The International Journal of
INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Research Paper

Ethnic Identity: Comparing Ethnic Groups in Terms of their Well Being and Sense of Belonging

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ABSTRACT

India is a culturally diverse country inherent with various ethnic groups. The objective of our study is to identity whether psychological well being and sense of belonging can predict ethnic identity in different ethnic groups. Previous researchers have found that for minority groups ethnic identity is more salient and is associated with positive outcomes when compared to majority groups. The ethnic groups we examined using a comparative design were Indo Aryans and Dravidians. Using Regression Analysis, we found that psychological well being and sense of belonging did not significantly predict ethnic identity in either of the groups. This can be attributed to the processes of globalization, urbanization, and acculturation which have made ethnic identity-based segregation redundant. Since ethnicity has not been very frequently researched by psychologists in India, our research adds to the existing pool of research.

India is a country with a blend of various social groups which may be based on culture, religion, or ethnicity. An individual's social group is of great importance, especially in a collectivistic country like India, where an individual exists as a part of a group and the group is of a greater value than the individuals that make up the group. The existence of such varied group of individuals has led to the emergence of ethnic groups that define and consist of people coming from the same cultural, regional, linguistic backgrounds. In India, ethnic groups have been divided into two major groups- Indo Aryans and Dravidians. The population of Indo Aryans is dominant in North India, whereas Dravidians are predominant in the southern region of India. This classification is made mainly based on language. Delhi being the capital of India and one of the most populous cities in the world has a rich blend of people coming from various ethnic backgrounds. Here, they encounter various other cultures and ethnic groups, such groups that individuals belong to provide them with a sense of belonging. Experiencing oneself as a part of a group has also been known to enhance an individual's well being. An individual's ethnic identity links them to a social group and becomes an inseparable part of their lives. But does this ethnic identity have equivocal effects for both the majority and

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minority groups? Many studies have found that ethnic identity seems to be more salient for the minority groups. One of the most prominent and noteworthy work on ethnic identity has been done by Phinney, who postulates that ethnic identity is more central for the minority groups, especially in a country like India.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity has been a complex word to define. Many scholars have their own conceptualizations of this term. The underlying meaning shared by these conceptualizations is that, ethnic identity can be described as a person's sense of belonging that a person derives through their membership to an ethnic group. These ethnic groups can be based on ancestry, cultural heritage, values, traditions, rituals, language and often region and religion. Ethnic identity is related to a range of positive aspects of child and adolescent development, such as improved coping abilities, greater self-competence in academics, less depression and loneliness, and higher self-esteem, for both majority and minority group members (Davey et al., 2003; Greig, 2003; Phinney, 1989; Roberts et al., 1999). An individual's ethnic identity provides them with a sense of who they are and where they belong.

Many developmental and social psychologists regard ethnic identity as one of many facets of an individual's social identity (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Phinney's theory of ethnic identity is based on Erikson's psycho-social theory of development and Marcia's ego identity theory. Erik Erikson developed the psycho-social stages of development. One of these stages is adolescence wherein the defining feature of the stage is identity development which he highlighted in his work: Identity: Youth and Crisis (Phinney, 1988). The failure to develop one's identity during adolescence results in role confusion, which makes the individual uncertain or irresolute of who they are and where they belong. Having a stable sense of identity is crucial for an individual's mental health and normal development. Marcia stated that the adolescence stage consists neither of identity resolution nor identity/ role confusion, but rather the degree to which one has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains. In summary, both social psychological and developmental perspectives suggest that a strong, secure ethnic identity makes a positive contribution to psychological well-being. Research provides support for this view; maintenance of a strong ethnic identity is generally related to psychological well-being among members of acculturating groups (Liebkind, 1996; Nesdale, Rooney, and Smith, 1997; Phinney et al., 1997). Such acculturating groups tend to be the minority.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging has been described in the literature as the extent to which an individual feels included, respected, accepted, and supported by others in different social contexts (Baumeister & Leary 1995; Hagerty et al., 1992). It has also been conceptualized as a need which exists in each individual, according to Maslow, belongingness is a deficiency need that need to be fulfilled before a person can achieve the growth need of self-actualization. Not being able to form social connections tends to affect an individual's physical and mental health. Social isolation can have direct effects on cardiovascular disease risk factors. Perceived isolation and loneliness are associated with increased sympathetic nervous system activity, increased inflammation, and decreased sleep, all of which can accelerate brain and cardiovascular aging (Cacioppo, et al., 2011).

Psychological Well Being

Well being in layman terms may be defined as happiness, health, and a sense of meaning. Many perspectives on well being exist, one of which is the one proposed by Ryff and Keyes

(1995). They identify three forms of well being: Emotional well being: Presence of positive affect or emotions. Social well being: Having a sense a belonging to a group. Psychological well being: It has been divided into six components- Autonomy - The extent to which a person functions depending on self-determined values and does not give into societal pressure. A person high on autonomy would make his or her own decisions and not rely on others to make choices for them. Environmental mastery - The extent to which an individual has control over his or her surroundings. An individual possessing mastery over his or her environment would be able to manage daily hassles or difficulties with ease. Personal growth -The extent to which a person strives for betterment and is open to novel experiences. An individual who strives for personal growth would take risks and try novel tasks and accept his or her limitations and work on them. Positive relations with others - The extent to which an individual has positive and fulfilling relationships with others. A person with positive relationships would have a healthy and supportive social network. Purpose in life - The extent to which a person feels motivated and feels his or her life is not meaningless. A person who has a purpose in life would strive to achieve his or her goals and see oneself as a valuable part of the society. Self-acceptance- The extent to which a person views himself or herself positively. A person who has acceptance for oneself would be aware of their shortcomings and talents and accept both alike.

Many researchers prove that an individuals' social identity affects their emotions, behaviors, and perceptions which in turn contribute to the way an individual would function and can contribute to their well being. Examples include sports team members who personally take the blame for a team loss (Taylor and Doria 1981), research participants who stick together with an unsuccessful group, even when they have the opportunity to leave (Ellemers et al. 1997), or activists who may jeopardize their personal well-being for causes or principles that are unlikely to affect their own immediate outcomes (e.g., animal rights and environmental activists; e.g., Drury and Reicher 2000). The groups individuals belong to act as an important resource in maintaining and promoting health and well being. One of the components of well being according to Ryff and Keyes is positive relationship with others. Psychological wellbeing being an eudaimonic concept, is influenced by each of its components. In a study examining relationships between group membership and life-satisfaction among people who had recently experienced stroke, it was found that life satisfaction after the stroke was higher for those who belonged to more social groups before their stroke (Haslam et al., 2008). Social groups provide individuals with a sense of belonging which provides them with the feeling of being accepted and appreciated and enhances well being.

Present Study
In our study we have two ethnic groups, Indo Aryans, and Dravidians. The population of Indo Aryans is dominant in North India, whereas Dravidians are predominant in the Southern region of India. Since Indo Aryans tend to be predominant in Northern India, Dravidians tend to be the minority in these regions. Being a minority is not only related to being less in number, but it brings about differential treatment. Minority groups are more likely to be excluded, discriminated against, oppressed, and persecuted. They also struggle with problems related to their identity due to the different cultures they are surrounded by, their identity tends to get overshadowed. They also develop a sense of insecurity over issues of resources due their inability to win conflicts over resources against majorities. They are not provided with equal opportunities and treatment due to which they experience inequity. In the case of Dravidians, they are frequent receivers of comments such as "aiyyaiyyo", "vibhuti" 'Madrasi,' "Mallu," etc. They are represented poorly in Indian cinema where all characters

dress up and talk in a stereotypical fashion. Hindi is imposed upon them. People tend to be ignorant of their culture, for them, 'south' is somehow just one state. They are forced to assimilate with the northern culture. They face frequent racism due to their skin color. They are ridiculed and discriminated against by the majorities. Many psychologists, especially Phinney, have found that one's ethnic identity tends to be more significant and salient for ethnic minority groups. Since they are oppressed and weaker, they tend to assert themselves against the majority through their identity. And due to the feeling of insecurity and exclusion they experience due to the majority group, their own ethnic group tends to provide them with the feeling of security and acceptance that they crave. Due to the dearth of research related to ethnic identity in the Indian context, our study aims to expand our understanding of ethnic identification and fill the gaps in knowledge. Also, discovering factors that can serve as a protective factor for the minority group can also strengthen their capacity to cope with discrimination.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consists of Dravidian and Indo Aryan college students whose age ranged from 18-21. Data was collected from 120 college students. In the current study 3 sampling techniques were used: purposive sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling. The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling as the study needed only Indo Aryans and Dravidians, convenience sampling because participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate, and snowball sampling as participants were asked to nominate other participants.

Instruments

Three scales were used in this study:

1. **Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale:** To assess psychological well being Ryff's Psychological Well Being scale was used. We used the 42 items version of the scale. This scale was designed to measure six constructs of psychological well being, which are: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. In a study conducted by Opree (2018), the reliability of the PWB-c was assessed by determining the scale's internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Proper internal consistency is indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or higher, and test-retest reliability by Pearson's correlation coefficients of 0.50 or higher.

2. **Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure:** To assess ethnic identity the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) by Phinney (1992) was used. The scale assesses ethnic identity exploration and ethnic identity commitment. Research across ethnic and age groups has yielded reliability coefficients (Cronbach alphas) between 0.65 and 0.83. The exploration and commitment sub-scales are related, with Pearson correlations ranging from 0.54 to 0.69 across studies. MEIM is positively related to self-esteem and psychological well-being and negatively to depression.

3. **Social Connectedness and Social Assurance Scales:** To assess sense of belonging the social connectedness and social assurance scales by Lee and Robbins were used. It is 16 items scales with 8 items in each dimension. To assess reliability the coefficient alphas were computed and were found to be of .91 and .77, respectively (Crocker & Algina, 1986). The test-retest correlations, which were estimated on a separate sample during a 2-week interval, were .96 and .84, respectively. (Crocker & Algina, 1986). A Pearson product—moment correlation was computed on the second split sample to determine the relationship be between

Social Connectedness and Social Assurance. The correlation for the two scales was .341, suggesting that they are moderately related but independent factors. (Lisrel VII; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1988).

Procedure

The aim of the study was decided after which the criteria for the sample was established. After identifying the sample, a Google form was created to reach participants who were not easily accessible. The scales were also administered in a paper-pencil test format. Before data was collected participants were asked to sign the consent form and were briefed about the study. Participants were ensured that the data will be kept confidential. Data was collected from 120 college students, 60 Dravidians and 60 Indo Aryans, who are residing in Delhi. Data was collected virtually and face to face to reach more number of people. After the data was collected from the sample, the data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to examine the data after which the results were prepared.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Group 1 (Indo Aryan, n=60) and group 2 (Dravidians, n=60). N=120

Variables	Ethnic Identity	WellBeing	Sense of Belonging
Indo Aryans			
Mean	28.7167	175.70	63.9667
Standard deviation	6.84227	26.262	14.614
Dravidian			
Mean	36.5167	177.77	61.9833
Standard deviation	5.31863	22.144	13.866
Total			
Mean	32.6167	176.73	62.9750
Standard deviation	7.25083	24.210	14.220

 * The mean scores for Dravidians on Multi-group Ethnic Identity Scale is higher than for Indo Aryans. Which means Dravidians identify more closely with their ethnic identity.

Table 2: Showing the t Value for the Mean (N=120)

Variables	t value	df	Level of Significance
Ethnic Identity	6.972*	118	.000
Well Being	.466	118	.642
Sense of Belonging	.763	118	.447

*$p<0.01$
*Abbreviation: df- degree of freedom
* Since the t value for ethnic identity scores for both the groups is significant, it means there is a significant difference between the degree of identification that the groups have with their ethnic identity.

Table 3: Showing the Pearson Correlation of the Variables for the Total Sample (N=120) and for Indo Aryans and Dravidians Separately (n=60)

Variables	Total		Indo Aryans		Dravidian	
	r	Level of sig.	r	Level of sig.	r	Level of sig.
Ethnic Identity and Well being	.067	.469	341*	.008	-.146	.266
Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging	-.062	.501	.341*	.008	-.246	.058
Well Being and Sense of Belonging	.386*	.000	1*	.000	.452	.000

*Abbreviation: IA-Indo Aryans, D-Dravidian, Sig- significance
*p<0.01
* Since the correlations between ethnic identity and well being, and ethnic identity and sense of belonging are significant for Indo Aryans, it shows there is a significant positive relationship between the.

Table 4: Showing ANOVA Test for Both Group (N=120) and Indo Aryans and Dravidians Separately (n=60)

Variables	Total		Indo Aryans		Dravidian	
	F	Level of sig	F	Level of sig	F	Level of sig
Ethnic Identity, Well Being ,and Sense of Belonging	.800	. 452	1.139	.327	1.885	.161

*Abbreviation: IA-Indo Aryans, D-Dravidian, T-total, Sig- significance
*p<0.01

Table 5: Showing Multiple Regression Analysis for Both Groups (N=120) and Indo Aryans and Dravidians Separately (n=60)

	Total		Indo Aryans		Dravidian	
	R	R^2	R	R^2	R	R^2
Ethnic Identity (DI), well Being, and Sense of Belonging (PREDICTOR)	.116	.013	.196	0.038	.249	.029

*Abbreviation: IA-Indo Aryans, D-Dravidian, Sig- significance

Table 6: Showing Regression Coefficient for Both Groups (N=120) and Indo Aryans and Dravidians Separately (n=60)

| Variables	Total			Indo Aryans			Dravidian		
	B	**Beta**	**Level of sig**	**B**	**Beta**	**Level of sig**	**B**	**Beta**	**Level of sig**
Ethnic Identity and Well Being	.032	.106	.287	.037	.078	.537	-.010	-.044	. 762
Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging	-.053	0.51	.303	.040	.155	.267	-.087	-.226	.121

*Abbreviation: IA-Indo Aryans, D-Dravidian, T-total, Sig- significance
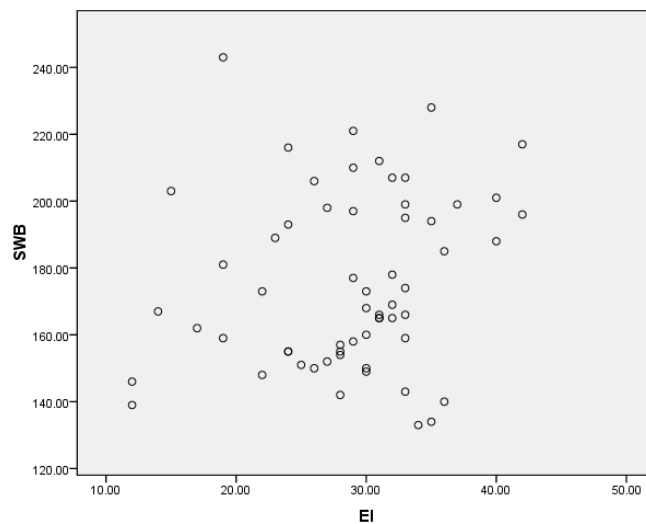*$p<0.01$

Graphs
Graph 1: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging
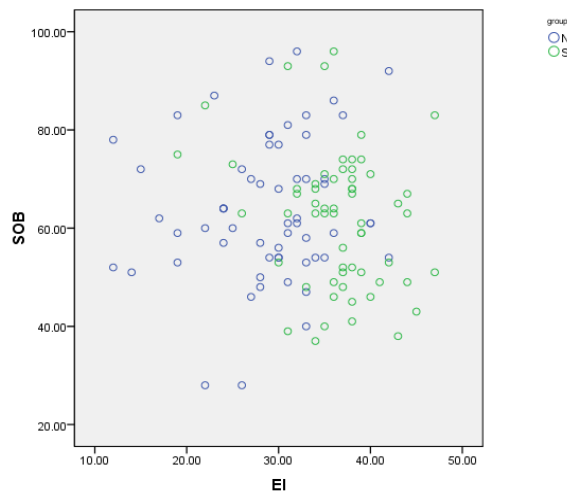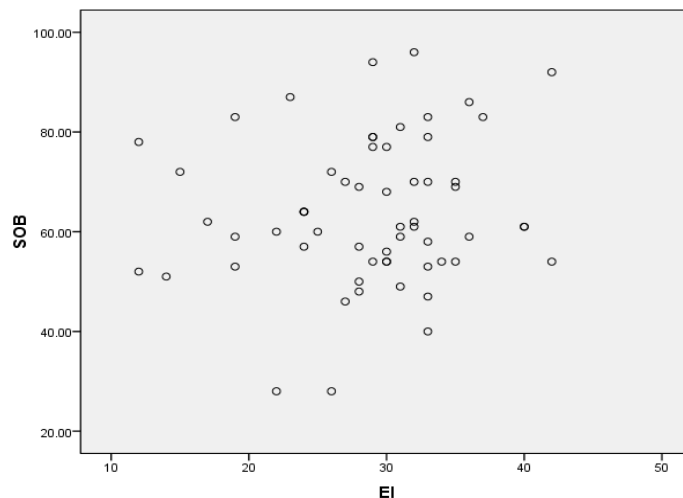

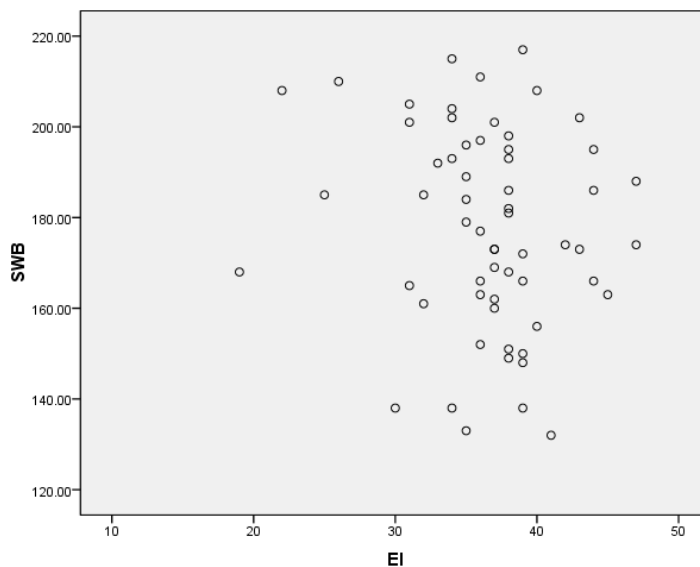**Graph 2: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Well Being**
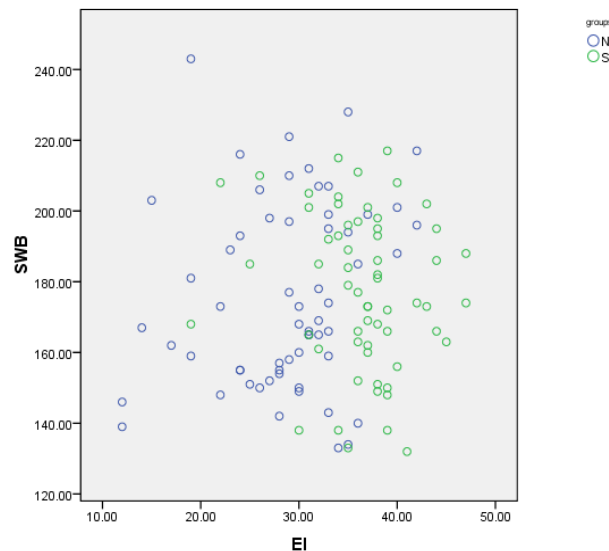
Graph 3: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Well Being for Indo Aryans
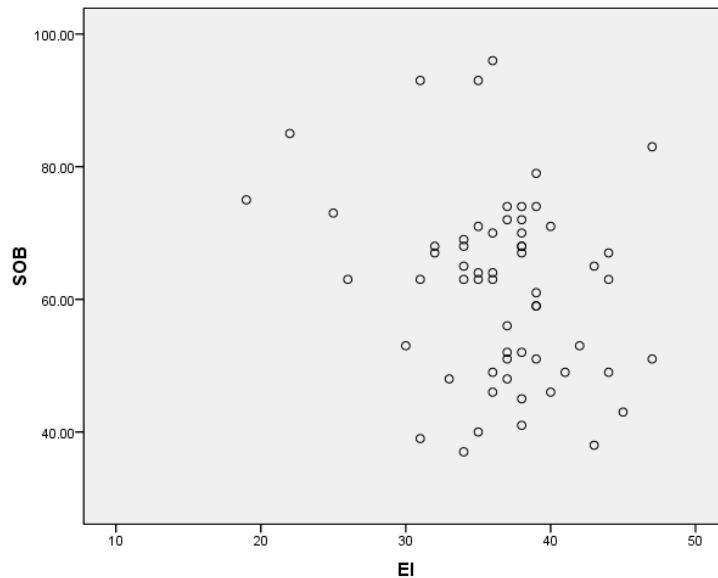

Graph 4: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging for Indo Aryans

Graph 5: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Well Being for Dravidians

Graph 6: Scatter Diagram of Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging for Dravidians

DISCUSSION

Ethnic Identity and Sense of Belonging

Researchers have found that there are differential effects of ethnic identity for minority and the majority groups. This study was able to demonstrate that ethnic groups tend to differ in terms of the ability of their sense of belonging to predict their ethnic identity. Since Indo Aryans are the majority, they are surrounded by people with whom they share a common ethnic identity which might make their ethnic identity more salient for them and may be a source of the feeling of acceptance and togetherness. Since Dravidians are the minority, they do not experience acceptance and a sense of togetherness and other factors such as college environment, family, friends, and daily events also have an impact on one's sense of belonging. A study by Lee (2005) found that Korean Americans (minority) with high EI-Pride reported fewer depressive symptoms and higher social connectedness when perceived ethnic discrimination was low, but depressive symptoms increased, and social connectedness decreased when perceived discrimination was high for this group. Phinney's (1990) review, which summarized previous studies on ethnic identity, defined the components of ethnic identity, including self-identification with one's ethnic group, a sense of belonging to this group, and positive or negative attitudes toward one's ethnic group (Demir, 2014). Another reason sense of belonging did not predict ethnic identity can be that minority groups, in order to adjust to the new culture, adopt different acculturation styles. Depending on these styles their ethnic identities may become more or less salient for them.

Acculturation has been defined as "meeting of cultures and the resulting change" (Sam and Berry, 2006). Laroche, Kim,and Tomiuk (1998) did an empirical study was conducted to test this relationship between linguistic acculturation and ethnic identification using data gathered from multiple studies investigating four different ethnic groups in Eastern Canada over a period of 7 years and found that as linguistic acculturation increases, ethnic identification decreases. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) stated that culture is adaptive also that the fact that culture was adaptive but also suggested that the relationship between acquisition of dominant culture and retention of culture of origin may not be linear. There are several competing explanations which may be possible for these findings that will have

to be investigated further: first, the findings may reflect a model of adaptation that we call the "attraction resistance model", in which a group acculturating linguistically will initially try to resist any loss of identity. Over time, this resistance weakens, with greater loss of identity associated with increased linguistic acculturation. This model is consistent with brewer's (1991) view of the social self, with has two opposing needs: need for assimilation (here, linguistic acculturation) and need for differentiation (here, identification). another explanation is that immigrants may not perceive the initial phase of acculturation as a threat to their ethnic identity; that is, they use the new language out of necessity. Eventually, they may find the use of the new language easier leading to a loss of ethnic identity. (Laroche, Kim,Hui, and Tomuik,1998).

Ethnic Identity and Well being

Ethnic identity can provide a sense of strength, competence, and self-acceptance when negotiating complex environmental contingencies (e.g., Outten et al., 2009; Ruiz, 1990). Our study did not find that ethnic identity significantly predicts well being in either of the groups. The reason behind this can be that other factors moderate this relationship. Factors such as self-esteem, adjustment, relationship with peers, perceived discrimination also add to this relationship. Some researched have observed that in some cases stronger ethnic identity may actually exacerbate susceptibility to distress (e.g., Yip, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008; Yoo & Lee, 2008). According to self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), individuals attune to environmental cues relevant to their own identity. Research has confirmed that individuals with strong ethnic identity attend to inter-ethnic dynamics (Syed and Azmitia, 2008; 2010) and are more likely to report experiences of discrimination (e.g., Sellers & Shelton, 2003) and experience distress because of discrimination (McCoy and Major, 2003). Ethnicity can influence well being if the individual perceives their ethnic identity as important. If individuals do not relate to their ethnic identity it may not influence well being. The view of ethnic identity as the link between ethnicity and psychological outcomes is based on the assumption that ethnicity is a meaningful psychological variable to the extent that it has salience and centrality for the individuals involved. For most Americans of European background, ethnicity is not a salient or important part of their identity, and they can choose what role, if any, it will have for them (Phinney, 1996). socioeconomic status has been found to be associated with both ethnic identity and well-being, with stressors associated with ethnic discrimination being compounded by poverty (Myers, 2009). Studies investigating gender identity have concluded that it is positively associated with ethnic identity (e.g., Hoffman, 2006) and that ethnic identity development may differ across males and females (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). However, data contrasted across gender yield either minimal differences or mixed findings (e.g., Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney et al., 1997; Tatman, 1996). a study by Yoo and Lee (2005) on Asian Americans found that individuals with a strong ethnic identity were more likely to engage in approach-type coping strategies, but the use of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving coping buffered the effects of racial discrimination on well-being only when racial discrimination was low. Gómez (2004) was used to classify participants into ethnic identity clusters based on degrees of exploration, resolution, and affirmation. The sample comprised 156 self-identified Arab Americans living in the United States who were at least 18 years of age. Results from multiple regression analyses demonstrated that ethnic identity exploration was not significantly related to psychological well-being. However, ethnic identity resolution and affirmation were significantly, positively related to self-esteem, flourishing, and satisfaction with life. Ethnic identity affirmation appeared to be a moderator by mitigating the impact of perceived discrimination on flourishing. It may be that it is ethnic identity affirmation that serves as

protective factor against discrimination, rather than ethnic identity exploration or resolution. (Atari, 2017).

What we can infer from the results that were obtained from our study is that in the globalized world diversity is all around us. It is no longer rare. This has helped people become more accepting of differences and to place more emphasis on what an individual has achieved rather than what they are born with. Our results are also consistent with the concept of the melting pot which states that in a society made up of different types of people, the people blend as one. I would like to highlight one of my experiences in one of the practical we did in our class, we were made to think of how we are surrounded by diversity every day, but even though people may be different than us in terms of their caste, race. religion, ethnicity, there are also some similarities. It also made us realize how oblivious we are of the diversity that surrounds us and how focusing on similarities rather than differences enhances unity and harmony.

Limitations and implications
The current study had certain limitations. The sample size was not large due to the time constraints due to which the data may not be generalizable. Since we used self-report measures the participants may have showed social desirability and demand characteristics. Ethnic identity is a complex concept and there is no clear-cut criteria to differentiate people based on their ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is not equally important for all group members. Personal characteristics and environmental characteristics may have influenced the relationship between ethnic identity, well being, and sense of belonging, since some of the data was collected online, there were no means to ensure whether the participants were answering the items genuinely. Other demographic factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status were not considered. Even though there were certain limitations there were also some implication. The study did not consider the acculturation style of the participants which may have influenced the results. There are very few researches on ethnic identity done in India, the study adds to the existing pool of research studies. Since ethnic identity plays an important role in other person related factors, more attention should be given to social identity and how it affects people. There can also be longitudinal studies as to how the relationship between ethnic identity, well being, and sense of belonging changes over time.

CONCLUSION
The role an individual's ethnic identity plays in their life has been an interesting area of study in psychological research, however it is still not well examined in the Indian context and remains an under researched area of study. The aim of our study was to find out whether psychological well being and sense of belonging predict ethnic identity among college students. Analyzing Indo Aryans and Dravidians as our sample for the study, none of our three objectives were proved to be true. Hence it was concluded that psychological well being and sense of belonging did not predict ethnic identity among Indo Aryans and Dravidian college students who are currently residing in Delhi. The factors that may have contributed to these results were found to be the processes of urbanization, globalization, and acculturation. In the future, studies can be done longitudinally or using interviews to capture a more in-depth representation of this relationship.

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