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Self-Esteem and Ethnic and National Identification among Adolescents in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

The great majority of studies on the self-esteem of ethnic minority youth has been conducted in the United States, has focused on global personal self-esteem only, and has not considered the issue of dual group identity. Using a two-dimensional perspective we examined ethnic and national identification and its relationship to global self-esteem and self-evaluation in six separate domains. Analyses of data collected in the Netherlands showed that for ethnic minority group adolescents, ethnic identification and national identification were independent of one another. In addition, ethnic identification was positively related to self-esteem whereas national identification was not. Furthermore, compared to the Dutch, ethnic minorities had similar levels of self-esteem and domain specific self-evaluations. Among all groups, physical appearance was clearly the most important predictor of global self-esteem. The results support a two-dimensional conceptualisation of identification for ethnic minority adolescents. The paper also argues that studies on self-esteem should examine different domains of self-evaluation in addition to global self-esteem. Furthermore, the results suggest that not only ethnocultural factors, but also more general factors are important for shaping self-evaluation among adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

The self-esteem of ethnic minority youth has been, for several decades now, a subject of great interest. A global feeling of personal self-esteem is widely recognised as a central aspect of the self-concept, of psychological functioning and well-being (e.g. Jahoda,

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1958; Wylie, 1979), and is strongly related to many other variables including general satisfaction with one's life (see Kaplan, 1982; Rosenberg, 1986). Hence, many theorists agree that "... self-esteem is a crucial and pivotal concept in analysing race-relations" (Bagley, 1979; p. 127).

However, there are a number of limitations in existing research on ethnicity and self-esteem. First, the majority of studies have been conducted within the United States and in particular among African Americans. In comparison to the US, there are only a limited number of studies in other countries raising questions about the generalizability of the findings. There is a clear need for data to be collected in a number of different countries and among various ethnic minority groups so that the role of specific ethnocultural and more general factors can be determined. Second, research on ethnicity and self-esteem typically compares groups of youth in terms of ethnic origin. Thus, ethnic group membership is used as the variable of interest without assessing other aspects of ethnic identity, such as the level of identification with the ethnic group. Furthermore, identification with the dominant group is typically not considered. However, most ethnic minority group adolescents are faced with the issue of dual group identity. They are not only ethnic group members but also members of the larger society in which they will most likely make their future. Third, existing research is limited because it predominantly focuses on global personal self-esteem and ignores different facets of the self. Hence, it is unclear whether findings for global self-esteem can be generalised to other facets and how the different facets are interrelated and contribute to feelings of global self-esteem. Fourth, in examining the relationship between ethnicity and self-esteem, most studies do not consider other factors that may confound or intervene in the relationship, such as gender and academic performance.

The present study tries to make a contribution to the existing literature by examining ethnicity and self-esteem among the numerically three largest ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands, that is the Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans. Dutch adolescents were also involved in the study as a comparison group. Furthermore, self-esteem is examined in relation to both ethnic and mainstream or national identification, different facets of the self in addition to global self-esteem are considered, and gender and academic performance are included as additional variables.

ETHNIC AND NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

In the literature, two main perspectives exist for understanding and examining dual group identity: assimilation and biculturalism. In the first perspective, identification is considered a unidimensional or bipolar phenomenon. This perspective pits one identification against another (e.g. ethnic minority vs. national), and assumes an inverse relationship between the two (e.g. Rotheram-Borus, 1990). Stronger mainstream or national identification is assumed to go together with weaker ethnic group identification.

In a bicultural or two-dimensional perspective it is assumed that identification and cultural involvement are not necessarily bipolar. This perspective is used most often in acculturation studies, where it is argued that culture maintenance and cultural adaptation are not mutually exclusive. It is possible that these are two relatively independent processes that might result in bicultural positions. A two-dimensional framework makes a combination of culture maintenance and adaptation possible, resulting in four different modes of acculturation (Berry, 1980). Assimilation or one-sided adaptation to the dominant culture without preservation of one's own minority culture is one of these modes. The opposite of assimilation is separation, or the one-sided maintenance of minority culture without a focus on the dominant culture. In addition to these two modes, integration refers to that form of acculturation that favours both culture maintenance and adaptation, whereas marginalization refers to the rejection of both cultures.

The two-dimensional framework has been applied successfully to the realm of group identification (Hutnik, 1991; Phinney, 1998; Sanchez & Fernandez, 1993; Ward & RanaDeuba, 1999). For example, after presenting the results of six different studies conducted in the United Kingdom, Hutnik (1991; p. 128) concluded, 'There seems to be clear evidence that ethnic minority identity must be conceptualised along at least two main dimensions: one relating to the degree of identification with the ethnic minority group; and the second relating to the degree of identification with the majority group'. In sum, there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to use a two-dimensional perspective instead of an unidimensional one. This allows us to examine the relationship between identification and adjustment more adequately.

Different methods have been used to assess modes of acculturation. One type of methods uses four separate subscales for measuring assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization. However, Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) show that this type

of measurement can be criticised on both conceptual and methodological grounds. Hence, they argue for two separate assessments, one for both ethnic and national identification that with a bipartite split allows for classifying participants into the four integration modes.

The present study examines ethnic and national identification separately. Following the two-dimensional perspective we expected both identifications to be independent for ethnic minorities. In addition, we examined group identification in relation to self-esteem.

SELF-ESTEEM

Empirical research in the United States has consistently refuted the common idea that lower social status, discrimination and negative stereotypes result in lower global self-esteem among ethnic minority groups (for reviews see Crain, 1996; Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Porter & Washington, 1979, 1993). However, there is very limited supportive evidence for ethnic minority adolescents in other countries, including the Netherlands (see Verkuyten, 1994).

In a unidimensional perspective a positive correlation between self-esteem and ethnic identification implies a negative correlation between self-esteem and national identification. In a two-dimensional framework, however, independent and interaction effects are possible. In her study among African American, Asian American, and Latino adolescents, Phinney (1998) found that ethnic identification was related to self-esteem whereas national identification was not. For White adolescents both ethnic and national identification were related to self-esteem (see also Phinney, et al., 1997). Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) report a similar finding. They concluded that for minority groups ethnic identification is the most salient factor for positive psychological well-being, whereas national identification is unrelated to well-being. Furthermore, they found that participants with an integration mode of acculturation or a dual identification were significantly higher on well-being. Hence, a dual identification is found to be related to better psychological adjustment and reduces the stress of bicultural contacts and of belonging to a group which has a social minority position (e.g. Berry & Sam, 1996; LaFromboise, et al., 1993; Sanchez & Fernandez, 1993; Verkuyten & Kwa, 1994). However, others have argued that a dual identification involves 'living between two cultures' which is associated with insecurity, anxiety and defensiveness (e.g. Watson, 1977).

Adolescence research on self-esteem has for the most part focused on individual sources of self-esteem, and in particular on feelings of competence or efficacy in different domains (e.g. Coleman & Hendry, 1990; Harter, 1993). Researchers examining ethnic minority groups have criticized this focus for ignoring the impact of ethnic group membership on self-esteem. However, this criticism and the related research, in turn has led to ignoring different individual sources of self-esteem such as academic ability, social acceptance, and physical appearance. By far most studies on ethnic minority adolescents have concentrated on global self-esteem or how a person feels about him- or herself in a comprehensive sense. Studies examining various domains of self-perception are scarce, and most of the existing studies focus on the academic self (but see Erkut et al., 1998; Muldoon & Trew, 2000; Verkuyten, 1990).

Harter (1993) and others have consistently found that certain domains contribute more to global self-esteem than others do. In particular, physical appearance is inextricably linked to self-esteem. For adolescents the relationship between physical appearance and global self-esteem is very high (around $r = 0.65$) and robust (see Harter, 1993). Physical appearance or the evaluation of one's looks clearly takes precedence over other domains in predicting global self-esteem, followed by peer social acceptance. One explanation for this is the value and emphasis given to appearance at almost every age which is reinforced through every day communication.

These studies by Harter and others have been conducted predominantly among White participants in the United States. There are some studies on White youth in other countries that report similar findings (e.g. Makris-Botsaris & Robinson, 1991), but very few studies have investigated possible ethnic differences. In the Netherlands, Verkuyten (1990) found physical appearance to be the strongest predictor of global self-esteem among both minority and majority group adolescents. Furthermore, Erkut et al. (1998) found that overall, physical appearance is the domain most closely associated with global self-esteem. However, they also found ethnic differences. For African Americans the strongest correlation with global self-esteem was for scholastic competence, and among Chinese Americans, close friendship was the strongest predictor of self-esteem.

In the present study we used Harter's adolescent self-perception profile not only for assessing global self-esteem but also for six other domains: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioural conduct and close

friendship. We will examine ethnic differences along with the associations of the different domains with global self-esteem. Furthermore, ethnic and national identification will be used as predictors of global self-esteem and of the different domains of self-perception.

GENDER AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Two additional variables were included in order to determine the relative contribution of group identification and other variables to self-esteem. These variables may be related to self-esteem and therefore need to be taken into account. In the present study we included gender and academic performance.

There is very little research that addresses the issue of gender differences in ethnic identity. There are some studies that suggest that ethnic identity is more important for females than for males (e.g. Cross, 1991), but there are also studies that find the opposite (e.g. Verkuyten, 1999), and there are studies that report no gender differences in ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney, 1992; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992). In addition, Bat-Chava and Steen (1997) found no gender differences in the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem in their meta-analysis. However, they point out that this conclusion is based on a very limited number of studies and they argue for more research on gender effects.

Gender differences in global self-esteem are more often found. Various nationally representative samples and random sample surveys show a significant gender difference in global self-esteem in favour of males (for reviews see Coleman & Hendry, 1990; Harter, 1993; Rosenberg, 1986). In their recent meta-analysis Kling et al. (1999) found higher male self-esteem among most age groups. However, Kling et al. (1999) indicate that studies on different facets of the self are lacking, and they also found mixed evidence regarding ethnic and racial differences in the magnitude of the gender difference in global self-esteem. Lower global self-esteem among females seems less obvious for minority groups compared to the majority group (e.g. Dukes & Martinez, 1994; Richman, Clark & Brown, 1985). We therefore expected males to have higher global self-esteem than females, in particular among the Dutch and to a lesser degree among the ethnic minority groups. Furthermore, we will explore gender differences for the different self-perception domains.

Numerous studies, including studies among ethnic minority groups, have found a relationship between academic performance

and global self-esteem (e.g. Keltikangas-Järvinen, 1992; Rosenberg, Schooler & Schoenbach, 1989), and this relationship is stronger between academic performance and scholastic competence. However, in general, the relationships found between academic performance and global self-esteem are not very strong. For example, Osborne (1995) used data from a nationally representative study of American students and found correlations between 0.14 and 0.28. Rosenberg et al. (1989) found in their panel study a correlation of 0.24. Moreover, there are also several studies that have failed to find a significant relationship (e.g. Alsaker, 1989; Demo & Parker, 1987).

One of the reasons for these limited results is the lack of attention paid to the importance of the direct academic environment. Following social comparison theory, Rogers, Smith and Coleman (1978) argue and demonstrate that students develop self-esteem in relation to the classroom in which they reside. Verkuyten and De Jong (1987) have found the same result among Turkish and Dutch students in the Netherlands. The students' perception of how his or her level of performance compares with the performance of classmates seems of particular relevance for feelings of self-esteem. Grades more than scores on academic achievement test are important for assessing one's performances relative to classmates. Hence, the relationship between academic performance and self-esteem should be examined in the context of the students' academic environment or classroom. Therefore, for measuring academic performance we asked students about their relative academic position within their classroom and to report their grades.

In summary, our focus was on group identity and self-esteem and we made the following predictions. First, we expected ethnic and national identity to be relatively independent for ethnic minority adolescents, whereas for the Dutch a positive association was expected. Second, no ethnic differences in global self-esteem were expected, and ethnic differences in self-perception domains were explored. Third, physical appearance was expected to be the strongest independent predictor of global self-esteem. Fourth, for the ethnic minority groups, ethnic identification and not national identification was expected to be related to self-esteem and different domains of self-perceptions. In addition, participants with a dual identification were expected to have higher global self-esteem and more positive self-perceptions than participants preferring other modes of acculturation. Finally, we included gender and academic performance as factors that may affect self-esteem.

METHOD

Participants

The study was carried out in six multi-ethnic secondary schools in the western part of the Netherlands (e.g. Rotterdam and Amsterdam). The questionnaires were administered in the classroom under supervision. Students completed the questionnaire anonymously and voluntarily. All students agreed to complete the questionnaire. In the present study the focus is on 243 adolescents with ethnically Dutch parents, 89 adolescents with Surinamese parents, and 50 adolescents with an Islamic background (Turkish and Moroccan).¹ Of these students 46% were females and 54% males. This gender distribution was the same for the different groups (chi-square = 3.19, $p > .05$). Participants were between 14 and 17 years of age and their mean age was 15.46. The age distribution was similar for the different groups (chi-square = 11.14, $p > .05$). No systematic data on socioeconomic status were gathered. However, according to the schools the majority of their population belonged to the lower strata.

Measures

A version of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) was used to measure ethnic identity. Students completed the revised version of the MIEM (Roberts et al., 1999) which contains 12 items. The instrument is composed of two factors. The first factor (7 items) accounts for most of the variance and is interpreted as ethnic identification, belonging and commitment. The second factor (5 items) refers to ethnic identity search and achievement. With the present sample the first factor explained 48.5% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 5.81. The eigenvalue of the second factor was 1.38. In the present study the focus is on the first dominant factor which is most comparable to the measure used for assessing national identification.

National identification was measured using four items with a five-point scale. These items have been used in other Dutch studies (e.g. Verkuyten, 1999). The items were, 'I very much feel Dutch', 'If someone said something bad about the Dutch, it is as if they say

¹There were 20 participants with a Turkish background and 30 Moroccan students. Because of these low numbers and the many similarities between both groups of Islamic immigrants we decided to treat them as a single group.

something bad about me', 'I feel at home in the Netherlands', and 'I find it important to follow Dutch rules and norms'.

Global self-esteem and self-perceptions were measured using the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents developed by Harter (SPPA; 1988). In addition to global self-esteem, the SPPA assesses perceptions of scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, social acceptance, behavioural conduct, and close friendship. Each subscale has five items that are rated on a four-point scale. The scholastic competence subscale measures the perception of competence in doing class work and how smart or intelligent one feels. Athletic competence taps feelings about being good at sports and athletic activities. The subscale of physical appearance measures an adolescent's satisfaction with his or her looks, body image and attractiveness. Social acceptance refers to the degree to which the adolescent feels accepted by peers and feels popular. Behavioural conduct measures the degree to which one likes the way one behaves, acts the way one is supposed to and does the right thing. The subscale of close friendship taps the perception of the ability to make close friends with whom one can confide and share secrets.

Academic performance relative to classmates was measured using two questions (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2000). First, perceived class position was determined by the Willig scale (see Burns, 1979). This is a self-anchoring ten-step rating scale, the top of which marks the best performing student in one's class, and the lowest step the student with the worst achievements. Participants indicate on which step their own performances are. Second, participants were asked to report their grade in their weakest area. In the Netherlands, grading in school follows a ten-point scale from 1 to 10.

RESULTS

Comparability

The comparability of the measures has to be examined for making valid comparisons between ethnic groups. What should be ascertained is whether or not there is similarity in reliability and meaning. Hence, we compared the reliabilities among the groups and we tested for metric or structural equivalence by calculating a measure of factorial invariance at item-level (Poortinga, 1989).

Table 1 shows the internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the different measures and the separate groups. The

ethnic identity measure shows a high level of internal consistency which was similar for the three groups and in agreement with the results of other studies (see Roberts et al., 1999). The scale measuring national identification has lower alpha's, in particular for the Islamic group.

Harter (1988) reports for four samples adequate reliability for each of the subscales with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .74 to .91. With the present sample the alphas are somewhat lower with a lowest alpha of .67 and a highest of .88. These values indicate an adequate level of internal consistency for this study. Furthermore, there are few differences between the three groups, although in general, the alphas for the Dutch participants are somewhat higher.

The fact that the reliabilities among the three groups are quite similar, indicates the usefulness of the scales for these groups. In addition, for checking similarity in the factor structures, Tucker's coefficients were computed. This was done for each scale separately, and for each combination of two groups separately. All in all, 27 values were calculated. The lowest value was 0.74 followed by 0.79 and 0.81. All other values were above 0.85. This means that each scale had a practically identical factor structure for each combination of two ethnic groups. Thus, in general the scales used in this study have constancy of meaning and can be used for comparisons between different ethnic groups.

TABLE 1

Internal Consistency Estimates (Cronbach's alpha)
for Group identity and Domains of Self-Perception

	Dutch	Surinamese Moroccans	Turks/ Moroccans
Ethnic identity	.87	.88	.87
National identity	.67	.69	.58
Global self-esteem	.76	.75	.74
Scholastic competence	.70	.69	.68
Social acceptance	.78	.68	.68
Athletic competence	.88	.88	.82
Physical appearance	.84	.77	.77
Behavioural conduct	.79	.74	.67
Close friendship	.75	.67	.72

Ethnic and national identification

The adjusted mean scores and standard deviations for the three groups and the different measures are presented in Table 2. We conducted analysis of covariance of the measures for the entire sample, with ethnicity and gender as factors, and academic performance as covariate.² The results show for both ethnic and national identification clear differences between the three ethnic groups. Compared to the other two groups, the Dutch scored lower for ethnic identification and higher for national identification. The two analyses of covariance yielded no significant effects for gender and also not for academic performance.

For the Dutch, a positive relationship between national and ethnic identification was found ($r = .30, p < .001$). However, as predicted no significant relationship was found for the Surinamese ($r = -.15, p > .10$) and for the Islamic group ($r = -.08, p > .10$). Hence, for the ethnic minority participants both identifications were independent showing the usefulness of a two-dimensional framework in studying group identification among these groups.

Classification of the ethnic minority participants among the four acculturation modes can be achieved by a bipartite split of the two identity scales. The scalar midpoint and the median score were similar for both the ethnic identification scale (3.28 and 3.33) and the national identification scale (3.14 and 3.24). A median split was used whereby scores equal to or higher than the median were classified as high and the rest as low. For the Surinamese, this split resulted in 17 participants classified as marginalized, 27 as assimilated, 24 as separated and 22 as integrated. For the Islamic group the numbers were 10, 11, 12, and 17.

Self-esteem and domains of self-perception

Analyses of covariance with ethnicity and gender as factors and academic performance as covariate were performed for examining differences in mean scores. In agreement with many other studies, no difference in global self-esteem between the three groups was found (Table 2). In addition, there were also no differences for five of the six domains of self-perception. Only for social acceptance, the

²Preliminary analyses yielded one effect for age. Older participants scored significantly lower in global self-esteem than younger participants $F(1,380) = 4.21, p < .05$. There were no other main effects for age, and no significant higher order interactions with age.

TABLE 2

Adjusted Means and Standard Deviations for
Ethnic and National Identification, Global Self-Esteem and
Domains of Self-Perception

	Dutch (N = 243)	Surinamese (N = 89)	Turks/ Moroccans (N = 50)	F-value
Ethnic identification	2.73 (.45)	3.34 (.52)	3.33 (.41)	34.90**
National identification	3.83 (.72)	3.02 (.87)	3.05 (.78)	36.89**
Global self-esteem	3.00 (.63)	3.06 (.62)	3.06 (.65)	0.38
Scholastic Competence	2.80 (.58)	2.78 (.56)	2.79 (.48)	1.25
Social Acceptance	3.01 (.58)	3.05 (.57)	3.30 (.51)	4.67*
Athletic Competence	2.70 (.77)	2.68 (.74)	2.90 (.71)	1.11
Physical Appearance	2.67 (.71)	2.78 (.71)	2.81 (.71)	1.22
Behavioural Conduct	2.71 (.69)	2.76 (.69)	2.62 (.68)	0.44
Close Friendship	3.27 (.69)	3.12 (.69)	3.31 (.70)	1.66

Note: All measures had a 4-point scale except national identification that was assessed with a 5-point scale.

$p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Islamic participants had a higher score than the other two groups. Note that in general, the mean scores fluctuate around the value of 2.9 which is above the midpoint of the scale and similar to results reported by Harter (1988). However, there were some differences in subscale means. As in Harter's studies, close friendship was consistently rated the highest, whereas physical appearance was among the lowest domains. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that the standard deviations fall between .48 and .77. This is also consistent with results reported by Harter and indicates considerable variation among participants.

The results show six clear gender differences that again are similar to Harter's (1988) findings. Compared to males, females had a lower score for global self-esteem, $F(1,380) = 10.27$, $p < .001$, scholastic competence, $F(1,380) = 18.38$, $p < .001$, athletic competence, $F(1,380) = 72.92$, $p < .001$, and physical appearance,

$F(1,380) = 37.58, p < .001$. Females had higher scores than males for behavioural conduct, $F(1,380) = 12.45, p < .001$, and for close friendship, $F(1,380) = 13.65, p < .001$. This latter effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between ethnicity and gender, $F(2,380) = 4.09, p < .05$. Only among the Dutch, females had a higher score than males. There were no other significant interaction effects between ethnicity and gender.

The covariate academic performance had a significant positive effect on five of the seven measures. For close friendship and behavioural conduct there were no significant effects ($p > .05$). For the other measures, higher academic performance was related to more positive self-perceptions. As expected, the strongest effect was for scholastic competence, $F(1,380) = 134.24, p < .001$, followed by global self-esteem, $F(1,380) = 36.02, p < .001$. The zero-order correlation between academic performance and perceived academic competence was .51 ($p < .001$), and between academic performance and global self-esteem the correlation was .29 ($p < .001$). Controlling for academic competence, the partial correlation between academic performance and global self-esteem was not significant (.07, $p > .10$). These results indicate that the academic self mediates the relationship between academic performance and global self-esteem (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Table 3 shows for the three groups the correlations between global self-esteem and the six domains of self-perception. In addition, the Table shows the standardized regression coefficients (Beta) of the different domain scores that were entered simultaneously in a regression analysis predicting global self-esteem.

The pattern of results for the three groups is very similar. For all groups the six measures together explain an equally high amount of variance in global self-esteem. Furthermore, for the three groups physical appearance was clearly the strongest predictor of global self-esteem. For the Dutch and Surinamese, scholastic competence and behavioural conduct also made a significant and independent contribution to the prediction of self-esteem. For the Turks and Moroccans, the Beta for scholastic competence is similar as for the Surinamese but not significant due to the lower number of Islamic participants. For these participants close friendship was an additional significant predictor.

Furthermore, participants of all three groups made a distinction between the six domains of self-perception. Similar to results reported by Harter (1988), the highest intercorrelations for the six domains were between close friendship and social acceptance (for the Dutch, .47, for the Surinamese .51, and for the Islamic group

TABLE 3

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations between Global Self-Esteem and Domains of Self-Perceptions, and Standardized Regression coefficients (Beta) Predicting Global Self-Esteem

	Dutch		Surinamese		Turks/Moroccans	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Scholastic Competence	.46***	.26***	.41***	.16*	.41**	.18
Social Acceptance	.33***	.09	.36***	.06	.36**	.03
Athletic Competence	.27***	.04	.14	.02	.31*	.16
Physical Appearance	.66***	.52***	.65***	.55***	.60***	.54***
Behavioural Conduct	.20**	.15**	.38***	.22**	.10	.14
Close Friendship	.15*	.08	.22*	.14	.50***	.36***
Multiple r		.74*		.74*		.73*
F-value		50.03**		15.36**		7.48**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

.47). Physical appearance and athletic competence were also related (for the Dutch .39, for the Surinamese, .22, and for the Turks .54). All other correlations between the domains were below .30.

Group identity, self-esteem and self-perceptions

For the Dutch, there was one significant correlation between, on the one hand, ethnic and national identification, and on the other hand, global self-esteem and domains of self-perception. Higher ethnic identification was related to a more positive score for physical appearance ($r = .20$, $p < .01$). For the Islamic group, there was also only one significant correlation between ethnic identification and social acceptance ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). However, for the Surinamese participants ethnic identification was significantly related to global self-esteem ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), physical appearance ($r = .32$, $p < .01$),

social acceptance ($r = .27, p < .01$), and scholastic competence ($r = .23, p < .05$).

For the Surinamese, we conducted multiple regression analyses for examining the main effects of ethnic and national identification and their interaction on self-esteem and self-perceptions. The interaction term was computed using centred scores (Aiken & West, 1991), and gender and academic performance were included as additional predictors. The results show that ethnic identification made a significant and independent contribution to the prediction of global self-esteem (Beta = .32, $t = 3.01, p < .01$), and also to physical appearance (Beta = .26, $t = 2.30, p < .05$), social acceptance (Beta = .28, $t = 2.49, p < .05$), and scholastic competence (Beta = .24, $t = 2.55, p < .01$). Academic performance was a predictor that made an additional significant contribution to the variance in global self-esteem (Beta = 0.26, $t = 2.19, p < .05$) and scholastic competence (Beta = .53, $t = 5.34, p < .001$). No other predictors, including gender, had significant effects for any of the measures.

In addition, the interaction term between ethnic and national identification was not a significant predictor for global self-esteem or any of the domains of self-perception. The advantage of multiple regression analysis is that the continuous nature of the data is efficiently used. However, this technique does not directly permit the explicit comparison of self-perceptions across the four acculturating groups. Therefore, planned comparisons for a priori contrasts were undertaken by t tests. First, the mean score of the integrated group was contrasted with the combined mean of the separated, assimilated and marginalized groups. The results show no significant differences for any of the measures. There were also no significant differences for the contrasts between the assimilated group and the other three groups. However, compared to the other three groups, the marginalized group had lower global self-esteem, $t(89) = 2.02, p < .05$, and lower perceived scholastic competence, $t(88) = 2.27, p < .05$. Furthermore, the separated group had higher scores for scholastic competence and physical appearance than the other three groups, $t(88) = 2.47, p < .05$, and $t(87) = 2.43, p < .05$, respectively.

DISCUSSION

The present study has tried to go beyond the existing research by studying ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands, by examining both ethnic minority identification and national identification, by focusing on different domains of self-perceptions in addition to

global self-esteem, and by including gender and academic performance as additional variables.

The results support a two-dimensional conceptualisation of identification for ethnic minority adolescents. Ethnic and national identification were independent dimensions, and only ethnic identification was related to self-esteem and various domains of self-perception. The independence of both identifications is in agreement with other findings (e.g. Sanchez & Fernandez, 1993; Hutnik, 1991; Verkuyten & Kwa, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), and contrary to an unidimensional or bipolar framework that assumes a very strong or even perfect inverse relationship. Ethnic minority youth are faced with the issue of dual group identity and for most of them, ethnic identification is not contradictory to national identification. This is not to say that such a contradiction may never exist. Situations of temporary or more enduring conflicts and hostilities can require clear choices making both identifications incompatible.

The divergent relationship of group identification with self-esteem and domains of self-perception is also consistent with a two-dimensional framework. In particular among the Surinamese adolescents, ethnic identification showed positive correlations with these measures, whereas national identification was unrelated to self-esteem and self-perceptions. When a number of other variables were taken into consideration, ethnic identification predicted self-esteem and domain specific self-perceptions. Hence, the results provide strong support for the importance of ethnic identity for psychological well-being which is also found among other ethnic groups in other countries (e.g. Phinney et al., 1997; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

For the Surinamese, we found limited evidence that the four modes of acculturation are differently related to self-evaluations. However, marginalized adolescents had lower global self-esteem and lower perceived scholastic competence. Thus participants who neither identified with their own ethnic group nor with the national group, had the most negative scores. There are other studies that show that marginality is associated with lower psychological well-being (Berry & Sam, 1996; Verkuyten & Kwa, 1994).

Separated Surinamese participants had a higher score for scholastic competence and physical appearance. Hence, a predominant identification with one's own ethnic group appears to affect self-perceptions positively. The own group may provide social and psychological support, for example in dealing with negative messages and cultural conflicts. In addition, low national identification may prevent having to deal with psychological

distress. Furthermore, we found no evidence for the idea that an integrated mode of acculturation is inherently problematic, for example, because of assumed cultural conflicts and divided loyalties (e.g. Watson, 1977). A dual identification was not associated with lower self-esteem or more negative self-perceptions.

The Surinamese and Islamic participants had a higher score for ethnic identification than the Dutch, whereas the Dutch scored higher for national identification. Several studies among different ethnic groups in different countries have shown that, on average, youth from ethnic minorities identify more strongly with their ethnic group, than majority group members do (see Phinney, 1991; Verkuyten, 1999). Explanations for this finding can be sought in both the minority and the ethnic aspects of ethnic minorities.

Several theories stress the minority aspect, such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Being a minority group member is seen as a threat to a positive social identity. People respond to this threat by accentuating positively valued differences and with stronger own group identification. Ethnic minorities can emphasize the value and self-defining importance of their ethnic background in reaction to negative characterisations. Vermeulen (1984) shows that perceived rejection and discrimination are factors in ethnic identification among Turkish and Surinamese youth in the Netherlands. He uses the term 'reactive ethnic identity', because this identity is emphasised in reaction to perceived exclusion (Ogbu, 1993).

This explanation is plausible, but also limited. Hutnik (1991), amongst others, has argued that the ethnic aspect, or the characteristic features of the in-group, are also important. Ethnic minority groups have their own rich history, culture and traditions. These are important sources for developing pride and satisfaction in one's ethnic background or a positive ethnic identity. Most ethnic minority groups are 'ethnic' from the inside and have their own social network and sources for a positive ethnic identity. In addition, many ethnic minority groups have a more collectivist cultural background in which the importance of the own group and the preservation of group harmony and loyalty are stressed (Triandis et al., 1988). Ethnic minority adolescents have been found to be more collectivist than the Dutch (e.g. Huiberts et al., 1999). Furthermore, in a study among Turkish and Dutch early adolescents, self-esteem was related to individual differences in collectivism among the former group but not among the latter one (Verkuyten, 2000).

Existing studies on the possible consequences of ethnic minority

identity for self-concept predominantly concentrate on global personal self-esteem. In the present study we examined not only global self-esteem but also various domains of self-perception taking other variables into consideration. For global self-esteem and the different domains of self-perception no ethnic differences were found. Only for social acceptance the Islamic participants had a higher score than the Surinamese and the Dutch. For all other measures, the different ethnic groups had equal mean scores. Hence, the present study replicates the well-documented finding in the United States that in general ethnic minority youth do not have lower global self-esteem than majority contemporaries. In addition, the present study goes beyond most of the existing research by showing that this lack of difference also applies to different domains of self-perception.

Furthermore, we examined the relationship between global self-esteem and self-perceptions. For all ethnic groups physical appearance was clearly the most important source for global self-esteem. This result is in agreement with many other studies among White (early) adolescents and adults (see Harter, 1993). The present study shows that this 'inextricable link between appearance and self-esteem' (Harter, 1993; p. 95) also exist among ethnic minority groups. Contemporary Western societies emphasise appearance and those who are considered attractive receive more positive attention. The implication is that more general social factors play an important part in the self-concept of ethnic minorities. Studies of ethnic minorities often tend to focus exclusively or predominantly on ethnic specific factors. However, global self-esteem of ethnic minority youth cannot be reduced to their experiences and beliefs associated with their ethnic background. It seems important to recognise the influence of more general factors making a wider perspective necessary. The interrelationship of various factors must be determined in order to get a more complete and accurate understanding of the self-concept of ethnic minority youth.

The need to address more general factors when studying ethnic minority groups is also suggested by the gender differences found. Gender had an effect on global self-esteem and domains of self-perception. Females had lower scores for self-esteem, scholastic competence, athletic competence and physical appearance, but higher scores for behavioural conduct and close friendships. The gender difference in global self-esteem is in agreement with a recent meta-analysis that finds from early adolescence on a consistent difference in favour of males (Kling, et al., 1999). Kling et al. (1999) discuss several explanations for this difference such as different gender roles and the cultural emphasis on girls' physical

appearance. Harter (1993) has found that a lower perception of attractiveness among girls contributes to their lower global self-esteem. Others have argued and shown that already in early adolescence, gender inequality in society, demanding role expectations, and early pubertal development leave their mark on global self-esteem of girls in particular (Simmons & Blyth, 1987).

The gender differences for domains of self-perception may also have to do with attractiveness and role demands. An additional explanation is that males compared to females are more concerned with differences in status, prestige and achievements. In general, males show a higher participation in (competitive) activities involving achievement and competence that may explain their higher scores in the present study for perceived academic and athletic competence. In comparison, females more often belong to small groups that are based on interests and interpersonal attractions, which may explain their present higher scores for behavioural conduct and close friendships.

The fact that similar gender differences in self-esteem and self-perceptions were found among the three ethnic groups suggest that more general developmental and societal factors are important. However, ethnic specific factors may also play a role. For the domain of close friendship we found an interaction effect between ethnicity and gender. Dutch females compared to males had a higher score for close friendships. This was not found among the Surinamese and Islamic participants. In addition, regression analysis for the Surinamese group separately yielded no significant gender differences in self-esteem and self-perceptions. Hence, in general the gender differences found were more clear for the majority group than for the ethnic minorities which is also found in other studies (e.g. Martinez & Dukes, 1991; Phinney et al., 1997).

Moreover, it is possible that the lower self-esteem of females requires another explanation among the Dutch than among minority groups. For example, Islamic females may have to cope with more traditional gender roles, whereas Dutch females may experience more pressures regarding appearances. The role and position of women in Islamic cultures differs in many respects from what is typically expected among the Dutch. Hence, compared to the Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan females may face somewhat different challenges that, however, among both ethnic groups lead to lower self-esteem compared to males. Thus, not only more general factors are important for understanding gender differences in self-esteem among different ethnic groups, but also more specific factors. Similar levels of self-esteem may in part be the result of different sources.

To evaluate the present results and to give some suggestions for further study, two limits of our research will be considered. First, in examining the relationship between self-perceptions and group identity our focus was on identification or a sense of belonging and commitment. However, ethnic and national identity are multidimensional constructs and their various components may be related differently to self-perceptions (Phinney 1991). So, for getting a clear picture of the role of ethnic and national identity in self-perceptions of minority group members further research needs to consider other components such as knowledge about one's group, and the orientation toward one's own group and mainstream society. In addition, studies could include other psychological measures than the self-concept and also measures for sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Furthermore, the reliability of national identification was relatively modest in comparison with ethnic identification. This might have attenuated the effect sizes for this measure. The lower reliability might be explained by the lower number of items but may also be due to specific connotations that national identification may have for minority group members, such as assimilation.

Second, the present study cannot determine the causal direction of the effects. We treated ethnic and national identification as predictors and self-esteem and self-perceptions as the dependent variables. However, self-esteem may, for example, also affect ethnic identification. The present results, then, show one possible, but theoretically grounded, direction of the relationship between group identity and self-esteem. As such it contributes to answering the complex question of what it means to be a member of an ethnic minority group.

In conclusion, the present study confirms the idea that group identification among minority youth should be studied as a two-dimensional process whereby minority group members can have either a strong or weak identification with their own group as well as with the mainstream society. The two dimensions are important for understanding how minority youth deal with ethnic group membership in a pluralist society, and how these identifications are related to psychological well-being. In studying these relationships, it is important to focus not only on ethnic specific factors but also to consider more general factors that affect global self-esteem and its different sources.

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