

Summary

The Relationship Between Identity Management Strategies and Outgroup Favouritism of Kurdish University Students and Identity-Related Actions and Goals: A Study with Explicit and Implicit Measurements

Kenan Alparslan¹

M. Ersin Kuşdil²

Muş Alparslan University

Bursa Uludağ University

Full citation for this article:

Alparslan & Kuşdil (2020). The relationship between identity management strategies and outgroup favouritism of Kurdish university students and identity-related actions and goals: A study with explicit and implicit measurements. *Turkish Journal of Psychology*, 35(Özel Sayı), 80-104.

Laboratory experiments (Ellemers & Rijswijk, 1997; Ellemers et al., 1988) and real group research (Baysu, 2007; Bobowik et al., 2014a; Mummendey, Kessler et al., 1999) following the classification of the responses to negative social identity by Tajfel and Turner (1979) revealed that disadvantaged group members adopted various strategies ranging from individual mobility to competition. In addition to the goal of reaching a comprehensive list of identity management strategies, researchers studying this subject also tried to understand the factors behind the strategy choices of individuals. This quest, which started in the 1980s with Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), continues today with the inclusion of some other approaches such as System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) and Social Dominance Theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Current literature in intergroup relations shows that theories differ in terms of ingroup favoritism and outgroup favoritism in explaining group behaviors. While SIT seems to focus on ingroup favoritism, SDT and especially SJT base their explanations on the determinative importance of outgroup favoritism. According to SIT, ingroup favoritism serves the ingroup to achieve a higher status or maintain the current high status. The most critical factor that enables group members to be motivated for ingroup favoritism is the identification of the person with their group (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2003; De Cremer, 2001; Liebkind et al., 2006).

SJT argues that people tend to view existing social systems as legitimate and support them to continue (Jost et al., 2004). In particular, it states that the most disadvantaged group members, who suffer from the system the most, legitimize that system and exhibit outgroup favoritism. Similar to SJT, SDT argues that advantageous

group members within a certain social structure help to maintain the existing hierarchical structure by exhibiting ingroup favoritism and disadvantaged group members by showing outgroup favoritism (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). It suggests that, of the disadvantaged group members, those who have social dominance orientation (SDO) can exhibit outgroup favoritism for advantaged groups (Sidanius et al., 2004).

Studies dealing with identity management strategies are generally carried out within the framework of SIT. However, the relationships between strategies and outgroup favoritism are rarely explored (Mummendey, Klink, et al., 1999; Niens & Cairns, 2002; Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). Furthermore, researchers working on identity management strategies state that the predictive variables are limited and insufficient (Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Niens & Cairns, 2003; Taylor & McKirnan, 1984). When the social psychology literature was examined, no studies investigating identity management strategies or outgroup favoritism by handling these three theories together were found. Given this shortcoming, simultaneous use of the main variables of the three major theories will help researchers understand the reactions to negative identity.

As well as being one of the few conditions that create a disadvantage for a social group, it is known that having a different identity than the national one has the potential to produce different responses of disadvantaged group members with regard to dealing with their negative identity. Kurdish identity in Turkey may be considered an example of negative identity. It is reported that various dimensions of national identity differ for Turkish and Kurdish ethnic group members. While Kurds who identify with national identity have considerations similar to Turks, those who identify with their ethnic identity

Address for Correspondence: ¹Res. Asst. Kenan Alparslan, Muş Alparslan University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of Psychology, 49250 Güzeltepe / Muş, k.alparslan@alparslan.edu.tr, ORC-ID: 0000-0001-6701-355X

²Prof. Dr., Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of Psychology, mekusdil@uludag.edu.tr, ORC-ID: 0000-0002-3005-9009

have different concerns (Bilali, 2014; Çelebi et al. 2014; Çoymak, 2018). As a result of the social and political processes, Kurds living in Turkey became a group ranging from those who try to get their identity rights by engaging in ethnic politics to those who have preferences and evaluations similar to Turks (Ergil, 2009; Uluğ et al., 2017). In short, from competition to mobility, the Kurdish identity in Turkey has the characteristics of a rare example for an elaborate social psychological analysis of a disadvantaged group's identity management strategies.

The aim of this study is to examine how disadvantaged group members deal with a negative social identity and how they react within the scope of identity management strategies and outgroup favoritism. In the study, we aimed to determine the main predictors of the actions and goals of the participants related to identity by using the main variables of SIT, SDT, and SJT (ethnic identification, social dominance orientation and system justification, respectively), as well as identity management strategies and explicit and implicit outgroup favoritism.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample for this study consisted of 125 male university students who identified themselves as Kurdish and we reached the participants by using the snowball sampling technique. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 28 ($M = 22.66$; $SD = 2.09$). After signing the consent form, the participants filled out the questionnaire with all scales and then completed the Implicit Association Test (IAT).

Measures

Except for the measurements of SDO and implicit outgroup favoritism, all scale items used in this study were measured with 5-point Likert scales (1 = *Completely disagree*; 5 = *Completely agree*).

System Justification Tendency. As the 10-item scale, developed by Mummendey, Klink, et al. (1999) to measure socio-structural variables and adapted to Turkish by Baysu (2007), provides a chance to examine how the borders between groups are perceived, it was used to evaluate the tendency to legitimize the system related to ethnic groups. Since all scale items aim to assess the status difference between groups, in this study, based on the average of all, a single variable (system justification tendency) was included in the analyses.

Ethnic Identification. The 10-item Identification Scale developed by Roccas (2003) and adapted to Turkish by Ceylan and Özbal (2008) was used to measure the extent to which participants identified with their ethnic groups.

Social Dominance Orientation. The social dominance orientation of the participants was measured by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO_c) developed by Pratto et al. (1994) and adapted to Turkish by Karaçanta (2002). The scale consists of one dimension and is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 7 = *Strongly agree*).

Explicit Outgroup Favoritism. The 8-item Inter-group Bias Scale developed by Güler (2013) was used to measure explicit outgroup favoritism of Kurdish participants towards the Turkish group.

Implicit Outgroup Favoritism. The implicit outgroup favoritism of the participants for the Turkish group was measured using the IAT developed by Greenwald et al. (1998). The test evaluates the relationship between two target groups (Kurdish-Turkish) and the qualifying words (positive-negative). A total of 16 names, 8 Turkish and 8 Kurdish, determined in the pilot study, were used as a stimulus in this test created by using the computer software called "Inquisit 4 Lab."

Identity Management Strategies. Twelve strategies determined by Blanz et al. (1998) were used in this study to examine the participants' responses to their disadvantaged identities. The scale was adapted to Turkish by the researchers within the scope of this research. As a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) applied according to the 5-factor structure in the original study, the strategies of *re-evaluation of comparison dimension*, *new comparison dimension*, and *new comparison group* were determined to receive very low factor loads (.17, .34, and .15, respectively). As a result of the repeated CFA with these strategies removed, 9 strategies were grouped under 4 factors. These factors were labeled as *competition*, *mobility*, *categorization*, and *comparison*.

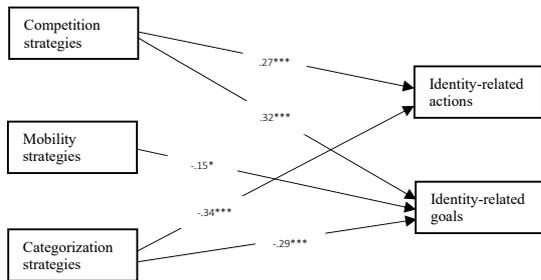
Identity-related Actions. The 7-item scale was developed by the authors within the scope of this study to examine to what extent Kurdish university students displayed certain behaviors, such as speaking their mother tongue and listening to music in that mother tongue, which can be considered to reflect their ethnic identity.

Identity-related Goals. This 6-item scale was created by the authors to examine the goals of the participants related to their ethnic identity, such as participating in social projects defending the rights of the ethnic group and teaching their mother tongue to their children for the future.

Results

For the purposes of the research, three models were tested with path analysis. The first one was created to reveal whether the strategies determined the identity-related actions and goals. According to the results of the

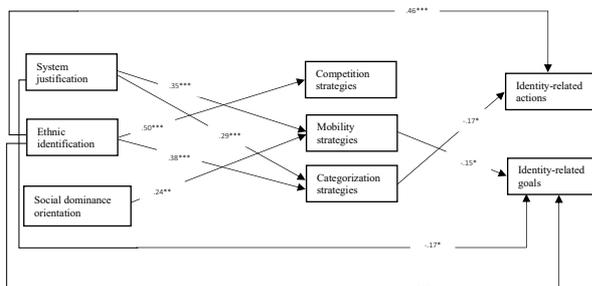
first model (see Figure 1), adopting competition strategies predicted having identity-related actions and goals positively ($\beta = .27, p = .002$; $\beta = .32, p < .001$, respectively), and adopting categorization strategies predicted having identity-related actions and goals negatively ($\beta = -.34, p < .001$; $\beta = -.29, p < .001$, respectively). Adopting mobility strategies only predicted having identity-related actions negatively ($\beta = -.15, p = .048$).



Note. All paths shown in the figure are statistically significant, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

Figure 1. Model 1 for relationships between identity management strategies and identity-related actions and goals.

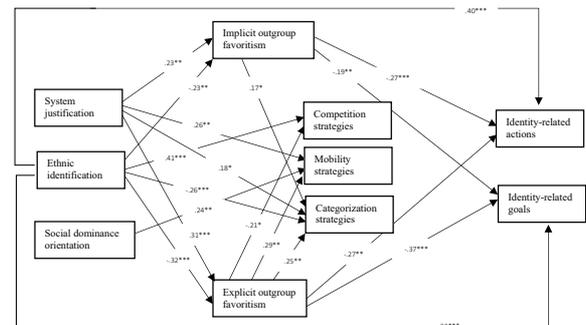
In the second model, the main variables of the three theories were added to the first model, and the determinants of both strategies and identity-related actions and goals were examined. According to the results of the path analysis (see Figure 2), higher identification with the ethnic identity positively predicted the use of competition strategies ($\beta = .51, p < .001$), while negatively predicting the use of categorization strategies ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$). However, no significant relationship was observed between ethnic identity identification and mobility strategies ($\beta = .05, p = .531$). System justification positively predicted the use of mobility and categorization strategies ($\beta = .35, p < .001$; $\beta = .29, p < .001$, respectively). Increases in SDO only predicted the use of mobility strategies significantly ($\beta = .24, p = .004$).



Note. All paths shown in the figure are statistically significant, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

Figure 2. Model 2, in which the variables of system justification, ethnic identification and social dominance orientation are added to the analysis.

In the third model, in which all variables were included, the predictors of explicit and implicit outgroup favoritism, as well as the variables that predicted actions and goals the strongest, were examined. Path analysis results indicated that higher ethnic identity identification negatively predicted both explicit ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$) and implicit ($\beta = -.23, p = .008$) outgroup favoritism, while system justification predicted both explicit ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and implicit ($\beta = .23, p = .010$) outgroup favoritism positively. However, SDO predicted neither explicit ($\beta = -.01, p = .859$) nor implicit ($\beta = .04, p = .649$) outgroup favouritism. The results also showed that explicit outgroup favoritism predicted mobility ($\beta = .29, p = .002$) and categorization ($\beta = .25, p = .002$) strategies positively and competition strategies ($\beta = -.21, p = .012$) negatively. The variables that predicted actions and goals related to ethnic identity the strongest were found to be ethnic identification and explicit and implicit outgroup favoritism, respectively (see Figure 3).



Note. All paths shown in the figure are statistically significant, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

Figure 3. Model 3 with all variables.

Discussion

This study was carried out to determine the responses of Kurds living in Turkey to their disadvantaged social identity and the factors underlying their identity-related behaviors now and opinions in the future. Within the scope of the research, firstly, we examined whether strategies would be related to identity-related actions and goals. The results of correlation and path analyses showed that competition strategies positively predicted identity-related actions and goals, and mobility and categorization strategies were negatively related to these variables. While the main purpose of competition strategies is to bring about social change, the purpose of mobility and categorization strategies is to reduce conflict between groups and to ensure that they live in

harmony with advantaged groups (Becker, 2012; Hogg & Abrams, 1998). The findings are important because they show that strategies are not only perceptions at an individual level and these strategies are closely related to identity-related behaviors and opinions.

The results also showed that the strongest variable that determined the strategy preference and outgroup favoritism was the identification with the ethnic group, belonging to SIT. In the current study, identification with the ingroup is positively related to competition strategies, while it is negatively related to categorization strategies and explicit and implicit outgroup favoritism. These findings are parallel with previous studies in the context of collective action and intergroup competition (Dumont & van Lill, 2009; Moghaddam et al., 1987; Wright, 2009).

Consistent with SJT's assumption, a high tendency to legitimize the system was observed to enable participants to adopt individual mobility and categorization strategies. In different studies conducted with disadvantaged ethnic groups, the perception of legitimacy was observed to serve similar mechanisms (Baysu, 2007; Jost et al., 2005; Mana et al., 2015). Furthermore, the fact that there was a strong and positive relationship between the tendency to legitimize the system and outgroup favoritism supports the argument of SJT that individuals who perceive the system as legitimate will exhibit favoritism towards the advantaged group (Jost et al., 2004).

In this study, consistent with the argument that disadvantaged group members with high SDO will have a tendency to protect and support the status quo (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), SDO only had a positive relationship with mobility strategies. On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between SDO and competition strategies. Given the findings, it is fair to argue that SDO is insufficient to explain social change.

In the last model in which all variables were analyzed together, the most effective variable in predicting identity-related actions and goals was ethnic identification, while the second effective variable was outgroup favoritism. In addition, explicit and implicit outgroup favoritism were observed to be closely related and lead to similar results. However, contrary to the assumption of SJT, explicit outgroup favoritism was found to be stronger in predicting the other variables compared to the implicit measurement. This finding can be regarded as an indication that, of the groups who have been living together for many years, the disadvantaged group can explicitly exhibit outgroup favoritism.

As a result, the current study indicates that the main variables of the three major theories can contribute to understanding responses to disadvantaged identity and actions and goals related to ethnic identity. While

SIT was the strong predictor of variables related to social change, SJT and SDT were the strong predictors of variables related to intergroup cohesion. The fact that each of the theories discussed in our study stands out in explaining different strategies points out the importance of handling these theories together.

References

- Ashburn-Nardo, L., Knowles, M. L., & Monteith, M. J. (2003). Black Americans' implicit racial associations and their implications for intergroup judgment. *Social Cognition, 21*(1), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.21.1.61.21192>
- Baysu, G. (2007). The Effects of intergroup perceptions and ingroup identifications on the political participation of the second-generation Turkish migrants in the Netherlands [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Middle East Technical University.
- Becker, J. C. (2012). The system-stabilizing role of identity management strategies: Social creativity can undermine collective action for social change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 103*(4), 647–662. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0029240>
- Bilali, R. (2014). The downsides of national identification for minority groups in intergroup conflicts in assimilationist societies. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 53*(1), 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12012>
- Blanz, M., Mummendey, A., Mielke, R., & Klink, A. (1998). Responding to negative social identity: A taxonomy of identity management strategies. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 28*, 697–729. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0992\(199809/10\)28:5%3C697::AID-EJSP889%3E3.0.CO;2-%23](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199809/10)28:5%3C697::AID-EJSP889%3E3.0.CO;2-%23)
- Bobowik, M., Basabe, N., & Páez, D. (2014b). “Heroes of adjustment”: Immigrant's stigma and identity management. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 41*, 112–124.
- Çelebi, E., Verkuyten, M., Köse, T., & Maliepaard, M. (2014). Out-group trust and conflict understandings: The perspective of Turks and Kurds in Turkey. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 40*, 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.02.002>
- Ceylan, A., & Özbal, S. (2008). Özdeşleşme yoluyla sadakat oluşturma üzerine üniversite mezunları arasında yapılan bir çalışma. *C.Ü. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi, 9*(1), 81–110.
- Çoymak, A. (2018). Kimmiş o ayrılıkçı: Türkiye’de uzun süredir devam eden Türk-Kürt çatışmasının çoklu sosyal kimlik dinamiklerini çözümlmek. *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları, 21*, 38–56.
- De Cremer, D. (2001). Relations of self-esteem concerns, group identification, and self-stereotyping to in-group favoritism. *Journal of Social Psychology, 141*(3), 389–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540109600560>
- Dumont, K., & van Lill, B. (2009). Dominant and non-dominant groups' responses to social change: The economic transformation process in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology, 39*(4), 432–447. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630903900405>
- Ellemers, N., & Van Rijswijk, W. (1997). Identity needs versus social opportunities: The use of group-level and individual-level identity management strategies. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 60*(1), 52–65. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2787011>
- Ellemers, N., van Knippenberg, A., de Vries, N., & Wilke, H. (1988). Social identification and permeability of group boundaries. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 18*(6), 497–513. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420180604>
- Ergil, D. (2009). Kürt raporu: Güvenlik politikalarından kimlik siyasetine. Timaş Yayıncılık. Greenwald, A. G., McGhee, D. E., & Schwartz, J. L. K. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: The implicit association test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*(6), 1464–80. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.6.1464>
- Güler, M. (2013). Gruplar arası temas, kaygı ve yanlılığın sosyal mesafeye etkisi: Türk ve Kürt kökenli gruplar üzerine bir çalışma [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ankara University.
- Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1998). Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes. Routledge.
- Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01008.x>
- Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology, 25*(6), 881–919. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00402.x>
- Jost, J. T., Kivetz, Y., Rubini, M., Guermandi, G., & Mosso, C. (2005). System-justifying functions of complementary regional and ethnic stereotypes: Cross-national evidence. *Social Justice Research, 18*(3), 305–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-005-6827-z>
- Karaçanta, H. (2002). Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal baskınlık yönelimi ve başka bazı değişkenler açısından karşılaştırılması [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ankara University.
- Kessler, T., & Mummendey, A. (2002). Sequential or parallel processes? A longitudinal field study concerning determinants of identity-management strategies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*(1), 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.1.75>

- Liebkind, K., Henning-Lindblom, A., & Solheim, E. (2006). Ingroup favouritism and outgroup derogation among Swedish-speaking Finns. *Nordic Psychology, 58*(3), 262–278. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1901-2276.58.3.262>
- Mana, A., Sagy, S., Srour, A., & Mjally-Knani, S. (2015). On both sides of the fence: Perceptions of collective narratives and identity strategies among Palestinians in Israel and in the West Bank. *Mind and Society, 14*(1), 57–83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11299-014-0159-3>
- Moghaddam, M. F., Taylor, D. M., & Lalonde, R. N. (1987). Individualistic and collective integration strategies among Iranians in Canada. *International Journal of Psychology, 22*, 301–313.
- Mummendey, A., Kessler, T., Klink, A., & Mielke, R. (1999). Strategies to cope with negative social identity: Predictions by social identity theory and relative deprivation theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 229–245. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.2.229>
- Mummendey, A., Klink, A., Mielke, R., Wenzel, M., & Blanz, M. (1999). Socio-structural characteristics of intergroup relations and identity management strategies: Results from a field study in East Germany. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 29*, 259–285.
- Nielsen, U., & Cairns, E. (2002). Identity management strategies in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Psychology, 142*(3), 371–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540209603905>
- Nielsen, U., & Cairns, E. (2003). Explaining social change and identity management strategies. *Theory and Psychology, 13*(4), 489–509. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02709593543030134003>
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(4), 741–763. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.4.741>
- Roccas, S. (2003). The effects of status on identification with multiple groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 351–366.
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Van Laar, C., & Levin, S. (2004). Social dominance theory: Its agenda and method. *Political Psychology, 25*(6), 845–880. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00401.x>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worche (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks-Cole.
- Taylor, D. M., & McKirnan, D. J. (1984). Theoretical contributions: A five-stage model of intergroup relations. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 23*(4), 291–300.
- Uluğ, Ö. M., Odağ, Ö., Cohrs, J. C., & Holtz, P. (2017). Understanding the Kurdish conflict through the eyes of Kurds and Turks: New conflict reflections from lay people in Turkey. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 28*(4), 483–508. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcma-05-2016-0035>
- Verkuyten, M., & Reijerse, A. (2008). Intergroup structure and identity management among ethnic minority and majority groups: The interactive effects of perceived stability, legitimacy, and permeability. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 38*, 106–127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.395>
- Wright, S. C. (2009). The next generation of collective action research. *Journal of Social Issues, 65*(4), 859–879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01628.x>