

# The Influence of Cultural Identity on Mental Health in Ethnic Minority Youth

Selin. Kaya<sup>1</sup>, Zeynep. Acar<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Clinical Psychology, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkiye

<sup>2</sup> Department of General Psychology, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkiye

\* Corresponding author email address: zeynep.acar@istanbul.edu.tr

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
John S. Carlson Distinguished Professor of the Department of Educational Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, United carlsoj@msu.edu	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Fahime Bahonar Department of counseling, Universty of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. Email: Fahime.bahonar@edu.ui.ac.ir <b>Reviewer 2:</b> Mahdi Khanjani Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Email: khanjani_m@atu.ac.ir

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Cultural identity—the sense of belonging to a particular cultural group...” provides a solid conceptual grounding. However, it would benefit from the inclusion of a more contemporary definition or empirical model of cultural identity (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2010), especially to support the psychological framing of the construct.

The statement “Positive ethnic identity development...has been shown to act as a buffer...” is theoretically strong, but it would be useful to clarify which model of ethnic identity development (e.g., Phinney's three-stage model) underpins this analysis.

The sentence “Such roles can foster maturity and resilience...” would benefit from further elaboration on the psychological toll of being a cultural broker, including role strain or boundary ambiguity.

The reference to the COVID-19 pandemic is timely, but the impact on mental health services specific to Turkey remains underdeveloped. The authors should consider citing national reports or studies from Turkey to enhance contextual relevance.

The concept of bicultural stress is briefly mentioned. Consider integrating a discussion of the Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) model here to provide more theoretical clarity.

While the sampling strategy is described as purposive, it would enhance transparency to clarify inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as how regional diversity within Turkey was accounted for.

The description “Interviews were conducted either in person or via secure video calls...” should include the number conducted via each method to assess potential differences in data richness or participant comfort.

The authors state they used “Braun and Clarke’s six-phase framework” for thematic analysis. However, there is no mention of how inter-coder reliability or validation of themes was ensured. This should be addressed for methodological rigor.

The authors report, “25 participants reported being bilingual...” It would be valuable to explore whether language proficiency or dominance had any noticeable effect on identity formation or mental health narratives.

The quote “At home I’m Kurdish, at school I’m Turkish...” is powerful. However, the narrative would benefit from analysis linking this quote to concepts like cultural frame switching or acculturation gaps.

The example “Kids said I looked like a terrorist...” raises ethical and social alarm. The authors might consider elaborating on how such experiences contribute to internalized racism or stereotype threat.

The statement “These findings align with the work of Gopalkrishnan...” would be stronger with a brief elaboration of Gopalkrishnan’s framework or evidence base—currently, it’s too summative.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the sentence “The role of family is particularly salient in this regard...”, the term “salient” is too general. Consider specifying mechanisms (e.g., parental ethnotheories, social learning processes) by which families influence identity development.

The authors note that “Services are often shaped by dominant cultural assumptions...” This important critique could be expanded by offering specific examples from the Turkish mental health system that illustrate this cultural misalignment.

The paragraph discussing stigma ends with “These pressures can generate cycles of self-censorship...”—this is a powerful statement, but the paragraph could be strengthened by mentioning empirical data or prior studies documenting this in the Turkish context.

The sentence “However, empirical research examining the specific role of cultural identity...” rightly identifies a gap. It would help to specify how this study addresses the gap methodologically—what novel perspective or population it includes compared to prior research.

The phrase “We speak the same language, but not really...” could be interpreted in multiple ways. Clarifying whether this reflects linguistic differences, emotional disconnect, or generational gaps would deepen interpretation.

The authors assert “This is consistent with Chu et al...” but do not critically analyze any contradictory findings in the literature. Including such nuance would strengthen the discussion’s academic rigor.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.