



Racialized Sexual Discrimination in online partner seeking and Happiness among young  
gay/bisexual men of colour in Ireland.

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** Past research has shown negative impacts of Racialized Sexual Discrimination (RSD) on the population of young black gay/bisexual men. However, little is known about whether RSD is associated with poor mental health outcomes in gay/bisexual men of colour as a whole. The current study examined RSD and its impact on happiness, predictors of happiness and the role Emotional Regulation strategies namely Cognitive Reappraisal (CR) and Expressive Suppression (ES) play in mediating the RSD-happiness relationship in a sample of 31 gay/bisexual men of colour. **Method:** Data was drawn from an online survey designed to examine issues of RSD, perceived rejection, internalized racism, self-perceived sexual attractiveness, emotional regulation and happiness. The current research employed several statistical procedures for its analysis namely multiple regression, hierarchical regression and ANOVA. **Results:** Results indicated that CR, ES and perceived rejection significantly predict Happiness ( $p = .01; .005; .04$ ). There were no significant associations between RSD and happiness ( $p = .64; .49; .63; .56$ ) and no racial differences in happiness scores ( $p = .54$ ). **Conclusion:** The current study did not find any associations between RSD and Happiness. The use of emotional regulation strategies should be encouraged to mitigate any potential negative impacts that RSD may have on mental health outcomes.

## Introduction

### *1.1 The context and construct development of Racialised Sexual Discrimination*

History of being a marginalized population forced gay and bisexual men to find a safer space for social networking and finding intimate partners (Wilson et al., 2009; Wade & Harper, 2019). Digital spheres are the ideal places for this activity. In these spaces, gay and bisexual men can get to know each other and seek out sexual partners without the risk of discrimination and homophobia they face while doing this in public spaces (Harper et al., 2016). With the constant development of technology, these digital spaces have evolved from internet chat room to modern mobile apps which one can install in their personal phone devices (Harper et al., 2016). Within these apps, users can present themselves as a potential partner as well as showing the desired traits and preferences they have for an intimate partner. These could be race, ethnicity, height, weight, HIV status, et cetera. These preferences can be served via the use of different filter functions to search for those who match the characteristics that they are looking for in a sexual partner (Wilson et al., 2009). It is important to note that these digital spaces are microcosms of our society (Wade & Harper, 2019). Although these spaces are smaller, they still fully possess characteristic of the broader societal groups. This comes with societal structures, deeply embedded norms and stereotypes that are still very much present. Discrimination, therefore, needs to be acknowledged to happens within these spaces (Riggs, 2013). Over the last decades, it is noted that there is a surge in the use of online dating platforms to search for sexual/intimate partners among gay/bisexual men (Bolding et al., 2005; Grov et al., 2014; Phillips et al. 2014). Due to the fast and efficient means of finding sexual partners, the use of internet to facilitate this activity has growth explosively (Paul et al., 2010). As a consequence, the need to examine the social structure embedded in online-partner-seeking platforms, the norms, stereotypes and behaviours that follow as a result of this structural sexual network becomes more and more

important in trying to understand the impact online partner seeking may have on those who engage with this activity (Wade & Harper, 2019; Wilson et al., 2009).

One of the phenomenon which takes place in the spheres of online-partner-seeking, where the well-being of those at the receiving end of this phenomenon are at risk, is Racialized Sexual Discrimination (RSD). The phenomenon of Racialized Sexual Discrimination is defined by Wade and Harper (2019) as “the sexualized discriminatory treatment that gay and bisexual men of colour encounter in online partner-seeking venues” (p. 2). Before the encompassing terms of Racialized Sexual Discrimination was used by the researchers, similar terms such as “sexual racism”, “racialized partner discrimination” or “romantic segregation” were used to describe the phenomenon (Callander et al., 2012; Callander et al., 2015; Callander et al., 2016). Callander and colleagues (2012) reported a phenomenon in which racialized preference are often made public mostly by white men and predominantly directed towards men of colour on their online dating profiles. These comments are diverse in the way they are expressed with either exclusionary comments (e.g., no Asian) or inclusionary comments (e.g., white only). Race-based exclusionary comments were also found in Rigg’s (2013) study where the researcher found pervasive anti-Asian sentiments on more than 400 out of 60,082 dating profile in Australia. These exclusion comments are categorized as “racism constructed as a personal preference”, “the construction of Asian men are not real men”, “the construction of Asian men as a type” and “saying ‘sorry’ is enough to excuse racist sentiments”. Though the number of profiles where anti-Asian sentiments were presented are relatively small compared to the number of profiles examined in total, the potential psychological toll this can have on the Asian users who came across these profiles are unquestionable. Callander and colleagues (2016), in exploring the phenomenon of sexual racism further, conducted a qualitative study which aimed to describe the phenomenon in depth. Using thematic analysis, sexual racism was conceptualized as

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someone's preference, their prejudice and their intention. The experience one have with sexual racism are expression of race-based stereotypes, being rejected or excluded on the basis of one's race (subtle sexual racism) or harassed on the basis of one's race (blatant sexual racism). Lastly, coping strategies in the face of sexual racism are by disconnecting themselves from the platform, becoming adapted and accepting of the experience or confrontational. The researchers' work are important in defining, understanding the phenomenon and building a framework where the impact of sexual racism on mental wellbeing of gay/bisexual men of colour can be examined.

Driving the phenomenon of Racialized Sexual Discrimination is the Eurocentric beauty ideals which primarily results from the influence of the media (Brennan et al., 2013; Wade & Harper, 2019). Here, whiteness has come to be the defining characteristic of physical attractiveness (Crosby & McKeage, 2013). Possessing a light complexion, straight hair or having thinner lips are stereotypical standards of beauty which forces women of colour to face the stereotype that they are unattractive and juxtaposes this cohort against Caucasian women (Crosby & McKeage, 2013). In the population of women of colour, Eurocentric beauty ideals has a strong impact on the wellbeing of this cohort with research reported increased instances of eating disorder (Wood et al, 2010), body dissatisfaction (Fredrick et al., 2016; Yokoyama, 2008) and depressive symptoms (Hall, 1995; Patton, 2006; Robinson-Moore, 2008). Given the dominance of Eurocentric beauty ideals, it is clear that regardless of gender, whiteness is perceived as superior, and people of colour are seen as less attractive and inferior (Wade & Harper, 2019). Indeed, Han (2008) reported the feeling of inadequacy among the population of Asian Pacific Islander gay men where Eurocentric displays of physical beauty are constantly praised and worshiped. Perceiving whiteness as the standard of beauty was also one of the dominant themes emerged from Brennan and colleagues' (2013) study. It was noted that the media overrepresent white bodies which



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pressures ethno-racialized gay/bisexual men into internalizing the white bodies, along with other dominating characteristics associated with the white bodies that are portrayed by the media such as having a muscular and lean body, as the standard of beauty. This was shown to be more problematic for gay/bisexual men when it was found that this cohort feel more under-pressured compared to heterosexual men to achieve these bodily characteristics (Carper et al., 2010). Brennan and colleagues' (2013) study also highlighted the dominance of sexual stereotyping, sexual objectification, fetishization, and idealization of the bodies of gay/bisexual men of colour on the basis of their race in determining the outcome of interaction between men who have sex with men (MSM). The authors argued that ethno-racialized gay/bisexual men are confronted with body image ideals that either erase their presence or seek to objectified and fetishize them in ways that are degrading and dehumanizing, and that this could have a detrimental impact on the well-being of this cohort. In the context of online partner seeking, Paul and colleagues' (2010) study's participants reported the same experience where race and ethnicity were said to be powerful factors in determining outcomes of interaction on online-dating platforms. Racialized interactions were said to be pervasive ranging from simple preferences for race (inclusionary) to outright discriminatory interactions (exclusionary). Participants also experienced race-based sexual objectification which results from raced based sexual stereotyping with some feel that they were constantly being devalued and rejected on the basis of their race. Race-based sexual stereotyping, hence, could be accounted for as another driving factor of the RSD phenomenon (Wade & Harper, 2019).

It was shown that 100 milliseconds is the amount of time one needs to make up their mind about someone they meet for the first time (Todorov et al., 2015). The process of social categorization help one categorize the world around them more quickly in order to live more efficiently, but this process is often biased and disadvantaging to the targets of one's

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perception. Race-based sexual stereotyping is an example of this. Black men are often described as being promiscuous, aggressive, dominant, possess a large penis and be the “insertive” partner (top) during sex. Asian men are attributed with having small penis, being the receiving partner (bottom) during sex, being submissive, reserved and prefer vanilla sex. Latino men are believed to be “passionate” and “hot” during sex (Calabrese et al., 2015; Calabrese et al., 2018; Newcomb et al., 2015, Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004; Wilson et al., 2009). McKeown and colleagues (2010) adopted an intersectional approach to explore the experience of gay/bisexual Black and Asian men living in the UK. In regard to RSD, it was reported by the participants that they have experienced instances of being discriminated, objectified, or excluded. However, these behaviours are often manifested in a more subtle rather than straightforward manner. Asian men were reported to mostly be excluded by potential sexual partners and often seen as undesirable or asexual, whereas Black men often experience eroticization of their body and felt like they are only worth as being sexual partner rather than long-term relationship partners. Both Asian and Black participants in McKeown and colleagues’ (2010) study expressed their desire for white men and see “Whiteness” as “the standard of beauty”. Wade and Harper (2019) argued that race-based sexual stereotyping influences the dynamic of interaction in an online dating venue which often result in sexual objectification (e.g., because you are black so you should have a large penis) or lessen the desirability of one race toward people of another race (e.g., because you are black, so you are thug, uneducated and promiscuous) which could have potential consequences on the health and well-being of gay/bisexual men of colour.

Past research in the area of Racialized Sexual Discrimination has shown negative impact this experience has on gay/bisexual men of colour. Chae and Yoshikawa (2008) examined Perceived Group Devaluation and HIV-risk behaviour among Asian gay/bisexual men. It was found that those who perceived that their racial group is devalued by white gay

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men scored higher on depressive mood inventory questionnaire and higher levels of Unprotected Anal Intercourse (UAI). Souleymanov and colleagues (2018), using multivariable logistic regression to examine the relationship between racism, sexual objectification and alcohol use among a group of 369 gay/bisexual men of colour, found that being exposed to racial discrimination and sexual objectification associate significantly with alcohol use disorders. The authors called for more consideration of racial discrimination's potential negative impact and advocated for development of interventions to target alcohol disorder, harm reduction and HIV prevention among this population. Han and colleagues (2015) examined the relationship between sexual racism and unprotected sex in gay/bisexual men of colour. Result found that Asian men are subjected to the highest level of distress compared to men from other racial groups. This potentially due to the frequent rejection by White men since Asian men are those who most actively seek for white sexual partners (Paul et al., 2010). Bhambhani and colleagues (2018) examine Psychological Flexibility- the ability to engaged in a valued chosen behaviour even in the presents of distress, as a mediator in the experience of Sexual Racism and Psychological Distress among gay/bisexual men of colour. It was found that sexual racism positively correlates with psychological distress and psychological flexibility mediate this relationship.

The term “personal preference” has widely been used as a non-racialized justification of RSD (Wade & Harper, 2019). The question of whether this phenomenon is just a matter of preference has been subjected to examination. Robinson (2015) conducted 15 semi-structure interviews and content analysis on 100 online dating profile in the United States. It was found that on many of these profiles, Black men are most often excluded. The theme ‘personal preference’ emerged regularly as a justification of exclusion. The researcher concluded that ‘personal preference’ is the new face of racism in online sexual networking. Callander and colleagues (2016), using a 79-item survey, examined the use of online partner seeking in

terms of racism and attitude around race. It was found that majority of participants were tolerant towards racism in online dating venues providing the reason that there is little they can do about it. The researchers called into question the notion of preference and argued that these preferences reflect racism in a sexualized context. Wilson and colleagues (2009), in examining the pervasive topic of sexual stereotyping. The researchers argued that sexual stereotyping facilitates decision making in terms of choosing one's sexual partners. As a result, choosing sexual partners is a racialized act in nature. Regardless of inconclusive arguments and opinions as to whether racism happens in online partner seeking, the most important question here is how these experiences are internalized by those who are targeted and the effect these experiences can have on their mental well-being (Wade & Harper, 2019).

### ***1.2. RSD and mental health framework***

Wade and Harper (2019) proposed a framework to systematically examine the effect of RSD on mental health outcomes. This framework is based on the transactional model of stress and coping (Folkman, 1997; Folkman et al., 1986 & Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). According to this model, one goes through two consecutive stages of appraising the stress, in this case RSD. The first stage is Primary Appraisal which is one's evaluation of the severity of the stress. This will help one determine if the stress poses a threat and influence one's strategies to cope with the stress. The second stage is called secondary appraisal where resources which can be useful in dealing with the stress are evaluated. This determines one's capacity in coping with the stressor. Appraisal of the stressor then leads to coping efforts. These often come in the form of problem-solving coping or emotion-based coping (Folkman, 1997, Wenzel, 2002). Wade and Harper (2019) argued that emotion-based coping is used predominantly in the case of RSD since there is little which can be done in terms of the behaviours of people in online settings. In order for the form of emotion-based coping to be useful, it is required that one has the skills to regulate their emotions effectively. The two

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major emotional-based coping strategies that have been particularly studied are expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal (Gross & John, 2003). Specifically, expressive suppression are an effort to hide, deny or avoid ongoing emotion-expressive behaviour whereas cognitive reappraisal is defined as an attempt to try to reinterpret an emotion-evoking stimulus or situation in ways that alters its meaning and changes its impact on one's mental state (Gross & John, 2003). Expressive suppression has consistently been shown to have negative impact on psychological outcomes when Cognitive Reappraisal has been shown for its positive effects (Brans et al., 2013; Gross & Levenson, 1993; Mauss et al., 2005; Moore et al., 2007; Martin & Dahlen, 2005, Wenzel et al., 2002). Considering that RSD is perceived and interpreted via a cognitive pathway (Wade & Harper, 2019), the pathway in which RSD can have an impact on mental health outcomes and the mediating effect of emotion-coping strategies such as Expressive Suppression and Cognitive Reappraisal in this pathway hence needs to be examined.

Wade and Harper's (2019) review also pointed out potential confounding factors which could possibly account some degree of variance of mental health among gay/bisexual men of colour. These are self-perceived sexual attractiveness, perceived rejection, internalized racism, frequency of online partner seeking and relationship status. One's positive perception of their attractiveness, which includes body image, self-perceived physical attractiveness and self-perceived sexual attractiveness, is associated with better mental health (Bale & Archer, 2013; Brennan et al., 2013; Duncan et al., 2015; Ehlinger & Blashill, 2016). In the context of finding sexual partner online, self-perceive sexual attractiveness is argued to be the most relevant factor to be considered (Wade, 2000; Wade & Harper; 2019). One's level of sensitivity being rejected is positively associated with poorer mental health (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Nolan et al., 2003). Rejection is a component of RSD (Wade & Harper, 2019) hence one's sensitivity to rejection could affect one's coping

and mental well-being when they encounter rejection. Internalized racism refers to the experience where members of a racial group devalue their own memberships and see other racial groups to be of superiority (Campon & Carter, 2015). Internalized racism is associated with poor mental health (Szymanski & Gupta, 2009; Taylor et al., 1991; Williams, 1999) and is well related in the experience of RSD in the case where people of colour perpetuate RSD to members of their own racial group. As a result, it is also necessary to take this factor into consideration. The relationship between relationship status and mental wellbeing is unclear (Wade & Harper, 2019). There is little evidence suggest that gay/bisexual men of colour share their experience of racism with the context of RSD with their friends and family. However, there is evidence that conversations between partners of a non-monogamous relationship about their sexual experience can have a positive impact on their well-being (Mogilski et al., 2015). As a result, being in a relationship can provide protection against the impact of RSD. Frequency of online partner seeking can also influence the likelihood of someone encountering RSD and in turns influencing one's mental health. The Covid-19 pandemic makes this factor more relevant because of its impact on the already limited socializing venues for gay/bisexual men and its contribution to the surge in the use of social media and online networking in order to maintain as well as making new social relationships (Holloway et al., 2021, Brennan et al., 2020). There is an extensive amount of literature done in examining the relationship between time spent looking for sexual partners and risk of contracting HIV (Bauermeister, 2012; Bauermeister et al., 2011; Bolding et al., 2005; Mustanski, 2007). However, little has been done in examining the role time spent looking for sexual partners online plays in mental health outcomes of gay/bisexual men of colour (Wade & Harper, 2019).

### **1.3     *Rationale***

Research in the LGBTI area in Ireland are limited. The biggest study conducted so far namely the LGBT Ireland report (Higgin et al., 2016) indicated that young LGBTI people living in Ireland (14 – 25 years of age) are those whose mental health are at the lowest compared to other age groups with high rates of mental disorders, self-harm and suicide. However, there is little generalizability one can make to the population of young gay/bisexual men of colour in Ireland. To the researcher's knowledge, research dedicated to young gay/bisexual men of colour in Ireland as well as other part of Europe is even more limited if not entirely absent. There has not been any studies conducted in Ireland to examine the effect of RSD or any other similar phenomenon on mental health outcomes among this marginalized population considering the similarity in cultural and racial diversity this area is to the United States and Australia where the phenomenon of RSD has been primarily reported. Most studies conducted in the population of gay/bisexual men of colour up to date were carried out in the area of HIV/AIDS preventions (Wade & Harper, 2019). Provided that gay/bisexual men of colour have multiple minority statuses (e.g., racial, ethnic and sexual orientation) and the context of online sexual partner seeking where racism and sexuality intersect, the need for researchers to delve deeper into the phenomenon of RSD and mental health outcomes among the population of gay/bisexual men colour has become more and more important. Moreover, research in the area of RSD are largely qualitative (Wade & Harper, 2019). Wade and Harper (2020), based on the evidence of previous exploratory studies originated a framework to examine the pathway where RSD's impact on mental health outcomes can be explored. A quantitative scale was also developed for the purpose of measuring RSD and increasing generalizability and a pilot study has been carried out to validate the scale using the sample of young black gay/bisexual men (Wade & Harper, 2020). Provided that RSD is a phenomenal that affect not only the population of black gay/bisexual men but also gay/bisexual men of colour in general, the need to carry out a study to examine

the effect of RSD on mental health outcomes of gay/bisexual men of colour as well as the mediating factors that influence this relationship becomes increasingly prominent in an effort to develop appropriate interventions to protect the well-being of this marginalized population.

#### **1.4 Aims**

The study aims to investigate the effect of RSD and other covariates as shown in previous literature on level of happiness in the population of gay/bisexual men of colour, assessing whether different racial groups are affected differently by RSD as well as examining the role Emotional Regulation plays in mediating the relationship between RSD and Psychological Wellbeing in order to advocate for development of appropriate interventions to protect this marginalized population from adverse mental health outcomes. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions: (i) Are age, racial background, relationship status, time spent looking for partner online, self-perceived sexual attractiveness (SSAS), internalize racism (AROS), perceived rejection (ARSQ) and Emotional Regulation components (CR & ES) significant predictors of Happiness in the population of gay/bisexual men of colour?; (ii) Does each of RSD components namely White Superiority (WS), White Rejection (WR), Same-race Rejection (SR), White Physical Objectification (WO) predicts Happiness?; and if yes then (iii) Does ERQ's components namely Cognitive Reappraisal (CR) and Expressive Suppression (ES) mediate the relationship between RSD and Happiness?; and (iv) Is there a difference in Happiness between Asian, Latino and Black gay/bisexual men of colour cohorts?.

#### **1.5 Hypotheses**

It is hypothesized that:

(H1) Level of Happiness is predicted by age, racial background, sexual orientation, relationship status, time spent looking for partner online, self-perceived sexual attractiveness



(SSAS), internalize racism (AROS), perceived rejection (ARSQ) and Emotional Regulation (ERQ)

(H2) There is a relationship between each RSD components and Happiness

(H3) The relationships between RSD and Happiness is mediated by Cognitive Reappraisal (CR) and Expressive Suppression (ES).

(H4) There is a difference in Happiness score between 3 cohorts of Asian, Latino and Black gay/bisexual men.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 *Participants*

The sample for the current study consisted of 31 gay/bisexual men (Gay: n= 24; Bisexual: n= 6; Gay/bisexual but prefer not to specify: n= 1). Participants came from different social background (e.g., students, doctors, IT technician, etc). Participants' age ranged from 19 to 30 years, with an average age of 26.29 (SD = 2.72). To be eligible, participants need to meet the following criteria: (i) be 18 – 30 years of age (ii) identify as gay, bisexual, queer, same-gender-loving, or another non-heterosexual identity, or report having had sexual contact with a man in the last 3 months; (iii) identify as Black, Asian, Latino or any racial/ethnic groups apart from White (iv) report having used a website or mobile app to find male partners for sexual activity in the last 3 months; and (v) reside in Ireland. The study implemented a nonprobability, convenience, and snowball sampling strategies to recruit participants. Given the limited time frame and no funding, this sampling method appears to be the most suitable for the use of the current study (Howitt & Cramer, 2020).

### 2.2 *Power Analysis*

G\*Power3.1 was used to determine an appropriate sample size of for the study. An F test for a fixed model linear multiple regression with an R square deviation from 0 was selected. Sample size was computed given the power level, effect size and alpha level, and

number of predictors ( $N=9$ ). A medium effect size was chosen (Cohen, 1977). Power level was set at .80 and standard alpha level of .05 was chosen for the analysis. The ideal sample size calculated for the study is 114.

### 2.3 *Materials*

The study questionnaire was comprised of demographic questions and 6 scales combined using Google Forms. The demographic questions were administered to gain a general profile of the participants in this study, questions regarding their age, sexual orientation, racial background, relationship status, occupation and time spent looking for partner online were included for this section. The 6 scales utilized in the study include:

**Racialized Sexual Discrimination Scale.** Racialized Sexual Discrimination Scale developed by Wade and Harper (2021) is a self-reported measure designed to capture the experiences of RSD. The scales consist of 60 individual items that capture 30 unique experiences. Each unique RSD experience has two corresponding items: one that assesses the effect (i.e., to what degree the experience has a negative effect on someone) and another that assesses the frequency (i.e., how often someone encounters the experience). Experiences may also occur in one of two contexts: partner browsing (i.e., viewing user profiles on mobile apps/websites) and partner negotiation (i.e., written exchanges in communication on mobile apps/websites). All items within the partner browsing context are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, for both the effect (0 = 'Strongly disagree;' 1 = 'Disagree;' 2 = 'Neutral;' 3 = 'Agree;' 4 = 'Strongly agree') and the frequency (0 = 'Never;' 1 = 'Some of the time;' 2 = 'Half of the time;' 3 = 'Most of the time;' 4 = 'All of the time') items. All items within the partner negotiation context are measured on a 6-point Likert scale, for both the effect (0 = 'I have not contacted this group;' 1 = 'Strongly disagree;' 2 = 'Disagree;' 3 = 'Neutral;' 4 = 'Agree;' 5 = 'Strongly agree') and the frequency (0 = 'I have not contacted this group;' 1 =

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‘Never;’ 2 = ‘Some of the time;’ 3 = ‘Half of the time;’ 4 = ‘Most of the time;’ 5 = ‘All of the time’) items.

In examining RSD in the current study, the researcher used 4 of out 7 RSD subscales namely White Superiority (WS), White Rejection (WR), same-race rejection (SR) and White-physical Objectification (WO) subscales provided that these scales have the highest reliability (.865 - .913) (Wade & Harper, 2021). Also, these scales represent the most salient experiences gay/bisexual men of colour encounter whilst looking for partners online (Wade & Harper, 2021). In the current study, the Cronbach ‘s alpha level for the WS, WR, SR, WO subscales range from very good to acceptable ( $\alpha = .86; .84; .75; \& .60$  respectively).

**The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHS).** The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) is developed from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle et al., 1989), The questionnaire consists of 29 items using a 6-point Linkert scale ranging from “‘Strongly Agree” to “‘Strongly Disagree”’. Scores are calculated by adding up score of both normal and reversed score items and then divided by 29. The lower the average score, the lower psychological wellbeing reported. The test constructors report an internal reliability of 0.90 and a seven-week test-retest reliability of 0.78. For the current student, the Cronbach ‘s alpha level for the scale in the current study is excellent ( $\alpha = .93$ )

**Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS).** Participants’ self-reported internalized racism was collected in order to establish internalized racism score. The researcher used the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS) (Campon & Carter, 2015). The mean of the scale’s 24 items was calculated to generate a mean score, ranging from 1 to 7 (Campon & Carter, 2015). Participants rated the degree to which they agreed with a set statements, such as, ‘I feel critical about my racial group’; ‘I don’t really identify with my racial group’s values and beliefs’; ‘People of my race shouldn’t be so sensitive about race/racial matters.’ Each item was measured using a 7-point Likert scale containing the following

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anchor values: 1 = 'Strongly disagree;' 7 = 'Strongly agree.' Higher scores indicate higher self-reported levels of internalized racism. The Cronbach 's alpha of the scale for the current study is excellent ( $\alpha = .95$ )

**Rejection Sensitivity Adult Questionnaire (ARSQ).** The A-RSQ is a 9-item self-report measure developed to examine one's expectations of rejection and rejection anxiety in young adults (Berenson et al., 2013). Participants completed nine hypothetical interpersonal scenarios where rejection is a possible outcome (e.g., "You ask your parents or other family members to come to an occasion important to you"). Participants then are asked to use a 6-point scale to show their level of anxiety about the possibility of being rejected and to report their perceived expectations of being. Scores are calculated by multiplying rejection expectancies by rejection concerns to index anxious rejection expectancies, which served as the item score. Mean score of the nine items is computed to get the total score with higher score indicates more RS. The Cronbach 's alpha of the scale for the current study is very good ( $\alpha = .79$ )

**Self-perceived Sexual Attractiveness Questionnaire (SSAS).** Self-Perceived Sexual Attractiveness Scale (SPSA) was used to collect data on the degree to which participants feel that they are sexually attractive, scores were calculated by computing the mean of 6 items of the scale to create a mean index, ranging from 1 to 7 (Amos & McCabe, 2015). Participants were asked to show the degree to which they feel in congruence with a series of statements, such as, 'I believe I can attract sexual partners' or 'I feel that others may perceive that a sexual relationship with me would be sexually fulfilling.' Items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 = 'Strongly disagree'; to 7 = 'Strongly agree'. Higher scores indicate higher self-reported levels of SPSA. The Cronbach 's alpha for the scale in the current study is excellent ( $\alpha = .90$ )

**Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ).** The researcher used the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2002) to examine the frequency with which people use cognitive reappraisal or expressive suppression to regulate their emotion in the face negative emotion. The questionnaire includes two subscales that measure the use of reappraisal or suppression using a 7-point scale. The reappraisal subscale (I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in) consists of 6 items and the suppression subscale (I control my emotions by not expressing them) consists of 4 items. Previous studies have shown acceptable internal consistencies that are slightly higher for the reappraisal than for the suppression subscale (Gross & John, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale for the current study is very good ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

#### **2.4 Design**

The study implemented a cross-sectional research design and adopted a quantitative approach. For each research question, a correlational, within-participant design was incorporated, with PVs including Age, Relationship Status, Racial Background, Time spent looking for partners online, AROS, SSAS, AROS, CR, ES, WS, WR, SR, WO and CV including OHS (see "Analytic Approach" section below for further details).

#### **2.5 Procedure**

Participants completed the survey online using Google Forms. The link to google forms were distributed throughout social media and email between December and February 2022. The survey included an information page, where participants were informed of the aims and purpose of the study, participants' right and what the study involves. Post survey debriefing sheet was also included where the researcher and supervisor's contact information, and contacts of helpline services are provided. Only by consenting to participate could the participants begin to fill out the survey. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Once submitted, data are provided to the researcher in the form of anonymous data.

Responses were saved as Microsoft Excel .xlsx file which was then converted into IBM SPSS Statistic .sav file.

## **2.6 *Analytic Approach***

For the 1<sup>st</sup> research question, a multiple regression analysis will be employed to examine whether Age, Racial Background, Relationship Status, Time Spent Looking for Partner Online, AROS, SSAS, AROS, CR and ES (PVs) significant predictors of OHS (CV).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> research questions, using 4 hierarchical regression models, addressed whether each RSD component namely WS, WR, SR, WO (PVs) significantly predict (OHS) (CV) after controlling significant predictors of OHS as a result of research question 1. ERQ components would be excluded from the analysis in case they are significant predictors of OHS. This is because the researcher intended to use the regression model from the 2<sup>nd</sup> research question as the first analysis for the 3<sup>rd</sup> research question where the mediation effect of ERQ components namely Cognitive Reappraisal (CR) and Expressive Suppressive (ES) on the relationship between each RSD components and OHS are examined based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis model.

Specifically, in regards of the 3<sup>rd</sup> research question, mediation analysis model was only going to be examined in case RSD components (PVs) significantly predict OHS (CV) as a result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> research question as this is step 1 of the mediation analysis. If RSD components significantly predict OHS then the researcher would need to run 2 more regression models. The first one use ERQ components as the CVs in the regression equation and RSD components as PVs. Next, use both ERQ and RSD components as PVs to see whether the model predict OHS. All 3 models controlled for significant predictors of OHS as a result of the 1<sup>st</sup> research question (apart from ERQ components if applicable). If all 3 models are significant and if the effect of RSD on OHS controlling for ERQ was zero then ERQ components completely mediates the RSD-OHS relationship. If all 3 models are

significant and if the effect of RSD on OHS controlling for ERQ is reduced then ERQ components partially mediates the RSD-OHS relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Lastly, research question 4 examined whether there is a significant difference in OHS (DV) between 3 racial groups (IV) of Asian, Black and Latino gay/bisexual men of colour using ANOVA analysis.

In terms of collinearity diagnostics, to ensure that the 9 predictor variables of the first research question did not show high multicollinearity, the researcher ran 5 multiple regression models where each of the continuous predicting variables are used as criterions variables and the rest as predicting variables. Across these four multiple regression models, the tolerance ranged from 0.464 to 0.846 and the variance inflation factor ranged from 1.182 to 2.154, indicating acceptable levels of multicollinearity (Daoud, 2017).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total number of 31 participants took part in the study. Frequencies for Sexual Orientation, Racial Background, Time spent looking for partners online and Relationship Status are presented in Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Age, AROS, SSAS, AROS, ERQ (CR & ES), & RSD (WS, WR, SR, WO) presented in Table 2.

**Table 1.**

*Table of Descriptive Statistics- Categorical variables*

Variable	Frequency	Valid %
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		
Gay	24	77.4
Bisexual	6	19.4
Other	1	3.2

## RACIALIZED SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND HAPPINESS

**Racial Background**

Asian	21	67.7
Latino	6	19.4
Black	4	12.9

**Time spent looking for partners online**

Once a month or less	1	3.2
2-3 times a month	5	16.1
About once a week	5	16.1
2-6 times a week	8	25.8
About once a day	4	12.9
More than once a day	8	25.8

**Relationship Status**

Single	27	87.1
In a relationship	4	12.9

**Table 2.***Table of Descriptive Statistic- Numerical variables*

Variable	<i>M</i> [95% CI]	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age	26.29 [25.29- 27.29]	2.72	19- 30
WS	17.16 [12.08- 22.23]	13.83	.5- 6.56
WR	34.58 [26.87- 42.28]	21.01	4.0- 90.0
SR	28.71 [23.75- 33.66]	13.52	8.0- 60.0
WO	17.64 [12.95- 22.33]	12.78	2.0- 55.0
CR	30.96 [28.30- 33.63]	7.25	12.0- 42.0
ES	17.48 [15.09- 19.87]	6.52	6.0 – 28.0



## RACIALIZED SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND HAPPINESS

AROS	3.45 [2.94- 3.95]	1.37	1.0 -7.0
SSAS	31.83 [28.83 -34.84]	8.18	15.0 -42.0
ARSQ	8.56 [7.15- 9.98]	3.84	2.0- 22.11

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### 3.2 *Inferential Statistics*

#### 3.2.1 *Research question 1*

A multiple regression was carried out to investigate whether age, racial background, relationship status, sexual orientation, time spent looking for partner online, SSAS, AROS, ARSQ, CR and ES are significant predictors of OHS. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 71.4% of the variance of OHS ( $R^2 = .714$ ) and that the model was a significant predictor of OHS,  $F(10, 19) = 4.74$ ,  $p = .002$ . Upon closer examination, there were 3 significant predictors namely ES, CR and ARSQ. ES was the strongest predictor of OHS ( $\beta = -.59$ ,  $p = .005$ ) which is followed by CR ( $B = .42$ ,  $p = .01$ ) and ARSQ ( $\beta = -.32$ ,  $p = .04$ ). The contribution of each predictor variable to OHS are reported in Table 3. The result indicated that the stronger one perceived that they are rejected by others, the less happy the person would be, the more one use the emotional regulation strategy of CR, the better it would have an effect for their happiness, and lastly the more one employed the emotional regulation strategy of ES, the worse it would be for their happiness.

A post hoc test was conducted to determine the study achieved power using G\*Power 3.1. Effect size ( $f^2 = 2.49$ ), significant level ( $\alpha = .05$ ), sample size ( $N = 31$ ) and number of predictors ( $N = 10$ ) was entered into the model. Despite small sample size, the study achieved high power ( $1 - \beta = .99$ ) which indicates that the result yielded from the analysis is reliable.

#### **Table 3.**

*Multiple Regression of Predictors of Perceived Stress Among Psychology Graduate Students*

Variable	$R^2$	$B$	$SE$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
	.714					
Age		-.083	.049	-.255	-1.704	.105
Sexual Orientation		.194	.329	.089	.588	.563
Racial Background		-.254	.198	-.206	-1.282	.215
Relationship Status		-.603	.365	-.231	-1.654	.115
Time Spent		-.075	.090	-.129	-.830	.417
ARSQ		-.076	.036	-.329	-2.130	.046
SSAS		.022	.017	.206	1.311	.206
AROS		-.093	.109	-.144	-.857	.402
CR		.052	.020	.424	2.586	.018
ES		-.081	.026	-.590	-3.140	.005

*Note:* Dependent Variable: OHS, n= 31

**3.2.2 Research question 2**

Four separate hierarchical multiple regressions were used to assess the ability of WS, WR, SR, WO to predict OHS after controlling for the influence of ARSQ. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. ARSQ were entered at step 1, explaining 25.8 % of the variance of OHS.

After entry of WS at step 2, the total variance explain by the model as a whole was 26.4%,  $F(2, 28) = 5.01$ ,  $p = .004$ . WS explained an addition of 0.6% of the variance in OHS,  $R^2 \text{ change} = .006$ , and was not a significant predictor of OHS ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $p = .64$ )

After entry of WR at step 2, the total variance explain by the model as a whole was 27.0 %,  $F(2, 28) = 5.18$ ,  $p = .01$ . WR explained an addition of 1.2% of the variance in OHS,  $R^2$  change = .025, and was not a significant predictor of OHS ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p = .49$ )

After entry of SR at step 2, the total variance explain by the model as a whole was 26.4 %,  $F(2, 28) = 5.02$ ,  $p = .01$ . SR explained an addition of less than 0.6% of the variance in OHS,  $R^2$  change = .006, and was not a significant predictor of OHS ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p = .63$ ).

After entry of WO at step 2, the total variance explain by the model as a whole was 26.7 %,  $F(2, 28) = 5.09$ ,  $p = .01$ . WO explained an addition of 0.9% of the variance in OHS,  $R^2$  change = .009, and was not a significant predictor of OHS ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $p = .56$ ).

### **3.2.3 Research question 3**

This mediation analysis model was only going to be examined in case RSD components namely WS, WR, SR, WO significantly predict OHS as a result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> research question as this is step 1 of the mediation analysis. As RSD components did not significantly predict OHS, the researcher did not go forwards with the next steps of the mediation analysis.

### **3.2.4 Research question 4**

A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were racial differences in level of happiness in the face of RSD. Participants were divided into three groups according to their racial backgrounds namely Asian, Latino & Black. There was no statistically significant difference in levels of happiness for the three groups,  $F(2, 28) = .62$ ,  $p = .54$ . The effect size indicated a very small difference in level of happiness ( $\eta^2 = .004$ ).

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 General findings**

The purpose of the study is to find out what are the significant predictors of happiness in the population of gay/bisexual men of colour in the context of online partner seeking. The study focuses on the experience of RSD and the potential impact this phenomenon may have on the population of interest and also the role Emotional Regulation may play in mediating the relationship between RSD and Happiness in this population. It is also of interest for the study to find out whether there would be racial differences in level of happiness in the face of RSD. The current study is constructed using a cross-sectional research design and adopted a quantitative approach. The 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis is supported with ES, CR and ARSQ as significant predictors of Happiness. ES was found to be the strongest predictor of Happiness, followed by CR and ARSQ. ES was found to negatively correlate with Happiness, and this is consistent with previous findings where ES was found to be associated with negative impacts such as reducing positive emotional experience (Gross & Levenson, 1993; Mauss et al., 2005), increasing levels of stress (Moore et al., 2007), PTSD symptoms (Moore et al., 2007) and negative affect (e.g., sad, angry, anxious and depressed) (Brans et al., 2013). On the other hand, CR was found to be positively correlated with Happiness and this is also consistent with previous findings where CR is associated with positive impacts such as lower levels of stress (Moore et al., 2007; Martin & Dahlen, 2005), lower level of depression (Martin & Dahlen, 2005), anxiety (Martin & Dahlen, 2005), stress (Martin & Dahlen, 2005) and higher levels of positive affect (e.g., happy, relaxed) (Brans et al., 2013). Perceived Rejection was found to be associated with low level of happiness. This is also consistent with previous literature where Perceived Rejection was found to be associated with negative mental health outcomes and specifically when it happens in an intimate context (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Nolan et al., Garber, 2003). It is interesting that all significant predictors of happiness reflect that of a person's internal world or in other words their cognitive processes. Decades of research has pointed out how one's negative view of themselves and their relationship with

other could potentially lead to poor mental health outcomes. The Harvard Study of Adult Development, the nearly 80 years longitudinal study, now directed by Doctor Robert Waldinger and colleagues, revealed that good relationships, not money, fame or status, are the secret to human happiness (Harvard Study of Adult Development, 2022). Specifically, how a person perceived the quality of their relationships determines their mental health outcomes (Waldinger & Schulz, 2010; Waldinger et al., 2015). The result of the current study echoed the role one's internal world plays in determining their mental health outcomes and the importance of learning the right skill such as cognitive reappraisal and avoiding maladaptive skills such as suppression to help one keep their internal world well and healthy.

The second hypothesis was not supported, the finding suggests that in the face of online discrimination, people's happiness may not necessarily be impacted, and this could be due to several different reasons. First of all, the discrimination could be directed towards people of their race as a whole rather than the person themselves, hence the impact in the face of RSD could have been mitigated if the person is detached from their racial identity and does not find themselves identifying with the racial groups that they belong to. Indeed, despite the popular finding suggesting the link between strong racial identification and positive health outcomes (Gale et al., 2020; Lee & Ahn, 2013), some research has indicated that having strong racial identification may in fact worsen mental health outcomes in face of stressors that threaten one's identity like such as prejudice (Operario & Fiske, 2001), racial discrimination (Yoo & Lee, 2008) and perhaps as well in this case, RSD. Secondly, one might perceive that race-based sexual discrimination is acceptable considering personal preferences in sexual attractions. The argument as to whether RSD as a form of discrimination or basically just a matter of preference is still ongoing (Wade & Harper, 2019). Nonetheless, one might have to give in to the notion that the reason they get rejected or ignored could primarily have been based on the other person's sexual preference which has

nothing to do with their racial background in order to mitigate the negative effect of RSD. In other words, one would employ emotional regulation strategies such as CR or ES (Gross & John, 2003) to deny, suppress the notion of being discriminated on the basis of their race or reappraise this notion in a way that does not take a toll on their mental health. Past research has indicated the positive impact of CR and indeed, though posing negative impact on one's mental health outcomes if employed in a long-term manner, ES have been shown to have adaptive results when used in short term as one may be able to temporarily reduce negative emotional experience and behaviour (Campbell-Sills et al. 2006; Clark et al. 1991; Gaskell et al. 2001; Gross & John, 2003; Geraerts et al., 2006; Goldin et al., 2008; Wegner & Zanakos 1994). In the case of RSD, perhaps, if instances of exposure to RSD is not high like that of the current study, utilizing either of these emotional regulation strategies in the long-run could perhaps have had positive impact for gay/bisexual men of colour in mitigating the impact of RSD. Thirdly, the distance created by online environments, along with the use of emotional regulation strategies might reduce the impact discrimination might have compared to when RSD is experience in a face-to-face context. Specifically, some options on different online dating platforms allow the participants to stay anonymous (Wilson et al., 2009).

Gay/bisexual minorities could then learn to distance themselves from the discrimination and choose not to engage with instances of discrimination or block the discriminators hence reducing the emotional burden one might have to deal with compared to when discrimination happens face-to-face (Choi et al., 2011). Beside disconnecting themselves from instances of discrimination, one might choose to dismiss the discrimination by viewing it as a commentary upon the perpetrator rather than as a statement about themselves (e.g., I didn't see that it's my problem, it is their problems), coming to pity the perpetrator (e.g., I feel sorry for him that he feel that way) or frame the discrimination within the broader societal context especially when there is not much one can do to change the situation (e.g., It is a sickness of

society really) (Choi et al., 2011). Fourthly, one might get so accustomed to such racial discrimination that they have become desensitized and come to accept that treatment as part of the online dating environment. Research in the area of violence has shown consistent result in the trend where increased exposure to television, video games or real-life violence increases level of desensitization to future violence (Cline et al., 1973; Englehardt et al., 2011; Funk et al., 2004; Rule et al., 1986, Thomas et al., 1997). As a result of desensitization to violence, one's natural responses to violent stimuli, their empathy and sympathy for the victims are reduced (Linz et al., 1988; Mullin & Linz, 1995). One might wonder the link between frequent exposure to RSD and desensitization to the phenomenon and as a result internalizing and getting accustomed to the phenomenon that it no longer has an impact on one's psychological outcomes. Lastly, one's frequency of exposure to instances of RSD could play a role in how one is impacted by the phenomenon, in the current study, the frequency in which participants experience RSD is around "some of the time". Not being exposed to RSD frequently enough could be another explanation as to why participants were not significantly impacted by the phenomenon.

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis was also not supported. Past research has indicated that Asian men tend to mostly be attracted to white men (Paul et al., 2010). Asian men hence would be more inclined to search for white partners online and as a result are more susceptible to instances of discrimination (Paul et al., 2010). This, in turn, poses more negative mental health outcomes for this racial group. However, the current study found no significant difference in the level of happiness between 3 racial groups. It is suspected that the sample size is too small to detect any true and significant differences in OHS score of the 3 racial groups.

#### **4.2     *Limitation and Future Research***

The current study has a number of limitations. Firstly, the study utilized self-report measures which is susceptible to social desirability bias. Participants might not want to admit the actual impact RSD might have on them and as a result might not be able to report on their experienced of RSD as accurately as they should. Secondly, the use of cross-sectional research makes it not possible to draw causal relationship between the variables in the study. Thirdly, the study failed to capture the RSD phenomenon fully. Though RSD is a phenomenon that is often encountered online, it could also be experienced in a face-to-face context. This study, however, was not able to capture RSD in a face-to-face context where it could also contribute significantly to one's mental health outcomes. Thirdly, RSD is a newly developed scale which has not been subject to extensive psychometric testing as well as confirmatory factor analysis hence the result yielded from the current study must be interpreted and generalized with extra caution. Last but not least, the fourth limitation concerns the study sample size. Due to the limited time-frame and no-funding, the researcher only managed to recruit a modest number of participants. Though the study still manage to achieve the power it needs, a bigger sample size would have been better to ensure the reliability and generalizability of the study.

Future research should continue to examine the relationship between RSD and mental health outcomes. It will be of benefit for future research to have larger sample sizes, longitudinal approach would also be good to in establishing causal relationships between variables. Continuing the work to refine the RSD scale would also be of benefit to ensure the validity and reliability of this measure for future research. Moreover, comparing the impact of RSD experienced in an online context and RSD experienced in a face-to-face context would perhaps be of interest to researchers to find out whether RSD can impact gay/bisexual men of colour differently depending on where they encounter the phenomenon.



In conclusion, the current study found that emotional regulation strategies and perceived rejection were significant predictors of happiness and there were no significant association between RSD and happiness. The study's results indicate that experiences of racialized sexual discrimination in online dating do not influence level of happiness in young gay/bisexual men of colour. The results also indicate that emotional regulation strategies are effective in promoting happiness in the face of RSD and the used of these strategies should be encouraged across online partner seeking platforms to mitigate any potential impacts that RSD might have on mental health outcomes. Research in the area of RSD is largely limited hence more research are needed in order to understand the potential impact this phenomenon may have on the population of gay/bisexual men of colour.

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**Appendix A****Screening Sheet**

Dear Participant,

My name is Hau Nguyen, and currently I am working on an exciting project as part of my dissertation for my bachelor's degree in National College of Ireland (NCI). Thank you very much for your interest in taking part in the research project. There are certain criteria you need to meet in order to be eligible for the study. Please tick the box if you:

- ☐ Are 18 – 30 years old.
- ☐ Identify as gay, bisexual, queer, same-gender-loving, or another non-heterosexual identity, or report having had sexual contact with a man in the last 3 months.
- ☐ Identify as Black, Asian, Latino or any racial/ethnic groups apart from White
- ☐ Report having used a website or mobile app to find male partners for sexual activity in the last 3 months.
- ☐ Reside in Ireland.

## Appendix B

### The Information and Consent Sheet.

Racialized Sexual Discrimination (RSD) in Online partner seeking and Happiness among young gay/bisexual men of colour living in Ireland.

#### Information about the study.

This study is being carried out by a student from National College of Ireland (NCI). It is a final year project in their undergraduate. The results collected from this survey will only be used in their project. It will be stored securely. It will only be viewed by the student, their supervisor and the examinations board of NCI.

#### The Nature of the Study.

The study aims to investigate the relationship between Racialized Sexual Discrimination on Psychological Wellbeing in gay/bisexual men of colour as well as the role Emotional Regulation has in mediating this relationship in order to advocate for development of interventions to protect this population from potential negative mental health outcomes.

#### Eligibility

To be eligible, participants need to meet the following criteria: (i) be 18 – 29 years of age (ii) identify as gay, bisexual, queer, same-gender-loving, or another non-heterosexual identity, or report having had sexual contact with a man in the last 3 months; (iii) identify as Black, Asian, Latino or any racial/ethnic groups apart from White (iv) report having used a website or mobile app to find male partners for sexual activity in the last 3 months; and (v) reside in Ireland.

#### Description of participant's involvement

Your participation is voluntary. If you consent to take part in this study, you will be asked to filled out some unidentifiable demographic information and 6 sets of questionnaire. These are RSD questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, Emotional Regulation Questionnaire, Self-perceived sexual attractiveness questionnaire, internalized racism questionnaire and Perceived Rejection Questionnaire. The survey takes around 35- 40 minutes to complete, and you can have the option of saving the survey and complete it at another time if you cannot complete it in one sitting.

#### Risk and discomfort

The research has taken cautious steps in minimizing the risks of the study. Nevertheless, it is still a potential that there could be some risk relate your participation. If you had negative experience that related to the content of this study, you might experience some degree of discomfort whilst thinking about them. As a participant, however, **you are permitted to stop participating at any time without penalty**. In case uncomfortable feelings and emotions arise, you can contact the researcher as well as free counselling and psychotherapy service for further help and support.

#### Confidentiality

No identifying information will be collected as part of the study. Completion of the questionnaire is anonymous. Data collected will only be accessible by the researcher, his supervisor and examination board. Since **data collected from this survey is completely anonymous, it is important to note that once you submitted the survey, data cannot be withdrawn.**

#### Contact Information

## RACIALIZED SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND HAPPINESS

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please email the researcher at x18210589@student.ncirl.ie, your query will be answered as soon as possible. The supervisor for this study is Dr April Hargreaves. You can contact her at Hargreaves.April@ncirl.ie

### **Consent agreement**

By clicking you consent, you are saying you have read all of the above information and voluntary consent to taking part in this survey.

*Do you consent to take part in this study?*

- ☐ Yes, I consent to partake in the study
- ☐ No, I do not consent to partake in the study

**Appendix C****Debriefing Sheet.**

By clicking submit, you consent to take part in this study, your answer will be saved and can no longer be changed. If you no longer wish to take part, just close the browser window and your answers will not be saved or sent to the researcher.

Thank you for participating in my final year project. I am investigating the to investigate the effect of Racialized Sexual Discrimination on Psychological Wellbeing and anxiety in gay/bisexual men of colour as well as the role Emotional Regulation has in mediating this relationship in order to advocate for development of interventions to protect this marginalized population from adverse mental health outcomes.

I am a final year psychology student in National College of Ireland. If you have any queries about this study please do not hesitate to contact me at x18210589@student.ncirl.ie or supervisor – Dr April Hargreaves at Hargreaves.April@ncirl.ie

If you feel distressed or upset by this survey, here attached is a list of services and contacts to get in touch with for further help and support:

- Samaritans: 116 123 or jo@samaritans.ie
- Jigsaw: +353 1 472 7010 or [info@jigsaw.ie](mailto:info@jigsaw.ie)
- LGBT Ireland: 1800 929 539



## Appendix D

### Oxford Happiness Scale (OHS)

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University.

#### Instructions

Below are a number of statements about happiness. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each by entering a number in the blank after each statement, according to the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

Please read the statements carefully, some of the questions are phrased positively and others negatively. Don't take too long over individual questions; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers (and no trick questions). The first answer that comes into your head is probably the right one for you. If you find some of the questions difficult, please give the answer that is true for you in general or for most of the time.

#### The Questionnaire

1. I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am. (R)
2. I am intensely interested in other people.
3. I feel that life is very rewarding.
4. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone.
5. I rarely wake up feeling rested. (R)
6. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R)
7. I find most things amusing.
8. I am always committed and involved.
9. Life is good.
10. I do not think that the world is a good place. (R) \_
11. I laugh a lot.
12. I am well satisfied about everything in my life.
13. I don't think I look attractive. (R)
14. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R)
15. I am very happy.
16. I find beauty in some things.
17. I always have a cheerful effect on others.

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18. I can fit in (find time for) everything I want to.
19. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R)
20. I feel able to take anything on.
21. I feel fully mentally alert.
22. I often experience joy and elation.
23. I don't find it easy to make decisions. (R)
24. I don't have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. (R)
25. I feel I have a great deal of energy.
26. I usually have a good influence on events.
27. I don't have fun with other people. (R)
28. I don't feel particularly healthy. (R)
29. I don't have particularly happy memories of the past. (R)

## Appendix E

## Racialized Sexual Discrimination (RSD) Scale

## WHITE SUPERIORITY SUBSCALE (16 items)

PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS: The following set of questions ask you about your experiences related to racial preferences that people say online. For the following questions, respond as though you are browsing a mobile app or website to find sexual partners.

For this first set of questions, we want to know how you feel when people suggest that White people are more preferable as sexual partners, as well as how frequently you encounter these opinions – depending on the race/ethnicity of the users making such statements. Please tell us (1) how much you agree with the following statements and (2) how often the experience has happened to you:

Variable Name	Variable Label / Survey Item	Value
WS_be_1 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> clearly state that they want to meet <b>White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = “Strongly disagree” 1 = “Somewhat disagree” 2 = “Neither agree nor disagree” 3 = “Somewhat agree” 4 = “Strongly agree”
WS_bf_1 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> clearly state that they want to meet <b>White people</b> ?	0 = “Never” 1 = “Some of the time” 2 = “Half of the time” 3 = “Most of the time” 4 = “All of the time”
WS_be_2 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>White people</b> clearly state that they want to meet <b>other White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = “Strongly disagree” 1 = “Somewhat disagree” 2 = “Neither agree nor disagree” 3 = “Somewhat agree” 4 = “Strongly agree”
WS_bf_2 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>White people</b> clearly state that they want to meet <b>other White people</b> ?	0 = “Never” 1 = “Some of the time” 2 = “Half of the time” 3 = “Most of the time” 4 = “All of the time”
WS_be_3 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> clearly state that they do NOT want to meet <b>other people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = “Strongly disagree” 1 = “Somewhat disagree” 2 = “Neither agree nor disagree” 3 = “Somewhat agree” 4 = “Strongly agree”
WS_bf_3 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> clearly state that they do NOT want to meet <b>other people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = “Never” 1 = “Some of the time” 2 = “Half of the time” 3 = “Most of the time” 4 = “All of the time”
WS_be_4 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>White people</b> clearly state that they do NOT want to meet <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = “Strongly disagree” 1 = “Somewhat disagree” 2 = “Neither agree nor disagree” 3 = “Somewhat agree” 4 = “Strongly agree”
WS_bf_4 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>White people</b> clearly state that they do NOT want to meet <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = “Never” 1 = “Some of the time” 2 = “Half of the time” 3 = “Most of the time” 4 = “All of the time”

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WS_be_5 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>White people</b> that say something mean or hurtful about <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "Strongly disagree" 1 = "Somewhat disagree" 2 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 3 = "Somewhat agree" 4 = "Strongly agree"
WS_bf_5 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>White people</b> that say something mean or hurtful about <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "Never" 1 = "Some of the time" 2 = "Half of the time" 3 = "Most of the time" 4 = "All of the time"
WS_be_6 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "Strongly disagree" 1 = "Somewhat disagree" 2 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 3 = "Somewhat agree" 4 = "Strongly agree"
WS_bf_6 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>White people</b> ?	0 = "Never" 1 = "Some of the time" 2 = "Half of the time" 3 = "Most of the time" 4 = "All of the time"
WS_be_7 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>White people</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>other White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "Strongly disagree" 1 = "Somewhat disagree" 2 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 3 = "Somewhat agree" 4 = "Strongly agree"
WS_bf_7 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from <b>White people</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>other White people</b> ?	0 = "Never" 1 = "Some of the time" 2 = "Half of the time" 3 = "Most of the time" 4 = "All of the time"

For this final set of questions, respond as though you have actually contacted a person on a mobile app or website for a sexual encounter.

WS_ne_1 (negotiation / effect)	When <b>White people</b> say something mean or hurtful about <b>my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
WS_nf_1 (negotiation / frequency)	How often do <b>White people</b> say something mean or hurtful about <b>your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"

## WHITE REJECTION SUBSCALE (4 items)

**PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:** The following set of questions ask you about your experiences around being rejected by White people online. For the following questions, respond as though you have actually contacted a person on a mobile app or website for a sexual encounter.

For this set of questions, we want to know how you feel when White people either ignore or explicitly reject you online, as well as how frequently you encounter these rejections. Please tell us (1) how much you agree with the following statements and (2) how often the experience has happened to you:

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Variable Name	Variable Label / Survey Item	Value
WR_ne_1 (negotiation / effect)	When my messages are ignored by <b>White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
WR_nf_1 (negotiation / frequency)	How often are your messages ignored by <b>White people</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"
WR_ne_2 (negotiation / effect)	When my messages are rejected by <b>White people</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
WR_nf_2 (negotiation / frequency)	How often are your messages rejected by <b>White people</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"

## SAME-RACE REJECTION SUBSCALE (4 items)

PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS: The following set of questions ask you about your experiences with being rejected by members of your same race/ethnicity online. For the following questions, respond as though you have actually contacted a person on a mobile app or website for a sexual encounter.

For this set of questions, we want to know how you feel when people of your same race/ethnicity either ignore or explicitly reject you online, as well as how frequently you encounter these rejections. Please tell us (1) how much you agree with the following statements and (2) how often the experience has happened to you

Variable Name	Variable Label / Survey Item	Value
SR_ne_1 (negotiation / effect)	When my messages are ignored by <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
SR_nf_1 (negotiation / frequency)	How often are your messages ignored by <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"
SR_ne_2 (negotiation / effect)	When my messages are rejected by <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
SR_nf_2 (negotiation / frequency)	How often are your messages rejected by <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"

## RACIALIZED SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION AND HAPPINESS

**WHITE PHYSICAL OBJECTIFICATION SUBSCALE (4 items)**

**PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS:** The following set of questions ask you about your experiences related to racial desires and expectations expressed by White people online. For the following questions, respond as though you are browsing a mobile app or website to find sexual partners.

For this first set of questions, we want to know how you feel when White people express a desire for a specific physical trait related to your race online, as well as how frequently you encounter these statements. Please tell us (1) how much you agree with the following statements and (2) how often the experience has happened to you:

Variable Name	Variable Label / Survey Item	Value
WO_be_1 (browsing / effect)	When I see profiles from <b>White people</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>people of my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "Strongly disagree" 1 = "Somewhat disagree" 2 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 3 = "Somewhat agree" 4 = "Strongly agree"
WO_bf_1 (browsing / frequency)	How often do you see profiles from White people express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>people of your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "Never" 1 = "Some of the time" 2 = "Half of the time" 3 = "Most of the time" 4 = "All of the time"

For this last set of questions, respond as though you have actually contacted a person on a mobile app or website for a sexual encounter.

WO_ne_1 (negotiation / effect)	When <b>White people</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>my race/ethnicity</b> , I have a negative reaction.	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Strongly disagree" 2 = "Somewhat disagree" 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree" 4 = "Somewhat agree" 5 = "Strongly agree"
WO_nf_1 (negotiation / frequency)	How often do <b>White people</b> express a desire for a specific physical trait related to <b>your race/ethnicity</b> ?	0 = "I have not contacted this group" 1 = "Never" 2 = "Some of the time" 3 = "Half of the time" 4 = "Most of the time" 5 = "All of the time"

**Appendix F****Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)****Instructions and Items:**

We would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is, regulate and manage) your emotions. The questions below involve two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. Although some of the following questions may seem similar to one another; they differ in important ways. For each item, please answer using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree

1. \_\_\_\_ When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I'm thinking about.
2. \_\_\_\_ I keep my emotions to myself.
3. \_\_\_\_ When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I'm thinking about.
4. \_\_\_\_ When I am feeling positive emotions, I am careful not to express them.
5. \_\_\_\_ When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.
6. \_\_\_\_ I control my emotions by not expressing them.
7. \_\_\_\_ When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.
8. \_\_\_\_ I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in.
9. \_\_\_\_ When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them.
10. \_\_\_\_ When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation

## Appendix G

### Self-perceived sexual attractiveness scale

Self-perceived sexual attractiveness. Self-rated sexual attractiveness was assessed using the Self-Perceived Sexual Attractiveness scale (SPSA; Amos & McCabe, 2015). The SPSA scale is composed of six statements, and participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Items included statements such as “I feel I am sexy” and “I believe I can attract sexual partners.” Scores were calculated by adding together responses to all six items. A high score indicated greater self-perceptions of sexual attractiveness.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Strongly disagree</b>			<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>			<b>Strongly agree</b>

Item 1: “I believe I can attract sexual partners”

Item 2: “I believe I can elicit sexual desire in other people”

Item 3: “I feel I am sexy”

Item 4: “I feel other people would want to be involved in a sexual relationship with me”

Item 5: “I am sexually attractive”

Item 6: “I feel that others may perceive that a sexual relationship with me would be sexually



## Appendix H

### Internalized racism scale

**Scoring:** The score was created using the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS), where the mean of 24 items was computed to generate an AROS mean index, ranging from 1 to 7 (Campón & Carter, 2015). Higher scores indicate higher self-reported levels of internalized racism.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Strongly disagree</b>			<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>			<b>Strongly agree</b>

1. There have been times when I have been embarrassed to be a member of my race
2. I wish I could have more respect for my racial group
3. I feel critical about my racial group
4. Sometimes I have a negative feeling about being a member of my race
5. In general, I am ashamed of members of my racial group because of the way they act
6. When interacting with other members of my race, I often feel like I don't fit in
7. I don't really identify with my racial group's values and beliefs
8. I find persons with lighter skin-tones to be more attractive
9. I would like for my children to have light skin
10. I find people who have straight and narrow noses to be more attractive
11. I prefer my children not to have broad noses
12. I wish my nose were narrower
13. Good hair (i.e. straight) is better
14. Because of my race, I feel useless at times
15. I wish I were not a member of my race
16. Whenever I think a lot about being a member of my racial group, I feel depressed
17. Whites are better at a lot of things than people of my race
18. People of my race don't have much to be proud of
19. It is a compliment to be told "You don't act like a member of your race"
20. When I look in the mirror, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see because of my race
21. I feel that being a member of my racial group is a shortcoming
22. People of my race shouldn't be so sensitive about race/racial matters
23. People take racial jokes too seriously
24. Although discrimination in America is real, it is definitely overplayed by some members of my race

## Appendix I

## Perceived rejection scale -Rejection Sensitivity RS-Adult questionnaire (A-RSQ)

The items below describe situations in which people sometimes ask things of others.

For each item, **imagine that you are in the situation, and then answer the questions that follow it.**

**1. You ask your parents or another family member for a loan to help you through a difficult financial time.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your family would want to help you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that they would agree to help as much as they can.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**2. You approach a close friend to talk after doing or saying something that seriously upset him/her.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to talk with you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me to try to work things out.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3. You bring up the issue of sexual protection with your significant other and tell him/her how important you think it is.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over his/her reaction?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would be willing to discuss our possible options without getting defensive.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**4. You ask your supervisor for help with a problem you have been having at work.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to help you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would want to try to help me out.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5. After a bitter argument, you call or approach your significant other because you want to make up.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your significant other would want to make up with you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would be at least as eager to make up as I would be.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**6. You ask your parents or other family members to come to an occasion important to you.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not they would want to come?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that they would want to come.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**7. At a party, you notice someone on the other side of the room that you'd like to get to know, and you approach him or her to try to start a conversation.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to talk with you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would want to talk with me.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**8. Lately you've been noticing some distance between yourself and your significant other, and you ask him/her if there is something wrong.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not he/she still loves you and wants to be with you?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she will show sincere love and commitment to our relationship no matter what else may be going on.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6

**9. You call a friend when there is something on your mind that you feel you really need to talk about.**

How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not your friend would want to listen?	very unconcerned					very concerned
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would expect that he/she would listen and support me.	very unlikely					very likely
	1	2	3	4	5	6