

Psychological distress and perceived discrimination experienced by Asian international male students in Australia

Rida Khan ^{a*}, Bahria University Karachi Campus, Institute of Professional Psychology, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

Mahnoor Mahnoor ^b, Bahria University Karachi Campus, Institute of Professional Psychology, Karachi, Sindh,
Pakistan

Sonia langhani ^c, Bahria University Karachi Campus, Institute of Professional Psychology, Karachi, Sindh,
Pakistan

Suggested Citation:

Khan, R., Mahnoor, M. & Langhani, S., (2022). Psychological distress and perceived discrimination experienced by Asian international male students in Australia. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*. 12(1), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v12i1.6048>

Received from December 19, 2021; revised from February 25, 2022; accepted from April 29, 2022.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Kobus Maree, University of Pretoria South Africa.

©2022 Birlesik Dunya Yenilik Arastirma ve Yayıncılık Merkezi. All rights reserved

Abstract

Recently, cases of psychological distress have substantially increased across the world. Numerous studies have indicated that psychological distress affects the quality of life of thousands of individuals. The study examines perceived discrimination and self-disgust with psychological distress in international male students in Australia. This study is conducted by an online Google survey with a purposive convenient sampling technique facilitated through ZTA Educational Consultants, which comprises 423 respondents. The selected measures are the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students, The Disgust Scale and Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21. The research findings suggest a moderate positive relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological distress. However, self-disgust shows a significant weak negative relationship with psychological distress and perceived discrimination. The implications suggest the need for psychological assistance for the candidates before relocating and during the beginning span of stay. Additionally, cultural influences in perceiving discrimination and self-disgust are observed. Ethical consideration is implemented during research.

Keywords: Discrimination, international students, psychological distress, self-disgust;

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Sonia langhani, Bahria University Karachi Campus, Institute of Professional Psychology, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
E-mail address: sonia.langhani@gmail.com

2. Introduction

Recently, cases of psychological distress have substantially increased across the world (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016). Numerous studies have indicated that psychological distress affects the quality of life of thousands of individuals (Carter, Lau, Johnson, & Kirkinis, 2017; Everett, Millburn, & Saint Onge, 2016; Nadimpalli, Dulin-Keita, Salas, Kanaya, & Kandula, 2016). The case is quite frequent among minorities in developed regions (Zhang & Hong, 2013). Nadimpalli et al. (2016) have shown that, in the United States, perceived discrimination is the major cause of stress for Asian minorities, which impacts their life as well as their opportunities. Many other studies have highlighted that discrimination is linked to the deteriorating mental health of overseas students (Carter et al., 2016; Everett et al., 2016; Nadimpalli et al., 2016). Accordingly, psychological distress is also found to emerge as a result of self-disgust, which emerges due to the stigma that students in general link to Asian individuals (Han & Pong, 2015).

A considerable amount of research has revealed that discrimination also emerges due to the subjective perception of individuals, emerging due to race or not, which substantially affects the mental health of the patients (Nadimpalli et al., 2016). A study by Nadimpalli et al. (2016) has shown that exposure to discrimination is linked to the Asian minorities in developed countries at any stage, which constitutes a deteriorating effect on the human rights of Asians in the developed regions. Personal opinions and community attitudes substantially affect mental illness among students who come to developed countries for education (Evram & Uzunboylu, 2017).

Huseyin Uzunboylu Zhang & Hong, 2013). However, limited efforts have been directed towards the assessment of psychological distress, in light of the discriminative attitude as well as self-disgust.

Unfair treatment is also observed to account for the mental stress among Asians (Zhang & Hong, 2013). The difference in it is due to the inconsistency of efforts and the heterogeneity of the groups. The association between psychological distresses among Asian minorities in developed countries has shown to vary where some have shown minimal difference, whereas some have shown no effect on the psychological distress among Asian minorities. Hence, the stated researches accommodate the need to pursue the current study following the proposed combination.

2.1. Literature review

2.1.1. Perceived discrimination

Perceived discrimination refers to the discriminatory attitude that is reflected based on the perception that one is whole towards a particular group. This discrimination may be due to sex, race, age, disability, religion, belief or sexual orientation. Pascoe and Smart Richman (2009) defined discrimination as the manifestation of behaviour, which is judgmental, unfair treatment of the group's members or negative attitude. Moreover, in contrast to facing discrimination directly, the issues regarding access to mental as well as physical health services and the fear of experiencing discrimination affect the lives of ethnic minorities.

Detrimental physiological consequences are the result of psychological distress related to perceived discrimination, which includes modification in heart rate and blood pressure (Shu, Flores, & Wang, 2019), as well as hypersensitivity or hypervigilance to messages of potential discrimination in terms of society, that influence employment as well as everyday living negatively. At both the societal and individual levels, this is considered a significant loss, and further research is mandated via suitable intervention and careful research. There is an expectation related to perceived discrimination in terms of increased psychological distress level in the international pupils in Korea as it is dependable on studies' meta-analysis with sojourners (Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013). Hence, this growing inequality is subjected to inculcate suspicion of insufficient view of self in comparison to others, which is expressed by self-hatred and self-disgust.

2.1.2. *Self-disgust*

Self-disgust is defined as a strong emotion of dislike or distaste for one's own self or the actions that one has taken. Different stimuli evoke disgust, which is a fundamental emotion, and special characteristics are possessed by it, which signifies disorder (Dawydiak, Stafford, Stevenson, & Jones, 2019). Rejection by others is motivated by a disease-avoidance mechanism as all of the stimuli are possible disgust as well as contaminants (McKay & Presti, 2018). According to Ille, Wolf, Tomazic, and Schienle (2016), alongside such triggers of core disgust, over the years, the human culture has evolved, and due to this, more kinds of this emotion have progressed, in particular, moral disgust and interpersonal disgust. Violators of social norms and orders provoke these kinds of disgust, which are strongly related to intricate emotions, which are disgust-derived, i.e., guilt and shame (Fox, Grange, & Power, 2015).

Moreover, the disgust scale (Haidt, McCauley, & Rozin, 1994) suggests three sub-scales (core disgust, contamination-based disgust and animal reminder disgust). However, the study focuses on core disgust which protects the body against contamination and is created by certain foods, animals and body products. The core disgust subscale has been utilised due to prime relevance and associations with the research variables. The external environment has all of the above-mentioned disgust elicitors, and in turn, the self against others is insulated by the induced repulsion from association with these elicitors. While facing such an environment, an individual develops feelings of incompetence that provoke anxiousness leading to psychological distress.

2.1.3. *Psychological distress*

Psychological distress is typically characterised by signs of depression (i.e., diminished interest, hopelessness and sadness) and anxiety (e.g., feeling tensed and restlessness) (Mirowsky & Ross, 2017) and as a condition of mental suffering. These symptoms can be related to somatic symptoms which are likely to differ across communities (such as headache, insomnia and loss of energy). Cheng, Kwan, and Sevig (2013) proposed a model to test the effects of psycho-cultural and psychological distress and their variables (ethnic identity, perceived discrimination and other group orientation) on perceived stigmatisation by self-stigma, and others in search of psychological help, managed the previous use of counselling/psychotherapy.

Overall, perceived racial/ethnic and psychological distress of higher levels predicted the excessive level of perceived stigmatisation of those who are in search of psychological help and, in turn, predicted strong self-stigma for searching for psychological help. There was other groups' attention that predicted a low level of self-stigma in searching for psychological help groups. Only for African Americans, a high level of ethnic identity was predicted where people with low self-stigma searched for psychological help. There have been very few longitudinal studies on psychological distress affecting Asian students, considering the proliferation of stress research and its effects and consequences, and also studies on racial discrimination. Very limited studies have been found on how stress from discrimination influences members of the white community when they participate in romantic interracial relationships (Corker et al., 2016; Van der Walt & Basson, 2015).

2.2. *Purpose of the study*

In light of prior research, the variables – perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress – are important to investigate as self-disgust is reported to be a strong emotion that shows hatred guided by perceived discrimination and this factor leads to develop anxiousness formulation of psychological distress. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress due to its abundance in the literature.

2.3. Theoretical framework

The major aim of the research is to analyse the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust with psychological distress among Asian male students in Australia. As the issue of discrimination has such adverse consequences on an individual's psychological well-being (Neblett et al., 2008), it is logical to accept that discrimination might have an analogous effect on the Asian male student populace in Australia.

Subtle, unconscious, automatic discrimination theory has psychological literature on prejudice which depicts this process as a lot of regularly unconscious convictions and affiliations that influence the perspectives and practices of individuals from the in-group (e.g., non-Hispanic whites) towards individuals from the out-group (e.g., blacks or other disadvantaged racial groups). Individuals from the in-group face an inner clash, coming about because of the distinction between the societal dismissals of bigot practices and also the societal persistence of racist perspectives (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Katz & Hass, 1988; McConahay, 1986). The outcome is a contemporary, inconspicuous type of prejudice that goes underground so as not to struggle with antiracist standards, while it keeps on moulding individuals' psychological, emotional and behavioural reactions. Individuals' millisecond responses to out-groups can comprise primitive dread and anxiety reactions for the brain (Phelps, 2000), negative stereotypic affiliations (Olson & Fazio, 2003) and discriminatory behavioural forces (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).

Individuals have appeared to react distinctively even when subconsciously introduced to out-groups (Dovidio et al., 1997; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). All appearances of inconspicuous prejudice – aberrant, programmed, unclear and conflicted – establish boundaries to full fair treatment. Subtle prejudice is significantly harder to report than more plain structures, and its consequences for discriminatory conduct are harder to catch. Consequently, a person under such conditions sentences himself to the casing of industrious re-examination, and people contrast themselves with others as a method of encouraging personal development, self-inspiration and a positive mental self-image. This prescribes the stage for social comparison theory created in 1954 by psychologist Leon Festinger suggesting individuals' tendencies to continually assess themselves, as well as other people, across areas such as engaging quality, wealth, knowledge and success. Therefore, the relative behaviour causes discrepancies in the real and ideal self. These assessments can advance progressions towards judgmental, one-sided and excessively serious or prevalent perspectives.

The resulting research illustrates that individuals who normally match themselves with others regularly face feelings of profound disappointment, guilt or regret and take part in harmful practices. These subsequent different variables help to comprise advancement of self-disgust, following the present person's interpersonal interaction time starts to contract steadily inciting component of stress. Drawing from the results of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory, the study suggested that the social context is a key variable that smoothen the relationship between psychological distress and perceived discrimination. Across all three groups, there is a significant positive correlation between psychological distresses with perceived discrimination.

Moreover, social cohesion and ethnic density smoothen the relationship between psychological distress and discrimination with ethnic density 'operationalisation and ethnic group' variation (Auer & Ruedin, 2019). The overall results suggested that there is a need for more research about the subjective experiences of individuals along with ethnic density. The ecological change is summed up with a sentiment of dread and worry related to stressor anxiety as indicated by the social response theory (Selye, 1978) which inevitably prompts innate psychological distress. Thus, the theoretical framework is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the study

Figure 1 shows the relationship of perceived discrimination with self-disgust based on the social comparison theory which indicates that individuals under discriminatory circumstances frame themselves under self-criticism which leads to advancement towards disappointments, regrets and guilt that eventually cause self-disgust. Hence, a combination of perceived discrimination and self-disgust manifestation of psychological distress tends to emerge. Hence, we hypothesise the following:

H1: There will be a significant relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust among Asian male students in Australia.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust with psychological distress among Asian male students in Australia.

3. Materials and methods

A quantitative design has been taken into consideration while correlating this approach.

3.1. Participants

The population of the study constitutes Asian Australian male students ($N = 423$). Purposive convenient sampling has been chosen by using a non-random sampling technique.

3.1.1. Inclusion criteria

Male Asian students residing in Australia and having more than 3 months duration of stay with no psychological disorder were selected for the study.

3.1.2. Exclusion criteria

The research excluded students who were not Asian, individuals who did not reside in Australia, males with less than 3 months duration of stay and participants having any psychological disorder. Also, females were exclusively excluded from the study.

3.2. Data collection instrument

The research comprised consent form, demographic form and Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students – subset perceived discrimination, The Disgust Scale – subscale core disgust and Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21).

3.3. Procedure

Initially, permission was taken from the respective authors of the selected scales in the study, the survey participants (Asian male Australian students) were approached by ZTA Educational Consultants, located in Melbourne, Australia, with a formal invitation to join the study as participants

via an online survey formulated through Google Form assistance, including the consent form, the demographic subset perceived discrimination, The Disgust Scale and DASS-21.

3.4. Analysis

We collected a total of 423 samples from the participants and data were analysed through SPSS.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Informed consent was taken from participants to ensure their voluntary participation with the right to withdraw at any time.

3. Results

Table 1. Frequency and percentages of demographic variables (*N* = 423)

Variables	<i>F</i>	%
Gender		
Male	423	100
Nationality		
Pakistani	132	31.1
Indian	28	6.6
Chinese	60	14.2
Bangladeshi	28	6.6
Iranian	20	4.7
Nepali	39	9.4
Indonesian	8	1.9
Japanese	40	9.4
Turkish	20	4.7
Korean	12	2.8
Thai	8	1.9
Filipino	28	6.6
Occupational status		
Full-time job	44	10.4
Full-time student	116	27.4
Part-time job	263	62.2
Birth order		
First born	168	39.6
Middle born	123	29.2
Last born	80	18.9
Only child	52	12.3
Qualification		
Undergraduate	59	14.2
Graduate	96	22.6
Postgraduate	268	63.2
Programme		
Graduation	119	28.3
Masters	304	71.7
Semester		
1	36	8.5
2	96	22.6
3	80	18.9
4	132	31.1

5	4	0.9
6	35	8.5
7	4	0.9
8	36	8.5
Accommodation		
Private	103	24.5
Shared	272	64.2
Hostel	48	11.3
Stayed in another country (except Australia)		
No	399	94.3
Yes	24	5.7
Experience of discrimination in Australia		
Maybe	164	38.8
No	155	36.6
Yes	104	24.5

Table 1 presents data information as percentage and frequency distribution of demographic factors measured in the current study and the emphasis of the research was to target the true representative sample of the population ($N = 423$).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and alpha reliability coefficients' univariate normality of study variables ($N = 423$)

Variables	Items	α	M	SD	SK	K	Range	
							Actual	Potential
PD	8	0.96	27.39	10.04	-0.37	-1.21	8-40	8-40
Self-disgust	12	0.46	6.15	1.90	0.32	-0.51	2.5-11	0-12
PSD	21	0.93	19.45	10.91	-0.28	-0.92	0-43	0-63
Anxiety	7	0.70	4.69	3.02	0.21	-0.71	0-12	0-63
Depression	7	0.90	8.07	5.07	-0.13	-1.15	0-17	0-63
Stress	7	0.80	6.67	3.58	-0.41	-0.80	0-14	0-63

Note: PD= Perceived Discrimination, PSD = Psychological Distress, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach's Alpha, SK = Skewness, K = Kurtosis.

Table 2 indicates that the data were normally distributed according to the values of mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. Moreover, good alpha reliabilities of perceived discrimination and psychological distress scales and subscales are obtained. However, self-disgust is reflected as acceptable.

Table 3. Pearson's moment-product correlations between perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress (anxiety, depression and stress)

	PD	Self-disgust	PSD	Anxiety	Depression	Stress
PD	-	-0.27**	0.56**	0.26**	0.69**	0.51**
Self-disgust		-	0.33**	-0.24**	-0.35**	-0.29**
PSD			-	0.88**	0.95**	0.95**
Anxiety				-	0.73**	0.81**
Depression					-	0.85**
Stress						-

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination, PSD = Psychological Distress.

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3 shows a significant weak negative relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust. Moreover, a moderately positive relationship prevails between perceived discrimination

and psychological distress. Perceived discrimination has a moderate positive relationship with depression and stress. Moreover, it has a weak positive relationship with anxiety. However, self-disgust shows a weak negative relationship with psychological distress. Self-disgust has a weak negative relationship with anxiety, depression and stress. Hence, it can be interpreted that perceived discrimination and psychological distress are positively correlated and constitute a negative relationship with self-disgust.

Table 4. Simple linear regression analysis showing perceived discrimination as a determinant of psychological distress in Asian males

	Psychological distress					
	B	B	T	p	R ²	ΔR ²
PD	0.567	0.616	7.01	0.00	0.32	0.31

Note: PD = Perceived discrimination, β = Standardised beta, R² = R-squared, ΔR² = Adjusted R-squared

Table 4 shows that perceived discrimination is a positive predictor of psychological distress causing a 31% variance.

Table 5. Simple linear regression analysis self-disgust as a determinant of psychological distress in Asian males (N = 423)

	Psychological distress					
	B	B	T	p	R ²	ΔR ²
Self-disgust	-0.33	-1.89	-3.57	0.00	0.11	0.10

Note. β = Standardised beta, R² = R-Squared, ΔR² = Adjusted R-squared.

Table 5 shows that self-disgust is a negative predictor of psychological distress with a 10% variance of self-disgust that can be seen in psychological distress.

Table 6. Stepwise regression analysis of perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress in Asian males (N = 423)

Variable	β	R ²	ΔR ²	95% CI	
				UL	LL
Step 1					
PD	0.56	0.32	0.32	0.44	0.79
Step 2					
PD	0.51	0.11	0.11	0.38	0.73
Self-disgust	-0.19			-2.02	-0.15

Note. PD = Perceived Discrimination, β = Standardised beta, R² = R-Squared, ΔR² = Adjusted R-squared, CI = Confidence Interval, LL = Lower limit, UL = Upper limit

Table 6 shows that perceived discrimination has 32% variance particularly and is a strong predictor of psychological distress in Asian Australian students, while perceived discrimination and self-disgust together have an 11% variance, which can be illustrated as self-disgust and is also playing a significant role but it is a negative predictor.

Table 7. Analysis of variance for self-disgust on psychological distress based on the feeling of discrimination in Australia (N = 423)

Variables	Yes n=26		Maybe n=41		No n=39		F	p	i-j	Mean D -j	S.E	95% C.I	
	M	S.D	M	S.D	M	S.D						LL	UL
	Self-Disgust	5.71	1.75	5.67	1.50	6.94						2.14	5.90
PSD	23.19	8.94	26.12	6.32	9.95	9.17	43.23	.00	Maybe>No	-1.27*	.40	-2.24	-.30
									Yes>No	13.24*	2.05	8.35	18.14
									Maybe>No	16.17*	1.81	11.85	20.50

Note. PSD= Psychological Distress, CI=Confidence Interval, LL=Lower limit, UL= Upper limit

*p<0.005

The analysis of variance (Table 7) was conducted to see the relationship between self-disgust and psychological distress with the feeling of discrimination in Australia. For this analysis, a closed-ended question was collected for demographic information. The statistical findings of the question suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between PD with psychological distress which means the students who were experiencing discrimination were facing psychological distress more as compared to students who were not facing any discrimination.

Table 8. Trends of perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress among Asian males

Variables	PD		Self-Disgust		PSD	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pakistani	20.30	6.98	7.18	1.99	13.30	11.02
Indian	25.14	10.74	8.35	1.72	18.43	12.60
Chinese	26.27	12.45	5.36	1.45	19.80	13.16
Bangladeshi	33.71	9.92	5.50	1.22	18.29	7.63
Iranian	34.00	3.46	4.70	1.15	21.80	9.09
Nepali	31.60	9.27	5.95	1.65	27.50	10.80
Indonesian	16.00	.00	3.50	.70	22.00	1.41
Japanese	29.30	7.43	4.25	.97	26.60	6.16
Turkish	29.30	7.43	6.30	.75	22.00	4.89
Korean	34.67	4.61	5.66	1.04	22.00	6.55
Thai	36.00	5.65	4.50	.70	28.50	0.70
Filipino	36.43	4.15	6.78	.63	20.29	7.08

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination, PSD = Psychological Distress

Table 8 shows the highest trends of perceived discrimination in Filipino ($M = 36.43$), while Indonesia reports the lowest in both perceived discrimination ($M = 16.00$) and self-disgust (3.50). However, Indians are seen to have recorded the highest self-disgust ($M = 8.35$). Moreover, Thais mark the highest ($M = 28.50$) and Pakistanis are the lowest ($M = 13.30$) in psychological distress.

Table 9. Pearson's moment-product correlations between demographics, perceived discrimination, self-disgust and psychological distress

	PD	Self-disgust	PSD
Age	-0.17	0.17	-0.14
Stay in Australia	-0.27**	0.29**	-0.21*
Siblings	-0.44**	0.13	-0.31**
Semester	-0.34**	-0.03	-0.16
Work hours	-0.19*	0.12	-0.15
Asian friends	-0.39**	0.41**	-0.41**
Australian friends	-0.35**	0.33**	-0.31**

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination, PSD = Psychological Distress.

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 9 indicates no significant relationship between age and other variables, but there is a significant negative weak correlation between the time of stay in Australia with PD, which depicts that if the stay in Australia is long, the experience of perceived discrimination is less and vice versa. The relationship between staying in Australia and self-disgust is significantly positive but weak which means that if one stays in Australia for a longer period, the self-disgust will be high, while staying in Australia for a shorter period will lead to low self-disgust. Additionally, there is a significant negative correlation between staying in Australia with psychological distress which means the longer an individual stays in Australia, the lesser psychological distress he experiences. The correlation of siblings with PD and PSD is significantly negative, which means that if an individual has more siblings, the PD and PSD are faced less by the person.

There is a negative correlation between the semester and PD, which illustrates that if the person is in a higher semester, the perceived discrimination is found to be lesser among the participants. The correlation between working hours and perceived discrimination is negative which

shows that if the participant works for longer hours, he is likely to experience less PD and vice versa. There is a negative correlation between having Asian friends with PD and PSD, which depicts that if they have more Asian friends, there is less PD and PSD and vice versa, while there is a positive relationship between Asian friends with self-disgust, which means the more number of Asian friends, the more self-disgust they are likely to experience. There is a negative correlation between having Australian friends with PD and PSD which depicts that if they have more Australian friends there is less PD and PSD and vice versa, while there is a positive relationship between Australian friends with self-disgust, which means the more number of Australian friends, the more self-disgust they are likely to experience.

4. Discussion

The major aim of the research is to analyse the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust with psychological distress among Asian male students in Australia. As the issue of discrimination has such adverse consequences on an individual's psychological well-being (Neblett et al., 2008), it is logical to accept that discrimination might have an analogous effect on the Asian male student populace in Australia.

Perceived discrimination is a positive predictor of psychological distress causing a 32% variance, which reveals that a moderate positive relationship prevails between perceived discrimination and psychological distress. Perceived discrimination has a moderate positive relationship with depression and stress. Moreover, it has a weak positive relationship with anxiety.

The findings between perceived discrimination and psychological distress are observed due to literature support. Wong, Tsai, Liu, Zhu, & Wei (2014) investigated male students of Asian international colleges and their approach towards racial discrimination, the centrality of masculine identity, subjective masculinity stress and psychological distress; these variables were tested by the moderated mediation model. Participants of perceived racial discrimination were significantly associated with subjective masculinity stress at the maximum level (not the minimum level) of masculine identity centrality. Moreover, subjective masculinity stress was considered to be positively correlated to psychological distress; however, this correlation was stronger among others who noted the high level of masculine identity centrality. The researcher also observed that the association between psychological distress and perceived racial discrimination is considered to be a high level (not low level) of masculine identity centrality. Similarly, the associations among the variables perceived discrimination, psychological distress and ethnic identity were investigated in Korea (Shu et al., 2019).

The result shows that (a) a personal approach is the students' approach (i.e., debate of discrimination) that shows a significant relationship with anxiety and depression and is considered to be the stronger association than perceived unfair treatment, anxiety and depression. (b) Exploration of students having ethnic identities had a positive correlation with anxiety. These findings suggested that there is a need to give additional help and support to international students to engage them in the exploration process. Therefore, perceived discrimination has been linked with elevated rates of depressive symptoms and psychological distress. The perceived discrimination was indicative of the number of medical problems. The impact of perceived discrimination on medical problems is mediated by depressive symptoms (Williams & Collins, 1995).

Consequently, a person who feels discriminated sentences himself in the case of industrious re-examination and people contrast themselves with others as a method of encouraging personal development, self-inspiration and a positive mental self-image. This prescribes the stage for the social comparison theory created in 1954 by psychologist Leon Festinger, suggesting individuals' tendencies to continually assess themselves, as well as other people, across areas such as engaging quality, wealth, knowledge and success. Therefore, the relative behaviour causes discrepancies in the real and ideal self. These assessments can advance progressions towards judgmental, one-sided and excessively serious or prevalent perspectives. The resulting research illustrates that individuals who normally match themselves with others regularly face feelings of profound disappointment, guilt or

regret, and take part in harmful practices. These subsequent different variables help to comprise advancement of self-disgust and following this present person's interpersonal interaction time starts to contract steadily inciting component of stress.

However, the result shows a weak negative relationship between self-disgust and psychological distress with an 11% variance particularly. Thus, self-disgust has a weak negative relationship with anxiety, depression as well as stress. The demonstrated findings can be linked to an indication of social researchers who stated that individuals relinquish their way of life and acquire from another culture when they respect parts of the other culture as 'better' or as having more joy and preferred standpoint. Idolisation of the western culture has become a benchmark by Asian, resulting in practices of adaptation and assimilation, which may suggest ammunition of eccentric view, like self-disgust, replaced by persistent trails to adjust comfortably. The extended vision is equally contributed by the tendency to blame one's self for the destruction by collective cultures, which is supported by study findings where socially oriented Chinese students blame or punish themselves when reacting to frustration (Cui, Tang & Huang, 2022), whereas Japanese are more likely to engage in self-criticism, which helps them avoid future ill-perceived behaviour (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

Therefore, potential constructs of western standardisation may accelerate the impedance of self-disgust by proven prevailing patterns of conformity in Asian collective cultures (Bond & Smith, 1996) as analysed results of 133 studies that have used Asch's line-judging task in 17 different countries and a significant relationship that conformity is greater in more collectivistic than individualistic countries. Yang (1981) also observed that traditional Chinese were much more vigilant and more consistent in expressing their reactions similarly. Societies respond differently to speech material and type (alternative forms and styles). Kim and Markus (1999) examined ads from magazines and newspapers in Korea and the United States to see whether individuality was stressed differentially. As they learned, while U.S. magazine advertising tended to concentrate on individuality, Korean ads tended to concentrate more on enforcement problems. Hence, it can be interpreted that perceived discrimination and psychological distress are positively correlated and constitute a negative relationship with self-disgust.

These findings are observed due to a weak negative correlation between perceived discrimination and self-disgust which is supported by a discovery that specifies participants who acknowledged discrimination on minimal magnitude relatively reveal high evidence of witnessing self-disgust. In addition, a complex relationship between cultural beliefs, overt behaviour and biological roots can be linked to the weak negative correlation with recent culture models (Han, 2017; Han & Ma, 2015; Kitayama & Uskul, 2011; Kim & Sasaki, 2014).

A comparison of the impact of culture on behaviour and the brain has also been studied. Individuals from East Asia are also defined to see and describe themselves in comparison to others; they see themselves as more intertwined with and encompassing essentially others, leading to an interdependent self-constructive form. Westerners, on the other hand, are known to see and describe themselves more as autonomous of others and the social setting; they perceive themselves as more independent, more self-centred and disparate from others, leading to an individual form of self-construction. The multiple self-conceptualisations can be traced back to the divergent trends of neuronal activity of individuals from Western and East Asia countries (Han & Ma, 2014; Ma, Adesope, Nesbit, & Liu, 2014; Zhu & Han, 2008). Hofstede (1980) suggested that both Asians and Chinese are collectivists, whereas the prime focus of the majority of Chinese was to defend and improve the needs of their private closeness (Hsu, 1968). Chinese might as well be willing to sacrifice themselves for advantages that are primarily attributed to a single social entity or even to the community in general. Thus, instead of recognising prejudice, self-disgust can interfere as a coercive emotion to accommodate the need for Asian society to create relationships.

Moreover, the manifestation of self-disgust may not emerge, despite the observed highest trends of perceived discrimination in Filipinos ($M = 36.40$), Thais ($M = 36.00$) and Koreans ($M = 34.67$) because the number of Thais who are racially and/or ethnically prejudiced has high levels of racial prejudice when compared with other countries' citizens (Draper et al., 2019). Similarly, several empirical studies in Korea investigated the experience of appearance discrimination and its impact on health in Korea (Lim & Ployhart, 2004; Lim & Hoot, 2015; Song, 2011). According to a survey, 24% of 3117 teenagers reported suicidal tendencies, and appearance discrimination was more likely to be faced by those who encountered discrimination because of their appearance than others who never did (Song, 2011). Related findings have been found in Korean adults (Lim & Hoot, 2015) and a high frequency of appearance discrimination has been documented in those who have undergone or expect to undergo plastic surgery than in people that have not (Lim & Ployhart, 2004). Thus, under the high familiarity of facing discrimination, it could be concluded that the repressive expression of self-disgust may be attributed to the environmental conditions rather than engagement in self-criticism.

Likewise, Indian nationals are shown to have the highest statistical observation on trends of self-disgust ($M = 8.38$) while showing a low range of perceived discrimination ($M = 25.15$). On the contrary, Indonesian residents represent the lowest traces of self-disgust ($M = 3.50$) with the lowest figure of perceived discrimination ($M = 16.00$) which justifies the research findings of a weak negative correlation between perceived discrimination and self-disgust. Perhaps, the evidence of the highest level of psychological distress is found in Thai nationals ($M = 28.50$), which also reveals a high level of perceived discrimination ($M = 36.00$) and a low level of self-disgust ($M = 4.50$) on trend analysis thus suggesting a greater relationship between perceived discrimination on psychological distress and self-disgust.

Additional findings show that Asian students who maintained well-established social networks with Australian companions report less propensity to perceived discrimination and psychological distress. The reason for this outcome can be associated with Grossman and Liang (2008), who conducted a study on Chinese Americans and suggested that because of the discrimination and relationship with social functioning and mental health, a young group of Chinese Americans faced distress, and some other factors are also involved in developing the mental health affected due to discrimination. The study provides the findings that indicated a direct relationship between social, emotional health and corporation and other variables of distress from discrimination. Also, a supporting finding can be linked which shows that by increasing the duration of stay in Australia, the experience of perceived discrimination decreases. This can be interpreted by individuals who gradually becoming settled in the Australian environment, i.e., they begin to familiarise with the surrounding people and cultural values which facilitates a decline in the feeling of discrimination.

As perceived discrimination has been linked with elevated rates of depressive symptoms and psychological distress, perceived discrimination is indicative of the number of medical problems. The impact of perceived discrimination on medical problems is mediated by depressive symptoms (Williams & Collins, 1995). Therefore, other findings also support this by absolute moral background with a prime depiction of Asian individuals having more siblings experience less discrimination and psychological distress (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Krieger & Sidney, 1996). Araújo and Borrell (2006) and Williams et al. (2003) further assist in identification that perceived discrimination and well-being outcomes include those linked to mental well-being, as discrimination acts as a stressor, many of the structures used as measures of mental health include psychological distress, life satisfaction, depressive symptoms, moderate depression, anxiety and happiness level.

5. Conclusion

The research finding indicates a weak negative relationship between perceived discrimination and self-disgust. Moreover, a moderately positive relationship prevails between perceived discrimination and psychological distress. However, self-disgust shows a weak negative

relationship with psychological distress. Hence, perceived discrimination and psychological distress are positively correlated and constitute a negative relationship with self-disgust.

The highest trends of perceived discrimination are seen among Filipinos, while Indonesia reports the lowest in both perceived discrimination and self-disgust. However, Indians are observed to have the highest records of self-disgust. Moreover, Thais mark the highest and Pakistanis the lowest in psychological distress. Furthermore, the research outcome indicates that individuals with morals who have more siblings, well-established social networks with Australian companions and a longer duration spent in Australia experience less discrimination and psychological distress. However, participants who acknowledged discrimination on minimal magnitude relatively reveal high evidence of witnessing self-disgust.

The outcomes of the present study broadened the literature on psycho-cultural difficulties which are related to perceived discrimination and self-disgust faced by Asian foreign male students as being in a country away from home is a major life transition. The study stresses that as psychological distress increases, the need for psychological help also rises. Psychological help might change the attitudes of students towards people from other ethnic groups. College counsellors might help students to cope with the cultural shock phenomenon that can be reduced through counselling by emphasising the development of social relationships which can have positive consequences and the person might function adequately because of stable relationships; the sense of belongingness would be increased and hence the subjective well-being of students will be enhanced; they will be able to work with the sufficient attention and dedication which will increase their motivation towards their studies; the quality of the work would be appreciated by surrounding people and so the feeling of acceptance and the intensity of self-disgust will be minimised.

There are certain limitations of this study which include the language barrier for the students to completely understand the questions intimated in English. Moreover, there is a negligible amount of literature on self-disgust. Hence, further studies are strongly encouraged to explore the multiple dimensions of the variable along with different cross-cultural perspectives.

Future research ought to look at international students at different colleges across Australia by enlisting a bigger sample. A more complex examination might be directed to increase comprehension of how psychological distress is experienced in university students. Moreover, it is suggested to incorporate female students in Australia for gender base analysis. Similarly, researchers are encouraged to perform cross-culture analysis on the present topic to broaden their understanding of aggregate psychological distress and self-disgust experienced by them in relation to perceived discrimination.

References

- Araújo, B. Y., & Borrell, L. N. (2006). Understanding the link between discrimination, mental health outcomes, and life chances among Latinos. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 28(2), 245–266. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0739986305285825>
- Auer, D., & Ruedin, D. (2019). Who feels disadvantaged? Reporting discrimination in surveys. In *Migrants and expats: The Swiss migration and mobility nexus* (pp. 221–242). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. Retrieved from <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23046/1007115.pdf?sequence=1#page=233>
- Bond, M. H., & Smith, P. B. (1996). Cross-cultural social and organizational psychology. *Annual review of Psychology*, 47(1), 205–235. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/e1eca1bfd28f5780f3acc5e270fd9ca/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=24892>

- Khan, R., Mahnoor, M. & Langhani, S., (2022). Psychological distress and perceived discrimination experienced by Asian international male students in Australia. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 12(1), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjs.v12i1.6048>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American psychologist*, 34(10), 844. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1980-09341-001>
- Carter, R. T., Lau, M. Y., Johnson, V., & Kirkinis, K. (2017). Racial discrimination and health outcomes among racial/ethnic minorities: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 45(4), 232–259. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jmcd.12076>
- Chartrand, T. L., & Bargh, J. A. (1999). The chameleon effect: The perception–behavior link and social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(6), 893. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/getdoi.cfm?doi=10.1037/0022-3514.76.6.893>
- Cheng, H. L., Kwan, K. L. K., & Sevig, T. (2013). Racial and ethnic minority college students' stigma associated with seeking psychological help: Examining psychocultural correlates. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(1), 98. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/journals/cou/60/1/98/>
- Corker, E., Hamilton, S., Robinson, E., Cotney, J., Pinfold, V., Rose, D., ... & Henderson, C. (2016). Viewpoint survey of mental health service users' experiences of discrimination in England 2008–2014. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 134, 6–13. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/acps.12610>
- Cui, L., Tang, G., & Huang, M. (2022). Expressive suppression, confucian Zhong Yong thinking, and psychosocial adjustment among Chinese young adults. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ajsp.12529>
- Dawydiak, E. J., Stafford, H. E., Stevenson, J. L., & Jones, B. C. (2019). *Pathogen disgust predicts stigmatization of individuals with mental health conditions*. Retrieved from https://scholar.archive.org/work/7x6zqkthkfufxjyepzrsdyctxy/access/wayback/https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/76228/1/Dawydiak_etal_EPS_2020_Pathogen_disgust_predicts_stigmatization_of_individuals.pdf
- Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (1986). *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*. Cambridge, MA: Academic Press.
- Everett, B. G., Saint Onge, J., & Mollborn, S. (2016). Effects of minority status and perceived discrimination on mental health. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 35(4), 445–469. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11113-016-9391-3>
- Evrarn, G. & Uzunboyulu, H. (2017). Understanding Children's Paintings in Psychological Counselling with Children. Selected Papers Of 5th Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research (CYICER-2016), 3 (3) *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, <https://doi.org/10.18844/GJHSS.V3I3.1621>
- Fox, J., Grange, N., & Power, M. (2015). Self-disgust in eating disorders: A review of the literature and clinical implications. In P. A. Powell, P. G. Overton, & J. Simpson (Eds.), *The revolting self: perspectives on the psychological and clinical implications of self-directed disgust* (pp. 167–186). London, UK: Karnac Books. Retrieved from [https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/selfdisgust-in-eating-disorders\(f80b2394-4b3b-4179-87dd-fa43dbf6255e\)/export.html](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/selfdisgust-in-eating-disorders(f80b2394-4b3b-4179-87dd-fa43dbf6255e)/export.html)
- Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review*, 102(1), 4. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/1995-17407-001>
- Grossman, J. M., & Liang, B. (2008). Discrimination distress among Chinese American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37(1), 1–11. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10964-007-9215-1>
- Haidt, J., McCauley, C., & Rozin, P. (1994). Individual differences in sensitivity to disgust: A scale sampling seven domains of disgust elicitors. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 16(5), 701–713. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0191886994902127>
- Han, J., LaMarra, D., & Vapiwala, N. (2017). Applying lessons from social psychology to transform the culture of error disclosure. *Medical Education*, 51(10), 996–1001. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/medu.13345>
- Han, M., & Pong, H. (2015). Mental health help-seeking behaviors among Asian American community college students: The effect of stigma, cultural barriers, and acculturation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(1), 1–14. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/566962/summary>

- Khan, R., Mahnoor, M. & Langhani, S., (2022). Psychological distress and perceived discrimination experienced by Asian international male students in Australia. *Global Journal of Sociology: Current Issues*, 12(1), 55-70. <https://doi.org/10.18844/gjis.v12i1.6048>
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and organizations. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 10(4), 15–41. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00208825.1980.11656300>
- Hsu, F. L. (1971). Psychosocial homeostasis and Jen: Conceptual tools for advancing psychological anthropology. *American Anthropologist*, 73(1), 23–44. Retrieved from <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1525/aa.1971.73.1.02a00030>
- Ille, R., Wolf, A., Tomazic, P. V., & Schienle, A. (2016). Disgust-related personality traits in men with olfactory dysfunction. *Chemical Senses*, 41(5), 427–431. <https://academic.oup.com/chemse/article-abstract/41/5/427/2366010>
- Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. Y. (2002). Relation between racial discrimination, social class, and health among ethnic minority groups. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(4), 624–631. Retrieved from <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.92.4.624>
- Katz, I., & Hass, R. G. (1988). Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(6), 893. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037/0022-3514.55.6.893>
- Kim, H. S., & Sasaki, J. Y. (2014). Cultural neuroscience: Biology of the mind in cultural contexts. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 487–514. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/75f1q4x3>
- Kim, H., & Markus, H. R. (1999). Deviance or uniqueness, harmony or conformity? A cultural analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(4), 785. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1999-11645-010>
- Kitayama, S., & Uskul, A. K. (2011). Culture, mind, and the brain: Current evidence and future directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 62, 419–449. Retrieved from <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/32378>
- Kitayama, S., Markus, H. R., Matsumoto, H., & Norasakkunkit, V. (1997). Individual and collective processes in the construction of the self: Self-enhancement in the United States and self-criticism in Japan. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(6), 1245. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1997-06343-001>
- Lim, B. C., & Ployhart, R. E. (2004). Transformational leadership: Relations to the five-factor model and team performance in typical and maximum contexts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(4), 610. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-17371-004>
- Lim, S. J. J., & Hoot, J. L. (2015). Bullying in an increasingly diverse school population: A socio-ecological model analysis. *School Psychology International*, 36(3), 268–282. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0143034315571158>
- Ma, W., Adesope, O. O., Nesbit, J. C., & Liu, Q. (2014). Intelligent tutoring systems and learning outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(4), 901. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/journals/edu/106/4/901.html?uid=2014-25074-001>
- McConahay, J. B. (1986). *Modern racism, ambivalence, and the modern racism scale*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- McKay, D., & Presti, R. L. (2018). Disgust and interpersonal experiences: The complex emotional experience of rejection. In *The revolting self* (pp. 113–126). London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429483042-6/disgust-interpersonal-experiences-complex-emotional-experience-rejection-dean-mckay-rebecca-lo-presti>
- Mirowsky, J., & Ross, C. E. (2017). *Social causes of psychological distress*. London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315129464/social-causes-psychological-distress-john-mirowsky-catherine-ross>
- Nadimpalli, S. B., Dulin-Keita, A., Salas, C., Kanaya, A. M., & Kandula, N. R. (2016). Associations between discrimination and cardiovascular health among Asian Indians in the United States. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 18(6), 1284–1291. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10903-016-0413-3>
- Neblett Jr, E. W., White, R. L., Ford, K. R., Philip, C. L., Nguyen, H. X., & Sellers, R. M. (2008). Patterns of racial socialization and psychological adjustment: Can parental communications about race reduce the

- impact of racial discrimination? *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 18(3), 477–515. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2008.00568.x>
- Olson, M. A., & Fazio, R. H. (2003). Relations between implicit measures of prejudice: What are we measuring?. *Psychological Science*, 14(6), 636–639. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1046/j.0956-7976.2003.psci.1477.x>
- Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 531. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037/a0016059>
- Phelps, M. E. (2000). Positron emission tomography provides molecular imaging of biological processes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 97(16), 9226–9233. Retrieved from <https://www.pnas.org/doi/abs/10.1073/pnas.97.16.9226>
- Selye, H. (1978). *Hans Selye*. Pacifica Tape Library.
- Shu, H. N., Flores, L. Y., & Wang, K. T. (2019). Perceived discrimination, ethnic identity, and mental distress among Asian international students in Korea. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 50(8), 991–1007. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022022119874433>
- Song, Y. S. (2011). Depression, stress, anxiety, and mindfulness in nursing students. *Korean Journal of Adult Nursing*, 23(4), 397–402. Retrieved from <https://www.koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO201114639122000.page>
- Van der Walt, A., & Basson, P. (2015). The lived experience of discrimination of white women in committed interracial relationships with black men. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 15(2), 1–16. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/20797222.2015.1101834>
- Williams, D. R., & Collins, C. (1995). US socioeconomic and racial differences in health: Patterns and explanations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 349–386. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2083415>
- Wong, Y. J., Tsai, P. C., Liu, T., Zhu, Q., & Wei, M. (2014). Male Asian international students' perceived racial discrimination, masculine identity, and subjective masculinity stress: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 61(4), 560. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/journals/cou/61/4/560.html?uid=2014-33201-001>
- Yang, K. S. (1981). Social orientation and individual modernity among Chinese students in Taiwan. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 113(2), 159–170. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00224545.1981.9924368>
- Zhang, W., & Hong, S. (2013). Perceived discrimination and psychological distress among Asian Americans: Does education matter? *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 15(5), 932–943. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10903-012-9676-5>
- Zhu, Y., & Han, S. (2008). Cultural differences in the self: From philosophy to psychology and neuroscience. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(5), 1799–1811. Retrieved from <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00133.x>