The impact of perceived ethnic group discrimination on depressive symptoms among Kurdish refugees in Iraq: Does ethnic self-esteem and cultural identity matter?

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Abstract

The study is intended to examine the impact of perceived ethnic group discrimination on depressive symptoms among Kurdish refugees in Iraq. In addition to that study has also examined the mediating role of ethnic self-esteem and Kurdish cultural identity in the relationship between the perceived ethnic group discrimination and depressive symptoms. People believe that perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) is a long-term source of stress, and there is more and more evidence linking PED to poor physical and mental health outcomes among ethnic minority populations. This research focuses on Kurdish refugees in Iraq. 613 responses were used for the analysis. SEM-PLS is used for analysis purposes. The findings of the research that has been carried out on psychological aspects as potential PED buffers have been equivocal. There is growing evidence relating perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) to poor physical and mental health outcomes among ethnic minority populations. People are under the impression that perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) is a factor that contributes to long-term stress. The results of study implies that the perceived ethnic group discrimination has significant positive impact on the depressive symptoms among Kurdish refugees in Iraq. The study will help the policymakers and researchers in understanding the issues related ethnic group discrimination and depressive symptoms among Kurdish refugees in Iraq.

Keywords: *Perceived ethnic group discrimination, self-esteem, cultural identity, Kurdish refugees, Iraq*

1.0. Background

Discrimination occurs when an individual or group of people is treated unjustly and with prejudice because of their gender, degree of ability, or religion (Genc & Baptist, 2020). Discrimination often manifests itself as being cruel to individuals because of their race or ethnicity, which are related but distinct concepts. Race is a social idea that divides people into groups based on their physical traits, like skin color. Ethnicity, on the other hand, refers to the shared culture (such as language and traditions) and identity that stem from sharing a common background, lineage, or nationality. Both concepts are similar, yet they are also distinct. Discrimination based on race or ethnicity is widespread across the globe (Ang, 2022). It is one of the most significant drivers of social friction because it may make individuals feel

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horrible about themselves, have poor self-esteem, and have little control over their life (von Humboldt et al., 2022). Furthermore, prejudice harms health on several levels by making it more difficult for individuals to get resources such as political power, access to healthcare, and education (Elias & Paradies, 2021). Furthermore, prejudice makes advancement in society and climbing the social ladder more difficult (Silvestri & Tong, 2022), possibly adding to stress. Indeed, a number of meta-analyses have shown that persons who suffer various forms of discrimination are less healthy overall and are more prone to acquire mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal behavior, and psychosis (Kohrt et al., 2022). As a result, it is critical to investigate how perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) may be a risk factor for PS/PEs and may help explain why PS/PEs are more common in ethnic minority groups (Bardol et al., 2020).

According to the findings of several international studies that were conducted on the topic of migration and mental health, one of the most significant sources of tension is the way in which migrants are treated on the basis of their ethnicity. The idea that someone has been treated unfairly because of who they are or where they come from is what we mean when we talk about "perceived bias" (Okoro, Hillman, & Cernasev, 2020). The phrase "felt discrimination" does not just relate to "objective" signs of prejudice because of the subjective character of the experience. It is also possible for it to have criteria that are ambiguous or confusing, which may not seem discriminatory to people who are looking in from the outside (Veale & Zuiderveen Borgesius, 2021). Those who believe that they are the target of discrimination have a greatly greater risk of acquiring cardiovascular disease and hypertension, as shown by the results of a number of in-depth studies (Neisius et al., 2019). The experience of prejudice has been shown to be associated with a variety of mental health conditions, including anxiety and sadness (Vargas, Huey Jr, & Miranda, 2020). This is something that may be seen in both adults and youngsters. However, there are exceptions to the rule when it comes to the connection between self-perceived prejudice and psychological health (Henry, 2022). This might be due to differences in living conditions and political considerations, such as the number of immigrants and the legal rights they are granted, as well as differences in the methods that were used to conduct the research. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, in 2012, 41% of immigrants residing in Germany had the perception that they were being treated unfairly by German society. This demonstrates how significant of an issue we are dealing with. Those of Kurdish heritage are subjected to the greatest level of prejudice when compared to members of other ethnic minority groups. According to the theory of migratory stress, the psychological adjustment of immigrant teenagers is weaker than that of their classmates who did not migrate, and the reasons for this may be attributed to prejudice as well as other acculturative events (Lee, 2018). Recent scientific discoveries, on the other hand, call this hypothesis into question (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2020). Rastogi et al. (2018) that the ability to handle the stresses and strains of ordinary life is more crucial for sustaining one's mental health than the absence of such pressures and strains. When investigating the connection between psychological adjustment and the experience of discrimination, it is of the utmost importance to look at the potential drawbacks as well as the ways in which they might be circumvented.

A growing body of evidence suggests that prejudice against people of other ethnic origins has a negative impact on both mental and physical health. Ethnic discrimination, defined as the practice of treating people differently based on their ethnicity, threatens the majority of racial and ethnic minority groups. Increased stress levels, which are directly caused by racial discrimination, have a detrimental effect not just on mental health but also on physical health

(Carlson et al., 2018). In addition to the undeniable link that exists between racial discrimination and negative health outcomes (Mekawi et al., 2021). The majority of the research that has been done on the connection between ethnic discrimination and stress has focused on potential protective variables, such as in-group identification (Wade & Pear, 2022), which may lower stress when faced with ethnic discrimination. This has been the case because these variables may help people cope better with the effects of ethnic discrimination. The inquiry has mostly concentrated on this aspect of the case. In addition, studies have been conducted to investigate the ways in which individuals cope with traumatic events and their perceptions of the assistance they get from their communities after being subjected to ethnic prejudice (Miller & Vittrup, 2020). Individual coping techniques and perceived social support are ways of thinking and acting that are utilized to mitigate the negative impacts of perceived discrimination based on ethnicity. In North America and Europe, overt forms of ethnic prejudice have reduced since the 1970s, whereas concealed, subtle, and beneficial types of prejudice have grown (Lissitsa & Kushnirovich, 2019). "Ethnic/racial microaggressions" is a term that was coined via study to refer to covert expressions of racism and ethnic prejudice. Verbal, behavioral, or environmental infractions perpetrated against members of ethnic minority groups were described as these (21), and the trend toward more covert forms is mostly connected to altering cultural norms and efforts made by the government (Atkin et al., 2022). In light of this, it is very necessary to make a distinction between the many manifestations of racial prejudice.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of research has focused on examining the effects of overt forms of prejudice on individuals, whereas subtle and covert types have received far less attention. The subtle and covert types of discrimination have only been the subject of a small number of studies, but the ones that have been conducted tend to suggest that they are harmful to individuals (Thelamour, George Mwangi, & Ezeofor, 2019). The behaviors from intergroup and affects and stereotypes map, often known as the BIAS map, is a theoretical model that distinguishes between four different forms of discrimination based on essential characteristics of how society views group membership (Favaretto, De Clercq, & Elger, 2019). Active harm, which is when someone does something to damage or hurt someone else, and passive harm, which is when someone ignores or doesn't care about someone else, both have negative impacts on the member of the group. Active harm is when someone does something to hurt or harm someone else. The latter two sorts of actions are known as facilitatory behaviors, and their purpose is to assist the outgroup in some manner. The purpose of providing open assistance to or engaging in constructive conversation with a group is referred to as "active facilitation. When collaboration and participation in a group are simply accepted for other reasons, this is an example of passive facilitation (Cuadrado, López-Rodríguez, & Constantin, 2020). Also, discrimination on a daily basis, such as at restaurants, government offices, or while applying for a job or a loan, has to be taken into consideration since it still occurs very often. People have a tougher time participating in many aspects of daily life and meeting their fundamental requirements because of everyday prejudice, such as finding a job or a place to live (Evans et al., 2020).

It is well known that people who belong to racial and ethnic minorities experience discrimination. Unfortunately, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are frequent against many of these socially and economically disadvantaged groups since they are easier to pick on (Lissitsa & Kushnirovich, 2019).This is due to the fact that these groups are more likely to be targeted. It is possible for members of minority groups, especially younger members of

minority groups, to have a lowered sense of self-worth as a result of spending a significant amount of time in these types of environments. However, research on the detrimental consequences that prejudice and discrimination have on a person's sense of self-worth as well as their overall mental health has just recently gotten under way. Because of this, Cave et al. (2020) came to the conclusion that more research on the effects of racism and racial discrimination on mental health is required.

2.0.   Hypothesis Development

Perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) is a long-term source of stress (Dush et al., 2022). The majority of the research indicates that depressive symptoms are to blame, demonstrating that greater levels of PED are connected to increased depressive symptoms in populations of ethnic minorities (Sacco, Pössel, & Roane, 2022). If we can determine which psychosocial variables lessen the relationship between discrimination and depressive symptoms, then we may get a better understanding of how ethnic minority groups cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We can gain a better understanding of how members of ethnic minority groups cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PEDS) by determining which psychosocial factors weaken the link between discrimination and depressive symptoms. This is true even though it is essential that discrimination be stopped. This may help explain why certain individuals a lower risk of developing PED have compared to other people. For instance, a meta-analysis revealed that social support and belonging to a group did not alter the connection between discrimination and mental health outcomes (Ang, 2022). According to the findings of several investigations, ethnic identification seemed to make the connection stronger. In a nutshell, the results of this research showed that having social support did not act as a buffer. However, the majority of the studies were conducted with a very small sample of young individuals (typically students), and these participants were selected at random.

The majority of research indicates that depressive symptoms are to blame, and it has been shown that greater levels of PED are connected with an increase in the severity of depression symptoms among ethnic minority groups (Smith & Pössel, 2022). If we are able to determine which psychosocial variables mitigate the link between discrimination and depressive symptoms, then we may be able to get a better understanding of how ethnic minority communities cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We may be able to get a better understanding of how members of ethnic minority groups cope with post-traumatic stress disorder by determining whether or not psychosocial factors attenuate the connection between discrimination and depressive symptoms (PEDS). Despite the fact that it is of the utmost importance to eliminate bias, this is nonetheless the case. It is possible that this helps to explain why certain people have a lower risk of contracting PED compared to other people (von Humboldt et al., 2022). The research that was done on psychological characteristics as potential PED buffers had conflicting findings. For example, the findings of a meta-analysis suggested that social support and involvement in groups did not affect the association between discrimination and mental health outcomes. According to the findings of research of Dush et al. (2022), the influence of ethnic identification on the connection between prejudice and health is not a linear one. The findings of a number of studies indicated that ethnic identification seemed to increase the connection between the two parties. In a nutshell, the results of this research suggested that the buffering effect of social support did not exist. On the other hand, the great majority of studies were conducted with a very small sample of young individuals (often students) who were selected at random as participants.

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Perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) is the belief that a person is being treated unjustly due to their ethnic origin. It depicts the daily slights that occur and is recognized as a key cause of long-term stress, particularly for ethnic minority populations. Studies indicate that PED is associated with negative health outcomes. The majority of this material originates in the USA and Europe, but focuses mostly on Iraqi Kurds. Because ethnic minority groups in Iraq and the United States are of different origins and have migrated in various ways, it is difficult to apply American findings in Europe. Five or six European studies have identified a correlation between PED and health. Some studies also examined racial harassment, which differs from PED in that it examines assaults based on race (either verbal or physical) (Smith & Pössel, 2022). A British study discovered a correlation between how ethnic minority groups felt about discrimination and racial harassment and the severity of their own health issues. 7 out of 26 European nations, PED was not associated with self-reported poor health, according to the European Social Survey. However, the correlation was only examined in a sample that included both ethnic majority and minority populations. 8 On mental health, there has been little study. PED was connected to poor mental health in studies conducted in Spain (with a non-random sample of immigrants) and the Netherlands (with a limited sample of adolescents). Two British studies discovered a correlation between racial harassment and the prevalence of mental health issues among ethnic minority groups. For two reasons, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of how individuals feel about racial prejudice. First, while overt acts of prejudice (such as hate speech) have grown less prevalent, ethnic minority groups continue to endure covert acts of discrimination (such as being treated with less courtesy). Perceptions provide insight into these encounters (Despagne & Jacobo Suárez, 2019). Second, a person's views reveal how he or she perceives and analyzes discriminating circumstances. This process may

result in a stress reaction, a decline in self-esteem, and the employment of unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as harmful habits, that are detrimental to your health. According to stress studies, "uncertain, unpleasant, unexpected, and unpredictable stressors are particularly detrimental" and may have long-term repercussions on health. Thus based upon the arguments broached the study has proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: *PED has significant impact on the depression symptoms among Iraqi Kurdish.*

The idea that racism causes minorities' children to have poorer self-esteem is unconvincing (Ang, 2022). As a general rule, people of minority backgrounds have their voices and viewpoints ignored. However, as the motivations behind such actions are often unknown, potentially discriminatory behaviors and the great majority of social occurrences are also shrouded in mystery. Attributions made about members of stigmatized groups are trickier (Silvestri & Tong, 2022). The target's likelihood of receiving discriminatory reactions and feedback due to their membership in a given group falls within the typical range of plausible attributional judgements. Since it may be difficult to demonstrate specific instances of discrimination, it is crucial to differentiate between perceived or subjective discrimination and objective or quantifiable prejudice. Discrimination is a subjective sensation, yet it may have an effect on one's mental health and sense of self-worth. There is solid evidence supporting this connection. A study of almost 5,000 immigrant children in southern California and south Florida found that discrimination enhanced depressive symptoms and that projected discrimination was strongly connected with worse self-esteem (Kohrt et al., 2022). It was shown that Hispanics in the Miami region who experienced both acculturative stress and perceived racism were more likely to suffer from mental health problems (Smith & Pössel, 2022).

There was a correlation between the experience of discrimination and higher levels of reported anger, melancholy, anxiety, and egotism (Bardol et al., 2020; Okoro et al., 2020) published their findings in 1975. Surinamese people, who make up a small but significant ethnic minority in the Netherlands, voiced concerns that they were being discriminated against. Because of this, they felt less content with their lives. Okoro et al. (2020) reached the conclusion that being under the impression that one is being treated unjustly is a source of tension as well as negative sensations. There is also evidence to suggest that being exposed to prejudice might assist a person in developing a more positive self-image. According to Neisius et al. (2019), attributional uncertainties have the potential to assist individuals in protecting themselves. It is possible to shield your feeling of self-worth from the effects of failure by rationalizing it away as the result of unfair treatment or discrimination. In a similar vein, achieving success despite being mistreated may be beneficial to one's sense of self-worth. Vargas et al. (2020) conducted a series of tests in which they discovered evidence that attribution to discrimination is a self-protective mechanism. It's possible that the variations between (a) perceived personal and group discrimination and (b) personal and social identity are what make the difference in the link between perceived discrimination and self-esteem. Researchers have shown time and time again that members of minority groups have the perception that their group as a whole is subjected to a higher level of prejudice than they personally experience. This phenomenon has been given the name "persona-group discrimination discrepancy" by Henry (2022). This is a significant discovery across a variety of underprivileged groups, and it holds true even when researchers modify the ways in which they ask questions.

The denial of personal discrimination, the amplification of group discrimination, and the basic method in which the brain processes information are some of the explanations that have been presented to explain this phenomenon (Lee, 2018). The phenomenon seems to be real despite the

fact that its origin is unknown. I expected being able to differentiate between reported personal bias and perceived group prejudice during the course of this investigation. Authors also thought that adolescents who come from racial or ethnic minorities would consider collective prejudice to be of a higher severity than individual prejudice. In the field of social psychology, the difference between individual and group prejudice is related to the split that exists between an individual's private and public identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Individuals may be distinguished from one another based on the qualities and traits that make up what is known as their "personal identity." Membership in emotionally relevant social groupings or categories is closely related with and contributes to a person's sense of social identity. As a consequence of this, our personal identification as well as our social identities are both essential components of who we are; nevertheless, they explain different aspects of who we are. Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2020) explored the concept of personal and collective self-esteem by analyzing feelings of self-worth through the lens of the personal-social distinction. They felt that variations in positive social identities were analogous to variations in positive personal identities and that qualities were the cause of these differences. They also believed that these variations were comparable to variations in positive personal identities. Due to the fact that the connection between individual and collective self-esteem is rather weak (approximately), it is possible to differentiate between the two by looking at the relevant evidence (Rastogi et al., 2018). Youth from different ethnic groups in the Netherlands exhibited a comparable association.

Moreover, similar to individual self-esteem, communal self-esteem seems to be associated with psychological adjustment. Depression is adversely connected with both collective and individual self-esteem among African American and white pupils in the United States (Carlson et al., 2018). In this research, I examined the participants' sense of self-worth as both individuals and members of an ethnic group. Individual and racial self-esteem were anticipated to be empirically distinct. In addition, Study hypothesized, at the same level of abstraction, a relationship between perceived personal discrimination and self-esteem: perceived personal discrimination should be connected to personal self-esteem, but not ethnic self-esteem. However, perceived group prejudice should be associated with ethnic self-esteem and not with individual self-esteem. Authors have also anticipated a negative link between personal and ethnic self-esteem, but its nature remained uncertain. Discrimination perceptions may result in poorer group membership evaluations, but they may also result in greater group attachment to compensate for negative social identification (Mekawi et al., 2021). The connection between individual and communal self-esteem is a controversial topic. The collective self is as psychologically unique as the individual self, and neither is necessary for the existence of the other.

Teenagers from underrepresented groups may be hesitant to report bias for fear of harming the dominant culture's image. However, members of the minority group may throw the accusation onto the majority by emphasizing the norm against discrimination in society. To account for this variable, I included a social desirability scale in this research. If you accept that bias is the source of your difficulties, you acknowledge that you have no influence over the result. This harms a person's perception of agency. Teens from ethnic minorities and immigrants in the United States revealed that their perception of control affected their intergroup competence. A high degree of control was also positively connected with increased subjective well-being (Thelamour et al., 2019). I expected that the more in control a person felt, the less unjust treatment they would perceive and the better they would feel about themselves. Prior researchers also mentioned two other subjects: To determine if

discrimination influenced the participants' confidence in their cognitive, social, and physical talents in addition to their overall feeling of self-worth, I first administered confidence tests in the cognitive, social, and physical domains. Second, prejudice and discrimination are taboo topics, which may impair perceptions of social desirability. Many young members of minority groups are hesitant to reject racism out of concern for the image of their community. Minority members, on the other hand, might assign guilt to the majority by invoking the cultural norm against discrimination. Study has utilized a measure of social desirability to control for this confounding variable in this study. Thus, based upon the arguments broached the study has proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: *PED has significant impact on the ethnic self-esteem of Iraqi Kurdish.*
H4: *Ethnic self-esteem of Iraqi Kurdish has significant impact on the depression symptoms among Iraqi Kurdish.*
H6: *Ethnic self-esteem of Iraqi Kurdish mediates the relationship between the PED and depression symptoms among Iraqi Kurdish.*

Meeting individuals from other cultures compels them to adapt, thus altering their cultural identities (Doucerain, 2019). During these acculturation processes, people choose the extent to which they want to identify with their original community or the dominant culture (Safak-Ayvazoglu & Kunuroglu, 2021). Throughout adolescence, a person's development focuses on establishing a stable sense of self. When an individual feels a sense of belonging to their own culture, they have an ethnic identity. Fascinatingly, ethnic identity shields against perceived bias and facilitates psychological maturation (Wang et al., 2020). Psychologically, those who endure prejudice and have a strong connection to their culture of origin will do better than those who face discrimination but have a weaker connection.

Moreover, perceived discrimination and ethnic identification are closely associated (Pearce et al., 2019) persons who experience greater prejudice identify more strongly with their indigenous group. This is especially true for the characteristic of public regard (e.g., "Others appreciate black people") but not always for private regard (e.g., "I feel good about black people"). Bicultural identity is the combination of a person's ancestral society's culture and the dominant society's culture. Mok (2022) used the Bicultural Identification Integration (BII) scale to expand and quantify the idea of bicultural identification. Its two components—conflict and distance—illustrate the extent to which a person exposed to two cultures perceives them as overlapping and integrated, as opposed to distinct and difficult to integrate. While distance contains the cognitive and performance aspects of acculturation, conflict refers to the emotional aspects of biculturalism (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2020).

Welsch argues that these transformations must be adequately accounted for in modern conceptions of culture because it is not true that immigrants often adapt to majority society and lose cultural elements of their community of origin (Petzke, 2022). Rather, it is not true that immigrants often lose cultural elements of their community of origin in the process of adapting to majority society. It is not necessary to accept cultural differences; rather, they may be integrated, with the borders between them becoming more porous or disappearing altogether. This cultural mixing is reflected not only in the way in which individuals interact socially but also in the way in which they form their own identities; for instance, a person's identity may need to include aspects of both their ancestral culture and the culture of the location in which they are currently living, and it may even need to include aspects of the culture of the world as a whole. According to Johnson (2022), adolescents from migrant backgrounds may assume one of three distinct

identities: (i) ethnic flight, in which they reject their cultural heritage in favor of the majority culture; (ii) adversarial identities, in which they construct their identity in opposition to the majority culture and its institutions; and (iii) transcultural identities, in which elements of both cultures are incorporated. Ethnic flight is one of the three possible identities that adolescents from Similar to bicultural identification, transcultural identity places an emphasis on cultural integration, yet it goes beyond bicultural identity in some respects (unpublished observations) (Silvestri & Tong, 2022). People who have a transcultural identity are influenced by characteristics of other cultures, and as a result, they change such features into novel behaviors and expressions that are representative of their own identities (Van Tongeren et al., 2021). This new cultural domain is the outcome of cultural mixing and entanglement, and it exceeds the boundaries of old national cultural canons in many ways. Many facets of day-to-day life, including music, food, television programs and movies, sports teams, language, religion, holidays, and fashion, have become more diverse as a direct consequence of this phenomenon. There are a number of parallels that can be seen between the concept of BII and that of transcultural identification. Both of these approaches focus on the creation of new cultural places as a central topic of debate. In the transcultural perspective, the formation of a cultural space is perceived as the result of cultures converging (Susino & Schubert, 2020), whereas bicultural only feel this when they sense a minimal cultural gap and little conflict. This is because bicultural only feel this when there is a confluence of cultures. In addition to this, a transcultural identity may be constructed using a limitless number of different aspects of other cultures. Ali et al. (2022) referred to the phenomenon of transcultural identification as "hybrid identity." According to Erentaitė et al. (2018), globalization "may contribute less to a bicultural identity than to a hybrid identity." It is not required for someone to have a history of migration in order for them to have a transcultural identity.

Furthermore, not everyone who is exposed to more than one culture will acquire a transcultural identity. As a result, bicultural individuals do not necessarily have a transcultural identity. According to Patel, Trivedi, and Yagnik (2020), one important factor that has an influence on the formation of identity The perspective of an ethnic group held by the dominant culture, such as that of schools, law enforcement, the media, and the general public, is reflected in a social mirror. A social mirror is an example of a social mirror. What kind of effects can bias have on our perception of ourselves? It's possible that individuals who have been the object of discrimination are less likely to embrace a global worldview. It is intriguing to consider whether transcultural identity also functions as a resilience factor, possibly mitigating the negative effects of perceived discrimination. Considering that transcultural identity is considered to be the most adaptive identity style for adolescents who come from migrant backgrounds (Despagne & Jacobo Suárez, 2019), it is important to ask whether transcultural identity also functions in this capacity. Thus based upon the arguments broached the study has proposed the following hypothesis:

H3: *PED has significant impact on the Kurdish Cultural Identity of Iraqi Kurdish.*
H7: *Kurdish Cultural Identity of Iraqi Kurdish mediates the relationship between the PED and depression symptoms among Iraqi Kurdish.*
H5: *Kurdish Cultural Identity of Iraqi Kurdish has significant impact on the depression symptoms among Iraqi Kurdish.*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
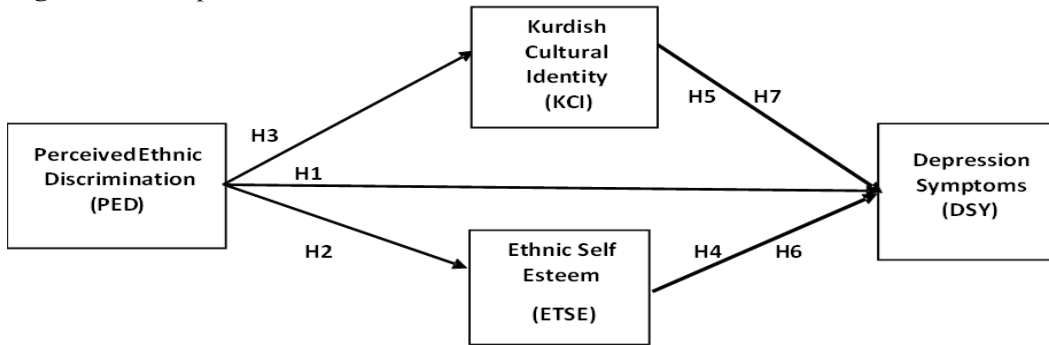
3.0. Methodology

This research focuses on Kurdish refugees in Iraq. When selecting the data, the researcher relied on a simple random sampling. The method of selecting at random from a large population might be helpful when trying to generalize the results of statistical studies conducted on that group. This approach assists the researcher in ensuring the reliability and validity of their results to a larger level than ever before, making it one of the most helpful methods available. Utilizing a randomization strategy is the most effective method for lowering the influence of any confounding factors in an experiment. The effectiveness and high external validity of the simple random sampling technique for large sample sizes are additional advantages of using this approach. In a similar vein, it reveals the genuine qualities that are present among a vast population. In order to acquire the information, a survey was carried out. This approach to the gathering of information is suitable for use in specific research projects. The usefulness of this strategy is determined, in part, by the population from whom data will be acquired and by the kind of information that is required to address the issue. This is not a trustworthy method for obtaining information on really sensitive matters. The accuracy of data obtained via surveys is directly proportional to the degree to which respondents are able to comprehend the subject matter at hand and discuss it. The objectives of this research are not debatable, and it stays away from controversial topics. The individuals who will be reading it are already well-versed in the subject matter that forms the basis of the study. In addition to that, the researcher presented a concise description of the methodology as well as the primary emphasis of the study.

Questionnaire designing

When developing the questionnaire, the researchers exerted considerable effort to ensure its reliability and accuracy. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts. The first component comprises information about the respondents' age, gender, and degree of experience. The second phase is a neo-personality questionnaire in which participants are asked about their most defining features. In the third component of the study, the researcher presented questions concerning the previous two aspects of the inquiry. A seven-point Likert scale was used to develop the questionnaire, which is an effective approach for accurately gauging how people answer to questions. The researcher opted to use a procedure with a high degree of validity and reliability. In the last phase of their examination, the researchers studied the look of the instrument and consulted experts in the relevant field to make it easier to read and interpret.

Procedure:

After getting their consent, the researcher emailed them a well-designed survey to distribute to study participants. It has been ensured that the confidentiality of the information will be maintained, and the information is being collected only for research purposes. The response rate was satisfactory when the researcher received 700 completed questionnaires from respondents after sending out 1000 questions. The researchers revealed that 87 of the questionnaires have missing data or repeated replies upon closer analysis. Consequently, 613 responses were used for the analysis.

We first looked at respondent demographics and utilized SPSS to find any missing data values that lead authors into the PLS analysis. Without a response or inadequate information, an observation is said to have a missing value, also known as missing data (Hair et al., 2010). There were 68.4 percent men and 31.6 percent women among the study's respondents. In terms of the age ranges from which the respondents were drawn, 34.6% were in the 18–30-year-old bracket, 22.7% were in the 21–30-year-old range, and 21.7% were in the 31-40 year old range. All other replies were older than 40. Of the respondents, 9% had less than a year's worth of experience, 17% had between one and five years, 67% had between five and ten years, and the remaining respondents had more than ten years' worth of experience.

The PLS-SEM approach has attracted a lot of attention since it can estimate complicated models including many constructs, indicator variables, and structural pathways without requiring any distributional assumptions to be made about the data.

4.0.   Results

The Smart PLS 3.3.9 measurement model is used to kick off the analysis (see figure 2). Using this instrument, we may evaluate the reliability of the data. Discriminant validity and convergent validity were the two methods that were applied to examine the reliability and validity of the conceptions (Rose & Johnson, 2020). According to Table 1, all of the items have factor loadings that are higher than 0.70, which proves that the data do indeed demonstrate the convergent validity that was asserted by Janadari et al. (2016). Janadari et al. (2016) also stated that AVE values should be more than 0.50. If you look at the data in Table 2, you'll see that they have above the AVE threshold of 0.50. This can be seen if you look at the table. All of the AVE values in table 2 are more than 0.50, which indicates that they are good.
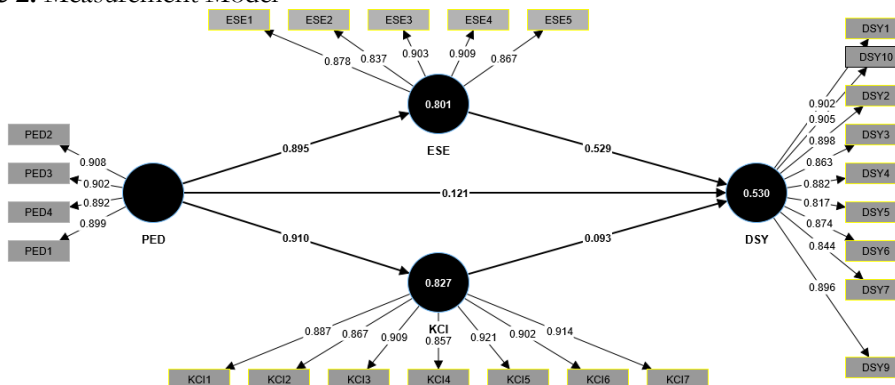
Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 1: Outer Loading

	DSY	ESE	KCI	PED
DSY1	0.902			
DSY10	0.905			
DSY2	0.898			
DSY3	0.863			
DSY4	0.882			
DSY5	0.817			
DSY6	0.874			
DSY7	0.844			
DSY9	0.896			
ESE1		0.878		
ESE2		0.837		
ESE3		0.903		
ESE4		0.909		
ESE5		0.867		
KCI1			0.887	
KCI2			0.867	
KCI3			0.909	
KCI4			0.857	
KCI5			0.921	
KCI6			0.902	
KCI7			0.914	
PED2				0.908
PED3				0.902
PED4				0.892
PED1				0.899

In this study, the overall reliability of the variables was tested to give further proof that the validity is right. The statistics shown in table 2 make it quite evident that the CR of every single structure exceeds 0.70. Concerning this problem Al-Mhasnah et al. (2018) proposed a CR cutoff threshold of 0.70. The results of CR, which are shown in table 2, indicate that this level has been effectively attained.

Table 2: Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
DSY	0.962	0.963	0.967	0.768
ESE	0.926	0.928	0.944	0.773
KCI	0.958	0.959	0.965	0.799
PED	0.922	0.922	0.945	0.810

The next stage of the measurement model is the testing of the discriminant validity. For the sake of this activity, Fornell and Larker's criteria were used as the benchmarks. The results of the analysis of the square root of the AVE for each construct are shown in Table 3, which shows that this correlation is larger than the highest correlation among all of the other variables. To put it another way, the values on the diagonals of the matrices have to be higher than the other values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The evidence presented in Table 3 reveals that all of these characteristics have been met, proving that the study has discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	DSY	ESE	KCI	PED
DSY	0.876			
ESE	0.724	0.879		
KCI	0.696	0.931	0.894	
PED	0.679	0.895	0.910	0.900

Consequently, the reliability and validity of the data have been confirmed by this investigation. This is how the measurement model for the research is developed.

Moving Towards Testing Structural Models (see figure 3). The structural model estimate was derived using 5000 bootstrap repetitions using the bootstrap technique. In addition, a significance criterion of 5% was applied. Using the structural model, the relationship between direct and indirect hypotheses was investigated. Additionally, R2 must be determined in order to ascertain its value. The testing of hypotheses phase in a structural model's evaluation. The significance of the link was determined by analyses of the beta values and t-values of the data. The statistical results of the direct hypothesis are shown in Table 5 below.

Figure 3: Structural Model
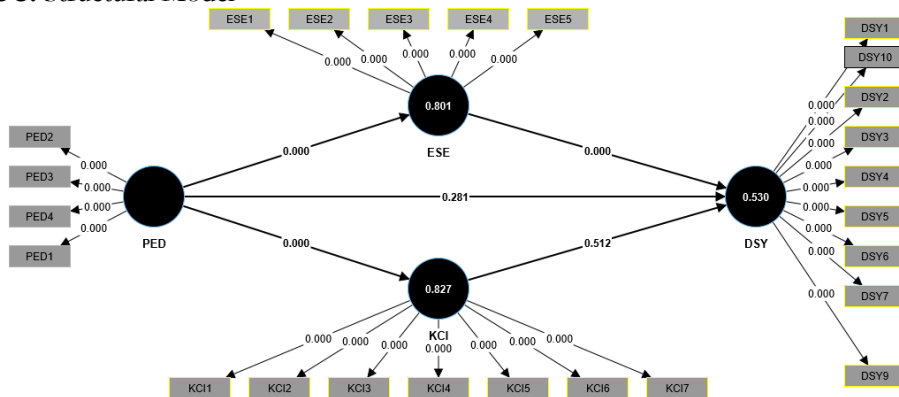
The results of direct relationships are shown in the table 4. The results indicate that all the hypothesis are accepted significantly except KCI -> DSY. The results have highlighted that the perceived ethnic discrimination and ethnic self-esteem are significant determinants of depressive symptoms

Table 4: Direct Relationship

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
ESE -> DSY	0.529	0.527	0.151	3.506	0.000
KCI -> DSY	0.093	0.100	0.142	0.655	0.512
PED -> DSY	0.679	0.679	0.069	3.860	0.000
PED -> ESE	0.895	0.895	0.020	3.648	0.000
PED -> KCI	0.910	0.909	0.015	3.603	0.000

The mediation analysis are shown in the figure 3 and results are presented in the table 5. The results indicate that ESE mediate the relationship between the PED and depressive symptoms. However, KCI fails in mediating the relationship between the PED and depressive symptoms

Table 5: Mediation results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
PED -> ESE -> DSY	0.473	0.471	0.135	3.498	0.000
PED -> KCI -> DSY	0.085	0.091	0.130	0.652	0.514

5.0.   Conclusion

The results indicate that the Kurdish in Iraq, who are confronted with a significant amount of cultural friction have a difficult time distinguishing their own culture from that of others. People who have a significant cultural difference are more likely to believe that the divide between the two civilizations was caused by a physical barrier (Favaretto et al., 2019). Those who have a low ESE are more likely to struggle with their own identities, while those who have a high BII are more likely to identify with a varied society in which the lines between cultures are blurred. There is a negative correlation between bias awareness and BII, which indicates that those who are sensitive to prejudice have a more difficult time absorbing aspects of both cultures (Neff, 2022). The relevance of people's cultural identities in affecting how they experience prejudice and how they respond to it is highlighted in recent research that focused on ethnic and bicultural identification. There is a lack of information about the extent to which the operationalization of cultural identity is responsible for these results. As a consequence of this, one of the objectives of this research is to investigate different ways of conceiving about cultural identity (Okoro et al., 2020). Across-cultural identification. In recent years, there has been an increase in global mobility, which has led to the emergence of new types of cultural engagement. As a result of globalization and migration, traditional cultural practices and ideas are shifting. These shifts are being brought about by a variety of factors, including global media, a free market economy, and democratic institutions, among others (Hyde, 2020).

According to some experts, a person's sense of self-esteem may be affected by how they feel about their social group. Wade and Pear (2022) described these two modes of thinking using the phrases "segregated model" and "integrated model." The second statement she made was, "Social identity and personal identity are not that distant from one another". According to Miller and Vittrup (2020) the relationship between one's group identity and individual identity is determined by one's life experiences and surroundings. It has been shown that the integrated strategy is the most beneficial for minority students. This study revealed that experiencing prejudice on an individual level, seeing discrimination on a collective level, and having a strong sense of one's own ethnicity are all predictors of self-esteem. I devised a route model in an effort to get a deeper understanding of how diverse people assess their own worth. When a person feels prejudice, they may feel powerless because they think they have less control over their life's trajectory and consequences. When one views or experiences unfair treatment, it may be challenging to believe that one's existence is a direct result of one's own efforts. However, it has been established that the desire to limit one's own prejudices correlates with a feeling of agency. People were less likely to attribute poor results to discrimination when they thought they had more control over whether or not they met prejudice (Lissitsa & Kushnirovich, 2019). When a person's failure is attributed to an external source, such as racism, their sense of agency is diminished. There was an association between a good sense of self-worth and a feeling of mastery among American adolescents of various ethnicities and backgrounds. A person's view of injustice was impacted not only by their sense of control but also by their intergroup competence (Atkin et al., 2022). For this

study, Study hypothesized that individuals with a greater feeling of control would have a lower impression of unjust treatment and a better view of themselves. Results also mentioned that Iraqi Kurds views of discrimination affected their cognitive, social, and physical skills, in addition to their overall self-esteem. Second, since prejudice and discrimination are so polarizing, it is easy for individuals to misread the answers to social desirability questions.

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