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Leaning In, or Lack Thereof: Uncovering the Impacts of Intersectional Discrimination on Asian American Women

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Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Abstract

Women in the workplace are told to lean into their strengths and self-advocate in order to get promoted but this does not take into account the systemic barriers that prevent them from wanting to in the first place. Compared to women of other ethnicities, Asian American women have the lowest ratio of representation at the executive versus non-executive level. Yet, there is a lack of research on how two marginalized identities – as a woman and as an Asian American individual – synergistically interact and explain the intersectional discrimination only experienced by Asian American women, potentially interacting with cultural variables such as power distance orientation to impact how much Asian American women lean in. In Study 1, measures of intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in were created and validated, with 62 participants from a liberal arts college consortium filling out a survey to assess convergent and discriminant validity. In Study 2, participants were 369 Asian American and White American men and women recruited via Prolific. They filled out survey measures to understand their personal feelings of intersectional discrimination, power distance, and leaning in. Contrary to hypotheses, power distance orientation was not a moderator of the relationship between intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in. Additionally, intersectional discrimination was a significant predictor of one's reluctance to lean in not just for Asian American women, but for all four ethnic-groups. Implications regarding how organizations may conceptualize the leaning in model not just from an individual level but from a systemic or institutional one are discussed.

Keywords: intersectional discrimination, Asian American women, power distance orientation, leaning in, leadership

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Asian American Women

Introduction

In 2018, Ascend – North America's largest non-profit organization dedicated to cultivating and empowering Asian and Pacific Islander (API) professionals to become business leaders – published a report examining the senior leadership pipeline in companies across all industries. The metric used to conceptualize the senior leadership pipeline is the Executive Parity Index (EPI). EPI is a numerical comparison of the ratio of the representation of a particular group at the executive level versus its representation at the non-executive, professional level. Breaking down the EPI score for women by ethnicity, White women have the highest EPI, at 0.69. Looking at non-White women, Hispanic women have the highest EPI, at 0.41, followed by Black women, at 0.31. Asian women have the lowest EPI compared to other ethnicities, at 0.30. Although the EPI of Asian women has been improving (from 0.24 to 0.30 between 2015 and 2018), Asian women remain the least likely to hold positions at the executive level (Kim et al., 2020). As a result, the issues faced by Asian American women must be addressed through the lens of intersectionality, by understanding how their experiences both as an Asian American and as a woman compound, leading to them experiencing double discrimination – or double jeopardy – which prevents them from assuming a leadership role.

Intersectional Discrimination

Discrimination is a cause for concern in organizations as research links discrimination to a host of negative outcomes on both the individual and organizational levels. Discrimination has been linked to a variety of employee problems such as greater risks of depression, long-term

sickness absence, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intent (Clark et al., 2021; Gee, 2002; Triana, García, & Colella, 2010; Woodhead et al., 2022). In turn, this can impact an organization's success and performance (Messersmith, Patel, & Lepak, 2011). Employees perform better when they are part of diverse groups than homogeneous ones, which increases innovation and creativity, providing companies that leverage diversity with a competitive advantage (Frost, 2018). Given the benefits of diversity and drawbacks of discrimination, it is imperative that organizations not only focus on increasing diversity but also on reducing cases of discrimination. While there is a growing body of literature on leveraging diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles in the workplace, it is important to peel back the layers of DEI and uncover specific types of discrimination that may still be present despite the growing focus on workplace DEI.

For example, within the intersection of discrimination against Asian American individuals (the Bamboo Ceiling) and against women (the Glass Ceiling) is where the Asian American women experience lies. Because ethnic minority women do not fit the prototypes of their respective ethnic or gender identity groups, they may experience intersectional invisibility, or double jeopardy (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), in which minority women encounter both gender and ethnic prejudice (Beal, 1969).

There are two ways to conceptualize the double jeopardy experienced by Asian American women – through the additive or interactive model. Through the additive model, the forms of oppression associated with each of the Asian American women's identities are merely summed together, producing a cumulative sum of the separate discrimination they experience as a woman and as an Asian American individual. Through the interactive model, both of these identities continuously interact in a synergistic fashion, where the Asian American woman will experience these identities as one, and not in two separate silos (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Thus, understanding double jeopardy through the lens of the interactive model is more meaningful than understanding it through the lens of the additive model, as it accounts for the stereotypes and outcomes that are only found by virtue of being an Asian American woman. For example, being seen as submissive, passive, or invisible are stereotypes that are only held for Asian American women – not for Asian Americans and not for women in general (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). More broadly, the interactive model of double jeopardy can also help make sense of why ethnic minority women have been found to experience more frequent and severe sexual harassment overall than White men, minority men, and White females in the workplace (Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

Due to the fact that previous studies have shown that ethnic minority women experience more frequent discrimination, and that there are more stereotypes associated with this discrimination, the first hypothesis states the following:

Hypothesis 1: Intersectional discrimination among Asian American women will be the highest compared to White women, Asian men, and White men.

In contemporary literature, the interactive model of double jeopardy is widely known as intersectional discrimination, a term that has been brought to public attention by civil rights scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), underscoring the importance of understanding discriminatory experiences that are particular to specific intersections as interconnected as opposed to parallel to each other.

Psychological literature on intersectional discrimination is lacking. However, the current available literature on intersectional discrimination can be divided into two main brackets. Firstly, there has been a focus on attempting to uncover and understand stereotypes held by the

perpetrators of intersectional discrimination, especially because intersectional stereotypes are more complex and harder to explicitly identify than stereotypes only associated with a singular marginalized identity. A qualitative study has uncovered the stereotypes associated with a variety of ethnic-gender groups by asking individuals about their perceptions of other ethnic and gender groups, regardless of their own ethnic or gender backgrounds, ultimately uncovering that there were more distinct elements in stereotypes of ethnic women than of ethnic men, some of which included stereotypes about Asian American women (Ghavami & Peplau, 2013). Another qualitative study conducted interviews with Asian American women to uncover themes that highlighted the types of discrimination experienced by the participants themselves (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). Secondly, there has been a focus on examining the outcomes of intersectional discrimination on marginalized individuals, such as how intersectional discrimination is associated with depressive symptoms (Jones & Briones, 2022) and posttraumatic stress symptoms (Ho et al., 2012). Older research has also investigated how intersectional discrimination affects elements of one's livelihoods, such as personal income and educational attainment (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000).

While the literature referenced above has focused on stereotypes held by perpetrators and the negative outcomes – mainly regarding affect – of intersectional discrimination on those that experience it, there is a glaring lack of studies examining intersectional discrimination as it specifically pertains to Asian American women and as it specifically pertains to the workplace. Furthermore, the focus must shift from outcomes related to affect to outcomes related to actions and advocacy in order to best empower marginalized individuals and advocate for their leadership growth, which could potentially combat the issue of lack of promotions. One example

of a contemporary action-oriented outcome is one's ability, or willingness, to lean in in the workplace.

Leaning In

The concept of leaning in was coined by Sheryl Sandberg, ex-Chief Operating Officer of Facebook. Sandberg published a book titled *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (2013) that has since received global acclaim. She posits that leaning in is important in order to counter the inequality that women face in the workplace, such as the elements preventing them from progressing to higher leadership positions. She argues that the lack of women in leadership positions can be attributed to the fact that women are holding themselves back. The book lays out five main tenets of leaning in that women should practice in order to break through the internal barriers that hold them back (Sandberg, 2013):

1. Sit at the table even if you feel unqualified
2. To make progress, accept that you cannot please everyone
3. There are multiple paths to the top; women must take risks, challenge themselves, and ask for promotions
4. Seek mentors to achieve success
5. Speak and act authentically

Evidently, one of the primary outcomes of leaning in, according to Sandberg's conceptualization, is to get promoted and climb the corporate ladder. However, the concept of leaning in only takes into account individual level factors, putting the burden on women themselves to be the sole responsibility for their own workplace growth without taking into account the systemic and institutional factors at play, such as the discrimination that may hinder them from leaning in or from getting promoted in the first place. The interplay between

discrimination and lack of promotions as it applies to Asian American women can be better understood by examining the Bamboo and Glass Ceilings.

Discrimination and Promotions with Respect to Asian American Women

   The Bamboo Ceiling. The Bamboo Ceiling refers to the barriers that keep qualified Asian individuals from attaining leadership positions specifically in the United States (Hyun, 2012). This can partially be attributed to the model minority myth. For decades, Asian Americans have been perceived as the model minority, leading to the illusion that Asians have been and continue to be successful. This illusion has persisted for decades and has created positive and negative myths about Asians, both of which have been harmful to the community at large (Czopp et al., 2015; Suyemoto et al., 2009; Zhang, 2010). These myths have made the community invisible, such that their experiences of discrimination are either invalidated or remain unacknowledged.

   As a result, DEI scholars and practitioners tend to overlook these biases against Asian Americans and instead share the belief that Asian Americans are stereotyped positively. Because of this, discrimination against Asian Americans – including intersectional discrimination – often goes unnoticed and unprobed. Because organizations and DEI practitioners often ignore the harmful implications of the model minority stereotype, they unknowingly continue to further perpetuate harmful stereotypes about Asian Americans, indirectly limiting leadership opportunities for Asian Americans (Mouton et al., 2020). Furthermore, it has been established that high perceived discrimination against ethnicity is related to denied promotions (Yu, 2020), and that White evaluators are less likely to hire and promote Asian candidates than White candidates (Lai & Babcock, 2013). This is reflective of the report published by Ascend in which

the number of Asian Americans in professional jobs is growing, but their career development opportunities remain stagnant (Gee & Peck, 2018; Kim et al., 2020).

The Glass Ceiling. Conversely, the Glass Ceiling refers to the barriers and organizational factors that hinder women's abilities to attain leadership positions and progress in their careers (Loden, 1987; Morrison & von Glinow, 1990). Similar to the individual and organizational level outcomes of discrimination, the Glass Ceiling is believed to negatively affect one's job satisfaction and increase one's intention to quit (Babic & Hansez, 2021). Unconscious, implicit stereotypes still remain intact as well. Stereotypes shared about women in the workplace result in women being perceived as caring, shy, and nurturing – traits seen as less than desirable for leaders to possess. These stereotypes are exacerbated by implicit associations of women with the domestic sphere, leading to the perception of a lack of ambition and the internalization of such gender roles (Taparia & Lenka, 2022). Although it has been suggested that there is no difference in levels of ambition between men and women (Faniko et al., 2022), the Glass Ceiling still remains intact, and women are still denied from getting promotions due to gender discrimination. Previous studies have found that when looking at performance ratings made by managers, women were rated lower than men in both line and staff jobs, which had career consequences two years down the road. In addition, women had to outperform men in order to get promoted – their performance was not based on objective metrics as it was for men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). In a study that sought to understand how hostile sexism impacts evaluations of female managerial candidates, it was found that higher hostile sexism portrayed towards the female candidates led to more negative evaluations of that candidate and fewer recommendations that she should be employed as a manager (Masser & Abrams, 2004).

In summary, the literature has focused on Asian American women's barriers to attaining promotions through the additive model: as an Asian American, and as a woman, in two separate silos. However, through the interactive model, a conflict between the two arises. Through the Bamboo Ceiling, Asian American women are seen as hardworking and intelligent. Through the Glass Ceiling, Asian American women are seen as shy and submissive. These stereotypes clash and come into conflict with one another within the context of leadership, making it difficult to attain such positions. We can better conceptualize and understand the lack of promotions received by Asian American women through this double bind and inconsistency that exists solely within the intersection that the female Asian American leadership experience lies within. As a result of this intersection, the second hypothesis states that:

Hypothesis 2: Reluctance to lean in among Asian American women will be the highest compared to White women, Asian men, and White men.

The Case for the Lean In Model

Although the literature highlights how discrimination results in a lack of promotions and vertical growth, the promotion literature cited thus far focuses on the perceptions of Asian American women held by those in superior or senior positions, while the intersectional discrimination literature cited thus far mainly focuses on the marginalized individual's negative affect. There is a lack of research that puts the focus on Asian American individuals themselves, seeking to garner a deeper understanding, beyond their affect, of how intersectional discrimination experiences impact the actions that they take as a result of experiencing intersectional discrimination, such as whether they feel inclined to self-advocate for promotions. Because of this, the Lean In model provides a contemporary and relevant conceptualization of individualized actions that Asian American women could potentially take in today's social

context with the goals of maximizing their leadership potential and climbing the corporate ladder as a result of intersectional discrimination experienced. As such, the third hypothesis states that:

Hypothesis 3: Intersectional discrimination will predict reluctance to lean in only for Asian

American women.

Power Distance Orientation (PDO)

Following Sandberg's conceptualization of leaning in, it must be noted that leaning in is a gendered variable – its inception is contingent upon gendered discrimination, sexism, and the theory of the Glass Ceiling within organizational settings. However, there is one added layer of complexity that needs to be taken into account with regards to the intersectional female Asian American experience in the workplace and their leadership capabilities. Because authority and hierarchy play large roles in the leadership and working styles of Asian Americans, the cultural variable of power distance must be taken into account. Power distance refers to the "extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 45). A review of leadership literature argues that power distance, or aspects of culture related to hierarchy and power, are perhaps one of the most important aspects of Asian conceptualizations of leadership (Takeuchi et al., 2020). In order to understand power distance as it pertains to employees on an individual level, its individual-level component, power distance orientation (PDO), will be discussed from hereon.

PDO is a variable that has been researched extensively within the leadership literature. Studies thus far have examined how PDO differs across countries and cultures within them, and previous research has sought to understand how followers' cultural orientations, such as their

PDO, play a role in different leadership and employee outcomes. PDO has been a moderator in such studies, revealing its impact on employee outcomes (Takeuchi et al., 2020).

PDO may be an underlying mechanism or factor for cross-cultural differences. Studies have highlighted how ethnicity and culture are predictors of PDO. In a country like Taiwan where there is a high emphasis on traditional values such as that of power distance, women in Taiwan received positive career returns from mentorship programs only when they conformed to hierarchical traditions and had a high PDO, compared to women with a low PDO, who reported lesser career returns. On the contrary, in a country like the United States where there is a culture of egalitarianism, women reported having higher career returns from mentorship programs only when they had a lower PDO. As such, there was a significant moderating effect of PDO on the career returns experienced by employees taking part in mentorship programs (Ramaswami et al., 2014). Similarly, there was a significant moderating effect of PDO on the relationship between perceived abusive supervision and employee actions. More specifically, subordinates from a Confucian Asian culture – where hierarchical status is underscored – were more likely to perceive abusive supervision as fair compared to those from an Anglo culture, who perceived it as less fair, leading to lower work effort (Vogel et al., 2015). PDO has also been found to moderate the relationship between a managers' authoritarian approach and an employees' voice and willingness to freely express their thoughts about problems within their organization (Li & Sun, 2015).

To date, the literature on PDO has compared cultures within different countries, and presents gaps in understanding the role of PDO within a country, comparing two distinct ethnic groups whose roots are in different cultural norms and values. Given the evidence that culture directly influences PDO, the fourth hypothesis states that:

Hypothesis 4: Asian Americans will have a greater PDO than White Americans.

Although there is substantial literature highlighting the moderating role of PDO on the relationship between ethnicity and employee outcomes, it is unclear what moderating role PDO plays when ethnicity is compounded with gender. As such, this study seeks to investigate this relationship and uncover the moderating role PDO may play between intersectional discrimination and the employee outcome of reluctance to lean in. As such, the fifth and last hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 5: PDO will moderate the relationship between intersectional discrimination and one's reluctance to lean in.

Due to the dearth of quantitative psychological studies on both intersectional discrimination experienced by Asian American women and one's willingness to lean in, two measures will be created: one of intersectional discrimination experienced by Asian American women, and the other assessing one's reluctance to lean in, in the workplace. Study 1 will focus on the development and validation of these new measures. In Study 2, the five main hypotheses will be run.

Study 1

The first study validated two newly created measures of intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in in a sample of college students, specifically focusing on construct validity.

Study 1: Methods

Participants

This study had a total of 62 respondents. Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in lower-level Psychology courses at a private liberal arts college consortium in Southern California. Participants received credit upon completion of the study, which was factored into the participation grade of their respective lower-level Psychology courses. Participants were informed that they will be filling out a survey to understand their affect and discrimination on campus.

This study's sample (N = 62) had a mean age of 19.92 (*SD* = 1.15), and 46 identified as female and 16 identified as male. There were 21 participants who identified as Asian/Asian American, 19 as White American, 15 as other, 5 as Black or African American, and 2 as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Eleven participants were freshmen, 26 were sophomores, 19 were juniors, 5 were seniors, and 1 was in their fifth year.

Design and Procedure

A survey design was used for this study. Once participants had signed up for the study, they were sent a link to a Qualtrics survey. There, participants completed measures of perceived intersectional discrimination, leaning in, perceived inclusion, social dominance orientation, motivation, and perceived stress and perceived future employability. The order of items from these measures was randomized through Qualtrics. Next, they answered demographic questions which included their age, gender identity, ethnicity, and school year. Once they successfully completed the survey, they were automatically provided credit for their respective classes.

Measures

Intersectional Discrimination

This measure was created based on an empirical qualitative study on discrimination experiences of Asian American women (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). The measure consists

of three scales: racism against Asian Americans shared by Asian American women, gendered

racism/racialized sexism, and gender discrimination within the Asian American family, for a

total of 23 items. Face validity was assessed with the help of an Organizational Psychology

Professor. Sample items include, "I am often talked over, as if invisible" and "others often

attribute my smarts or success to my ethnicity". Participants rated these items on a Likert scale,

from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). To assess convergent validity, the following

measures were also included in the survey that was administered to participants: 16-item

perceived inclusion scale (Jansen et al., 2014) and 16-item social dominance orientation scale

(Ho et al., 2015). To assess discriminant validity, the following measures were included: 3-item

intrinsic motivation scale (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) and 10-item perceived stress scale (Cohen

et al., 1983). Mean scores for each of these measures were calculated to perform a correlation

analysis with intersectional discrimination, which had moderate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.87$)

(see Appendix A).

Leaning In

This measure was created based on Sheryl Sandberg's book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and

the Will to Lead* (Sandberg, 2013), based upon the six main tenets of the book. There are 14

items. Face validity was assessed with the help of an Organizational Psychology Professor.

Sample items include, "I tend to focus on pleasing everyone around me" and "I say what other

people want to hear". Participants rated these items on a Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1)

to *strongly agree* (5). To assess convergent validity, a 24-item perceived future employability

scale was included (Gunawan et al., 2020). To assess discriminant validity, the aforementioned

10-item perceived stress scale was utilized (Cohen et al., 1983). Mean scores for each of these

measures were calculated to perform a correlation analysis with the leaning in scale, which had

adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.62$) (see Appendix B).

Perceived Inclusion

A perceived inclusion scale (Jansen et al., 2014) was used to assess convergent validity

for the newly created intersectional discrimination scale. This scale was chosen to assess

convergent validity particularly because of the inverse relationship between discrimination and

inclusion – employees who feel discriminated against tend to feel less included and less like they

are insiders of their organization (Adams et al., 2020). Participants were asked to rate how much

they feel like they belong and are authentically themselves in their workplace using this 16-item

scale (see Appendix C). Sample items include, "This workplace gives me the feeling that I

belong" and "This workplace encourages me to be authentic". Participants rated these items on a

5-point Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A mean inclusion score

was calculated for each participant. This scale had excellent internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.97$).

Social Dominance Orientation

A social dominance orientation measure (Ho et al., 2015) was used to also assess

convergent validity for the intersectional discrimination scale. This scale was chosen to assess

convergent validity particularly because those high in social dominance tend to support forms of

hierarchy such as racism and other forms of discrimination and are least likely to experience it

themselves (Pratto et al., 1994). Participants were asked to rate their degree of preference for

inequality among social groups using this 16-item scale (see Appendix D). Sample items include,

"Some groups of people must be kept in their place" and "We should not push for group

equality". Participants rated these items on a 5-point Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1) to

strongly agree (5). A mean social dominance score was calculated for each participant. This

scale had excellent internal reliability (α = .92).

Motivation

An intrinsic motivation scale (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) was used to also assess

discriminant validity for the intersectional discrimination scale. Although motivation has been

associated with discrimination, it should be conceptually independent from discrimination

(Cornejo, 2007). Participants were asked to rate their degree of workplace motivation using this

3-item scale (see Appendix E). Sample items include, "I feel a great sense of personal

satisfaction when I do my job well" and "Doing my job well increases my feeling of self-

esteem". Participants rated these items on a 5-point Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1) to

strongly agree (5). A mean intrinsic motivation score was calculated for each participant. This

scale had good internal reliability (α = .74).

Perceived Stress

A perceived stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983) was used to assess discriminant validity for

both the intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in scales. This scale was chosen to

assess discriminant validity particularly because although discrimination could be a stressful

experience that can lead to one seeking help, it should conceptually be independent from

discrimination and leaning in (Carter & Forsyth, 2010). Participants were asked to rate their

levels of stress in the last month using this 10-item scale (see Appendix F). Sample items

include, "In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important

things in your life?" and "In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability

to handle your personal problems?". Participants rated these items on a 5-point Likert-type scale,

from *never* (1) to *always* (5). A mean perceived stress score was calculated for each participant. This scale had good internal reliability (α = .83).

Perceived Future Employability

A perceived future employability scale (Gunawan et al., 2020) was used to assess convergent validity for the reluctance to lean in scale. This scale was chosen to assess convergent validity particularly because of its similarity to the leaning in scale with regards to tapping into an individual's belief in themselves and actions they are willing to partake in regarding progressing in their career (Rothwell et al., 2009). Participants were asked to rate how employable they think they will be when they finish college using this 24-item scale (see Appendix G). Sample items include, "When I complete my studies, I will have built up a social network that will help me do well in my job" and "When I complete my studies, prospective employers will be able to see that I have clear goals for myself". Participants rated these items on a 5-point Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A mean perceived future employability score was calculated for each participant. This scale had excellent internal reliability (α = .94).

Study 1: Results

The goal of Study 1 was to validate two new measures – perceived intersectional discrimination (PID) and Reluctance to Lean In (RTLI). In order to do this, convergent and discriminant validity of each measure was assessed. See Tables 1 and 2 for the descriptive statistics of the newly created measures and scales used for this study.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Validation of the Intersectional Discrimination Measure

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Intersectional Discrimination	2.60	0.64	--			
2. Inclusion	3.44	0.84	-.38**	--		
3. Social Dominance Orientation	1.77	0.67	.02	.20	--	
4. Motivation	4.48	0.58	-.24	.23	-.27*	--
5. Stress	3.12	0.61	.03	-.36**	-.07	.03

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p <$ .05. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Validation of the Reluctance to Lean In Measure

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2
1. Reluctance to Lean In	2.95	0.44	--	
2. Perceived Future Employability	3.79	0.56	-.38**	--
3. Stress	3.12	0.61	.39**	-.40**

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p <$ .05. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Validation of the Intersectional Discrimination (ID) Measure

To assess convergent validity of the ID measure, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine whether ID would be significantly correlated with perceived group inclusion and social dominance orientation. As expected, there was a significant negative correlation between ID and perceived group inclusion, $r(60) = -.38$, $p = .002$. However, contrary to what was expected, ID was not significantly correlated with social dominance orientation, $r(60) = .02$, $p = .855$.

To assess discriminant validity of the ID measure, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine whether ID would not be significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation and perceived stress. As expected, ID was not significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation, $r(60) = -.24$, $p = .06$, or with perceived stress, $r(60) = .03$, $p = .85$.

Validation of the Reluctance to Lean In (RTLI) Measure

To assess convergent validity of the RTLI measure, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine whether RTLI would be significantly correlated with perceived future employability. As expected, there was a significant negative correlation between RTLI and perceived future employability, $r(60) = -.38$, $p = .002$.

To assess discriminant validity of the RTLI measure, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine whether RTLI would not be significantly correlated with perceived stress. Contrary to what was expected, there was a significant correlation between RTLI and perceived stress, $r(60) = .39$, $p = .002$.

Convergent and discriminant validity of both the ID and RTLI scales suggested that both scales were reasonably valid, so no item elimination took place. As a result, we proceeded with Study 2 as planned.

Study 1: Discussion

The purpose of Study 1 was to develop and validate two new measures – one of intersectional discrimination experienced by Asian American women, and of one's reluctance to lean in in the workplace. For the intersectional discrimination scale, convergent validity was established with perceived group inclusion, but not with social dominance orientation. Discriminant validity was established with intrinsic motivation and perceived stress. For the reluctance to lean in scale, convergent validity was established with perceived future employability. However, discriminant validity was not established with perceived stress.

Although Study 1 analyzed and established convergent and discriminant validity for the two newly created measures, much work remains to be done in order for both measures to be thoroughly validated. For example, a reliability analysis of the third subscale of the intersectional discrimination measure showed that it had poor internal consistency ($\alpha = .36$). Due to the scope of this study and because the overall scale had a strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$), subscales were not formally validated and edited. In addition, the reluctance to lean in scale had an adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .62$) Future researchers should attempt to further validate the scales, and specifically the subscales.

In addition, future researchers should go beyond convergent and discriminant validity assessments to assess construct validity. In order to thoroughly assess construct validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses should be run. This will strengthen the validity and reliability of subscales as well as provide data-driven insights into the further development of both measures with regards to subscale regrouping and item elimination or simplification. Content validity could potentially be assessed as well by leveraging the expertise of scholars whose focal areas include intersectionality, Asian American Studies, discrimination, and

workplace self-advocacy. These subject matter experts would be able to evaluate items in each measure to ensure they are measuring the appropriate content.

Lastly, a limitation of this study lies in its sample. The sample used to validate both measures consisted of college students from a private and selective liberal arts consortium in the United States. This was due to convenience sampling. Items in both newly created measures, along with scales used for validation, were reworded so it applied to college students. For example, the word 'meetings' was changed to 'classes'. It must be noted that although this was the case, the sample remains biased and skewed, particularly because these measures were created for the workplace context. Hence, we were unable to capture how these items thoroughly applied in the workplace. This may explain why convergent validity was not established between intersectional discrimination and social dominance orientation, or why discriminant validity was not established between reluctance to lean in and perceived stress. For example, looking further into the social dominance orientation scale, my sample had a mean of 1.77. However, the contemporary US mean is 2.98 (Lucas & Kteily, 2018). The substantial difference in means between my sample and the contemporary US mean could be explained due to the lack of variance within my sample. The college students may be desensitized to such items, and on average may be more socially aware than the general population. As such, future validation studies for both measures should be conducted with full-time employees that ideally hold corporate jobs. Future iterations of these measures could be adapted for non-corporate jobs within different sectors.

Despite these limitations, the development and validation of both scales can be seen as a first step towards integrating intersectionality and a contemporary employee outcome within the

growing field of Industrial-Organizational Psychology. As both newly created measures were reasonably valid, no items were eliminated and we proceeded with Study 2.

Study 2

After having validated the measures, the second study was conducted to test the aforementioned hypotheses. This study was conducted on a sample of adults in the workforce, from a general population rather than college students. This was to ensure there was a realistic portrayal and gauge of individual experiences in the workplace.

Study 2: Methods

Participants

This study had a total of 387 respondents. Participants who were not working full-time, who were not White or Asian American, and who were not U.S. citizens were filtered out using Prolific's pre-screening capabilities. Although 387 430 people attempted the survey, 18 individuals were removed, either due to incomplete data ($N = 5$), because they completed the survey despite failing Prolific's pre-screen checks ($N = 7$), or because they failed the attention checks ($N = 6$), leaving 369 participants in the final sample,

Eighteen responses had been excluded from the analysis due to spending less than three minutes on the survey or for failing to answer all the questions, leaving 369 to be used in the analysis. Participants were recruited from Prolific, an online research platform. Participants were compensated $2.00 for their time completing a 15 minute survey. Participants were informed that they will be filling out a survey to understand their perceived discrimination, feelings on authority, and feelings on workplace growth and success.

This study's sample (N = 369) had a mean age of 37.59 (*SD* = 11.66). There were 169 female participants and 200 male participants. There were 172 Asian American participants and 197 White American participants. More specifically, there were 74 Asian American women, 98 Asian American men, 95 White American women, and 102 White American men. Regarding their highest title in the workforce, 159 participants self-identified as individual contributors, 146 as managers, 31 as senior managers, 17 as directors, 4 as senior directors, 2 as vice presidents, 1 as senior vice president, and 9 as C-Suite members. The median time spent on the survey was 15 minutes.

Design and Procedure

A 2 × 2 between-subjects design was used with grouping variables of gender (female or male) and ethnicity (Asian or White). The dependent variables were perceived intersectional discrimination, power distance orientation, and reluctance to lean in. A survey design was used to measure the levels of the dependent variables and understand the relationships between them. The order of items from these dependent measures was randomized through Qualtrics. Next, participants answered demographic questions which included their age, gender identity, ethnicity, and highest title they have held in a work-related role (e.g., individual contributor, manager, and senior manager). Two questions were included in the survey that served as attention checks. The first attention check asked participants to select 'strongly disagree' from a 5-point Likert scale, and the second one asked participants which item is something that you cannot eat: bread, soap, rice, or carrots.

Measures

Intersectional discrimination and leaning in scales remained the same from Study 1. Both scales were found to be internally reliable, $\alpha = .90$ and $\alpha = .72$ respectively. Scales used to assess convergent and discriminant validity of both scales were not included in this study.

Power Distance Orientation

A power differential scale was used to assess power distance orientation (Earley & Erez, 1997) as a potential moderator for the relationship between perceived intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in (see Appendix H). Participants were asked to rate their beliefs on power dynamics between a manager and their subordinates using this 8-item measure. Sample items include, "In most situations managers should make decisions without consulting their subordinates" and "Employees should not express disagreements with their managers". Participants rated these items on a 5-point Likert scale, from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A mean power distance score was calculated for each participant. This scale had good internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$).

Study 2: Results

The goal of this study was to assess how intersectional discrimination faced by different ethnic and gender groups impacts their reluctance to lean in, or self-advocate, in the workplace. The primary independent variables in this study were intersectional discrimination (Intersectional Discrimination measure), gender (Male and Female), and ethnicity (White American and Asian American). The primary dependent variables in this study were intersectional discrimination (Intersectional Discrimination measure) as well as reluctance to lean in (Reluctance to Lean In measure). Additionally, one moderator was measured – power distance orientation (Power

Differential measure; PDO). See Table 3 for the race and ethnicity breakdown for the final

sample.

Table 3

Number of Participants by Ethnicity and Gender in Final Sample of Study 2

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
White	102	95	197
Asian	98	74	172
Total	200	169	369

Skewness and kurtosis values for each dependent and moderator variable were in normal

range between -1 and 1. Histograms portrayed normality for each variable. According to the

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, none of the variables were normal. Despite this,

statistical analyses continued as planned because ANOVA and regression analyses are both

robust tests despite violations of the normality assumption. Given that analyses of variance

(ANOVAs) would be run for some of the hypotheses, a Levene's test was run for each ANOVA

to check for equality of variances for all samples. Levene's test for intersectional discrimination

and reluctance to lean in showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

Descriptive statistics and correlations for the dependent variables and moderator are

presented in Table 4. See Table 5 for means and standard deviations for each gender and ethnic

group for intersectional discrimination, reluctance to lean in, and PDO. Given that analyses of

variance (ANOVAs) would be run for some of the hypotheses, a Levene's test was run for each

ANOVA to check for equality of variances for all samples. Levene's test for intersectional

discrimination and reluctance to lean in showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variance

was met.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 2 Variables and Moderator

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Intersectional Discrimination	2.25	.69	--	
2. Reluctance to Lean In	2.74	.57	.42**	--
3. Power Distance Orientation	2.52	.70	.05	.02

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 5

Descriptives Summary Table for Dependent and Moderator Variables in Study 2

Ethnicity	Gender	Intersectional Discrimination		Reluctance to Lean In		Power Distance Orientation	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
White	Male	2.00	0.58	2.61	0.54	2.62	0.70
	Female	1.93	0.56	2.66	0.56	2.56	0.62
	Total	1.96	0.57	2.64	0.55	2.59	0.66
Asian	Male	2.57	0.66	2.73	0.53	2.53	0.72
	Female	2.57	0.68	3.00	0.58	2.32	0.74
	Total	2.57	0.66	2.85	0.57	2.44	0.74
Total	Male	2.28	0.68	2.67	0.54	2.58	0.71
	Female	2.21	0.69	2.81	0.59	2.46	0.68
	Total	2.25	0.69	2.74	0.57	2.52	0.70

*Note*. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.

Effect of Gender and Ethnicity on Intersectional Discrimination

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, that intersectional discrimination would be highest among Asian American women compared to other ethnic-gender groups, a 2 x 2 analysis of variance

(ANOVA) was run. Gender and ethnicity of participants were independent variables and their

perceived intersectional discrimination was the dependent variable. There was a significant main

effect of ethnicity, $F(1, 365) = 89.42$, $MSe = .38$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .197$, such that Asian Americans

($m = 2.57$, $SD = .66$) experienced more intersectional discrimination than White Americans ($m =$

1.96, $SD = .57$). There was no significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 365) = .24$, $MSe = .38$, $p =$

.62, $\eta^2 = .001$. Contrary to what was hypothesized, there was no significant interaction between

ethnicity and gender as related to the intersectional discrimination experienced, $F(1, 365) = .30$,

$MSe = .38$, $p = .59$, $\eta^2 = .001$ (see Figure 1). These results partially supported Hypothesis 1 by

highlighting that discrimination is highest amongst Asian American individuals.

Figure 1

Intersectional discrimination across ethnic-gender groups
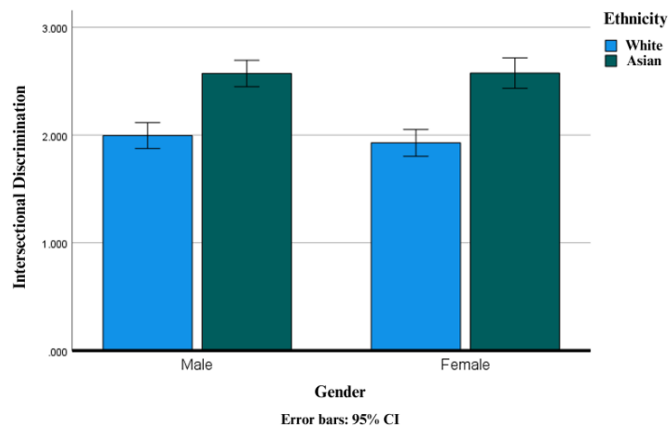
Note. This figure demonstrates the average intersectional discrimination experienced in the two

independent variables: gender and ethnicity. A significant main effect of ethnicity was found.

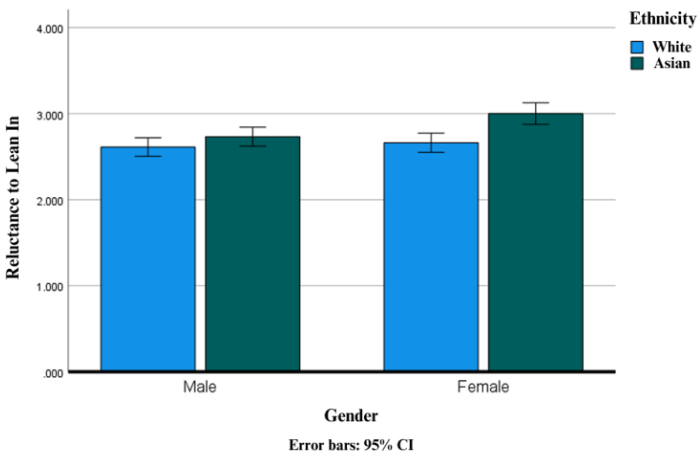**Effect of Gender and Ethnicity on Reluctance to Lean In**

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was run to evaluate Hypothesis 2, that there will be an interaction

between gender and ethnicity such that reluctance to lean in will be highest amongst Asian

American women than the other ethnic-gender groups. This ANOVA used gender and ethnicity of participants as independent variables and their reluctance to lean in as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect of ethnicity, $F(1, 365) = 15.69$, $MSe = .30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .041$, such that Asian Americans ($m = 2.85$, $SD = .57$) were more reluctant to lean in than White Americans ($m = 2.64$, $SD = .55$). There was also a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 365) = 7.56$, $MSe = .30$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, such that women ($m = 2.81$, $SD = .59$) were more reluctant to lean in than men ($m = 2.67$, $SD = .54$). Contrary to what was hypothesized, there was no significant interaction between ethnicity and gender as related to one's reluctance to lean in, $F(1, 365) = 3.58$, $MSe = .30$, $p = .059$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (see Figure 2). These results partially support Hypothesis 2 given that reluctance to lean in is significantly higher for Asian Americans compared to White Americans, and significantly higher for women than men.

Figure 2

Reluctance to lean in across ethnic-gender groups

Note. This figure demonstrates the average reluctance to lean in experienced in the two independent variables: gender and ethnicity. A significant main effect of ethnicity and gender were found.

Effect of Ethnicity on Power Distance Orientation

A third 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate Hypothesis 3, that there will only be a main effect of ethnicity and not gender for PDO, such that PDO is higher for Asian Americans than White Americans. This ANOVA used gender and ethnicity of participants as independent variables and their PDO as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect of ethnicity, $F(1, 365) = 4.96$, $MSe = .48$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .013$, such that White Americans ($m = 2.59$, $SD = .66$) had a higher PDO than Asian Americans ($m = 2.44$, $SD = .74$). As hypothesized, there was no significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 365) = 3.50$, $MSe = .48$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2 = .009$ and no significant interaction between ethnicity and gender as related to one's PDO, $F(1, 365) = 1.04$, $MSe = .48$, $p = .31$, $\eta^2 = .003$ (see Figure 3). Contrary to what was hypothesized, White Americans had a significantly higher PDO than Asian Americans.
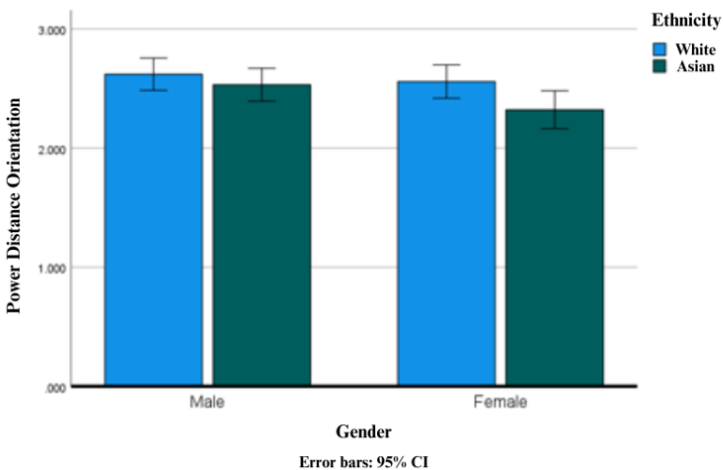
Figure 3

PDO across ethnic-gender groups

Note. This figure demonstrates the average power distance orientation (PDO) experienced in the two independent variables: gender and ethnicity. A significant main effect of ethnicity was found.

Intersectional Discrimination Predicting Reluctance to Lean In

To test Hypothesis 4, that intersectional discrimination will significantly predict reluctance to lean in only for Asian American women, bivariate regression analyses were conducted for each ethnic-gender group, with intersectional discrimination as the predictor variable and reluctance to lean in as the dependent variable.

For White men, intersectional discrimination significantly predicted reluctance to lean in, $R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 100) = 20.17$, $p < .001$. This result indicated that intersectional discrimination, as a predictor, explained 17% of the variance in reluctance to lean in in White men (B = .39, $SE = .09$, CI+/- = .22-.56, $\beta = .41$, $t(99) = 4.49$, $p < .001$). For every one unit increase in intersectional discrimination, a .41 increase in reluctance to lean in is expected.

For White women, intersectional discrimination significantly predicted reluctance to lean in, $R^2 = .24$, $F(1, 93) = 28.73$, $p < .001$. This result indicated that intersectional discrimination, as a predictor, explained 24% of the variance in reluctance to lean in in White women (B = .48, $SE = .09$, CI+/- = .30-.66, $\beta = .49$, $t(92) = 5.36$, $p < .001$). For every one unit increase in intersectional discrimination, a .49 increase in reluctance to lean in is expected.

For Asian men, intersectional discrimination significantly predicted reluctance to lean in, $R^2 = .08$, $F(1, 96) = 8.17$, $p = .005$. This result indicated that intersectional discrimination, as a predictor, explained only 8% of the variance in reluctance to lean in in Asian men (B = .23, $SE = .08$, CI+/- = .07-.39, $\beta = .28$, $t(95) = 2.86$, $p = .005$). For every one unit increase in intersectional discrimination, a .28 increase in reluctance to lean in is expected.

For Asian women, intersectional discrimination significantly predicted reluctance to lean in, $R^2 = .18$, $F(1, 71) = 16.13$, $p < .001$. This result indicated that intersectional discrimination, as a predictor, explained 18% of the variance in reluctance to lean in in Asian women (B = .36, SE

= .09, CI+/- = .18-.55, β = .43, $t(71) = 4.02$, $p < .001$). For every one unit increase in

intersectional discrimination, a .43 increase in reluctance to lean in is expected.

Hypothesis 4 was partially supported, in that intersectional discrimination experienced by

Asian American women did indeed significantly predict their reluctance to lean in. However, it

appeared that intersectional discrimination was a significant predictor of reluctance to lean in for

all three other ethnic gender groups too. Contrary to the hypothesis, this relationship was the

strongest for White women, followed by Asian women, White men, and Asian men.

Power Distance Orientation as a Potential Moderator

To test Hypothesis 5, that PDO will moderate the relationship between intersectional

discrimination and reluctance to lean in, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was

conducted. An initial regression model tested the direct effects of intersectional discrimination

on reluctance to lean in. The direct effects of intersectional discrimination explained 18% of the

variance in reluctance to lean in, $F(1, 367) = 80.66$, $p < .001$. Model 2, adding in direct effects of

PDO, did not significantly explain more variance in reluctance to lean in than model 1, $\Delta R^2 = .00$,

$F(2, 366) = 40.22$, $p = .990$. A third model, testing the interaction between intersectional

discrimination and PDO did not explain significantly more variance in reluctance to lean in, ΔR^2

= .00, $F(3, 365) = 26.96$, $p = .466$. The lack of significance of model 3 confirmed that PDO does

not moderate the relationship between intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in.

Study 2: Discussion

This study investigated how the intersectional discrimination experienced predicts one's

reluctance to lean in, and whether this relationship was stronger for Asian American women than

White women, White men, and Asian American men, and whether power distance orientation

moderates this relationship. Unlike what was hypothesized in hypotheses 1 and 2, findings

highlight that there was no interaction between ethnicity and gender on intersectional

discrimination and reluctance to lean in. However, there was a main effect of ethnicity on

intersectional discrimination and main effects of both gender and ethnicity on reluctance to lean

in. For hypothesis 3, unlike what was hypothesized, intersectional discrimination did

significantly predict reluctance to lean in not just for Asian American women, but for all three

other ethnic-gender groups: Asian American men, White American women, and White American

men. Hypothesis 4 stated power distance orientation would be higher for Asian Americans than

White Americans. It is interesting that results showed the converse – there was a significant main

effect of ethnicity, where power distance orientation was higher for White Americans than Asian

Americans. Lastly, power distance did not moderate the relationship between intersectional

discrimination and reluctance to lean in, unlike what was hypothesized in hypothesis 5.

Whereas past researchers have found associations between double jeopardy, or

intersectional discrimination, and negative individual outcomes faced by marginalized

individuals as a result of the greater number of stereotypes associated with that ethnic-gender

intersection (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018; Purdie-Vaughns &

Eibach, 2008), this was not the case in this study. However, the pattern of results in which

reluctance to lean in was higher in Asian Americans than White Americans, and higher in

women than men, is consistent with the previous literature where the Bamboo and Glass Ceilings

have harmful implications for one's workplace outcomes, including getting promoted and how

much harder women have to work in order to receive the same workplace growth opportunities

as men do (Babic & Hansez, 2021; Masser & Abrams, 2004; Yu, 2020). Findings in this study in

which power distance orientation was significantly higher for White Americans than Asian

Americans is surprisingly inconsistent with what leadership literature has posited for decades

(Ramaswami et al., 2014; Takeuchi et al., 2020; Vogel et al., 2015). This study sought to fill a gap in the literature whereby there was a lack of studies understanding the action-oriented impacts and outcomes of discrimination experienced, as opposed to simply understanding the perceptions of marginalized individuals that those in superior or senior positions shared (Masser & Abrams, 2004). Lastly, although power distance in leadership literature has been an important moderator in relationships between aspects of leadership and employee outcomes (Takeuchi et al., 2020), no moderating effect of power distance orientation was found in this study.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that for the purposes of measure creation, 'Asian American' was used as an umbrella term, essentially rendering invisible the nuances and important differences within groups under this umbrella. For example, the increased amount of racism and xenophobia that East Asians in the United States have had to sustain due to racist rhetoric around the COVID-19 pandemic is something that may not necessarily apply to South Asians in the United States (Cheng et al., 2021; Kibria, 1998). Similarly, issues of colorism experienced by South Asians and South Asian women in the United States may not necessarily apply to East Asian individuals (Banks, 2015). As a result, it must be noted that although the intersectional discrimination measure captures broad, yet covert and implicit, themes of intersectional discrimination generally experienced by Asian American women, there are nuances within this umbrella term that are unable to be measured.

A second limitation of this study is its sample size. Looking at the breakdown of participants by their ethnicity and gender, this study had 74 female Asian American participants. The number of participants in the other ethnic-gender groups did not exceed 102. As a result of the small sample size, this study had low power, reducing the chances of detecting true effects.

There is a possibility that a larger sample of female Asian American participants will increase the experimental power and detect effects, specifically as it pertains to hypothesis 3, in which it was hypothesized that the relationship between intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in would be the strongest only for Asian American women, and hypothesis 5, where it was hypothesized that there would be a moderating effect of power distance orientation on this relationship.

A third limitation of this study is the presence of confounding variables that could have potentially influenced both intersectional discrimination experienced and how much one leans in. For example, something that was not accounted for was working conditions. If a participant's job entails spending time at their desk, doing individualized work, chances are their levels of intersectional discrimination may be low by virtue of the fact that they do not interact with as many people as perhaps other participants do on a daily basis. Similarly, if a participant has a job at a place such as a call center in which there may not be potential for promotions in the first place, that participant may simply have no opportunity to lean in if they wanted to. Some other confounding variables that may have impacted the results include the industry the participants work in, their workplace culture, organizational safety that participants experience, and where their role is as contextualized within the company's organizational structure.

Lastly, because this study took place on Prolific, an online research platform, participants may be accustomed to taking research surveys for different academic institutions and purposes. It is possible that the low compensation rate, along with their experience in survey taking, resulted in participants not paying their full attention to the questions as it pertains to their respective full-time jobs. In addition, the sample on Prolific may not be representative of people from different socioeconomic, educational, and career backgrounds.

Implications

Despite these limitations, these results suggest several theoretical and practical implications. On an organizational level, these results underscore the importance of taking a nuanced approach to the lean in model, and should urge organizations worldwide that are utilizing Sandberg's model as a means of empowering their employees to take employees' positionalities into account. More specifically, this study presents an opportunity for organizations to practice principles of inclusion and equity by understanding how axes of discrimination, as seen by one's positionality within today's socio-political context, may impact one's ability to lean in. This study sheds light on how the lean in model rests upon the assumption that women are willing to lean in, and if they are not willing to lean in, then they are seen as disregarding their own career trajectory. As such, organizations should take one step back before employing the lean in model to understand how intersectionality impacts employees systemically.

The lean in model has theoretical implications as well. This study served as an attempt to integrate the lean in model into Industrial-Organizational Psychology literature. Given that the lean in model operates at the individual and interpersonal levels within organizations, there is an opportunity to integrate the lean in model further by understanding how it impacts different employee and organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and organizational performance. In addition, since this study has found that intersectional discrimination predicts reluctance to lean in for all four ethnic-gender groups, there is a potential to infuse elements of intersectionality into the lean in model, leading to the creation of a more inclusive lean in model that takes into account intersectional stereotypes that are currently not present in Sandberg's conception of the model.

The finding that power distance orientation did not moderate the relationship between intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in can have important implications for the workplace. Given that power distance orientation is an interpersonal variable within the organization that does not affect how much one leans in due to intersectional discrimination, this highlights the need for interventions focused on systemic discrimination and change over and above the current interpersonal changes between an employee and manager. There is an opportunity for organizations to bridge the gap between the systemic and the interpersonal, moving beyond trainings that merely focus on knowledge changes and implicit bias awareness to elements such as transparent evaluations and individualized plans for success (Hui et al., 2020).

Lastly, given that intersectional discrimination predicted reluctance to lean in more for women than men, this has significant implications for how organizations can encourage and increase the willingness of women to lean in. There is a potential for organizations to implement anti-discrimination trainings or have consistent, candid dialogues about the forms of intersectional discrimination present within that particular workplace and enact systemic change in order to create an environment that is more psychologically safe and comfortable for marginalized individuals. This may encourage women to lean in.

Future Research

In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend the current findings by exploring the stereotypes and forms of discrimination present within the 'Asian American' umbrella term, specifically as it pertains to women from different groups under this umbrella. This will help provide organizations and researchers with a more holistic view of intersectional discrimination and provides a more nuanced look into how organizations can best support employees in climbing the corporate ladder.

Secondly, due to issues with the lack of sample size and experimental power, future researchers should replicate this study with a larger sample size, especially for Asian American women. This will increase the chances of uncovering significant findings. In addition to recruiting participants through Prolific, to tackle the lack of a representative sample from the platform, future researchers should attempt to recruit a more representative sample size by reaching out to different organizations from different sectors and industries.

In addition to recruiting a more diverse sample, future researchers should attempt to control for the confounding variables that were not controlled for in this study, highlighted in the limitations section. Variables such as participants' workplace culture, their working conditions, industry or sector, and roles should be controlled for in order to fairly assess the relationship between intersectional discrimination, reluctance to lean in, and power distance orientation.

Finally, power distance orientation was found to be higher for White participants than Asian participants. Given that this was contrary to what the leadership literature posited, future research should attempt to understand this relationship further. This study was one of the first to understand power distance orientation within one country, comparing two cultures. Previous studies have looked at two cultures in two separate countries. As such, acculturation status should be taken into consideration in future studies. This can help shed light on how much Asian Americans are in alignment with traditional values traditionally associated with their culture. In addition to this, job seniority levels should be studied between ethnic groups to understand why White Americans had a higher power distance orientation than Asian Americans did. One possible explanation could be that advantaged groups' experience threats because of the introduction of DEI policies and a greater focus on marginalized groups. An example of this is symbolic threat – concern about the introduction of new values (Iyer, 2022). As such, perhaps

White Americans have increased in power distance orientation as a way to mitigate their

opposition to organizations' DEI policies and strategies.

Overall Conclusion

In this thesis, two studies were run to validate two new measures of intersectional discrimination and reluctance to lean in and to understand the relationship between both variables. Although the validity of the new measures must be further established by future research, the results of the present study has provided clear evidence that intersectional discrimination predicts how reluctant one is to advocate for themselves, or lean in, in the workplace. Both studies have illustrated the importance of factoring systemic-level variables into individual- or interpersonal-level variables when considering the role intersectionality plays in the way Asian American women are left behind in the senior leadership pipeline. This study is the first of its kind in uncovering the interplay between intersectionality and a contemporary model of self-advocacy as it pertains to the leadership advancement of Asian American women – an extremely capable, yet immensely underrepresented, community.

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Appendix A

Intersectional Discrimination (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

In my school…

In my workplace…

Subscale 1: Racism Against Asian Americans Shared by Asian American Women

1. I have been asked for my opinion on behalf of members of my ethnic group.

2. My ethnicity has never been mislabeled.*

3. Others have been surprised that I speak English very well.

4. I have felt excluded by my peers/coworkers on the basis of my ethnicity.

5. I have been told that my academic/career success is due to my ethnicity.

6. I have never experienced denigration of my culture by others (criticizing my culture's values, food, etc…).*

7. Others have assumed I have engaged in illegal activities

8. Others have stereotyped me on the basis of my ethnicity.

9. When sharing experiences of discrimination to those in other ethnic groups, I have felt invalidated, as if they do not believe me.

Subscale 2: Gendered Racism/Racialized Sexism

1. I have been seen as exotic, or different from my peers/coworkers of different ethnicities.

2. Others have told me they like me simply because of my ethnicity.

3. I have been told I am incapable of being a leader because of my ethnicity.

4. My authority has never been questioned because of my ethnicity.*

5. Others seem surprised that I have many years of leadership experience.

6. I feel afraid to speak up in my classes/meetings.

7. If I tried to assert myself, others would appear to be surprised.

8. I feel pressured to maintain a certain body image and shape.

9. Others have commented that I cannot gain weight no matter what I eat.

10. I am talked over, especially by my peers/coworkers who are men.

11. My views and opinions are overlooked by my peers/coworkers.

Subscale 3: Gender Discrimination Experiences From Within the Asian American Family or Ethnic Group

1. My academics were not taken as seriously by my family because of my gender.

2. My parents were more invested in my extracurricular activities than my academics.

3. My family has not attempted to define gender roles for me.*

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

*=reverse coded

Appendix B

Reluctance to Lean In (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

In my school… / In my workplace…

Theme 1: Sit at the table even if you feel unqualified

1. At meetings, I feel like a spectator rather than a participant.

2. I will not strive for new opportunities if I feel I am even slightly unqualified.

3. I do not feel qualified to do the work I am doing.

Theme 2: To make progress, accept that you cannot please everyone

1. I try to get ahead at work/at school by pleasing everyone.

2. I am not worried about the consequences at work/school if I do not please everyone.*

Theme 3: There are multiple paths to the top; women must take risks, challenge themselves, and

ask for promotions

1. I am reluctant to apply for a promotion even if I deserve it.

2. I am not afraid to ask for feedback at work/school when I want it.*

3. I believe that I will get ahead without explicitly requesting a promotion/better grades.

4. The only way to get ahead at work is by explicitly requesting a promotion.*

Theme 4: Seek mentors to achieve success

1. I have joined formal mentorship/sponsorship programs to advance my career.*

2. I actively seek out mentors of similar identities to mine to help me succeed at work.*

Theme 5: Speak and act authentically

1. I tend to not bring up issues at work for fear of negative consequences.

2. I am afraid to speak my mind honestly at work.

3. I am not worried about speaking truthfully to my professors/managers.*

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

*=reverse coded

Appendix C

Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (Jansen et al., 2014) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly*

agree)

This school…

1. …gives me the feeling that I belong

2. …gives me the feeling that I am part of this group

3. …gives me the feeling that I fit in

4. …treats me as an insider

5. …likes me

6. …appreciates me

7. …is pleased with me

8. …cares about me

9. …allows me to be authentic

10. …allows me to be who I am

11. …allows me to express my authentic self

12. …allows me to present myself the way I am

13. …encourages me to be authentic

14. …encourages me to be who I am

15. …encourages me to express my authentic self

16. …encourages me to present myself the way I am

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

Appendix D

Social Dominance Orientation Measure (Ho et al., 2015) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly*

agree)

1. Some groups of people must be kept in their place.

2. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the

   bottom.

3. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.

4. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.

5. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top.*

6. No one group should dominate in society.*

7. Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place.*

8. Group dominance is a poor principle.*

9. We should not push for group equality.

10. We shouldn't try to guarantee that every group has the same quality of life.

11. It is unjust to try to make groups equal.

12. Group equality should not be our primary goal.

13. We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.*

14. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.*

15. No matter how much effort it takes, we ought to strive to ensure that all groups have the

    same chance in life.*

16. Group equality should be our ideal.*

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

*= reverse coded

Appendix E

Intrinsic Motivation Scale (Hackman & Lawler, 1971) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly*

agree)

1. I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well

2. Doing my job well increases my feeling of self-esteem

3. I feel bad when I do my job poorly

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

Appendix F

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983) (1 = *never*, 5 = *always*)

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?

4. In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?*

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?*

6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?*

7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?*

8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?*

10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?*

*= reverse coded

Appendix G

Perceived Future Employability Scale (Gunawan et al., 2020) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 =

strongly agree)

"When I complete my studies..."

1.   ... I will be able to draw on the network I have developed to succeed at my work

2.   ... I will have built up a social network that will help me do well in my job

3.   ... I will have developed a network of contacts who can help identify potential work

     opportunities

4.   ... I will know how to network with people who can help me find work in my chosen

     career

5.   ... I will have had relevant work experience applying the knowledge acquired in my

     studies

6.   ... future employers will be impressed with the relevant work experience I have

     accumulated

7.   ... future employers will be satisfied with the work experiences I have gained

8.   ... I will be able to show future employers that I have the required practical skills and

     academic experiences they require

9.   ... my experiences will show that I have developed resilience and do not give up easily

10. ... prospective employers will be able to see from what I have achieved that I am well

     motivated

11. ... prospective employers will be able to see that I have clear goals for myself

12. ... my record will show that I have a strong work ethic

13. ... I will have an advantage as future employers will be more likely to recruit graduates from my institution than from other institutions

14. ... the reputation of my educational institution will be a significant asset to me in job seeking

15. ... I will have a lot of work opportunities open to me because my teaching institution has strong partnerships with many potential employers

16. ... I will be in demand because graduates from my institution are well prepared for work roles that are in high demand

17. ... I will have developed a good understanding of the variety of work opportunities available to me

18. ... I will know the steps I need to take to do well in my chosen career

19. ... I will have developed the ability to find out about job opportunities in my chosen field

20. ... I will be up-to-date with occupational trends in my chosen field

21. ... I will have gained the knowledge required to get the job I want

22. ... I will have the relevant skills for the occupation I choose

23. ... future employers will see that I will have learned the right discipline specific/technical skills and knowledge that they want

24. ... I will have developed the reasoning and problem-solving skills that future employers often require

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

Appendix H

Power Differential Scale (Earley & Erez, 1997) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

1. In most situations managers should make decisions without consulting their subordinates.

2. In work-related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates.

3. Employees who often question authority sometimes keep their managers from being effective.

4. Once a top-level executive makes a decision, people working for the company should not question it.

5. Employees should not express disagreements with their managers.

6. Managers should be able to make the right decisions without consulting with others.

7. Managers who let their employees participate in decisions lose power.

8. A company's rules should not be broken, not even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest.

Items will be rated on a Likert scale (1-5)

Appendix I

Study 1 Informed Consent and Debrief Forms

Study 1 Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY AT CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

Title of Study: Leaning In, Or Lack Thereof: Understanding Intersectional Discrimination and Power Distance in Asian American Women

Principal Investigator: Nishka Khoobchandani

You are invited to participate in this research study about affect and perceptions of discrimination on campus. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The research is being conducted by Nishka Khoobchandani of Claremont McKenna College, under the supervision of Dr. Ronald Riggio. You are qualified to participate in this research because you are an undergraduate student at a college in the Claremont Consortium. If you decide to participate, you will answer questions about discrimination on campus and about yourself. Participation in this study will take approximately 30 minutes of your time, and you will receive 0.5 credits toward your Psychology participation requirement.

There are no anticipated personal benefits of your participation, although the information obtained in this study will be beneficial to society in understanding internal and external feelings of discrimination. Risks may include potentially experiencing mild emotional distress. No

information that is obtained during this study can be personally connected to you. Participation

in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at

any time without penalty. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Claremont McKenna College

has reviewed and approved the present research. If you have any questions, please feel free to

contact the study's faculty supervisor, Dr. Ronald Riggio at

Ronald.Riggio@ClaremontMcKenna.edu.

By checking the box below, you are indicating that you are at least 18 years of age, and are

consenting to participate in this research study having read the information provided above.

- Yes, I agree to participate

- No, I do not wish to participate

Study 1 Debrief

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. We would now like to tell you a little more about what we were studying.

Asian American women appear to be getting promoted at a rate lower than their White counterparts. Women are constantly told to lean in, or to advocate for themselves in the workplace in order to get promoted, but what is missing is an understanding of the underlying reasons why women may be reluctant to lean in to begin with. This study sought to find out more about one of these underlying reasons – intersectional discrimination.

Currently, there are no measures for intersectional discrimination and leaning in. Hence, you completed a survey to help validate the creation of these two measures through filling out other measures that will both hopefully correlate and not correlate with these newly created measures.

Thank you again for your participation in the study. We hope this research will shed light on what is needed to support Asian American women and strengthen the senior leadership pipeline for them based not just upon individual factors, but external, systemic factors as well.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to the study's faculty advisor, Dr. Ronald Riggio (Ronald.Riggio@ClaremontMcKenna.edu).

Appendix J

Study 2 Informed Consent and Debrief Forms

Study 2 Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

You are invited to participate in this research study about discrimination, authority, and workplace growth success. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. You are qualified to participate in this research because you are at least 18 years of age and are either Asian American or White American and are based in the United States.

If you decide to participate, you will answer questions about workplace discrimination and about yourself. Participation in this study will take approximately 15 minutes of your time, and you will receive $2. You will only receive payment if you complete the entire study and attention checks are completed correctly. There are no anticipated personal benefits of your participation, although the information obtained in this study will be beneficial to society in understanding internal and external feelings of discrimination. Risks may include potentially experiencing mild emotional distress.

No information that is obtained during this study can be personally connected to you. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. However, you will not be compensated for your time if you have not completed the entire study or correctly answer the attention checks.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Claremont McKenna College has reviewed and approved the present research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the study's faculty supervisor, Dr. Ronald Riggio at Ronald.Riggio@ClaremontMcKenna.edu.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL NOT GET PAID IF YOU DO NOT PASS THE ATTENTION CHECKS OR IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE THE SURVEY. You must press the final SUBMIT arrow on the debrief screen.

By checking the box below, you are indicating that you are at least 18 years of age, are either Asian American or White American, are based in the United States, are currently employed full-time, and are consenting to participate in this research study having read the information provided above.

- Yes, I agree to participate

- No, I do not wish to participate

Study 2 Debrief

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. We would now like to tell you a little more about what we were studying.

Asian American women appear to be getting promoted at a rate lower than their White counterparts. Women are constantly told to lean in, or to advocate for themselves in the workplace in order to get promoted, but what is missing is an understanding of the underlying reasons why women may be reluctant to lean in to begin with. This study sought to find out more about one of these underlying reasons – intersectional discrimination – and the role that the endorsement of power and authority played in one's reluctance to lean in.

We did this by measuring participants' feelings of discrimination, authority, and reluctance to lean in within the context of the workplace. Thank you again for your participation in the study. We hope this research will shed light on what is needed to support Asian American women and strengthen the senior leadership pipeline for them based not just upon individual factors, but external, systemic factors as well. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to the study's faculty advisor, Dr. Ronald Riggio (Ronald.Riggio@ClaremontMcKenna.edu).

PLEASE PRESS THE FINAL SUBMIT ARROW BELOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

Thank you for completing this survey. Please click the button below to be redirected back to Prolific and register your submission.