

Self-Esteem, Self-Concept Stability, and Aspects of Ethnic Identity Among Minority and Majority Youth in the Netherlands

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This study investigates the relationship between ethnic identity and self-feelings among minority and majority youth living in the Netherlands. Contrary to existing studies, not only global self-esteem is assessed but also self-concept stability, and in addition, not only ethnic group membership was studied but also different aspects of ethnic identity: ethnic group identification and ingroup evaluation. There were no significant differences between minority and majority youth for global self-esteem and for self-concept stability. In addition, among the various ethnic groups there was only a small group who reported fluctuating self-feelings. However, as predicted, minority youth identified more strongly with their ethnic group and evaluated their group more positively than Dutch contemporaries. It is concluded that research should pay attention to the different aspects involved in order to understand more fully the possible consequences of ethnic minority identity for psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The principle guiding many definitions about ethnic majority and minority groups is not only to be found in numerical criteria, but in particular in the social position of the groups concerned (see Hutnik, 1991; Tajfel, 1981). By definition, minorities are seen as subordinated groups in society

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that are held in low regard by the dominant group, and who are more often the victim of negative stereotypes, social derogation, and exclusion. In addition, for many minority groups around the world, and especially for children of migrants, there is the question of how to deal with conflicting cultural norms, values, and demands of the majority and the minority culture. These kinds of unfavorable conditions have been extensively described and documented, and are often assumed to have important implications for the self-feelings of minority members. An example is Kramer who writes,

The way in which one is identified in the larger society (as well as where one is located in the social structure) affects the way in which one identifies oneself. Therefore it seems logical that minority or low status groups are likely to judge themselves—as a group—less positively than members of majority or high status groups. (in Jacques and Chason, 1977, p. 399)

A global feeling of self-esteem is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning and well-being (Jahoda, 1958, Kaplan, 1982; Rosenberg, 1985). Self-esteem has been shown to be related to many psychological as well as behavioral variables. For instance, compared to adolescents with low self-esteem, high self-esteem youth are less depressed, are more satisfied with life, and they rank lower on psychological and psychophysiological measures of anxiety, on overt aggression, irritability, and anomie (see Rosenberg, 1985). Hence, self-esteem is related to important aspects of psychological well-being. In addition, global self-esteem seems to be a relatively stable characteristic that does not change very easily (O'Malley and Bachman, 1983). The importance of self-esteem implies that it can be expected that unfavorable living conditions will have implications for feelings of self-worth.

The facts, however, tell a different story. Most recent studies using well-established scales and adequate control groups have shown no relationship between ethnicity and global personal self-esteem among youth in different Western countries. In the United States most studies focus on whites and Afro-Americans. There are studies that find no difference in self-esteem between these groups (Hines and Berg-Cross, 1981; Jacques and Chason, 1977) and also studies that find higher self-esteem among Afro-Americans (Richman *et al.*, 1985; Rotheram-Borus, 1990). Despite methodological problems and differences, as well as differences in research populations, empirical research in general does not support the assumption that Afro-Americans have lower self-esteem (for reviews see Burns, 1982; Porter and Washington, 1979; Wylie, 1979). There are also several studies of the self-esteem of ethnic minorities that have been undertaken outside

the United States (for a review see Verkuyten, 1994). In Great Britain the research has produced rather contradictory results because of differences in methods and groups investigated (see Stone, 1981). Here too, however, there are studies that find no difference at all or higher self-esteem among ethnic minorities (Louden, 1978; Stone, 1981). The same holds for the Netherlands as Verkuyten (1988, 1990) has shown in several studies.

Although these results are clear, there are at least two restrictions to this kind of research that focus on possible consequences of ethnic minority identity for psychological well-being, and in particular for self-feelings.

Self-Concept Stability

First, studies on the self-concept among minority youth predominantly focus on self-esteem. Other dimensions are largely ignored, although different writers have argued for the necessity of going beyond self-esteem (e.g., Rosenberg, 1979). This necessity is illustrated in studies that find different patterns of association. For instance, Hughes and Demo (1989) found in a national sample of Afro-Americans relatively high self-esteem but rather low feelings of personal efficacy. Another example is Simmons and Rosenberg (1975), who found that the self-esteem of boys and girls differed only modestly, while adolescent girls showed a considerably higher instability of self-concept. They were less certain about themselves and their ideas and feelings about themselves tended to vary and to change rather easily. This dimension of self-concept stability will be studied in the present research among minority and majority youth.

One of the central issues for adolescents is to settle on some picture of who and what they are. Uncertainty about the self-concept seems to be at its peak during adolescence when all that was taken for granted about the self in childhood becomes questioned. Doubt and uncertainties are introduced, not only because of dramatic physical and physiological changes but also because of altered social experiences and changing demands from society. The result can be a relatively unstable, shifting self-concept that is a major aspect of what Erikson (1959) calls "identity confusion." Savin-Williams and Demo (1983) showed empirically that it is possible to make a distinction between adolescents with a relatively stable self-concept, those with an unstable self-concept characterized by oscillating self-feelings, and a major group in between with self-feelings that are neither predictably stable nor predictably unstable from one moment to the next. So people are not only concerned with whether they have a favorable or unfavorable

view about themselves, but also whether they have a certain and stable view about themselves. Rosenberg (1985, p. 220) emphasized the need for an individual to have a reasonably stable self-concept because "the self-concept is his most fundamental frame of reference; without a firm clear picture of what one is like, the individual is virtually immobilized." Swann (1983) discusses several studies that show that individuals seek out consistency and stability, and actively resist information that challenges their prevailing view of themselves.

Self-concept stability, therefore, seems to be an important dimension of the self, and self-feelings that change rather easily are a burden to the person. A volatile and unstable self-concept has been shown to be associated with feelings of depression, insecurity, anxiety, and resentment, whereas a stable self-concept is associated with happiness and satisfaction (Rosenberg, 1979, 1985). Some of these associations have also been found among minority youth. Verkuyten (1992) found that Turkish youth in the Netherlands with a relatively stable self-concept had a higher score for internal locus of control and achievement motivation, and a lower score for anxiety than Turkish youth with an unstable self-concept. In addition, among Chinese youth living in the Netherlands there was a significant association between self-concept stability and hedonic affect. These relationships are partly due to the fact that self-concept stability is positively related to self-esteem. However, if self-esteem is statistically controlled for, these associations with different indicators of psychological well-being remain to exist.

The issue of self-concept stability is certainly also for minority youth an important one. Minority youth are often confronted with different norms, values, and demands from significant others, such as their multi-ethnic peer group and their family. These circumstances might affect their self-concept certitude and stability. Managing the complexity of dual reference points may generate ambiguity and self-concept uncertainty (see Phinney, 1990). However, more recent research suggests that it is possible to deal with different norms, values, and demands without suffering negative psychological outcomes (for a review, see LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993). Moreover, the benefits of dual reference points have been pointed out such as flexibility in roles and adaptability.

There is hardly any research addressing the issue of self-concept stability among minority youth. An exception is Verkuyten (1992), who found no significant difference in mean stability scores for Turkish and Dutch youth. The Turkish youth, however, showed a greater variability in their scores. The present study aims to extend these findings to other minority groups.

Aspects of Ethnic Identity

A second restriction of research on ethnicity and global personal self-esteem concerns the lack of distinctions between different components of ethnic identity, and especially between ethnicity and ethnic identity (Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992). Most research compares groups of youth in terms of ethnic origin operationalized, for instance, by the country of birth of the parents or grandparents. Thus ethnic group membership is used as the variable of interest without assessing other aspects of ethnic identity, such as the sense of belonging to the group and the evaluation of group membership.

The result is a rather limited understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and self-esteem. Studies that have examined this relationship more closely have shown, for instance, that ethnic esteem mediates between ethnic groups and personal self-esteem (Grossman *et al.*, 1985), and that ethnic group membership coupled with a sense of ethnic pride has a positive relationship to one's sense of self-worth. In addition, the level of self-esteem can be similar among minority and majority youth, but the underlying processes may differ. For instance, in a study of Dutch and Turkish youth in the Netherlands, Verkuyten (1993) found that self-attributed performance was the only important source of academic self-esteem among the Dutch. It was also an important source among the Turkish children, in addition, however, to perceived appraisal by Dutch classmates. Hence levels of self-esteem can be similar, while the correlates of self-esteem partly differ.

These and other studies (see Phinney, 1990; Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992) clearly suggest that the links between self-esteem, ethnicity, and ethnic identity are not straightforward. They are dependent on, for instance, the particular ethnic group, the ways of dealing with ethnicity within a specific social context, and different processes of self-concept formation. To understand the contributions of ethnic identity to feelings of self-worth more fully, it is necessary to go beyond simple comparisons between ethnic minority and majority youth based on ethnic group membership.

In her review, Phinney (1990) argues for more comprehensive studies measuring a range of components of ethnic identity. Most writers on ethnic (minority) identity agree with the multifaceted character of ethnic identity (e.g., Garza and Herringer, 1987). A first important aspect concerns the way one defines oneself. This aspect is important because it locates the individual within a particular social and cultural framework and because it may differ from ethnic group membership.

Subjects do not have to define themselves in terms of their ethnic origin. For instance, people may feel that a single ethnic label, whether chosen or imposed, is inaccurate inasmuch as they feel part of two or more groups (Hutnik, 1991; Ullah, 1987). Elsewhere we distinguished four types of self-definition based on the identification with one's own minority group and the majority group: dissociative, assimilative, acculturative, and marginal (Verkuyten and Kwa, 1994). All four were found to be present among minority youth in the Netherlands, showing that self-identification among minority youth is a two-dimensional process. In addition, the different types of self-identification showed a clear pattern of differences for self-esteem, self-concept stability, and life satisfaction. Minority youth who identified predominantly with the majority group (assimilative), or neither with their own minority group nor with the majority group (marginal), scored lower on these aspects of psychological well-being than subjects who identified predominantly with their own group (dissociative) or with both the minority and majority group (acculturative or bicultural). So the first important aspect is the way people define themselves, and a failure to assess self-definition in empirical research raises the possibility that subjects are included who do not consider themselves members of the group in question. However, when people define themselves unequivocally as members of their ethnic group, it seems necessary to make a distinction between different aspects of ethnic identity. In addition to our previous research, the present study concentrates on those youth who clearly define themselves as members of their ethnic group. Two aspects of ethnic identity will be studied.

First, if people define themselves in ethnic terms, this does not mean that they have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Ethnic group membership can be relatively unimportant but there can also be a strong identification with the group as a whole. The question that concerns us here is whether a sense of belonging to one's ethnic group is associated with feelings about oneself as a person.

A second aspect concerns the views one holds about one's ethnic group. The main question is whether it is possible to evaluate your ethnic group negatively and yet feel good about yourself. Research suggests that negative ingroup stereotypes with which one agrees do not have to have personal relevance (Rosenberg, 1979; Verkuyten, 1994). However, it is unclear whether self-evaluation is independent of ingroup evaluation among different ethnic groups. Also, unfavorable ingroup evaluations probably have a particularly negative impact on psychological well-being in the case of strong feelings of belonging.

Different Ethnic Groups

These relationships were investigated among Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese youth living in the Netherlands.² Dutch youth were not only included in the study for reasons of comparison, since the concept of ethnic identity does not only apply to minority youth. There are circumstances in which ethnic group membership loses much of its self-evidence for majority groups. Ethnicity can become important as an identity issue for majority youth when they are living in neighborhoods and visiting schools where there are many ethnic minority groups. In that case, majority youth are more or less forced to face the meaning and value their ethnic group membership has for them. The present study was conducted in multiethnic schools where the indigenous Dutch are not a numerical majority.

Different minority groups were studied in order to determine the importance of the acceptance or prestige of one's ethnic minority group in the society one lives in. Some minority groups are less accepted than others, and as a corollary they are more confronted with prejudice and discrimination. There can be relative degrees of social acceptability of the various minority groups. In the Netherlands there are clear indications that the Turks as a group have the lowest prestige followed by the Moroccans and the Surinamese. Studying, among Dutch adolescents, their rank ordering of minority groups or the ethnic hierarchy, Hagendoorn and Hraba (1989) found that the Turks were consistently evaluated most negatively, which puts them at the bottom of the hierarchy. Vekuyten (1992) found that 54%

²It is only relatively recently that large numbers of migrant workers and their families have settled in the Netherlands. It is true that a few thousand Italians came to the Netherlands even before World War II, and a few thousand migrant workers came from Spain and Portugal in the 1950s and 1960s. However, it was not until the beginning of the 1970s that Dutch industry began to recruit migrant labor on a large scale. Most of the migrants were Turkish and Moroccan men who were either single or had left their families behind in their country of origin. At first, all parties concerned imagined that the migrants would only remain in the Netherlands for a limited period. However, events proved otherwise; in the mid-1970s, a process of family reunification began as first the Turks and later the Moroccans were joined by their wives and children. At the same time, large numbers of people from the former Dutch colony Surinam settled in the Netherlands, which they were able to do because they were Dutch nationals.

In 1989, 640,600 immigrants were resident in the Netherlands (5% of the total population). The Surinamese were the largest single group, with 210,000, followed by the Turks (185,000), Moroccans (143,000), and Antilleans (66,000). A further miscellaneous group of 58,041 was made up of Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, Yugoslavs, and Greeks. Further, there were people from China, the Cape-Verde Islands and other countries. Just under half of these immigrants settled in the four largest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. Most live in old inner city areas, where they sometimes make up as much as half the population, and immigrant children may even comprise the great majority of pupils at local schools.

of a sample of Dutch youth thought that the Turks are the group that is most discriminated against. Only 6% was of the opinion that the Moroccans are most discriminated against. In addition, 39% was of the opinion that the Turks live in the worst socioeconomic conditions in the Netherlands, whereas 24% thought this was the case for the Moroccans. This difference between ethnic minority groups in social prestige and socioeconomic position was also perceived by the groups themselves. For instance, 42% of the Turkish youth thought that the Turks were the group most discriminated against, and 56% of the Moroccans were of this opinion. By contrast, 19% of the Turks thought that the Moroccans were the group most discriminated against while this percentage for the Moroccans was 23%.

So there are clear indications of relative degrees of social acceptability of the different minority groups in the Netherlands. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) suggest that being a minority member poses a threat to one's self-concept and that threat might be counteracted by accentuating positive social identity (see Hogg and Abrams, 1988). This will happen especially in a situation where group boundaries are seen as impermeable and intergroup status as relatively stable (Ellemers, 1991), as in the present study. In such a situation, a stronger identification with one's own group and a more positive ingroup evaluation can be expected. Hutnik (1991) also assumes that discrimination and prejudices make ethnicity more salient and important for minority groups. In addition, however, she points out that most minority groups have their own culture, history, and community that leads to an emphasis on ethnic identity, especially among migrants.

Hence it can be predicted that minority youth will show a stronger ethnic group identification and a more positive ingroup evaluation compared to the Dutch. In addition, it can be expected that the Turks will show higher scores on these measures than the other two minority groups.

METHOD

Sample

In the present study we concentrate on those subjects who define themselves exclusively and unequivocally in terms of their ethnic origin. Ethnic self-definition was assessed by using an open-ended question stating, "In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be . . ." (see Phinney, 1992). In total, 116 respondents defined themselves as Turkish, which is 77% of the respondents who indicated that they had a Turkish father and mother. Among the respondents of Moroccan origin, 73 or 74% defined themselves

as Moroccan. For the Surinamese this was the case for 73 subjects or 73%. These percentages show that minority youth do not have to define themselves exclusively in terms of their ethnic group membership. Other terms were used such as Muslim, foreigner, and Dutch-Turkish. The sample contained 308 respondents who defined themselves as Dutch.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents were boys and 38% were girls. There were no significant differences between the ethnic groups for gender (chi-square = 3.64, $df = 3$, $p > .10$). The respondents were between 12 and 17 years of age (mean age was 14.2). There was a significant difference between the ethnic groups for age (chi-square = 25.0, $df = 6$, $p < .001$). A higher percentage of the Dutch respondents were younger compared to the different minority groups. Among the minority groups there was a significant difference in age of migration to the Netherlands (chi-square = 35.5, $df = 6$, $p < .001$). Seventy-four percent of the Turkish respondents were born in the Netherlands while among the Moroccan and Surinamese respondents these percentages were 40% and 46%, respectively.

The study was carried out in six secondary schools in the city of Rotterdam. The questionnaires were administered in the classroom under supervision. All schools had a high percentage of pupils from various ethnic minority groups (around 65%). No systematic data on socioeconomic status were gathered. However, according to the schools the majority of their population—ethnic minority as well as Dutch students—belonged to the lower strata. Despite this similar socioeconomic background, both Dutch youth and ethnic minority youth consider the Dutch a higher status group. (Verkuyten, 1992).

Instruments

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure global self-esteem. The RSE consists of 10 items with four answer categories. A fifth neutral category was added, and the scale was scored following the Likert method. All items had an item-total correlation above .30, and Cronbach's alpha was .79. The reliabilities for the separate ethnic groups ranged from .73 to .82.

Self-concept stability was measured using an adapted version of the Stability of Self Scale developed by Rosenberg (1979). Five of the six original items were used with five answer categories. The items were as follows: "Some days I am happy with the kind of person I am, and other days I am not"; "My ideas about myself seem to change very often"; "Some days I feel I am one kind of a person, and other days I feel I am a different

kind of person"; "Some days I have a good opinion of myself, and other days I have not"; "I am often unsure about myself." The 5 items loaded on one factor, which explained 45% of the variance. Among the Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese subjects these percentages were 48%, 42%, 40%, and 42%, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .69. Alpha ranged from .64 to .72 for the separate ethnic groups.

Ethnic group identification was measured using 10 items of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) developed by Luthanen and Crocker (1992). The original scale was altered in order to focus on ethnicity. Luthanen and Crocker (1992) report that the psychometric properties of such an altered version closely resemble those of the original scale. The 10 items assess the importance and the evaluation of ethnic group membership (e.g., "My ethnic group is not so important for the person I am," "My ethnic group is an important part of who and what I am," "I feel good about the ethnic group I belong to," "I often regret that I belong to the ethnic group I do"). Principal components analysis with varimax rotation showed that the 10 items loaded on one factor, which explained 40% of the variance. Factor analysis for the different ethnic groups separately showed that the percentage of the variance explained for the Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese respondents were 36%, 36%, 44%, and 41%, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .73. The reliabilities for the separate ethnic groups ranged from .66 to .76.

Ingroup evaluation was measured using evaluative trait ratings on 8 different attributes (5-point scale; agree-disagree). Four were stated negatively (aggressive, dishonest, lazy, and rule breaking) and four positively (smart, respectful, friendly, hospitable). Principal components analysis with varimax rotation yielded one main factor, which explained 31% of the variance. Percentage of the variance explained for the Dutch, Turkish, Moroccans and Surinamese subjects was 30%, 29%, 30%, and 28%, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was .67, and alpha ranged from .62 to .66 for the separate ethnic groups.

Analysis

As stated above, separate factor analysis showed that the percentages of the variance explained by the main factor were similar among the different ethnic groups. Additionally, the reliabilities among the ethnic groups are also similar. These results are indications of the usefulness of the scales for these groups, but they are by no means sufficient for a comparison between groups with a different cultural background.

The problems in this connection are numerous and have been extensively dealt with in cross-cultural psychology. One of the key problems is the question of whether or not the same scale measures the same thing in the groups that are compared. What should be ascertained is whether or not there is similarity in meaning (Hoelter, 1983). Berry and Dasen (1974) draw attention to metrical equivalence, which means that data from two or more cultural groups have the same psychometric characteristics. One can test for metric or structural equivalence by calculating a measure for factorial invariance at the item level (Poortinga, 1975, 1989). Such a measure implies not only that the factor structure between two or more groups must be similar, but also the variance, as a result of measuring error.³ Several empirical studies on self-esteem among minority and majority youth, as well as cross-cultural studies, have compared factor scores and calculated an index of structural similarity. Most of these studies find sufficient similarity between factor structures to make meaningful comparisons between different ethnic groups (Louden, 1981; Hoelter, 1983; Bagley *et al.*, 1983; Verkuyten, 1994). Studies using the technique of confirmatory factor analysis have also shown similarity in the structure of self-esteem scales among different ethnic groups (Pallas *et al.*, 1990; Watkins, 1989; Watkins *et al.*, 1991).

In order to check similarity in the factor structures in the present study, the scores on the items have been standardized. Subsequently, the factor loadings of the items in the scales that were used have been compared, and Tucker's coefficient, a measure of factorial invariance (TenBerge, 1977), has been computed. This was done for each scale separately, and for each combination of two ethnic groups separately. All in all, 24 values have been calculated, and the lowest value was 0.90. This means that each scale had a practically identical factor structure for each combination of two ethnic groups. So the scales used in this study have constancy of meaning and can be used for comparisons between several ethnic groups.

The differences in the dependent measures between the various ethnic groups and possible interactions have been determined by means of analysis of variance. Gender, age (12-13, 14-15, and 16-17 years), and age of migration (born in the Netherlands, 1-5, 6-10, and 11-15 years) were included as factors. Analysis of variance was used to test for main effects of these factors as well as two- and three-way interaction effects. Multiple classification analyses were used to examine the size of the differences, by means of an estimate of the explained variance (based on η^2).

³Ideally to demonstrate meaning equivalence of measurements requires within-construct validity or structural equivalence revealing the conceptual structure of a scale in different cultural groups, as well as between-construct validity or functional equivalence relating a measure with conceptual correlates in different groups. In the present study only structural equivalence was considered.

Apart from the means, the standard deviations were tested for homogeneity (F test). In addition, for every ethnic group Pearson correlations between the different measures were computed separately.

RESULTS

Self-Esteem and Stability

Table I presents the results for the different measures and the various ethnic groups. No significant differences between the ethnic groups for global self-esteem as well as self-concept stability appeared.

However, among both groups there was a clear difference between boys and girls. Boys had a significantly higher score for self-esteem ($F = 89.2, p < .001$), and a more stable self-concept ($F = 4.2, p < .05$) than girls. For both measures there were no significant differences ($p > .05$) for age and for age of migration. In addition, there were no significant two- and three-way interaction effects between the independent variables.

Savin-Williams and Demo (1983) distinguished the groups of adolescents for self-concept stability. In their study, self-conception was a relatively enduring quality for 29% of their sample, 11% reported oscillating self-feelings, and 60% scored in between. In the present study a 5-point scale was used with a neutral category in the middle. The scores ranged from 5 to 25 and the neutral midpoint was 15. Thirty-six percent of the respondents had a score between 13 and 17, 48% scored above 17, and 16% had a score below 13. Hence, in agreement with Savin-Williams and Demo's study only a minority of the respondents reported a relatively unstable self-concept. The distribution of the subjects over the three categories did not differ significantly between the ethnic groups (chi-square = 4.7, $df = 6, p > .10$).

Group Identification and Ingroup Evaluation

For ethnic group identification and ingroup evaluation there was a strong difference between the ethnic groups (see Table I). The differences in means were in terms of variance explained; 16% for group identification and 19% for ingroup evaluation. One-way analysis revealed that the Dutch respondents scored significantly lower than the ethnic minority groups. In addition, the Turks scored higher than the Moroccans and the Surinamese on ingroup evaluation, while the Turks and Moroccans scored higher than the Surinamese on the ethnic identification measure.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the Separate Ethnic Groups

	Dutch		Surinamese		Moroccan		Turkish		F	eta
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD		
Self-esteem	35.9	6.8	36.5	6.4	36.3	6.2	36.9	6.9	1.7	.09
Self-stability	17.0	4.2	16.8	4.8	17.3	4.2	16.8	4.2	0.5	.04
Identification	34.3	5.1	38.0	5.7	40.7	5.8	40.0	5.8	35.6 ^a	.41
Ingroup evaluation	25.9	3.5	28.3	3.9	28.6	4.6	30.4	4.3	43.8 ^a	.44

^a $p < .001$.

Boys had higher scores on both measures than girls ($F = 7.1$ and $p < .01$ for ingroup evaluation, and $F = 8.1$ and $p < .01$ for group identification). However, there was also a two-way interaction effect between ethnicity and gender ($F = 3.3$, $p < .05$) showing no gender difference for both measures among the Surinamese respondents. For all measures there were no significant main effects ($p > .05$) for age and age of migration. There were also no other significant two- or three-way interaction effects between the different dependent variables.

Variability of the Scores

The standard deviations are also presented in Table I. Analysis (F test) of these results shows that there were hardly any significant differences. There were two exceptions, both for ingroup evaluation. The Dutch showed less variability on this measure compared to the Turks and the Moroccans ($p < .05$).

Intercorrelations

The intercorrelations between the different measures and for the separate ethnic groups are presented in Tables II and III. First, the correlations between self-esteem and self-concept stability are not very strong, showing that these two dimensions of the self-concept can be distinguished empirically. The correlations are similar among the different ethnic groups, and they are comparable to the .24 that was found in Bachman's nationwide study in the United States (see Rosenberg, 1979, p. 58; Marsh, 1993). Among all ethnic groups, self-concept stability was not correlated significantly with ingroup evaluation and only marginally with ethnic group identification. However, after statistically controlling for self-esteem (partial correlation), these last correlations did not reach significance ($p > .05$).

With one exception, personal global self-esteem was significantly correlated with group identification and ingroup evaluation among all ethnic groups. In addition, the intercorrelations are quite similar for the different groups. The intercorrelations between group identification and ingroup evaluation are also significant among the different ethnic groups. However, for the minority groups this correlation is higher than for the Dutch youth.

To study the relationship between ethnic group identification, ingroup evaluation, and self-esteem more fully, median splits on scores for the first two measures were used. Analysis of variance, with high-low group

Table II. Intercorrelations Between the Four Measures for the Dutch (Lower Left Half of the Table) and Surinamese Subjects (Upper Right Half of the Table)

	1	2	3	4
1. Self-esteem	—	.21 ^a	.28 ^b	.32 ^b
2. Self stability	.28 ^b	—	.05	.06
3. Identification	.29 ^b	.15 ^b	—	.47 ^b
4. Ingroup evaluation	.24 ^b	.08	.24 ^b	—

^a $p < .05$.

^b $p < .01$.

identification and high-low ingroup evaluation as independent variables and self-esteem as the dependent variable, showed significant main effects ($p < .05$) for both factors among the Dutch, Turkish, and Moroccan subjects. Youth with a higher score for ethnic group identification and for ingroup evaluation had a more positive self-concept. Among the Surinamese there was only a main effect for ingroup evaluation. The expected two-way interaction effect between group identification and ingroup evaluation appeared only among this last ethnic group ($F = 3.9, p < .05$). Surinamese youth who identified strongly with their ethnic group and also had a relatively negative evaluation of their ingroup showed the lowest score for global self-esteem. For all ethnic groups, the highest score for self-esteem was found among strong identifiers who evaluated their ingroup positively.

DISCUSSION

Studies on the possible consequences of ethnic minority identity for psychological well-being and especially for self-feelings predominantly concentrate on global personal self-esteem. And for good reasons, because self-esteem is an important dimension of the self-concept and a central aspect of psychological well-being. In general, empirical research in Western countries has found hardly any relationship between ethnicity and self-esteem. In the present study, too, no difference in self-esteem was found between majority and minority youth living in the Netherlands. This result is typically interpreted as evidence for the fact that ethnicity is unrelated to self-feelings. However, there are at least two restrictions that limit this conclusion, and that were investigated in the present study.

Table III. Intercorrelations Between the Four Measures for the Moroccan (Lower Left Half of the Table) and Turkish Subjects (Upper Right Half of the Table)

	1	2	3	4
1. Self-esteem	—	.27 ^b	.38 ^b	.26 ^b
2. Self stability	.22 ^a	—	.20 ^b	.04
3. Identification	.24 ^a	.22 ^a	—	.35 ^b
4. Ingroup evaluation	.14	.01	.39 ^b	—

^a $p < .05$.

^b $p < .01$.

First, although self-esteem is an important dimension of the self-concept, it is not the only one. Several other aspects have been distinguished and recognized as being important, such as self-confidence, feelings of personal efficacy, and self-concept stability. This last dimension was investigated in the present study. It was found that self-concept stability correlated significantly with self-esteem, showing similar correlations among the separate ethnic groups. However, the correlations were not very high, indicating that it is possible to distinguish both dimensions empirically. In addition, self-concept stability did not correlate with ethnic group identification and ingroup evaluation, while self-esteem showed significant associations with both these measures. No significant difference emerged for self-concept stability between the different ethnic groups. So the conclusion that minority status does not inevitably have negative consequences for the self does not only apply to self-esteem but also to another major dimension: self-concept stability. This result is also in agreement with recent studies among ethnic minority youth that question the idea that managing the complexity of dual reference points generates ambiguity and self-concept uncertainty (see LaFromboise *et al.*, 1993).

In addition, the present study suggests that the self of the vast majority of adolescents is characterized by stability. This seems to hold for adolescents in general, as there were no differences between ethnic groups. There was only a small group, which apparently had more or less fluctuating self-feelings. This result is similar to other studies (Engel, 1959; Savin-Williams and Demo, 1983), and is in agreement with the idea that adolescence is not so much pervaded by turmoil and disruption of self-concept, but with self-satisfaction and stability (Offer *et al.*, 1981).

Different explanations can be and have been put forward for the finding that ethnic minorities do not show lower self-esteem and self-concept stability. There are (sub-)cultural explanations that stress the development of one's own values, allowing favorable and stable interpretations of self (McCarthy and Yancey, 1971). Within a (sub-)culture, divergent criteria for success and failure can be effectively defined, and also specific styles of coping can be developed. There are also several sociological explanations that stress the importance of social networks in providing emotional and practical support in the face of negative group evaluations. Especially, microsocial relations within the family and the community would insulate the self-concept from systems of inequality and derogation as well as from strong conflicting demands (Hughes and Demo, 1989). In addition, there are several social-psychological explanations that focus on principles of self-concept formation—e.g., reflected appraisal, social comparison, and self-attribution—on which the assumptions of problematic self-concept among minority groups implicitly rest (Crocker and Major, 1989; Verkuyten, 1994). Verkuyten (1988) has shown, for instance, that Turkish youth in the Netherlands do not focus on the perceived judgments of majority group members but especially on those of family members, whereas this was not the case for Dutch contemporaries.

Although we focused on two central aspects of psychological well-being, our results should not be interpreted to mean that social disadvantages, prejudice, and discrimination do not have any substantial sociopsychological consequences for minority groups. There are many other possible consequences, not only concerning the self but also for other aspects. There are several studies, for instance, which found that minority status has an effect on happiness (see Veenhoven, 1984). This was also found among minority youth living in the Netherlands. Compared to their Dutch contemporaries, they had lower levels of life satisfaction as well as hedonic affect, but at the same time they showed hardly any lower global self-esteem (Verkuyten, 1989). This suggests that minority status has a differentiated effect on different aspects of psychological well-being: not all aspects are affected in a uniform manner. This of course poses the question of why certain aspects are affected while others are not, and it seems important to pursue this question systematically in future empirical research.

In the present study self-esteem and self-concept stability were not associated with age. Hence, no confirmation was found for the idea (Rosenberg, 1979; Simmons and Rosenberg, 1975) that ages 12 and 13 are troublesome and a time of self-concept disturbance (see also Offer *et al.*, 1984). Nor was there any association with age of migration among minority youth. This could mean that self-esteem and self-concept stability develop more under the influence of microsocial relations with family and community than through experiences in society (see Rosenberg, 1965; Hughes and Demo, 1989).

Gender, however, showed a strong effect: boys reported more positive self-esteem and less oscillating self-feelings among all different ethnic groups. These results are similar to other studies. Rosenberg (1985) suggests two explanations why girls' self-concepts are less positive and more volatile than boys. First, girls would be more concerned with their physical appearance at the adolescent stage. This would make them have greater difficulty in adjusting to the physical changes that appear in this period. Second, girls may be more fully immersed in the role-taking stage. This would make them more sensitive and concerned with other people's attitudes towards them, and produce enhanced efforts of self-presentation depending on different contexts and interactions.

The second restriction of research on ethnicity and self-esteem is that ethnic group membership is predominantly used as the variable of interest, while other aspects of ethnic identity are not considered. The present study was concerned with two such additional aspects: ethnic group identification and ingroup evaluation.

As predicted, minority youth showed a stronger identification with their ethnic group, a more positive ingroup evaluation, and also a higher intercorrelation between these aspects than the Dutch. In addition, the Turks as a group, having the lowest prestige in the Netherlands, showed the highest scores on both measures. These results are in agreement with social identity theory. This theory predicts that in a situation where group boundaries are seen as impermeable and relatively stable, minority groups will stress their ethnic identity in order to counteract negative social identity. However, an additional explanation is put forward by Hutnik (1991). She argues that attention should not only be paid to the minority aspect of identity but also to the ethnic aspect. What should not be underestimated are the powerful forces at work in ethnic groups themselves. These groups are endowed with a culture, tradition, and structure of their own, providing people with a sense of ethnic dignity. In other words, positive ingroup evaluation and group identification among ethnic minority groups should not only be seen as a reaction to social derogation and exclusion, but is also related to characteristics of the groups themselves. Ethnic group members do not have to look elsewhere for the construction of a positive ethnic identity, since they have their own rich culture and tradition. However, the higher scores of the Turks, which is the group with the lowest prestige, suggests that social derogation does have an influence.

Ethnic group identification and ingroup evaluation showed similar but modest significant correlations with global personal self-esteem. This leads to two conclusions. First, although ethnic group identification is associated with self-esteem, it is certainly not a decisive criterion in the self-concept

of adolescents. In their research, Hines and Berg-Cross (1991), p. 272) come to the same conclusion when they say, "Evaluation of one's self along racial lines is a contributing component rather than the sole determinant of global self-esteem." This conclusion does not mean that ethnic identity is unimportant. The present data suggest that ethnic identity is considered more important among minority youth compared to Dutch contemporaries (see also Verkuyten, 1990). However, it should be realized that the greater importance attached to ethnic identity is not such that global self-esteem is dominated by it. Second, personal self-esteem seems to be largely independent of the evaluation of the ethnic ingroup. This suggests that it is possible to evaluate one's ethnic group rather negatively and yet feel good about oneself (see also Verkuyten, 1994). However, relatively negative ingroup evaluation seems to have a negative effect on self-esteem in combination with strong group identification—at least among the Surinamese youth. Conversely, such identification together with positive ingroup evaluation showed the highest level of self-esteem among all ethnic groups.

To conclude, the present study suggests that research on possible consequences of ethnic minority identity for psychological well-being should be sensitive to the different aspects involved. First, there are many different possible consequences concerning the self but also concerning other aspects, which do not have to be affected in uniform manner. Second, there are different aspects of ethnic identity that should be studied in order to go beyond ethnic origin as the variable of interest. Future studies should investigate more fully which aspects of psychological well-being are affected by minority status, and which aspects of ethnic identity play a role in this relationship.

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