived competence levels for each photog was statistically significant, a paired t-test was run. The results showed a significant difference between the two paired measures of warmth level and competence level for each photo ($t(382) = -.51$, $p < .001$). Further results from the Pearson correlation analysis showed

a significant negative correlation between warmth level and competence level ($r(381) = -.48$, $p < .001$).

To further examine the perceived SCM traits corresponding to the eight photos, a one-way ANOVA was run. Results showed a significant effect of experimental condition on both perceived warmth level ($F(7, 375) = 64.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .73$) and perceived competence level ($F(7, 375) = 15.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$). The results of Tukey's HSD showed that the four experimental conditions priming warmth did not show significant differences between the levels of perceived warmth, and the levels of perceived competence for the four experimental conditions priming competence were relatively close to each other. Significant between-group differences for the same trait were mainly concentrated between groups with different initiation types.

Meanwhile, among the four photos priming competence, the photos of East/Southeast Asian males (M=4.01; SD=.49) and the photos of South Asian females (M=4.01; SD=.80) had the highest levels of perceived competence. In addition, although the four photos priming competence all corresponded to lower levels of perceived warmth, the photos of East/Southeast Asian males still had the lowest levels of perceived warmth (M=2.09; SD=.42). On the other hand, among the photos priming warmth, the best priming of perceived warmth levels was for South Asian females (M=4.04; SD=.29) and East/Southeast Asian females (M=4.01; SD=.39). This may be due to the fact that East/Southeast Asian males carry the most typical stereotypes of Asian Americans as the "model ethnicity" and are most likely to be viewed as high ability/low warmth ones, whereas Asian females inherit the traditional gender stereotypes of females and are racially portrayed for their submissiveness and sexuality, and therefore are perceived to have higher levels of warmth.

Additionally, statistics on hiring intentions corresponding to the eight experimental conditions showed that the models participants were most willing to hire were South Asian females priming competence (M=3.79; SD=1.22), followed by East/Southeast Asian males priming warmth (M=3.75; SD=.76). The model least likely to be hired was East/Southeast Asian males priming competence(M=2.88; SD=.97), which was the only model receiving a willingness to hire below 3.00, followed by East/Southeast Asian females priming warmth(M=3.04; SD=.88), and South Asian males priming competence(M=3.29; SD=1.02). All three models had lower hiring intentions than the mean.

Hypotheses Testing

Analysis of Research Question 1

To answer **RQ1**(For Asian American candidates, what is the effect of social media photo priming type(priming warmth or competence) on the hiring intentions of Caucasian employers?) and test **H1**(For Asian American candidates, priming warmth increases hiring intentions of Caucasian employers more than priming competence.), an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the effects of two priming type on hiring intentions level. The t-test revealed a nonsignificant difference between the groups($M_{PrimingWarmth} = 3.47$, $SD_{PrimingWarmth} = .93$, $M_{PrimingCompetence} = 3.36$, $SD_{PrimingCompetence} = 1.11$, t(382) =-.71, p > 0.05). **H1** was not supported.

Analysis of Research Question 2

To answer **RQ2**(Does the gender of Asian American candidates affect the effect of priming warmth and competence?) and test **H2**(Compared to Asian American male candidates, Asian American female candidates priming competence will increase Caucasian employers' hiring intentions more than priming warmth.), a two-way ANOVA with priming type and model

gender as independent variables and hiring intentions as dependent variables was conducted. The results were also consistent with the findings of the previous three-way ANOVA analysis. Although the respective main effects of priming type ($F(1, 379) = .20$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2 p=.00$) and model gender ($F(1, 379) = .01$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2 p=.00$) remained nonsignificant, the interaction effect between these two independent variables significantly predicted hiring intentions ($F(1, 379) = 13.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 p = .07$). Asian male priming warmth ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .93$) enhanced hiring intentions more than priming competence ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.00$), while Asian female priming competence ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.15$) enhanced hiring intentions more than priming warmth ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .83$).

Also, because the two variables, priming type and model gender, had fewer than three groups each and thus could not be directly post-tested, this study next conducted a post-test by combining groups. Based on the matching of priming type and model gender, the categorical variable "Priming Type*Gender" was created as the independent variable (1=Man Priming Competence, 2=Man Priming Warmth, 3=Woman Priming Competence, 4 =Woman Priming Warmth), one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD were conducted with willingness to hire as the dependent variable. The one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of the " Priming type * Gender" on hiring intentions ($F(3,379) = 4.74$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .08$). Tukey's HSD post hoc test showed that Group 1 (M=3.08, SD=1.00) corresponded to a significantly lower willingness to hire than Group 2 (M=3.71, SD=.93), MD=-.63, p<.05, 95% C.I. = [-1.17, -.09]. Group 1 (M=3.08, SD=1.00) also corresponded to significantly lower willingness to hire than Group 3 (M=3.63, SD=1.15), MD=-.55, p<.05, 95%C.I.=[-1.08, -.02]). In summary, **H2** was supported.

Analysis of Research Question 3

About **RQ3**(Does the ethnic subgroup of Asian American candidates influence the effect of priming warmth and competence?), a two-way ANOVA was also conducted. The two main effects of priming type ($F(1, 379) = .48$, $p > 0.05$, η^2 p=.00)/model ethnic subgroup ($F(1, 379) = 1.59$, $p > 0.05$, η^2 p=.00) , and the interaction effect between the two ($F(1, 379) = 1.17$, $p > 0.05$, η^2 p=.01) were not significant. **RQ3** was not valid.

Analysis of Research Question 4

The Analysis of **RQ1**, **RQ2**, and **RQ3** revealed that the traits of the Asian American models themselves, whether priming type, gender, or ethnic subgroup, did not reflect significant independent main effects, and that only the interaction effect between priming type and gender, significantly predicted hiring intentions.

Next, in order to check whether there is an interaction effect between the three factors of priming type, gender, and ethnic subgroup, this study conducted a three-way ANOVA analysis with the three factors mentioned above as independent variables and hiring intention as the dependent variable. The results supported that there was a significant interaction between priming type and model gender on willingness to hire ($F(1, 375) = 12.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$), replicating the previous findings of **RQ2** and **H2**, with no evidence of any other main or interaction effects, **RQ4** (Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroups and gender influence the effect of priming warmth and competence?) did not hold.

Summary and Supplement of Research Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4

To further investigate the specific differences of hiring intentions between the eight experimental conditions identified in **RQ1**, **RQ2**, **RQ3**, and **RQ4**, a one-sample ANOVA was run with the eight experimental conditions as the independent variables and hiring intentions as the dependent variable. The results showed a weak significant effect of the experimental

conditions on hiring intentions (F(7, 375) = 2.58, p < .05, η^2 = .10). Tukey's HSD post hoc test revealed a significant difference between condition "East/Southeast Asian Man Priming Competence" and condition "East/Southeast Asian Man Priming Warmth" (p<.05, 95% C.I. = [-1.74, -.02]); a significant difference between the condition "East/Southeast Asian Man Priming Competence" and the condition "South Asian Woman Photo Priming Competence " (p<.05, 95% C.I.=[-1.80, -.03]) was also found.

In terms of the hiring results obtained, the East/Southeast Asian American man priming competence group (M=2.88, SD=.97) was significantly weaker than the East/Southeast Asian American man priming warmth group (M=3.75; SD=.76), with a mean difference of -.88. The East/Southeast Asian American man priming competence group was also severely weaker than the South Asian woman priming competence group (M=3.79; SD=1.22), with a mean difference of -.92. East/Southeast Asian American males appeared to be most affected by priming type, which is also consistent with the conclusions drawn earlier about the interaction between priming type and model gender.

Analysis of Research Question 5

In addition to the attributes mentioned above from the Asian American candidates themselves, this study also examined the possible impact of potential employers' attitudes on hiring intentions. Regarding **RQ5**(Does the political ideology of Caucasian employers influence the effectiveness of priming warmth and competence?), a two-way ANOVA with priming type factor and political ideology factor as independent variables and hiring intention as the dependent variable was conducted. The results only supported a significant main effect of political ideology factor (F(2, 377) = 36.89, p < .001, η^2 p = .30). Neither the main effect of priming type (F(1, 377) = .16, p > .05, η^2 p=.00) nor the interaction effect between these two

factors was significant (F(2, 377) = 2.31, p > .05, η² p=.02).The results of the Tukey's HSD showed that the liberal and moderate groups were not significantly different in terms of hiring intentions, but both the liberal (MD = 1.26, p<.001, 95%C.I.=[.93, 1.60]) and moderate (MD = 1.07, p<.001, 95%C.I.=[.59, 1.55]) groups were significantly more likely to make a hiring decision than the conservative group. **RQ5** was not valid, but political ideology showed an independent significant effect.

Analysis of Research Question 6

Regarding **RQ6**(Does the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming warmth and competence?), a two-factor ANOVA was also run and the results did not support the existence of any significant effects. **RQ6** is not valid.

Analysis of Research Question 7

As for **RQ7**(Does Caucasian employers' agreement with the belief that the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with Asian Americans influence the effect of priming warmth and competence?) , the results of the two-way ANOVA only supported a significant main effect for beliefs about Asian Americans being associated with COVID-19 (F(2, 377) = 19.58, p < .001, η² p=.19).The results of Tukey's HSD showed that the "high Asian threat agreement" group was significantly less likely to hire than the "low Asian threat agreement" group (MD = -1.04, p < .001, 95% C.I. = [-1.42, -.66]) and the "moderate Asian threat agreement" group (MD=-.77, p<.001, 95%C.I.=[-1.23, -.31]). The interaction effect implied by **RQ7** was not supported, but beliefs about Asian Americans being associated with the COVID-19 were shown to independently predict hiring intentions.

Analysis of Research Question 8

Next, to answer **RQ8** (Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?), this study conducted a three-way ANOVA with priming type, ethnic subgroup, and perceived COVID-19 threat as independent variables and hiring intentions as the dependent variable. The results did not support the existence of any main effects or interaction effects. **RQ8** was not valid.

Analysis of Research Question 9

To answer **RQ9** (Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?), a three-way ANOVA analysis was conducted with priming type, ethnic subgroup, and belief about Asian Americans being related to COVID-19 as the independent variables, and hiring intentions as the dependent variable. Results revealed a weak interaction effect between ethnic subgroup and belief about Asian Americans as related to COVID-19 ($F(2, 371) = 3.32$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 p = .02$). **RQ9** was established.

Apart from that, because the ethnic subgroups were less than three, it was not possible to run the post-tests directly and determine exactly what differences corresponded between the different ethnic subgroups. The present study here divided participants into two groups by ethnic subgroups and ran one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD once within each group to examine the effect of beliefs on Asian American being related to COVID-19 factor on hiring intentions.

Results for the East/Southeast Asian group showed a significant effect of the Asians and COVID-19-related belief factor on hiring intentions ($F(2, 194) = 29.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .39$).Tukey's HSD post-hoc test showed that "high Asian threat agreement " ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .80$) had significantly lower hiring intentions than "low Asian threat agreement" ($M = 3.83$, $SD = $

.70, MD = -1.43, p < .001, 95% C.I. = [-1.87, -.98]) and "moderate Asian threat agreement"

(M=3.42, SD=.86, MD=-1.02, p<.001, 95%C.I.=[-1.53, -.50]).

On the other hand, the South Asian group showed a weakly significant effect of the

Asians and COVID-19-related belief factor on hiring intentions (F(2, 187) = 4.06, p < .05,

η^2=.10). In contrast to the significant differences between the three conditions in the

East/Southeast Asian group, Tukey's HSD post hoc test only supported a significantly lower

willingness to hire in the "high Asian threat agreement" condition (M=3.11, SD=1.14) than in the

"low Asian threat agreement" condition (M=3.81, SD=.95, MD=-.69, p<.05). No significant

differences were found between the "moderate Asian threat agreement" condition in terms of

willingness to hire (M=3.76, SD=1.02) and the other two conditions.

In sum, although the factor of beliefs about Asian Americans related to the COVID-19

significantly affects hiring intentions within both ethnic subgroups, the factor is more powerful

for the East/Southeast Asian group than for the South Asian group. Despite the fact that Asian

Americans in general are unfairly blamed for COVID-19, South Asians are relatively less

impacted by such stigmatization.

Summary and Supplement of Research Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

Furthermore, while utilizing manual categorization for continuous variables has been

shown to be effective in enhancing statistical validity for specific topics, it has been suggested

that data loss caused during the transformation of continuous variables into categorical variables

can compromise the comprehensiveness of statistical results (DeCoster et al., 2011). To remedy

this possible shortcoming, this study then used OLS multivariate regression to analyze three

continuous variables, participants' level of conservatism in political ideology, perceived threat to

COVID-19, and belief about Asian Americans' association with COVID-19, for their

independent effects on hiring intentions and their moderating effects on the impact of priming type on hiring intentions. Therefore, it was hoped that the results obtained from the regression analysis of the continuous variables would serve as a reference and complement the previous results obtained from the factorial ANOVA analysis of the categorical variables.

First, this study used hiring intentions as the dependent variable, the degree of conservatism in political ideology(1 = very liberal, 2 = somewhat liberal, 3 = moderate, 4 = somewhat conservative, 5 = very conservative) as one independent variable to measure the main effect, and the degree of conservatism in political ideology and priming type (1 = competence, 2 = warmth) were multiplied as another independent variable to measure the interaction effect. This resulted in a significant model, $F(2, 380) = 39.44$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .31$. Although the interaction effect between political ideology and priming type could not be effectively tested($b = .13$, $t = 1.23$, $p > .05$), political ideology was found to be effective in predicting hiring intentions independently of priming type ($b = -.66$, $t = -6.20$, $p < .001$), with the more conservative a participant's political ideology, the less inclined they were to make a hiring decision.

Since the main effect of political ideology was supported, this study then used the same OLS multiple regression with hiring intentions as the dependent variable, agreement with the COVID-19 threat as an independent variable(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) to measure the main effect, and agreement with the COVID-19 threat and priming type (1 = competence, 2 = warmth) were multiplied as another independent variable to measure interaction effect. Results showed that the model was not effective in predicting hiring intentions, $F(2, 380) = 1.22$, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .01$, and neither the main effect ($b = .10$, $t = .89$, $p > .05$) nor the interaction effect ($b = .03$, $t = .31$, $p > .05$) was significant.

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Political ideology demonstrated a significant independent main effect, and neither the main effect nor the interaction effect on perceived threat to the COVID-19 was significant. Next, this study used the same statistical method to examine the effect of participants' agreement with the belief that Asian Americans related to COVID-19(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). OLS multiple regression showed that the belief that Asian Americans related to COVID-19 had a similar effect as political ideology. This resulted in a significant model, $F(2, 380) = 23.77$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .22$. There was no significant interaction effect between belief that Asian Americans related to COVID-19 and priming type($b = .10$, $t = 1.01$, $p > .05$), but belief that Asian Americans related to COVID-19 independently predicted hiring intentions($b = -.52$, $t = -5.76$, $p < .001$). The higher the level of belief participants held about Asian Americans associated with COVID-19, the less inclined they were to hire the model in the Instagram photo.

Subsequently, this study used simple linear regression to examine the moderating effect of ethnic subgroup on the two COVID-19-related beliefs discussed above. Using ethnic subgroup(1 = East/Southeast Asians, 2 = South Asians) and agreement with the COVID-19 threat multiplied together as the independent variable and hiring intentions as the dependent variable to measure the interaction effect, no moderating effect was found ($F(1, 381) = 3.37$, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .02$, $b = .14$).

Repeating above analysis with the multiplication of ethnic subgroup and belief about Asian Americans related to COVID-19 as the independent variable and hiring intentions as the dependent variable, a weak interaction effect was found between ethnic subgroup and belief about Asian Americans related to COVID-19 ($F(1, 381) = 8.99$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .05$, $b = -.22$). The interaction effect obtained here is somewhat weaker than the results of the factorial ANOVA

analysis, supposedly because the independent variable being a continuous variable weakens the significance of the results.

Subsequently, this study also split the data into two groups based on ethnic subgroup and tested the effect of belief about Asian Americans related to COVID-19 on hiring intentions through simple linear regression. Belief about Asian Americans related to COVID-19 significantly predicted hiring intentions in both the East/Southeast Asian group ($F(1, 193) = 44.41$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .32$, $b = -.57$) and the South Asian group ($F(1, 186) = 12.40$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .13$, $b = -.37$); however, predictive validity was significantly stronger in the former than in the latter.

Overall, the regression analyses supported the results of the factorial ANOVA for Research Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The results of the two statistical analyses showed that both political ideology and the belief that Asian Americans are related to COVID-19 independently predicted hiring intentions, while perceived COVID-19 threat did not. Considering that these three variables have been shown to be somewhat correlated in the existing literature, this study next ran a series of simple linear regressions to examine the relationship between political ideology, belief that Asian Americans and COVID-19 are related, and perceived COVID-19 threat.

Results showed that political ideology did not significantly predict perceived COVID-19 threat ($F(1, 381) = .78$, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .00$, $b=-.07$), and perceived COVID-19 threat did not predict Asian American and COVID-19-related belief, too ($F(1, 381) = .52$, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .00$, $b=- .06$). The above two findings are inconsistent with established research (Cho et al., 2021; Conway et al., 2020; Li et al.). However, political ideology significantly predicted Asian American and COVID-19-related belief ($F(1, 381) = 152.93$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .47$, $b = .69$). As

has been demonstrated by existing research, the more conservative the participants' political ideology, the more inclined they were to believe that Asian Americans were responsible for the pandemic (Yamawaki et al., 2021).

Potential Effects Tests for Demographic Information

After examining the main and interaction effects mentioned in the research questions and hypotheses, and in view of the fact that some of the variables showed independent and significant predictions of hiring outcomes, this study also analyzed the relationship between participants' age, gender, education level, hiring experience, and hiring outcomes using a series of OLS multiple regression analyses. However, the analysis of demographic information did not yield any significant results.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

General Finding

Overall, though the main purpose of this study was to examine the effects of priming warmth and competence on hiring intentions among Asian Americans (**RQ1:** For Asian Americans candidates, what is the effect of social media photo priming type(priming warmth or competence) on the hiring intentions of Caucasian employers?), unfortunately, priming type did not independently and significantly influence the hiring decisions made by the participants, and **H1**(For Asian American candidates, priming warmth increases hiring intentions of Caucasian employers more than priming competence.) was not supported.

Based on the analysis of **RQ1**, the impact of priming type on hiring outcomes for Asian Americans cannot be generalized. While most existing stereotype content modeling (SCM) research treats Asian Americans as a low-warmth/high-ability whole, the failure of H1 proved this to be an overgeneralized statement. There are many differences in stereotypes between the two Asian American genders, and there is no single priming strategy that can be applied to all Asians, who need the flexibility to modify their stereotype management approaches according to their gender.

Here, in accordance with the findings of **RQ2**(Does the gender of Asian American candidates affect the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?), it is the trade-off effect model rather than the stereotype fit model that comes into play, with Asian males needing to emphasize warmth qualities and Asian females trying to highlight their competent side, both of which are qualities lacking in their inherent stereotypes. Although this impression management strategy is the same approach implied by H1, the validity of **H2**(Compared to Asian American male candidates, Asian American female candidates priming competence will increase Caucasian employers' hiring intentions more than priming warmth.) illustrates that the interaction effect

between gender and priming type completely overrides the possible main effect of priming type itself.

According to descriptive statistics on the priming effects of eight Instagram photos, the typical Asian American racial stereotype (low warmth/high competence) referred to in existing stereotype content modeling (SCM) studies is actually inherited most by Asian males, especially those of East/Southeast Asian descent. Therefore, the impression management strategy implied by **H1** is only valid for Asian males. Descriptive statistics of the priming effect of the photos revealed that Asian female models (no matter what ethnic subgroup they belonged to) generally had higher levels of perceived warmth than the average of Asian models as a whole. Considering that Asian women have racial stereotypes of over-sexualization and meekness, priming warmth likely deepened the degree to which their competence was suspected; priming competence could instead diminish their negative impressions. On the contrary, priming competence fails to compensate for the negative racial stereotypes of Asian males and may also remind employers that they are a threatening outsider group.

On the other hand, in spite of the validity of **H2**, which implied that the type of priming would interact with the gender of the Asian American models, the ethnic subgroups of the models did not show similar effects as gender, and **RQ3**(Does the ethnic subgroup of Asian American candidates influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) and RQ4(Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and gender influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) were not valid. This is a notable finding, given the issue of diversity in the Asian American community has received more attention in recent years than ever before. scholars have become concerned that the concept of AAPIs, while integrating the strengths of the Asian American community, may also diminish the public's focus on the ethnic heterogeneity of

Asians, and more studies have begun to emphasize the varied performances of Asians belonging to different ethnic subgroups under the same topic (Harpalani, 2021; Niles, 2022; Nadal, 2022; Yamashita, 2022).

Based on the findings of this study, however, the images of Asian Americans in different ethnic subgroups may be closer to each other in mainstream culture than anticipated by the Asian diversity perspective that has emerged in recent years. Ethnic subgroups did not show any main effects that predicted hiring intentions or interaction effects that worked in conjunction with priming type. Descriptive statistics on the priming effects of the photos also showed that while there were some differences in the levels of perceived warmth/competence exhibited by models from different ethnic subgroups under the same priming type (e.g., perceived warmth levels were relatively low for East/Southeast Asian males under both priming types), there were no significant differences based on ethnic subgroup. The effects of different types of impression priming under the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) dimension were largely determined by model gender, and differences in hiring decisions due to ethnic subgroups centered on another emerging aspect that was independent of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM): anti-Asian bias during the pandemic.

Here, the only significant result obtained from the analysis of research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 was the interaction effect of priming type with model gender, a finding that could directly guide Asian American candidates of different gender in choosing appropriate racial stereotype management strategies. Findings from research questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, on the other hand, hint at the existence of some influences beyond the control of Asian American candidates. First, employers' political ideology and belief that Asians are responsible for the pandemic were shown to influence hiring decisions independently of the type of priming, with **RQ5**(Does the political

ideology of Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) and **RQ7**(Does Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) holding true; perceived COVID-19 threat did not show a similar main effect or other interaction effect, and **RQ6**(Does the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) failed in this study.

The impact of preconceived beliefs from employers is something that Asian American candidates are unable to influence through impression priming strategies. Conservative political beliefs and the belief that Asian Americans are responsible for COVID-19 independently predicted negative hiring decisions, regardless of whether Asian American models used the correct gender-based stereotype management strategy. It has been shown that media priming effects are more likely to act on topics that participants perceive as ambiguous or unconscious, and that primes have difficulty functioning when participants have a clear position (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2007). Here, participants' political orientation ($F(2, 377) = 36.89$, $p < .001$, η^2 p=.30) and perceptions of the relationship between Asian Americans and the virus ($F(2, 377) = 19.58$, $p < .001$, η^2 p=.19) were strong preconceived notions. The above two factors exceeded the predictive power of the interaction effect of priming type and model gender in their ability to predict hiring intentions ($F(1, 379) = 13.58$, $p < .001$, η^2 p $= .07$).

Furthermore, this study found that hiring intentions could not be influenced by perceived fear of COVID-19. Perhaps the perceived threat of the virus alone was not enough for participants to project this anxiety onto Asian American candidates, and whether or not they identified with the racialization of the virus during the pandemic was a more important factor.

Although perceived COVID-19 fear did not show the same main effect of predicting hiring intentions as political ideology and belief of COVID-19 related to Asian Americans, there is considerable support in the existing literature for some sort of connection between these three COVID-19 related beliefs (Conway Iii et al., 2021; Cho et al., 2021; Lippold et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Yamawaki et al., 2021). In response to the potential relationships between these three factors, the data from this study support the idea that political ideology predicts belief of COVID-19 related to Asian Americans but not perceived COVID-19 fear; and that perceived COVID-19 fear does not predict belief of COVID-19 related to Asian Americans. While the correlation between political ideology and belief of COVID-19 related to Asian Americans was supported, perceived COVID-19 fear was found to be independent of the former two factors.

Here, the relationship demonstrated between these three in this study is somewhat contradictory to existing research. It has been documented that political ideology significantly predicts perceived virus threat, and that conservatives tend to weaken the threat of COVID-19 compared to liberals, and this attitude is based on desired political outcomes rather than direct experience (Conway Iii et al., 2021; Lippold et al., 2020). The data in this study do not support this effect. Given that the studies supporting this argument were largely made during the initial period of the COVID-19 outbreak, perhaps people's direct experience of COVID-19 accumulated over time, with preconceptions of the threat of the virus made on the basis of political positions gradually being replaced by feelings based on personal experience. Unlike the initial period of the pandemic outbreak, the current self-reported level of perceived viral threat by participants is relatively decentralized and unable to vary by ideology as found in previous studies.

At the same time, while participants may have become more rational in terms of merely assessing the threat of the virus, ideology rather than perceived COVID-19 fear still significantly

predicted beliefs in participants' minds about blaming Asian Americans for the pandemic when viewing Asian Americans and COVID-19 in combination. It has been supported that both political ideology and perceived COVID-19 threat significantly predicted the stigmatization of Asian Americans in the pandemic, but it has also been suggested that the most important precursor to anti-Asian bias in the United States is political ideology (Cho et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2021; Yamawaki et al., 2021). Therefore, the present study only demonstrated that that political ideology's can be associated with prejudice against Asians. Compared to liberals, conservatives strongly believe that Asian Americans and Asian culture caused the spread of the virus, and the resulting rejection of outgroups could potentially explain the lower willingness to hire.

It is worth noting that this hostility described above does not affect all ethnic subgroups of Asian Americans equally, and an analysis of **RQ8**(Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and the perceived threat of COVID-19 by Caucasian employers influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) and **RQ9**(Does the interaction of Asian candidates' ethnic subgroup and Caucasian employers' belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans influence the effect of priming type on hiring intentions?) reveals that South Asian Americans are an exception. Identification with viral racialized beliefs significantly predicted lower hiring intentions, but hiring outcomes were less impaired for South Asian models than for East/Southeast Asian Americans, and **RQ8** held. At this point, the ethnicity subgroup, while failing to show a significant main effect or an interaction effect with priming type or model gender, this factor interacted with the belief on COVID-19 related to Asian Americans and produced a weak significant effect on hiring intentions ($F(2, 371) = 3.32$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$).

Nonetheless, the interaction effect of ethnic subgroups was the weakest of the significant effects supported by the findings in this study. This less-than-strong priming effect may be due to

the complexity of the spillover situation of racialized discrimination of coronaviruses. Part of the existing literature suggests that the target of people's racial discrimination based on the place of origin of the virus is not only limited to ethnic Chinese, but also extends to East, Southeast, and South Asians in a broader sense (Haokip, 2021; Lalrinawmi, 2022; Reny & Barreto, 2022); and there are even studies suggesting that Hispanics immigrants are also subjected to the effects caused by the COVID-19 racialization-induced hate attacks against out-groups (Lu et al., 2021). While there is some evidence of such generalized discrimination, there are also studies that demonstrate the existence of opposing phenomena: some Americans lack specific knowledge of Asia and have subjective difficulty associating South Asia with Asia, where COVID-19 "originated", and South Asian immigrants suffered less during the pandemic than did other Asian immigrants led by East Asians (McGee et al., 2021). Here, participants in this study may have followed these two different judgment strategies separately, and although the final results support the significance of the latter, the effect is not quite remarkable.

Moreover, Americans' lack of geographic knowledge of Asia may be one explanation, and the considerable differences in appearance between South Asian immigrants and East/Southeast Asian immigrants, especially Chinese immigrants, may also have played a role. Considering that conservatives are particularly inclined to refer to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus," it is likely that the Chinese-like appearance may have been more potent in activating participants' hostility toward threatening outgroups.

Lastly, no significant relationship was found between the demographic information regarding participants' age, gender, education level, or hiring experience with hiring outcomes, a finding that is inconsistent with existing research. Lai and Babcock (2012) previously found that Caucasian female evaluators were extraordinarily low in evaluating the social skills of Asian job

applicants in comparison to Caucasian males, and were much less likely to promote Asian job applicants to positions requiring social skills. This has been attributed to the fact that evaluators' gender moderates their perceptions of Asian job applicants' social skills, and when it comes to the interplay between gender and target race, female evaluators, because of their innate advantage in social skills, are more concerned about possible social barriers of Asian candidates. In this case, they are more likely to subjectively subscribe to stereotypes of Asians as lacking in social skills, and are less likely to hire Asian applicants as compared to male evaluators (Lai & Babcock, 2012; Sy et al., 2010).

However, the present study did not find a similar effect of evaluator gender, which may be due to the fact that the present study controlled for the attributes of the job posting so that it neither overly favored the service industry nor was it overly similar to technical occupations. Gender bias from Caucasian evaluators may need to be under the traditional race-occupation matching stereotype (i.e., Asians are more suited to technical occupations than to service industries) in order to influence hiring outcomes. Considering that Lai and Babcock's (2012) experiment utilized a public relations specialist as the hiring position, employers may not show as much concern for the social skills of Asian job seekers as the evaluators in Lai and Babcock's (2012) experiment did when the position for which the Asian job seeker was applying was not in the service industry.

Implications and Future Research

Enrichment of Research Perspectives Based on Candidates' Identities

This study broadens the application of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) to the Asian American population. Existing SCM literature on Asians only discusses Asians as a "high ability/low warmth" group, suggesting that it is a lack of socialization rather than excessive work

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ability that contributes to negative perceptions of Asians in the workplace (Cuddy et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2005; Lai & Babcock, 2012). In addition, after defining the performance of Asians on the competence/warmth dimensions, existing research also lacks an exploration of the corresponding impression management strategies and their effects, and the few existing studies on racial stereotype management approaches based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) are still mainly centered on Caucasians and African-Americans, and especially lack tests for Asian populations (Lai & Babcock, 2012; Min et al., 2022; Swencionis et al., 2017).

To address these issues, this study tested the role of SCM-based impression management approaches on hiring outcomes for the first time for Asian Americans on gender and ethnic subgroup classifications, expanding the understanding of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) by subdividing Asian Americans into individuals with multiple identity labels. This study demonstrated that Asian males and Asian females are perceived with different stereotypes in the workplace and that one impression management strategy cannot be applied in a generalized manner. An analysis of the priming effects of eight photos used as stimulus material revealed that Asian men, particularly East/Southeast Asian men, were perceived as "high ability/low warmth" and were perceived more closely to the traditional racial stereotype of Asians as a whole, while Asian women generally had higher levels of warmth than Asian men, which may be the result of a combination of women's innate gender impression and the racial stereotype of Asian women as being particularly submissive and sexualized.

Meanwhile, existing studies exploring the effectiveness of racial impression management strategies based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) for ethnic minorities generally focus on African Americans as an example, and there is a lack of examination of other minorities. African Americans, as a racial minority, are generally in an upward interactional state in the workplace,

and they are more likely to prioritize priming ability to self-promote in such cross-racial and cross-class social interactions (Bergsieker et al., 2012; Swencionis et al., 2017). Existing tests of the effects of targeting this impression management strategy, however, have shown that priming warmth rather than competence is more conducive to improving the evaluations that African-American employees receive in the workplace, regardless of whether or not the occupations in the evaluative scenarios are considered service occupations (service occupations are generally perceived to require higher levels of warmth) (Grandey et al., 2018; Min et al., 2022).

In contrast to the impression management effects for African Americans, this study did not find the existence of a generalized impression priming principle specific to the Asian group as a whole. Overall, the impression priming effect for Asian Americans proved to be more consistent with a trade-off effect model (Swencionis et al., 2017) based on the gender of the job seeker than with a stereotype fit model: Asian job seekers who downplayed positive stereotypes and focused on improving negative stereotypes received more positive ratings from employers. Regardless of ethnic subgroup, Asian men who successfully downplayed the "low warmth" characteristic and Asian women who focused on priming competence that was lacking in existing stereotypes both received higher hiring rates.

The results of this study do not support the assumption of stereotype fit model that individuals benefit from displaying images consistent with their assumed positive stereotype; rather, priming competence may make Asian males appear more apathetic, and priming warmth may exacerbate the stereotype of Asian females as weak and submissive (Grandey et al., 2018). Here, although the hiring scenario used in this study is also a typical upward interaction scenario for Asian Americans, only Asian males benefited from the ideal strategy of priming warmth for fellow minority African Americans; Asian females, instead, benefited from the strategy of

priming competence, which is often employed by African Americans but has proven to be less effective. Applicable impression management strategies vary by race, and future research needs to treat the differences in stereotype management across minorities with greater nuance.

Divergent gender-based impression management strategies due to cultural stereotypes

Subtle differences in impression management strategies between Asian American males and females in job interviews are the main findings of this study. Instagram photos of Asian American job seekers created around cultural stereotypes of competence and warmth reveal the impact of the intersectionality of gender and race on job interview outcomes.

Asian American men are often subjected to the competence stereotype, wherein expectations of high academic and professional achievement prevail. Rooted in the "model minority" myth, this stereotype positions Asian American men as inherently competent, particularly in STEM fields. Concurrently, stereotypes emphasizing reserved and stoic demeanor contribute to perceptions of lower warmth. Given the competence stereotype, the research suggests that priming warmth during job interviews benefits Asian American men. This strategy aims to counteract potential perceptions of social aloofness or a lack of interpersonal skills, presenting the candidate as approachable and capable of effective collaboration.

Asian American women may face similar competence expectations, but more coupled with stereotypes emphasizing warmth, politeness, and exoticization qualities. The intersectionality of gender and ethnicity introduces additional stereotypes related to passivity and submissiveness, impacting perceptions of leadership style and assertiveness.

Contrasting with the strategy for men, the research suggests that priming competence is beneficial for Asian American women in job interviews. By emphasizing professional

achievements and skills, this strategy aims to counteract biases related to expectations of warmth and nurturing qualities, presenting the candidate as capable and assertive.

There are intricate interactions between cultural expectations and stereotypes in occupational settings, and these cultural nuances and intersectionalities are critical to understanding the diverse experiences of Asian American men and women. Existing research on the intersectionality of gender and race in the labor market has paid little attention to Asian populations, and its methodology, which mostly consists of qualitative analyses of retrospective interviews or examination of existing employment data, focuses on culturally critical perspectives and lacks experimental testing of possible coping strategies. Here, this study offers a potential reference for how Asian Americans of different genders understand and navigate vastly different cultural expectations in professional settings. The differential impact on warmth and competence emphasizes the need for nuanced strategies to challenge culturally limiting assumptions, and Asian job seekers need to be careful in responding to gender bias while presenting their authentic selves.

Particular Impact of COVID-19 on Asian American Candidates

On the other hand, whereas the priming effect of impressions for Asian Americans reflects only gender differences and not ethnic subgroup differences, the ethnic subgroup identity of Asian candidates moderates the prediction of hiring decisions by employers' held belief about Asian Americans and COVID-19 correlation. This is a particular aspect of impression management strategies for Asian Americans, who are the minority employees most vulnerable to COVID-19 racialization in the workplace. The extent to which the stigmatization of Asians that came with the pandemic actually affected the management of Asian American stereotypes is unclear. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that Asians suffer far more employment shocks in

pandemics than other races, and as Asians become scapegoats for the virus, their stereotypes deteriorate further and they face more discrimination in the workplace (Gemelas et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Mar & Ong, 2020). Although it is a well-established fact that Asian Americans' occupational impressions worsened with the outbreak of COVID-19, however, no research has yet examined whether the effectiveness of Asian Americans' impression management strategies changed accordingly.

Specific to the findings of the present study, priming warmth proved to be quite important for Asian males seeking employment, and it is reasonable to suspect that the importance of perceived warmth level for Asian males may have become more pronounced during the pandemic period than in the past. COVID-19 reinforces the stereotype of Asians as an apathetic, threatening outgroup, and Asian males fit the typical "low warmth/high competence" model minority image more closely than Asian females. The "low warmth/high competence" image is so ironic that Asian men have had to sacrifice demonstrations of competence to compensate for low warmth level in the pandemic era, while Asian women's inherently higher warmth level have ensured that they can continue to demonstrate ambition without making employers feel threatened.

Compared to the pre-pandemic era, is the importance of priming warmth in job application elevated for all minorities in the present day? Considering that there is also some degree of spillover of viral discrimination against Asians, the effectiveness of impression management strategies for other minorities may also change during the pandemic. Researchers might also consider methods such as meta-analysis to test whether the effectiveness of impression management strategies for other minorities in the literature, especially African-

Americans (the minority that has received the most attention in the existing literature), would exhibit some sort of temporal causal change in conjunction with COVID-19.

At the same time, given the rather sparse literature on the effects of impression management strategies among Asian Americans in the pre-pandemic era, future research could consider comparing different impression management approaches and their effects among Asians during the pandemic period and in the aftermath of the pandemic, e.g., to test whether the importance of priming warmth diminishes with the waning of COVID-19.

Significant Prediction of Employers' Ideology on Hiring Intentions

This study enriches the understanding of the effects of impression management based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) from the employer's ideological perspective. It demonstrates for the first time that political ideology and the belief that Asian American are related to COVID-19 affects the hiring decisions of Caucasian employers independently of priming warmth/competence. Impression priming based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) is not a panacea, and employers' own entrenched political stances actually demonstrated a more significant predictive power of hiring intentions relative to the interaction effects of priming type and model gender. At the same time, the correlation between employers' political ideology and the belief that Asian American are related to COVID-19 hinted at the strong politicization of such preconceptions. Given that the perceived COVID-19 threat was not in any significant way linked to either, the source of this prior knowledge of participants appears to be not empirical but ideological. Such a priori political views overriding the role of primes has been observed in previous media priming effect studies (Tan & Vishnevskaya, 2022; Vishnevskaya et al., 2023), but the present study is supposed to be the first to find this in an experiment on the priming effect of impressions based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM).

The fact that the effectiveness of impression management for minorities appears to be particularly sensitive to employers' ideology is a less than optimistic finding. If established stereotypes so strongly determine the mainstream's evaluations of minorities, racial tensions will be irreconcilable to some extent, and the effectiveness of the minority impression management strategies proposed in this study will be undermined in practice.

Available Impression Management Strategies Based on Stereotype Content Model (SCM)

However, despite the uncontrollable influence of pre-existing employer attitudes, this study demonstrates the relative effectiveness of an online racial stereotype management strategy based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) for Asian Americans, which contributes to our understanding of Asian Americans' workplace encounters and coping strategies. The "glass ceiling" or "bamboo ceiling" faced by Asian Americans has been a longstanding topic, but the discussion has focused on existing stereotypes, and there is still insufficient research on feasible coping strategies. As the first study to examine Asian Americans' strategies for improving racial stereotypes along the dimensions of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), this study demonstrates that the judicious use of visual pixels to prime an online impression can improve hiring outcomes for Asian Americans to a certain extent. This point provides a feasibility-rich reference for Asian American job seekers to facilitate their efforts to diminish the impact of negative stereotypes and provide personalized self-presentation by intentionally running their social media accounts.

Further, the online impression management approaches recommended in this study are particularly important for candidates during the pandemic. Online communication becomes particularly important during such a pandemic, and many organizations are forced to conduct virtual hiring or interviews, but few studies have discussed what the change in interaction

patterns means for job applicants' impression management (Al-Shatti & Ohana, 2021; Nosrati & Detlor, 2022). While traditional workplace impression management research has largely followed an offline interaction model, the growth of social media platforms has led to an increasing number of organizations not only conducting background checks on job candidates on social platforms, but also seeking out potential candidates directly through interactions on social media, a trend that has been fueled by the explosion of the COVID-19 (Al-Shatti & Ohana, 2021).

In other words, employers' assessment of candidates begins long before the first interview, job seekers must begin to consider the possible career consequences of online image building, and the management of social media profiles is critical to the creation of a good first impression of a candidate, a distinctive social media account will go a long way in enriching the candidate's self-presentation outside of the format-constrained resume and the serious atmosphere of the interview. Employers can also use this additional information to enrich their understanding of the job seeker, especially with regard to his or her personality. In order to highlight the priming effect of the visuals, this study did not show participants the model's resume, making participants' hiring judgments potentially less rigorous. In response to this issue, future attempts could be made to create virtual job applicant accounts on social media, operated under different impression management strategies, and use the job applicant's resume along with the social media account for recruitment testing.

Asian bias in AI image generation

The prevalence of various biases in AI-generated content has been repeatedly demonstrated by many studies (Ferrer et al., 2021; Ntoutsi et al., 2020; Schwartz et al., 2022). The findings of the current study also extend the evidence for implicit stereotyping of minorities

contained in the content of AI output. The large number of automatically generated photographs of models of East/Southeast Asian descent with slanted eye features versus models of South Asian descent with large beards is consistent with pre-existing cultural discrimination, and the AI's visual presentation logic exhibits racialized bias, with output based on stimulus material that exacerbates skewed representation. Researchers need to pay extra attention to this representational bias that increases with the number of stimuli generated when using AI to create media stimuli.AI's reliance on stereotypes not only diminishes racial diversity, but also exacerbates the prevalence of racially discriminatory language.AI image-generation platforms are becoming increasingly popular, with Midjourney creating as many as 2.5 million images per day (Valyaeva, 2023). A large number of users will not have enough experience or willingness to correct possible discrimination in the images, and the distribution of the generated material is likely to fuel or rationalize unconscious bias in the public. Future research could further explore visual discrimination by AI and its priming of implicit bias.

Limitations and Future Research

Concerns on Privacy Invasion of Candidates

The use of social media platforms for recruitment can be a good thing for both employers and candidates, with employers gaining additional avenues of understanding and candidates being able to present themselves strategically in a more flexible format. However, employers also have a relative ethical responsibility when using social media to screen candidates, and candidates have to face the intrusion of privacy (McDonald & Thompson, 2016). Whether or not employers violate the privacy rights of job candidates when conducting social media screening is a long-discussed topic, exacerbated by the lagging legislation on social media screening (Davison et al., 2016; McDonald & Thompson, 2016). Some candidates will choose to decline to

provide their social media access for privacy reasons, but this may result in them not being hired; setting some of their posts to be visible only to friends or closing their social media accounts may also make employers skeptical and diminish the competitiveness of applicants (Evuleocha & Ugbah, 2018; Slovensky & Ross, 2012; Tecassala, 2013; Wack & Habisch, 2022).

Specifically for the present study, a worrisome point is that the impression management strategies recommended by the findings are not only about publicly available career histories. While priming competence on social media can be done by sharing one's moments of professional achievement, traits related to warmth are difficult to prime through some contents that are appropriate for public disclosure. These warm traits are often linked to interpersonal interactions in the job seeker's private life and it is difficult to prime them without touching any privacy at all. In the case of the stimulus materials used in this study, for example, the Instagram page used to prime competence only shared the model's work scene, but the photos used to prime warmth contained deeper details of private life, such as the breed of the pet and the looks of close friends. Especially, the results of this study show that priming warmth is quite important in improving the hiring decisions of Asian American males, whereas this impression management strategy creates a greater risk of breaking the private-public boundary for Asian male candidates.

This is an unavoidable flaw of the impression management approach given in this study; abandoning online impression management would obviously weaken career competitiveness, but not every applicant is willing to sacrifice privacy or mix work and life. Existing studies on the invasion of privacy by social media screening have largely only explored topics such as the dangers of this situation and the urgency of legislation; for now there is a lack of research on strategies for balancing self-presentation with privacy protection (Drake et al., 2016; Gruzd et

al., 2017; Jeske et al., 2019; Jeske & Shultz, 2019). Future research needs to emphasize how to manage online image without undue pressure for overly self-exposure.

Exposure of Minority's Social Media Profiles and Risk of Racial Discrimination

The requirement for resumes to include a personal photo is widely recognized as an act that may lead to discrimination, but online social media profiles contain just as many non-work related elements that may lead to bias. It is difficult to ensure that employers can be completely objective in reviewing the figurative information that candidates post on social media without discriminating against any gender, racial, cultural, or political content contained therein (Smith & Kidder, 2010). Specific to the topic of this study, the potential for personal information on social media to lead to racial discrimination is especially important for minorities.

Research on traditional hiring practices has shown that applicants with typical Caucasian names are about half more likely to receive responses to their resumes than those with typical African American names (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). In addition, some racial minorities use "resume whitening" techniques in their job applications, avoiding the use of racially stereotyped names and modifying educational or work history to avoid suspicion of a specific racial background (e.g., removing a career as a Chinese tutor, not showing courses taken at a traditionally black college). This impression management strategy of avoiding revealing racial information has been shown to result in more interview responses for minorities; even if they are still eventually found to be minorities, passing the initial resume screening is still effective in increasing their hiring success (Carnes & Sheridan, 2019; Gerdeman, 2017; Kang, 2016; Ruedin & Van Belle, 2023).

Compared to "resume whitening" research, there is a lack of literature on minority applicants engaging in the "whitening" of their social media profiles, but it is reasonable to

suspect that job applicants who use a typical Asian name in their job search and attach a social

media account that showcases the life of an Asian American may receive fewer responses than if

they modified their Asian name and intentionally avoided all Asian traits in their social media

profiles(e.g., not displaying a photo of themselves, using text prime for impression management,

avoiding references to an Asian background, and focusing on showing clues to their social

activities with Caucasian friends) (Carnes & Sheridan, 2017; Gerdeman, 2017; Kang, 2016;

Ruedin & Van Belle, 2023). Similarly, if Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans use the

same social media stereotype management strategy (priming warmth/competence), Asian

Americans may be likely to receive worse interview offers or hiring decisions than Caucasian

Americans as long as they reveal information about their race. Given that the present study

limited the race of the experimental models to Asians, future research could consider using

Caucasian models as a control group to test the above conjecture; or using a prime other than

visual cues to activate competence or warmth while setting up a group of job seekers who

"whitened" their social media accounts and a group of job seekers who did not "whiten" their

social media accounts for comparison.

Emotional Stress of Creating the "Perfect Online Image"

While people who actively use stereotype management strategies may enjoy a better

public image, the repression and camouflage of the self in the process could induce emotional

stress and even jeopardize both mental and physical health (Leary et al., 1994; Watts, 2008;

Wang et al., 2020). Referring to research on the emotional risks associated with impression

management strategies in the workplace, being overly concerned with how others perceive

oneself, suppressing emotional expression in order to project a perfect image, or denying oneself

in order to fit into a particular occupational culture can easily lead to certain feelings of guilt and disappointment (Johnson, 2016; Leary et al., 1994; Watts, 2008; Weinberger & Davidson, 1994).

Specific to Asian Americans, existing research on Asian American impression management strategies in the workplace has focused primarily on the feasibility of the strategies themselves, with less attention paid to the psychological stress that the use of these strategies creates for Asian Americans. However, literature discussing barriers to integration for Asian American immigrants repeatedly states that "compliancy and accommodation are flexible strategies that were and remain important political choices for Asian Americans" (Mani, 2020). When crossing over into different cultural spheres, Asian Americans often choose to change their personalities and adopt the behavior standard of the dominant racial group, but this transgression of the Asian tradition can cause Asian immigrants to feel being unfairly forced to follow Western values (Pyke & Johnson, 2003; Sue et al., 2009).

Regarding the online racial stereotype management strategies recommended by this study, emphasizing Asian women's ability seems to touch on the modesty part of Asian culture, where publicly bragging about accomplishments on social media can be stressful for those who are used to keeping a low profile. Priming warmth could mean being forced to discuss their private lives with others for Asian men, and it is hard to say that they would feel warm while priming warmth. On the other hand, research on social media use among racial minorities shows that Asian Americans experience unique psychological stresses in operating social media accounts, with an extraordinarily high fear of "losing face", concern about exposing privacy, and dread of racialized cyberbullying. Fear of negative social consequences, particularly damage to one's reputation, is a significant barrier to Asian Americans exposing their true emotions and selves on social media (Charmaraman, 2018).

Given that the impression management involved in this study suggests a strategy for manipulating character self-presentation, and that it is difficult for racial minorities to completely avoid malice from the Internet in their online self-presentation, the extent to which Asian Americans are actually willing to adopt this strategy remains unknown, and it is even more unclear whether this cross-cultural character alteration will result in greater mental stress for Asian Americans. Future research needs to focus on the mental states of Asian Americans who utilize impression management strategies in order to differentiate between self-repression and healthy online impression management.

Underrepresentation of MTurk Sample for Recruiters

In addition to the aforementioned risks that may arise from the utilization of racial stereotype management strategies, another limitation of this study is the use of MTurk as a participant pool. Demographic information on MTurk workers indicates that most of them are young and have low average incomes (Ipeirotis, 2010). In this study, although the economic status of the participants was not counted, nearly 80% of the participants self-reported being less than 30 years old. Traditionally MTurk samples have been considered more generalizability rich than student samples, making them suitable for testing cross-cultural issues (Goodman et al., 2013). However, the ideal participant sought for this study was not a representative of the general public, but rather a generally older and seniority-rich professional. The MTurk sample may have possessed more professional experience than the college students, but a professional experience as a recruiter was still lacking: only 26% of the participants self-reported experience as a recruiter. Limitations from age and social status may make their evaluations of candidates unrealistic and skew the performance of real employers.

Obviously, well-qualified recruiters are unlikely to be keen on moonlighting on MTurk. In order to obtain feedback from real-life recruiters, scholars often openly recruit recruiters who volunteer to participate in experiments; or submit resume materials disguised as actual job applicants to companies or organizations (Cole et al., 2007). Specifically for research on social media recruiting, given that more and more companies are not only utilizing social media to conduct background checks on candidates, but furthermore actively seeking out and reaching out to potential job applicants through social media, there are studies that fictionalize the social media accounts of job applicants and test the responses of potential employers on social media platforms (Acquisti & Fong, 2020). For the topic of this study, future attempts could be made to create fictional job seeker accounts on social media, operate them under different impression management strategies, and then proactively reach out to employers who have posted job openings on the same social media platform to test the subsequent progress of the job search.

Non - Naive Participants and Questionnaire Order Effects

The lack of social experience has the possibility of undermining the referability of participants' answers, but on the other hand, participants' over-experience in questionnaire completion is equally concerning. The "non-naivete" of MTurk workers has long been recognized as compromising the validity of online experiments. A major concern is that MTurkers are exposed to such a multitude of experimental stimuli that they are skilled at seeing through the researcher's intentions (Chandler et al., 2014; Meyers, 2020). Research has demonstrated that MTurk's participant pool is not as large as expected, yet there are a high number of online experiments posted on the platform each day (Chandler et al., 2014). The mismatch between the number of participants and the number of experiments is rapidly undermining the naivete of MTurkers. Therefore, studies involving priming effects are

particularly vulnerable to "non-naivete". Given that priming effects are often unconscious to participants, if MTurkers are pre-familiar with this type of experimental paradigm, they can easily and intentionally control their responses, and the priming effect of the stimulus material becomes quite limited.

Prior knowledge of the experimental paradigm, familiarity with the stimulus material, and insight into the researcher's intentions can render an elaborate experimental design devoid of the desired deceptive effect (Hauser et al., 2019). Specifically in the present study, non-naive participants may not have believed that this experiment was really meant to test a limited-information model of thinking; they may have associated the just-examined photo of Asian Americans with the subsequent questionnaire testing the relationship of COVID-19 to Asians, and guessed that the researcher was expecting them to exhibit some degree of virus racism or Asian-hate tendencies. Here, participants' non-naivete may work in conjunction with the order effects of the questionnaire, leading to some sort of activation or activation-control effects (Arendt, 2013; Sassenberg & Moskowitz, 2005; Strack, 1992). Conservative participants may be more vocal about their dissatisfaction with Asians on subsequent COVID-19 related tests; liberal participants may control for potentially discriminatory attitudes in their responses as they realize the experimental intention.

In order to mitigate this possible interference, this study prohibited the use of the "back" button during questionnaire completion so that participants would not have the chance to change their answers after realizing certain intentions. However, "non-naive" is still a difficult effect to rule out completely, and many participants outside the MTurkers pool (e.g., college students) were also suspected of having this flaw. In future studies, it may be useful to consider a two-step recruitment process (Chandler et al., 2014) that separates the presentation of stimulus material as

a prime from the subsequent completion of questionnaire on Asian Americans and COVID-19 to

avoid participant guessing experiment intention due to the order of the questions.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In summary, this study investigated whether social media impression management strategies based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) influence Caucasian employers' willingness to hire Asian Americans across ethnic subgroups and genders.

Specifically, the results of this study indicate that Asian American male priming warmth, and Asian American female priming competence significantly enhance Caucasian employers' willingness to hire them. On the other hand, the more conservative the political ideology of Caucasian employers and the more they agree that Asian Americans are related to COVID-19, the less inclined they are to make a hiring decision. However, this influence from the employer's belief that Asian Americans are related to COVID-19 had a greater impact on East/Southeast Asian Americans than on South Asian Americans.

The findings of this study are useful for Asian Americans to improve racial stereotypes in the workplace, and the recommended social media impression priming strategies are particularly suited to the trend of hiring patterns going online during the pandemic; applying these strategies may compensate for the career frustrations suffered by Asian Americans as a result of virus racialization.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: SCREENING QUESTION

Please answer the following questions with yes or no.

01: I am an adult (aged 18 and older) Caucasian U.S. citizen residing within the United States.

APPENDIX B: WARMTH AND COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers use a five-point Likert scale:

Please answer the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree").

01: The candidate is friendly.

02: The candidate is warm.

03: The candidate is well-intentioned.

04: The candidate is considerate.

05: The candidate is competent.

06: The candidate is talented.

07: The candidate is skillful.

08: The candidate is ambitious.

APPENDIX C: HIRING INTENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers use a five-point Likert scale:

Please answer the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree").

01: Based on the available Instagram information, the candidate looks attractive.

02: I like the candidate 's Instagram page.

03: I would like to hire the candidate as a technical public relations specialist.

APPENDIX D: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers use a five-point Likert scale Please select only one option.

01: Please report your political ideology.

Very liberal

Somewhat Liberal

Moderate

Somewhat conservative

Very conservative

APPENDIX E: PERCEIVED THREAT OF COVID-19 QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers use a five-point Likert scale:

Please answer the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1 "strongly disagree"

to 5 "strongly agree").

01: I am most afraid of COVID-19.

02: It makes me uncomfortable to think about COVID-19.

03: I worry a lot about COVID-19.

04: COVID-19 is almost always terminal.

05: COVID-19 is an unpredictable disease.

06: My hands become clammy when I think about COVID-19.

07: I am afraid of losing my life because of COVID-19.

08: When watching news and stories about COVID-19 on social media, I become

nervous or anxious.

09: I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting COVID-19.

10: My heart races or palpitates when I think about getting COVID-19.

APPENDIX F: BELIEFS ON COVID-19 RELATED TO ASIAN AMERICANS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Answers use a five-point Likert scale:

Please answer the extent to which you agree with the following statements (1 "strongly disagree"

to 5 "strongly agree").

01: It is understandable that people are afraid of Asian Americans because of the

COVID-19 outbreak.

02: The COVID-19 outbreak shows the dangers of Asian cultural practices.

03: Asian people are to blame for the COVID-19 outbreak.

04: Asian Americans should be treated differently due to COVID-19.

APPENDIX G: MANIPULATION CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE

Please select only one option.

01: What is the race/ethnicity of the candidate you just evaluated?

Caucasian

Black

Hispanic

East or Southeast Asian

South Asian

02: What is the nationality of the candidate you just evaluated?

American

Non-American

APPENDIX H: DEMOGRAPHICS INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please select only one option.

01: What is your age?

18-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

≥70

02: What is your gender?

Male

Female

Any other gender identity

03: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High school

2-year degree

4-year degree

Masters or Doctorate

04: Have you ever had the experience of working as a recruiter?

Yes

No

APPENDIX I: STIMULI INSTAGRAM PHOTOS

Stimulus Photo 1.1: East/Southeast Asian Man Instagram Photo Priming Competence

Stimulus Photo 1.2: East/Southeast Asian Man Instagram Photo Priming Warmth
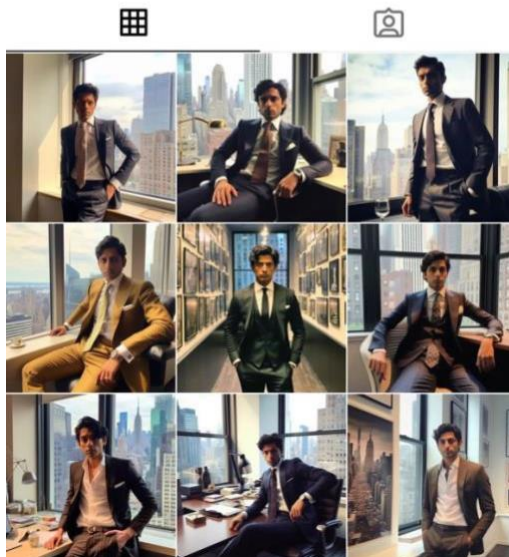
Stimulus Photo 1.3: South Asian Man Instagram Photo Priming Competnce

Stimulus Photo 1.4: South Asian Man Instagram Photo Priming Warmth
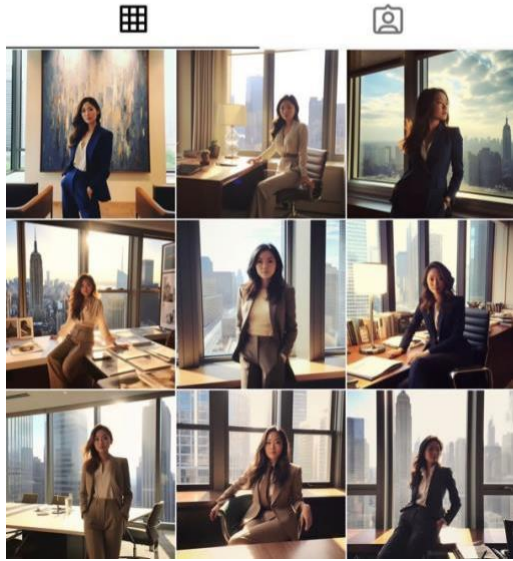
Stimulus Photo 1.5: East/Southeast Asian Woman Instagram Photo Priming Competence
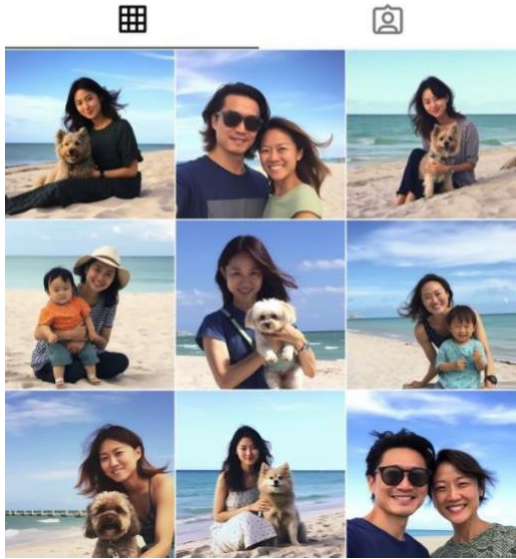
Stimulus Photo 1.6: East/Southeast Asian Woman Instagram Photo Priming Warmth

Stimulus Photo 1.7: South Asian Woman Instagram Photo Priming Competence
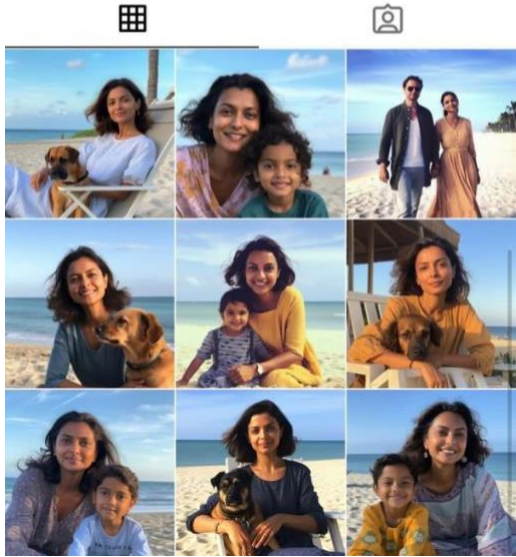
Stimulus Photo 1.8: South Asian Woman Instagram Photo Priming Warmth