Perceived discrimination and Psychological Well-Being among Immigrants living in Greece

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1. Introduction

- Discrimination is one of the major stressors that confront ethnic minority and immigrant groups.

- The present study considers only ***perceived discrimination***, namely the perception of receiving an unfair and differential treatment on the basis of ethnicity or race.

Theoretical Model:
Rejection-Identification Model

- Social groups who face discrimination maintain psychological well-being by becoming more identified with their own ethnic in-group and rejecting the out-group members and their negative evaluations.

- The negative role of discrimination in minorities' psychological well-being could be buffered if the minority groups derive their self-esteem from their in-group, by using in-group rather than out-group comparisons.

1.1. Perceived Discrimination and Psychological Well-Being

- Individuals who perceive higher discrimination tend to report higher depressive symptoms and more anxiety.

- Perceived discrimination may have both a direct and indirect relationship to health.

1.2. The Role of Acculturation Attitudes

- Perceived discrimination is related to acculturation process, namely to all those changes that arise when individuals and groups of different backgrounds come into contact.

- When individuals perceive **low discrimination**, they are more likely to endorse either **integration or assimilation** as the preferred acculturation attitude.

- Individuals experiencing **high discrimination** may seek **separation** from the mainstream community.

Separation as a Mediator

- Individuals who pursue **separation** as an acculturation attitude seem to report **more in-group contact and connectedness with their ethnic community**.

- Other research findings, also, suggest that the direct negative role of perceived discrimination to well-being could be suppressed by the positive effects of coping via ethnic identification.

- Ethnic identification and connectedness with immigrants' community are not identical to separation. However, **separation entails ethnic identification and connectedness with immigrants' community**.

1.3. The Role of Self-Construals

- The term self-construal describes how individuals from different cultural backgrounds define and make meaning of the self.

- *Independent* **self-construal** has been used to refer to individuals who perceive themselves to be independent from others, having as an aim the accomplishment of personal goals and personal ambitions.

- *Interdependent* **self-construal** refers to individuals who perceive themselves to be defined by their relations to others (in-group) and having as an aim the acceptance by the in-group and the maintenance of harmony with significant others.

Interdependent Self-Construal as a Moderator

Interdependent immigrants' tend to :

1. Maintain their culture of origin

2. Perceive more discrimination

3. Define themselves by the relationships that are developed with their ethnic community.

4. Be more committed to their heritage culture group.

5. Report better psychological well-being.

1.4. The Present Study:

- The present study included participants from two immigrant populations in Greece, **Albanians** and **Indians**.
- **Albanian** immigrant community represents the biggest immigrant community in Greece.
- **Indians** present an Asian community with noticeable cultural differences from Greeks, in religion, in dress code, and appearance.
- Both lack official papers and social insurance.
- Immigrants in Greece are generally perceived as a threat to Greek cultural identity, social security and welfare systems.

The Main Aim of the Present Study

- The main aim of the present study was to examine if separation and interdependent self-construal are factors directing immigrants to their in-group and intervene in the relationship of perceived discrimination to psychological well-being.

Hypotheses

- **(H1)** It was hypothesized a positive relationship of perceived discrimination to separation and a negative relationship of perceived discrimination to integration and assimilation.

- **(H2)** It was hypothesized a positive relationship of perceived discrimination to interdependent self-construal and a negative relationship of perceived discrimination to independent self-construal.

- **(H3)** It was hypothesized a direct relationship of perceived discrimination to depression and anxiety.

- **(H4)** It was hypothesized that a positive relationship of perceived discrimination to separation would result in turn in less anxiety and depression (i.e mediation effect).

- **(H5)** It was hypothesized that at the higher levels of interdependent self-construal immigrants would report relatively lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (i.e moderation effect).

2. Method-Scales

SCALE	ITEMS	AYTHORS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Demographics	10	Georgas & Papastylianou, 1993	-
Perceived Discrimination Scale	8	Phinney, Madden, & Santos, 1998	.86
State Anxiety Inventory	20	Spielberger, Gorush, & Lushene, 1970	.85
CES-D	20	Fountoulakis et al., 2001	.83
Acculturation Attitudes Scale	20	Berry et al., 2006	
Separation	5		.71
Integration	5		.60
Assimilation	5		.57
Marginalization	5		.61
Self-Construal	30	Singelis, 1994	
Independent S-C	15		.62
Interdependent S-C	15		.63

2.1. Procedure

- First generation adult immigrants.
- Participation in the study was voluntary.
- Immigrants were recruited mainly in their work place.
- A convenience sampling technique was used.
- Each measure was translated to Punjabi and Albanian from English and translated back to English by four translators

3. Results

Participants	Male	Years of residence	Age	Years of Education
Indians (N= 115)	75.4%	7.7 (SD = 3.9)	33.0 (SD = 8.0)	11.2 (SD = 2.7)
Albanians (N= 118)	56.4%	10.7 (SD = 4.2)	35.0 (SD = 8.0)	11.8 (SD = 2.4)
Total (N= 233)				

Preliminary Analyses

- The differences between the two ethnic groups were not significant as far as age *(t* (223) = -1.23, *p > .05).*

- The differences between the two ethnic groups were not significant as far as years of education were concerned *(t* (214) = -1.58*, p >.*05).

- T-Test indicated a significant difference, regarding anxiety (*t* (156) = -.3.63, *p* < .000) and depression (*t* (187*)* = -2.12, *p* < .05) as far as **the effect of ethnicity** is concerned.

- For this reason, the mediation analyses were, also, performed separately for Albanians and Indians and moderation analyses were performed first without covariates and then with ethnicity as one.

Table 2.

Means, Standard Deviations (SD) and Bivariate Correlations among Psychological Well-Being, Acculturation Attitudes, Perceived Discrimination, Independent and Interdependent Self-Construal

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Anxiety	44.50	10.74	1.00						
2. Depression	17.85	10.22	.63**	1.00					
3. Integration	19.78	3.72	.05	-.05	1.00				
4. Separation	14.50	5.47	-.02	-.14	-.36**	1.00			
5. Assimilation	9.02	3.72	-.03	.15	-.03	.13	1.00		
6. Marginalization	8.49	3.60	.04	.14	-.18*	.30**	.42**	1.00	
7. Perceived D.	11.99	7.82	.10	.06	-.39**	.46**	-.02	.03	1.00
8. Independent SC	4.98	.66	-.10	.00	.21**	-.05	.09	-.03	-.09
9. Interdependent SC	5.08	.63	-.06	-.07	.20**	-.16*	-.03	-.08	-.10

Note: *N* = 233, Perceived D. = Perceived Discrimination; SC = Self-Construal.
* *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01 (two tailed).

Table 3

The Indirect and Direct Effects of Perceived Discrimination on Depression and Anxiety

through Acculturation Attitudes (Mediation)

				Bootstrapping 95% Confidence Intervals[†]						
	B	SE	P	Indirect effects		B	SE	P	Direct effects	
				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
Dependent variable: Depression *t*										
Integration	.00	.05	.95	-.11	.09	.04	.10	.76	-.17	.25
Assimilation	-.00	.01	.28	-.03	.02	.01	.10	.88	-.18	.21
Separation	-.11	.05	.01	**-.24**	**-.02**	.20	.09	.03	.01	.40
Marginalization	.00	.01	.06	-.02	.04	.05	.10	.61	-.15	.25
Dependent variable: Anxiety										
Integration	-.06	.05	.15	-.20	.01	.20	.12	.10	-.04	.46
Assimilation	.00	.01	.44	-.01	.07	.06	.12	.60	-.17	.30
Separation	-.05	.07	.46	-.21	.08	.20	.12	.11	-.05	.46
Marginalization	-.00	.01	.65	-.01	.04	.12	.11	.29	-.10	.34

[†]Bootstrapping bias corrected and accelerated (5,000 bootstrap samples). Indirect and direct effects are significant at *p* <.05 for the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals, when the derived intervals do not include values of zero. Note: S-C = Self-Construal, SE = Standard Error.

- Next, it was examined whether the indirect role of separation to the relationship between perceived discrimination and depression depend on ethnicity (i.e. Albanians vs. Indians).

- Analyses revealed that the indirect role of separation was statistically significant for both Albanians *(B = -.49, SE = -.06, CI = -.15 to -.00)* and Indians *(B = .50, SE = -.08, p < .01, CI = -.22 to -.00).*

Table 4

Bootstrapping results for Moderation Effects of Independent/Interdependent Self-Construal

on the relationship of Perceived Discrimination to Depression and Anxiety

	B	SE	T	P	95% CI[†]	
					Lower	*Upper*
Dependent variable: Depression *t*						
Interdependent Self-Construal						
Low (-1SD)	-.21	.12	-1.7	.08	-.45	.02
Mean	.04	.09	.51	.60	-.13	.23
High (+1SD)	.30*	.12*	2.3	.01	**.05**	**.56**
Independent Self-Construal						
Low (-1SD)	-.12	.12	-.96	.33	-.36	.12
Mean	.05	.09	.61	.53	-.12	.24
High (+1SD)	.23	.13	1.76	.07	-.02	.50
Dependent variable: Anxiety						
Interdependent Self-Construal						
Low (-1SD)	-.12	.18	-.66	.50	-.48	.23
Mean	.10	.11	.92	.35	-.11	.32
High (+1SD)	.32*	.12*	2.62	.04	**.08**	**.57**
Independent Self-Construal						
Low (-1SD)	-.01	.16	-.06	.95	-.34	.32
Mean	.11	.11	.97	.33	-.11	.33
High (+1SD)	.23	.14	1.64	.10	-.04	.51

[†] Bootstrapping bias corrected and accelerated (5000 bootstrap samples).
Intervals that do not contain zero are deemed to be significant. Note: SD = standard deviation. CI = confidence intervals. * *p* < .05.

Discussion

- **(H1):** In accordance with the study hypothesis immigrants' **separation was positively related to perceived discrimination, whereas integration was related negatively.**

- However, an unexpected finding was that *assimilation was not connected to perceived discrimination* at all, maybe because assimilation promotes personal goals and the individual adopt behaviors and values of the hosts.

Discussion

- (H2): Contrary to the study hypothesis, **no statistical significant relationship between self-construal and perceived discrimination was identified.**

- A possible explanation could be that perceived discrimination and self-construal interacts with individuals' self-esteem.

- In the context of the present study, perceived discrimination can be conceived as an ego-threat condition that may elicit interpersonal behaviours depending on the self-esteem of the individuals.

Discussion

- (H3): **Perceived discrimination was related directly to depression**, confirming previous studies which suggested that perceived discrimination is a negative factor regarding immigrants' psychological well-being .

Discussion

- (H4): **Fewer depressive symptoms were reported by those immigrants who face discrimination but also select separation**.

- Given that separation signifies maintenance of the culture of origin, it may enhance identification with the in-group .

- Furthermore, the avoidance of contact with host community members, as another defining feature of separation may help immigrants feel safer from their rejection.

Discussion

- (H5): **Immigrants with high levels of interdependence do seem to be protected from depression and anxiety**.

- It is plausible that the more the devalued groups recognize the prejudice against them, the more they increase their emotional investment in their in-group (where they feel accepted).

- The acceptance of their in-group members protects immigrants' psychological adjustment, given that their self-esteem is most affected by the relationships that are developed with the in-group members than the out-group members

Conclusion

- The present study provided support to the rejection-identification model .

- Interdependence and separation may help individuals to:

1. Avoid contacts with out-group members, exposing themselves to a lesser extent to discriminatory events and experience less stress.

2. Increase social support behaviours from co-ethnics.

3. Interdependent individuals, also, underestimate the self as a separate unit and this may lead them, at first, to underestimate themselves as a target of discrimination .

Limitations

- A convenient sample was used.

- Cross-sectional nature of the study design: the direction of causality assumed in the mediation analyses may not be accurate.

- Internal consistencies were low to moderate for the scales of acculturation attitudes and self-construal.

THANK YOU
VERY MUCH FOR
YOUR ATTENTION !!!