



Discrimination and multicultural identity configurations: The mediating role of stress



Maya A. Yampolsky (Ph. D.) (Assistant Professor / Professeure adjointe)^{a,*},
Catherine E. Amiot^b

^a Université Laval, Canada

^b Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 June 2016

Received in revised form 9 September 2016

Accepted 11 September 2016

Keywords:

Multicultural identity

Identity integration

Identity configurations

Discrimination

Stress

ABSTRACT

The present research examines perceived discrimination as a predictor of how multicultural individuals negotiate and configure their different cultural identities within the self. We focused on three multicultural identity configurations: having one predominant identity (categorization), compartmentalizing one's different identities, and integrating one's identities. Since discrimination is related to intraindividual discordance and is stressful, we examined the mediating role of stress in the associations between discrimination and the identity configurations in 259 multicultural individuals. Mediation analyses revealed that greater discrimination predicted compartmentalization through greater stress, while lower discrimination predicted greater identity integration through lower stress. Categorization was not predicted by discrimination or by stress. Discrimination and stress appear to have damaging and depleting roles that hamper multiculturals' capacity to reconcile their identities into a cohesive whole.

Crown Copyright © 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Globalization and migration have made multicultural encounters more common (see Vertovec, 2007; Doucerain, Dere & Ryder, 2013), with the number of immigrants, second and third generation individuals, and people with mixed ethnocultural heritages on the rise in Canada and the United States (Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011; Jantzen, 2009). Multicultural individuals are often faced with navigating different sets of norms, expectations, relationships and practices stemming from their diverse cultural groups, which inevitably impacts their cultural identification experiences (Giguère, Lalonde, Lou, 2010). Both recent research and multicultural policies now promote identification with multiple cultural groups and respect for people's diverse cultural backgrounds (e.g., Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Sam & Berry, 2006; Schwartz, Vignoles, Brown & Zagefka, 2014). Research has yet to understand exactly how multicultural individuals come to identify with their multiple cultural groups, and how they organize and configure their different identities within the self-concept. Given that navigating multiple cultural memberships can be challenging and even stressful (Giguère et al., 2010; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997), understanding these processes is essential to capture how this cultural diversity is negotiated by multicultural individuals in order to integrate their multiple cultural identities.

* Corresponding author at: École de psychologie Pavillon Félix Antoine Savard, 2325, rue des Bibliothèques, Université Laval, Quebec City, Québec G1V 0A6, Canada.

E-mail addresses: maya-a.yampolsky@psy.ulaval.ca, mayaajgd@gmail.com (M.A. Yampolsky).

To understand these processes, the current research focuses on discrimination as a social factor that predicts the level of stress and the resulting types of identity configurations that multiculturals employ to organize their multiple cultural identities. Prior research has identified factors that inhibit the reconciliation and integration of one's multiple cultural identities, including the experience of social isolation, disapproval, rejection, and discrimination (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Sam & Berry, 2006; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). While Benet-Martínez and Haritatos were the first to examine the relationship between discrimination and bicultural identity integration, research has yet to investigate how discrimination predicts a broader range of distinct multicultural identity configurations, and the mechanisms through which this takes place. The present research fills these gaps in the literature by examining discrimination's predictive relationship to several multicultural identity configurations: categorization, compartmentalization and integration. Moreover, the current study directly investigates how stress – as an indicator of one's available resources in dealing with external demands – mediates these associations.

1.1. Multicultural individuals

The present research examines the complex identity experiences of multicultural individuals, that is, individuals who have lived with more than one cultural group over the course of their lives, and experience these multiple cultural affiliations as part of their self-concept (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Yampolsky, Amiot & de la Sablonnière, 2015). This broad definition enables us to account for the complex nature of multicultural identification, as people live through migration and immigration, intercultural relationships, cosmopolitan environments, and globalized economies and media (see Benet-Martínez & Hong, 2015; Doucerein, Dere & Ryder, 2013; Hong, Wan, No & Chiu, 2007; Vertovec, 2007 for a more comprehensive description of how multicultural experiences contribute to multicultural identity). Multicultural individuals, therefore, include first, second and third generation individuals, so-called third-culture kids, people with "mixed" heritages, etc. To capture this diversity of multicultural experiences, the current study was conducted in Canada, and based primarily in Montreal. Montreal is an appropriate context for researching complex, multicultural identities given that it has two majority cultures (i.e., English and French cultural groups), and a plethora of minority cultural communities hailing from all continents (Statistics Canada, 2012). Our first intention in our sampling was to show how multicultural individuals can be more diverse than assumed or acknowledged by conventional ethno-cultural categorizations, and our second intention was to demonstrate the common identity experiences across multicultural individuals.

1.2. Multicultural identity configurations

To account for how one's multiple cultural identities are negotiated and organized within the self, this research examines three multicultural identity configurations proposed in the cognitive-developmental model of social identity integration (CDSMII; Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007). Grounded in the developmental, social cognition, and self literatures (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Roccas & Brewer, 2002), the CDSMII offers an integrative framework to examine how social and cultural identities are cognitively organized within one's self concept. The model builds on, and goes beyond, prior work in the cultural identity literature (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) by proposing four distinct identity configurations that are applicable to all multicultural individuals: anticipatory categorization, categorization, compartmentalization, and integration. The current study accounts for the latter three configurations.

Anticipatory categorization occurs when one has yet to join a new (e.g., cultural) group, and involves projecting oneself into this future group and foreseeing similarities between oneself and one's future group. We do not examine this configuration in the present research since we examine the experiences of multicultural individuals who already belong to multiple cultural groups. **Categorization** involves identifying with one cultural identity above all others, and excluding other identities from the self. For instance, a Montrealer who has lived in Sweden for the last 15 years may see herself as being truly Montrealer but not Swedish.

In **compartmentalization**, one keeps one's identities separate from each other, and the differences between them are seen as divergent. Moreover, one's identities are context-bound, such that the person only identifies with each of their cultures depending on the context. For example, a Mexican-American may see herself as being both Mexican and American, but she sees her identities as separate, opposing parts of herself. She also feels that she is only Mexican when she is with other Mexican friends, and only American when she is with her American friends.

Integration is characterized by linking one's multiple cultural identities together within the self. This is achieved by perceiving similarities and complementing differences between one's groups. Moreover, one may identify with a higher-order, superordinate identity that includes one's different cultural identities, thereby bridging them together. To illustrate, a Mongolian-Canadian integrates her Mongolian and Canadian cultural identities together by perceiving the common values that these groups share, and by seeing the differences between them as enriching for who she is and how she sees the world.

Importantly, how individuals organize and configure their multiple identities is associated with different outcomes. Specifically, integrating one's identities – such that they are compatible and simultaneously important to the self – predicts greater adjustment and social effectiveness (e.g., Huynh, Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2011; Thomas, Brannen & Garcia, 2010), and greater well-being and intrapersonal coherence (Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond, 2008; Carpentier & de la Sablonnière, 2013; Cheng et al., 2008; Yampolsky, Amiot & de la Sablonnière, 2013; Yampolsky, Amiot & de la Sablonnière, 2015). In contrast, compartmentalizing one's identities is associated with lower well-being, despite the fact that this configuration

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7323694>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7323694>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)