

SOCIAL MEDIA-MEDIATED STRATEGIES OF ANTI-RACISM FOR THE ASIAN COMMUNITY: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Urgent action is needed to combat the rise in anti-Asian hate exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This systematic literature review examines previous studies on social media-mediated anti-racism strategies, given the increasing scholarly interest in the role of social media in addressing social justice issues and the need to empower both Asian and non-Asian communities in anti-racism efforts. The paper reviewed 38 peer-reviewed studies, categorizing them based on key attributes such as publication outlets, geographic focus, and methodological approaches. It also reviewed the identified anti-racism strategies in the papers, as well as their interrelationships with agents, effectiveness, and outcomes. The review also documented the associated challenges. Based on the findings, this review proposes four key directions for future research: (a) expanding the scope of strategies through diverse scholarly perspectives, (b) deepening understanding of these strategies across different national, socio-cultural, and platform-specific contexts, (c) identifying patterns of effectiveness by triangulating findings from multiple methodological approaches, and (d) systematically examining the challenges of leveraging social media for social justice initiatives.

KEYWORDS anti-racism; Asian; social media; systematic literature review

Introduction

Racial discrimination against Asians, particularly East and Southeast Asians (ESEA), has been pervasive and deeply ingrained in Anglo-American societies, manifesting in various forms such as stereotyping (Chou & Feagin, 2016) and exclusion (E. Lee, 2016). This issue was both exacerbated and brought to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research has established a strong link between racism and negative mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and psychological distress, among the global Asian community (D. L. Lee & Ahn, 2011). During the pandemic, racial discrimination further contributed to adverse consequences for the ESEA community, including diminished well-being (Cheah et al., 2020; S. Lee & Waters, 2021) and financial hardship (Huang, Krupenkin, Rothschild, & Cunningham, 2023). Addressing racism against the Asian community is therefore an urgent priority, requiring effective and sustained interventions.

During the pandemic, the Asian community actively utilized social media platforms to collectively combat racism. This marks a significant historical moment, as it may be the

first time the community has mobilized on such a large scale to publicly challenge racial discrimination. This shift contrasts with the traditional mindset of earlier generations, which often emphasized avoiding conflict. For instance, reflecting offline collective actions against anti-Asian violence under the slogan “Stop Asian Hate,” the hashtag #StopAsianHate has been used in 337.7K posts on the short-video platform TikTok (as of February 2025).

Existing scholarship on the relationship between social media and racism against the Asian community has primarily focused on two key areas: first, social media-mediated racism and its negative impact on the Asian community; and second, the underlying factors influencing engagement in social media-driven anti-racism efforts. More recently, scholars have begun examining the specific anti-racism strategies facilitated by different social media platforms in various contexts. For instance, emerging studies such as Xinyu Zhao and Abidin (2023) and J. J. Lee and Lee (2023) explore how the ESEA community has leveraged the affordances of the short-video platform TikTok to collectively address racism through various strategies, including raising awareness and fostering pan-Asian solidarity.

As Keum and Volpe (2023) astutely observe, research on online coping strategies for addressing racism remains limited, and the impact and effectiveness of these strategies are still unclear. This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing studies on identified strategies, assess their effectiveness where applicable, and highlight future research directions for leveraging social media more effectively in the pursuit of social and racial justice. Theoretically, this study builds on ongoing academic discussions regarding the role of social media in activism and social justice movements. It also provides empirical insights into anti-racism efforts. Rather than perpetuating a narrative that frames racialized communities as powerless victims who passively endure racism (Corneau & Stergiopoulos, 2012; Ellefsen, Banafsheh, & Sandberg, 2022), this paper emphasizes their agency and autonomy in actively utilizing available tools—social media, in this case—to develop coping mechanisms (Corneau & Stergiopoulos, 2012, p. 277) and resistance strategies (Ellefsen et al., 2022). Recognizing this agency is crucial for informing policymakers, social media platform designers, and activist organizations in the design of targeted, social media-driven initiatives that further empower individuals and civil society in the fight against racism.

Social media as a hotbed of racism

Media and communication scholarship has long examined the prevalence and patterns of racist discourse against the Asian community on social media, including its production, circulation, and impact on both victims and society at large, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A growing body of research has documented the widespread racial discrimination against the Asian community on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, manifesting in various forms such as harassment, exclusion, threats, hostility, and the spread of misinformation (Shi et al., 2022; Shin, Wang, & Song, 2023; Tong, Stoycheff, & Mitra, 2022). Moreover, Uyheng, Bellutta and Carley (2022) found that bots played a significant role in amplifying hate speech in online discussions about racism during the pandemic.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the harmful impact of social media-

mediated racism against the Asian community, affecting both community members and those outside the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, exposure to racism on social media was linked to heightened concerns about real-world discrimination among young Australian Asians, which, in turn, contributed to negative emotions and lower life satisfaction (Shin et al., 2023). Similarly, in the U.S., reliance on social media for COVID-19-related news was positively associated with greater concerns about future discrimination among Asian community members (Yu, Pan, Yang, & Tsai, 2020). These findings align with research conducted outside the pandemic context. For instance, Lee-Won, Lee, Song, and Borghetti (2017) found that, compared to nonracist messages, microblogged racist messages elicited stronger feelings of anger and shame among Asian users. Furthermore, social media consumption also influenced out-group perceptions. Willnat, Shi, and De Coninck (2023) found that higher consumption of COVID-19-related news on social media among White Americans correlated with increased anti-Asian stigmatization, which in turn reinforced the perception that Asian immigrants were less deserving of entry into the U.S.

Anti-racism on social media

If the widespread online racial discrimination facilitated by social media represents the *yin*, then the simultaneous resistance to racism, such as anti-racism discourses and various forms of online activism, embodies the *yang*.

Social media can serve as a powerful platform for addressing a range of social justice issues, including medical disenfranchisement (Xin Zhao, Feigenbaum, & Demirkol Tønnesen, 2024), gender equality (Chaif & Finneman, 2024), climate justice (Hannouch & Milstein, 2025), to name a few. Thanks to their interactive infrastructure, these platforms facilitate raising awareness, collaboratively constructing and expanding related knowledge, critiquing underlying structural problems, and mobilizing calls to actions (Xin Zhao et al., 2024).

Specifically in relation to the goals of anti-racism, the facilitative role of social media has been particularly evident in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Social media-enabled discussions of the movement helped amplify marginalized voices (Nartey, 2022); foster internal connections, garner resources from outsiders and lay movement members, build coalition with other groups, and promote preferred narratives of the movement (Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018); establish and expand public engagement through sympathy-based identification (Edrington, 2022); and motivate young students to participate in offline political activism (Clark, 2016). Notably, the momentum generated by the BLM movement on social media also predicted increased coverage of police brutality by mainstream news media, which could potentially channel anti-racism demands towards policymakers (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2018).

As to anti-racism for the Asian community, a growing body of research has examined the factors influencing online coping strategies in response to racism against the Asian community. These studies explore various determinants, including the roles of mobilizing activities and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in predicting intention for online civic engagement in anti-Asian violence activism (Kang, 2023), the relationship between COVID-19-related racial discrimination (e.g. blame and assault) and civic engagement on social media (Park et al., 2024), and the impact of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping

strategies on social media activism (Tao, Li, Lee, & He, 2024).

Research on online coping strategies for addressing racism is limited, and it remains unclear whether coping online with racism provided satisfactory coping experiences and allowed individuals to obtain effective online social support (Keum & Volpe, 2023).

Given the growing scholarly interest in the role of social media platforms in addressing social justice issues, particularly in combating racism, this SLR aims to provide an overview of social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community. Driven by this aim, this paper will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: In which journals and years were the studies published?

RQ2: What was the geographic focus (country), geographic focus (region), social media platform, context, and methodological approach that the studies focused on or used?

RQ3: What social media-mediated anti-racism strategies were identified, along with their agents, effectiveness, and outcomes?

RQ4: What issues were identified in leveraging social media to combat racism against the Asian community?

Methods

Data collection

The literature included in this SLR must meet four criteria: (1) the studied communication is mediated by social media, (2) it aims to address racism, (3) it is contextualized within racism-related events or activities, and (4) it pertains to the Asian community. To conduct the SLR, this paper adapted the protocols and steps used by Melchior and Oliveira (2022) and Lough and McIntyre (2023). This process involved (a) selecting search keywords, (b) applying these keywords to major scholarly databases, (c) scanning identified articles to determine inclusion or exclusion, and (d) conducting full-text readings of selected articles for further inclusion or exclusion decisions, and in the meantime, snowballing these articles.

First, the database Communication Source, available through the author's affiliation, was used to identify key terms related to relevant existing studies. As the most comprehensive full-text research database for communication studies, Communication Source includes 654 active full-text communication journals, making it a suitable resource for targeted keyword identification. Moreover, its automatic keyword suggestion feature enhances the comprehensiveness of the selected terms. After conducting trial searches, the following search string was formulated:

asian AND (racism or discrimination or prejudice or racial bias or race or stereotypes or racial inequality or anti-racism or antiracism or antiracists or anti-racist) AND social media

Second, the search string was applied to two databases, Communication Source and Web of Science, retrieving 52 and 611 articles, respectively. The full texts of located articles were then downloaded and stored them in Zotero, a free, open-source reference management tool that facilitates collaboration and automatically detects duplicates. To

expand the dataset, an additional search using Google Scholar was conducted. The author screened titles for relevance (e.g. prioritizing those mentioning anti-racism rather than racism alone) and then keyword searched whether the article mentioned “social media” in the main text. The search was stopped at page 30, where saturation was reached, yielding 12 additional articles.

Third, the articles were scanned by examining their titles, abstracts, and main texts. This review included empirical studies rather than literature reviews or editorials, considering both journal articles and PhD theses, as both undergo rigorous peer review. Only articles written in English were included. This step also helped exclude irrelevant studies, such as those on anti-racism strategies that are not mediated by social media. However, this review retained articles that, despite not explicitly mentioning social media-mediated anti-racism in their titles (e.g. studies only mentioning the examination of online racism discourses in their titles), still addressed the topic in their main text. After this screening, 69 articles remained.

Fourth, full-text reading allowed for a more detailed assessment of the articles’ eligibility. This process led to the exclusion of studies in which Asian participants constituted only a small portion of the sample or where their perspectives were minimally represented. Notably, this review included articles that examined both effective and ineffective social media-mediated anti-racism strategies (e.g. general social media use linked to perceived discrimination), as well as those that did not explicitly measure effectiveness, as all fall within the scope of our SLR. This step left this study 31 articles. During this step, a snowballing approach was also employed, identifying seven additional articles by reviewing the references of selected studies and screening publisher-recommended papers. The author continued sampling new relevant publications until March 2025. As a result, the final sample comprised 38 articles.

Following the PRISMA flow diagram (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009), Table 1 below reported the research design.

Table 1. Data collection record.

Step A	Deciding search key terms		
Step B	Communication Source	Web of Science	Google Scholar
	52	611	12
Step C	Scanning		
	69		
Step D	Full-text reading	Snowballing	
	31	7	
Total	38		

Data analysis

Guided by the research questions, this review coded the articles based on the following aspects: journal title, year of publication, geographic focus (country), geographic focus (region), social media platforms, context, methodological approach, identified strategy, its agent (i.e. who applied the strategy), effectiveness, outcome, and associated issue.

The classification of “identified strategy” was informed by existing frameworks in intersecting fields, including models for conceptualizing coping strategies for racism (Brondolo, Brady, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009), general computer-mediated coping activities (Hanasono & Yang, 2016), general social media coping activities (C. Yang & Tsai, 2023), and anti-racism strategies specific to the Asian community identified in the sampled articles. For example, this review adopted “cathartic expressions” from Abidin and Zeng (2020) as an overarching category encompassing various emotional expressions, such as anger, as identified by Brondolo et al. (2009). The categories of “associated issue” were derived from the sampled papers. Table 2 below presents the categories of “identified strategy” and “associated issue.” For the code “effectiveness,” this review only coded the quantitative studies that explicitly examined the effectiveness of specific strategies and left all other studies unclassified. The review did not categorize the code “outcome” but documented the specific findings in each study.

Table 2. Categories of “identified strategy” and “associated issue.”

Code	Category	Operational definition
Identified strategy	General social media use	Using social media in a general sense (Cai, Ahmed, Ibasco, & Chib, 2024)
	Consumptive social media use	Following or reading social media content (Ahmed, Chen, Jaidka, Hooi, & Chib, 2021; Chen, Sun, & Tao, 2024)
	Expressive social media use	Engaging with social media by publishing, sharing, or commenting (Ahmed et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2024)
	General coping online with racism	Coping with racism in online settings (Keum & Volpe, 2023)
	Exchanging experiences	Exchanging lived or vicarious racism-related experiences to amplify the reach and visibility of anti-Asian racism (Abidin & Zeng, 2020)
	Cathartic expression	Expressing strong emotions associated with personal or vicarious experiences of racism (e.g. anger, frustration, sadness, disappointment, laughter, humor, or satire) (Abidin & Zeng, 2020; J. J. Lee & Lee, 2023)
	Self-presenting racial/ethnic identity	Publicly showcasing the subjective sense of group membership, focusing on shared history, values, or common heritage (Brondolo et al., 2009)
	Exchanging social support (to victims and/or non-aggressors)	Providing or receiving support (emotional, esteem, network, informational, or tangible supports) to address racism-related issues (Abidin & Zeng, 2020; Hanasono & Yang, 2016)
	Seeking social support	Asking for support to address racism-related issues (Brondolo et al., 2009)
	Assertive coping (toward aggressors)	Expressive communication about the incident, such as directly questioning the aggressor’s behaviors, making an official complaint, demanding an apology, clarifying the intent of the act, or asserting what was inappropriate without resorting to insults (X. Wang, Wu, & Rajtmajer, 2023; F. Yang & Hanasono, 2021)

Code	Category	Operational definition
Identified strategy	Social media activism	Calling for collective action to address racism-related issues at the societal or structural level (Chon, 2023; Chon & Park, 2020; Jun, Kim, & Woo, 2024)
Associated issue	Counterproductive discourses	Invalidated, discredited, or insensitive discourses in response to anti-Asian racism (Abidin & Zeng, 2020)
	Negative impact on mental health	Mental health adversely affected when exposed to anti-racism related content on social media (Atkin, Ahn, Yi, & Li, 2024; C. Yang & Tsai, 2023)
	Ineffective platform functions	The inability of social media platforms to support or facilitate anti-racism efforts (Hanasono & Yang, 2016; Odağ & Moskovits, 2024; Parker & Song, 2006; Xinyu Zhao & Abidin, 2023)
	Fear of repercussions	Fear of unintended consequences when coping online (Odağ & Moskovits, 2024)

Coding

The author designed and conducted the data collection and analysis. To ensure coding reliability, they coded the articles twice, with a one-month interval between each round. An independent reviewer then reviewed the coding. We reached consensus on the coding for all quantitative studies. After further discussion, we refined the coding for “outcome” in studies using qualitative and mixed methods, adding more nuance to the coding.

Findings

Table 3 and Figure 1 below answered RQ1 that asks in what journals and when the studies were published.

Journal title

Table 3 shows that the *Asian Journal of Communication* publishes the highest number of papers ($N = 7$) on social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community, followed by *Social Media + Society* ($N = 4$). This finding is unsurprising, as the focus of these papers aligns closely with the aims and scope of both journals: the former specializing in communication issues with an Asian perspective and the latter examining social media within social and cultural contexts. While journals in fields such as health, race, crime, psychology, linguistics, and regional media and communication also published relevant studies, they did so in much smaller numbers. Given that addressing anti-Asian racism through social media requires interdisciplinary collaboration, these results highlight the urgent need for continued research beyond media and communication studies. Furthermore, identifying nuanced strategies across different national and cultural contexts remains essential, as racial discrimination against the Asian community and the corresponding resistance efforts are deeply shaped by regional historical backgrounds.

Table 3. Journals where the papers were published.

Journal title	No. of papers
Asian Journal of Communication	7
Social Media + Society	4
Journal of Medical Internet Research	2
Frontiers in Public Health	1
Frontiers in Communication	1
Media International Australia	1
New Media & Society	1
Race and Justice	1
Journal of Counseling Psychology	1
Media, Culture & Society	1
Crime & Delinquency	1
Telematics and Informatics	1
Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising	1
Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne	1
Ethnic and Racial Studies	1
The Sociological Review	1
Popular Communication	1
Proceedings of the 15th ACM Web Science Conference 2023	1
Heliyon	1
Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking	1
Howard Journal of Communications	1
Communication Quarterly	1
Multilingua	1
European Societies	1
Ethnicity & Health	1
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1
Asian American Journal of Psychology	1
Political Communication	1

Year of publication

Figure 1 illustrates a noticeable increase in publications on this topic from 2022 onward. The year 2022 marked the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which served as the contextual backdrop for 23 papers in the total sample (see “Contexts” below). This upward

trend aligns with the typical lifecycle of peer-reviewed publications, which often take several years from research to publication. The number of publications peaked in 2023 ($N = 11$) and remained steady in 2024 ($N = 10$). This trend suggests a sustained academic interest in the topic, largely driven by the unprecedented public health crisis and its societal implications.

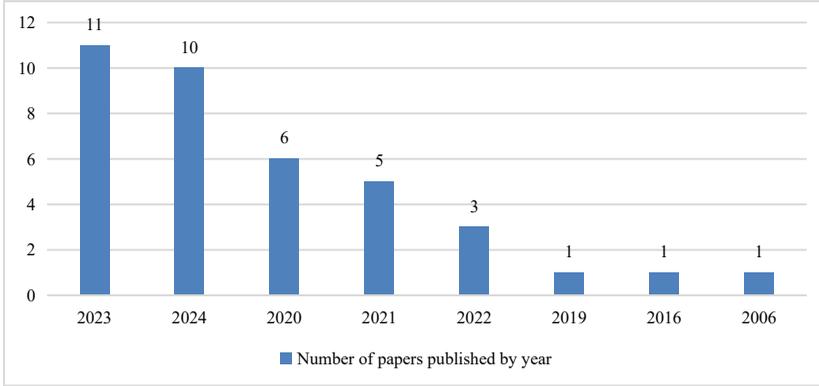


Figure 1. Number of papers published by year.

RQ2 enquired the geographic focus (country), geographic focus (region), social media platform, context, and methodological approach that the studies focused on or used.

Geographic focus

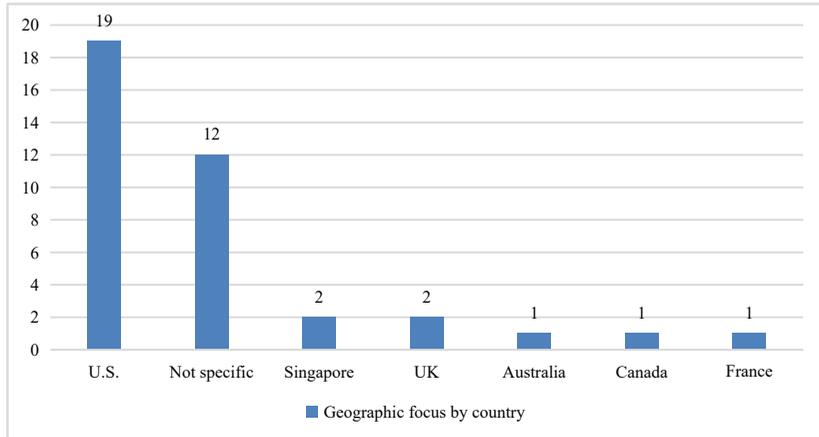


Figure 2. The geographic focus (by country) of the papers.

As shown in Figure 2, half of the sampled papers ($N = 19$) focused on the U.S. This finding reflects the significant role of the U.S. in the development and growth of the Stop Asian Hate movement, as well as its transition from offline to online spaces. Among the 12 papers not contextualized within a specific country, 11 did not specify a regional focus, while one was set in Europe. This is understandable, as it is often difficult to pinpoint the geographic locations of social media users when sampling online content. Only five other countries have been the subject of scholarly attention, each receiving limited focus. Given

that anti-Asian hate is a global issue, and social media platforms have facilitated resistance efforts, there is an urgent need to broaden the scholarly exploration of social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community to encompass more geographic regions. The fight against racism requires collective global efforts.

Social media platform

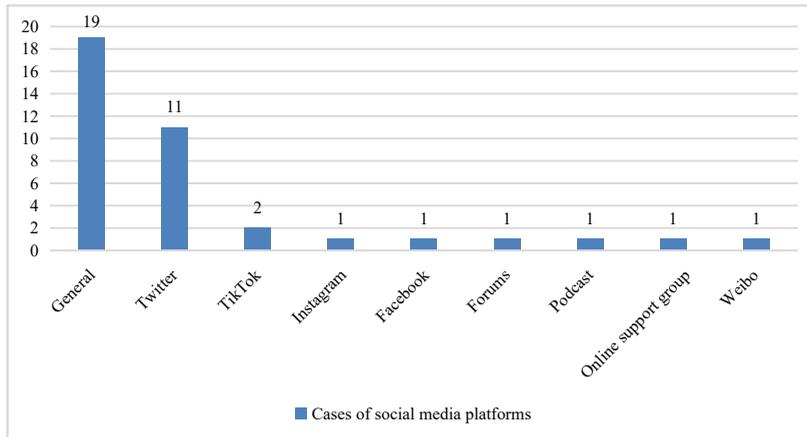


Figure 3. The social media platforms that the papers focused on.

Figure 3 shows that half of the sampled papers ($N = 19$) did not specify the exact social media platform(s) they focused on, instead examining social media use in a general sense. The emphasis on Twitter (currently known as X) highlights the platform's significance as a digital space for activism under the #StopAsianHate hashtag. Other social media platforms received only limited scholarly attention. As demonstrated in J. J. Lee and Lee's (2023) study, social media users creatively utilized platform features to construct anti-racism discourses and spaces. This finding underscores the need for more research into the diversity, nuances, and characteristics of anti-racism strategies across different social media platforms.

Contexts

23 papers were contextualized within the COVID-19 pandemic, and six focused on the Atlanta spa shooting, with three addressing both events. 12 papers did not specify a particular context. This result is not surprising, as there has been a surge in online resistance discourses in response to both online and offline racism incidents targeting the Asian/ESEA community, which were amplified by the pandemic. However, it also highlights the lack of academic attention to these strategies prior to the pandemic. As indicated in Figure 1 above, only three articles were published before 2020, when the pandemic began. This gap does not imply the absence of online coping strategies outside the pandemic context, nor does it diminish the need for further research in this area.

Methodological approach

19 studies employed quantitative research methods, 15 used qualitative approaches, and four utilized mixed methods. Among the quantitative studies, strategies such as consumptive social media use, expressive social media use, and social media activism were frequently quantified, with online surveys being the predominant method (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2024; Cho, Li, Cannon, Lopez, & Song, 2021; Jun et al., 2024). These quantifiable insights enable a deeper examination of the interrelationships among social media-mediated anti-racism strategies, their agents, effectiveness, and outcomes (see Figure 5 below for details).

Qualitative and mixed-methods studies provided nuanced perspectives on these strategies, documenting real-life cases and examples. Additionally, they captured strategies that were rarely or not at all addressed in quantitative studies. For instance, self-presenting racial/ethnic identity and seeking social support were exclusively explored in qualitative studies. Similarly, cathartic expression was identified in ten qualitative studies but appeared in only one quantitative study.

RQ3 asks the identified social media-mediated anti-racism strategy, as well as their agent, effectiveness, and outcome.

Social media-mediated anti-racism strategy

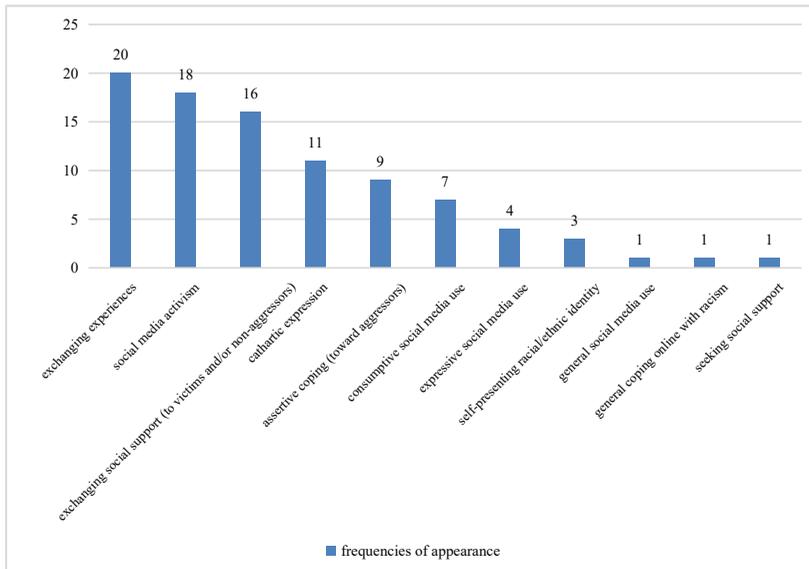


Figure 4. Frequencies of appearance of the identified social media-mediated anti-racism strategies in the papers.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the most frequently identified strategies include exchanging racism-related experiences ($N = 20$), social media activism ($N = 18$), exchanging social support (to victims and/or non-aggressors) ($N = 16$), and cathartic expression ($N = 11$). In contrast, other strategies, such as assertive coping (toward aggressors), self-presenting

racial/ethnic identity, and seeking social support, were identified in less than ten papers. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the facilitative role of social media platforms in sharing experiences of marginalization, building support communities, and mobilizing collective action for social justice (e.g. Xin Zhao, Feigenbaum, & Demirkol Tønnesen, 2024; Xin Zhao, Feigenbaum, & McDavitt, 2022). The reasons behind the limited focus on these other strategies remain unclear—whether due to a lack of scholarly attention or their relative rarity in real-life cases. However, the review of the challenges associated with social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community (discussed below) may offer insights into their limited presence.

Agent, effectiveness, and outcome of the strategies

Of the reviewed papers, 24 focused on the Asian community as agents in implementing various social media-mediated anti-racism strategies, ten examined the general public, two explored non-Asian communities (e.g. individuals identifying as Caucasian), one analyzed business accounts, and one investigated Black and Asian activist organizations. These findings suggest a relatively balanced scholarly focus on different groups involved in anti-racism efforts for the Asian community.

Among the 19 quantitative studies, 14 explicitly examined the effectiveness of various strategies. Figure 5 below illustrated their research findings on the social media-mediated anti-racism strategies, their agents, effectiveness, and outcomes.

Among the strategies analyzed, expressive social media use was consistently associated with positive outcomes across both Asian and non-Asian communities. Two studies found that social media activism among Asian community members was positively linked to an increased intention to participate in other forms of activism. These findings are reasonable, as both types of social media engagement suggest a high level of digital literacy and active participation, which may contribute to intrapersonal resilience and civic engagement.

The effects of consumptive social media use, however, produced inconsistent patterns across the three groups of agents. The patterns were contradictory among the studies targeting the general public and community members, respectively. Two studies found that social media consumption among non-community members predicted negative outcomes.

Other strategies and their relationships with agent, effectiveness, and outcomes were each examined in only one study. Notably, the positive impact of exchanging social support on social media users' well-being, as identified by F. Yang and Hanasono (2021), aligns with findings from other settings. For instance, Manohar and Kline (2024) found in an experiment that high person-centered emotional support (i.e. legitimizing and validating the recipient) and racial identity affirmation (i.e. ascribing value to the recipient's racial identity) were perceived as more effective in enhancing collective self-esteem (e.g. feeling good about belonging to one's racial/ethnic group) than lower-quality versions of these support types.

Interestingly, for Asian community members, none of the three strategies, i.e. general social media use, general coping online with racism, and exchanging experiences, were found to predict positive outcomes, despite the fact that, among the three strategies, exchanging experiences is the most frequently identified one among the sampled papers. This highlights the need for further research not only on *what* the social media-mediated

anti-racism strategies are but also on *how* they impact Asian communities, non-Asian communities, and society as a whole (Keum & Volpe, 2023).



Figure 5. Research findings of 14 quantitative studies that explicitly examined the effectiveness of the strategies.

Among the studies employing qualitative and mixed research methods that touched upon the outcomes of the strategies, one notable pattern emerges. Research focusing on the strategy of exchanging experiences has consistently documented its positive impact

on raising public awareness of anti-Asian racism and strengthening community cohesion not only within the Asian community (see Abidin & Zeng, 2020; Atkin et al., 2024; Cao, Lee, Sun, & De Gagne, 2022; S. Wang et al., 2021; Xinyu Zhao & Abidin, 2023; Zhu, 2020) but also in society at large (see Criss et al., 2023). This finding presents an interesting contrast to the quantitative study by Pan, Yang, Tsai, and Dong (2021), which identified a positive correlation between exchanging racism-related information on social media and increased depression during the COVID-19 pandemic. This contrast underscores the complexities of assessing the impact of anti-racism strategies, as they influence not only the internal states of community, as well as non-community, members (e.g. emotions, attitudes, thoughts, and perceptions) but also the broader network of relationships both within the community and between the community and non-community members. It is important to recognize that there may not be a one-size-fits-all strategy to address the diverse needs of all stakeholders in the anti-racism effort.

None of the studies explicitly examined the impact of self-presenting racial/ethnic identity on either group of agents. Rivas-Drake, Pinetta, Juang, and Agi (2022) proposed that youths' understanding of their ethnic-racial identities and their link to those of others can foster productive intergroup relations and, consequently, collective well-being. Given the popularity of social media among younger generations and the widespread practice of expressing ethnic and racial identity online, such as presenting the 'Asian + White' multiraciality on TikTok (King-O'Riain, 2022), it is crucial to investigate whether such self-presentation facilitates anti-racism.

RQ4 questions the issues identified in leveraging social media to combat racism against the Asian community.

Issues

Seven studies mentioned the inefficiency of platform functions in effectively supporting anti-racism efforts for the Asian community. Identified issues included the platform's inability to facilitate and manage in-depth civil discussions (Abidin & Zeng, 2020; Kuo & Jackson, 2024), the dominance of platform algorithms and filter bubbles over resistance discourses (Odağ & Moskovits, 2024), unresponsive platform assistive services (Odağ & Moskovits, 2024), challenges in integrating online discussions into decision-making processes (Parker & Song, 2006), limited engagement between in-groups and out-groups (Y.-J. Lee, Haley, & Shang, 2024), and low conversion rates from awareness to action (Xinyu Zhao & Abidin, 2023).

Five studies touched upon counterproductive discourses on social media related to resisting racial discrimination against the Asian community. These included inter-Asian and inter-minority tensions, as well as comparisons of racism-related suffering (Abidin & Zeng, 2020), counter-speeches that inadvertently reinforced racist stereotypes (X. Wang et al., 2023), and responses that failed to provide sufficient emotional support (Hanasono & Yang, 2016).

Two studies documented the negative mental health impacts of engaging with social media for anti-racism efforts, including stress and feelings of hopelessness (Atkin et al., 2024; C. Yang & Tsai, 2023). One study presented the community members' fear of potential repercussions from relevant social media engagement (Odağ & Moskovits, 2024).

These issues may explain the limited application of certain social media-mediated anti-racism strategies, as shown in Figure 4. Strategies such as assertive coping (toward aggressors), self-presenting racial/ethnic identity, and seeking social support may attract extreme hate speech while failing to garner sufficient support from both in-group and out-group members.

The issues identified in the sampled papers extend beyond anti-racism. They can also provide a reference to the challenges associated with social media-mediated efforts in addressing other social justice issues, such as disparities in medical diagnoses and treatment (Xin Zhao et al., 2024, 2022) and unequal access to health information (Xin Zhao & Xiang, 2023).

Discussion

Overall, the sampled papers were published in journals spanning a diverse range of scholarly fields, including communication, social media, health, race, and linguistics. Since 2022, three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a sustained increase in the volume of research on this topic. The studies employed a well-balanced mix of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches, with statistical insights and real-life case studies complementing each other. The identified strategies ranged from general social media use to targeted approaches directed at oneself, in-group members, and out-group members, which offer a valuable reference for future research aimed at further expanding and categorizing anti-racism strategies. The studies also showed a balanced scholarly focus on different agents involved in anti-racism efforts for the Asian community.

To advance the study of effective social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community, this SLR illuminates the following research directions.

First, more future studies could explore relevant strategies from a broader range of perspectives, such as race, health, and linguistics, extending beyond the predominant focus on communication within an Asian context or on media and communication studies.

Second, this body of scholarship would benefit from more nuanced understandings of (a) localized anti-racism efforts mediated by social media in non-U.S. contexts, (b) the specific strategies enabled by distinct features of various social media platforms, and (c) anti-racism strategies across a broader range of social and cultural contexts.

Third, further research employing diverse methodological approaches is needed to investigate and triangulate the interrelationships between anti-racism strategies, their agent, effectiveness, and outcomes. Identifying consistent patterns can provide valuable insights for key stakeholders, including policymakers and activist organizations, to implement effective social media-mediated anti-racism strategies. Future studies should also further relevant examination in an expanded pool of strategies, considering the continuously evolving practices of social media users.

Fourth, the challenges associated with using social media to combat racism against the Asian community warrant more systematic examination. These issues extend beyond anti-racism efforts and may significantly limit the effectiveness of social media-mediated initiatives in addressing social justice concerns.

However broad these suggestions may seem, their ultimate purpose is to inspire

detailed research agendas focused on a central goal: identifying effective social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community. Research in this area ultimately addresses, singly or in combination, three core elements: (1) the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed, (2) their application through the specific affordances of various social media platforms, and (3) the societal impact they generate. All of these elements are central to the overarching mission of combating racism against the Asian community.

Taking the strategy of assertive coping as an example, future research can explore the linguistic framing users employ when exposing racism-related incidents. For instance, a specific analysis of humorous rhetorical devices, such as satire, parody, and counter-humor, could illuminate their unique persuasive and cathartic functions.

Further, it is critical to investigate how these messages are tailored to the multimodal affordances of various social media platforms. This includes examining, for example, whether the assertive narratives are constructed through short-form videos, text-based posts, memes, or hybrid formats, and whether they are disseminated via original posts or interactions in comment sections.

From a media audience and effects perspective, scholars could examine the impact of these strategies on public discourse. Key questions include: How do they shape representations of the Asian community? To what extent do the assertions spark productive dialogue or foster solidarity across different communities? What is their role in the broader ecosystem of global digital activism?

Pursuing these agendas through interdisciplinary, context-sensitive, and methodologically diverse approaches, as suggested above, will yield rich, nuanced insights into this critical area of scholarship.

Theoretical and empirical implications

Theoretically, this SLR maps the scholarly landscape of how social media's role in advancing social justice has been conceptualized and operationalized in studies of anti-racism strategies. The strategies identified align with the framework proposed by Xin Zhao et al. (2024), which posits that individuals' participation in social justice initiatives via social media progresses through stages: from awareness, to the collaborative construction and expansion of knowledge, to the critique of underlying structural problems, and finally to mobilizing calls to action. Strategies identified in this SLR echoes the above framework. For instance, consumptive social media use primarily facilitates awareness raising. Expressive use and the exchange of lived experiences aid in collective knowledge construction and expansion. Finally, social media activism is critical for facilitating structural critique and mobilizing calls to action. Furthermore, practices such as self-presenting racial/ethnic identity and assertive coping (toward aggressors) highlight the unique particularities of anti-racism initiatives and their specific leverage of social media affordances to achieve strategic purposes.

This SLR also provides empirical insights to aid policymakers, social media platform designers, and activist organizations in designing targeted and efficient social media-driven anti-racism initiatives for both Asian and non-Asian communities.

First, to improve the psychological well-being of individuals involved in anti-racism

efforts, stakeholders could encourage expressive social media use, such as publishing, sharing, or commenting on content concerning anti-racism for the Asian community on social media. This strategy can enhance feelings of empowerment, increase perceptions of social support, and reduce worry about discrimination within the Asian community. Concurrently, it can help reduce negative perceptions of the Asian community among non-members.

Second, to mobilize the Asian community towards concrete change, initiatives can focus on encouraging community members to engage in social media activism that targets structural reform. For instance, members can be supported in organizing and calling for online collective actions, such as petitions, boycotts, or legislative campaigns, to address the root causes of racism. This strategic online engagement is crucial for fostering positive attitudes toward wider political participation and bridging the gap between online advocacy and offline action.

Third, to build and strengthen relational networks, both within the Asian community and with external groups, relevant parties can strategically facilitate the exchange of lived or vicarious experiences with racism. This strategy amplifies the reach and visibility of anti-Asian racism, which can effectively raise public awareness and foster both in-group and cross-community solidarity.

Conclusion

This paper systematically reviewed 38 studies that examined social media-mediated anti-racism strategies for the Asian community. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing scholarly discourse on the role of social media in addressing social justice issues. Empirically, the findings provide insights into the development of effective strategies to empower the Asian community and society at large in combating racism through social media platforms. The relatively small number of studies and their dispersed scholarly focus limited this SLR's ability to draw insights into the applied grounding theories, as is often possible in a more mature field. This limitation, however, underscores the need for further research and highlights the significant potential for growth within this area of study.

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