

# Muslim and Jewish Immigrants' Adjustment: The Role of Religious-American Harmony, Religious-American Identity Centrality, and Discrimination

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## Abstract

Religious-minority immigrants must negotiate both their religious and host cultural (e.g., American) identities; however, the duality of these identities is rarely examined in relation to adjustment. In this study, we tested whether a religious-American identity centrality could predict better adjustment over and above religious identity centrality and American identity centrality. Moreover, based on the Integrative Psychological Model of Biculturalism, we investigated whether the harmony perceived between one's religious and American identities could mediate the relationship between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment, and between perceived discrimination and adjustment. With data from 130 first-generation Muslim American and Jewish American participants, we found support for most hypotheses. Although a more central religious-American identity predicted better adjustment, it did not predict better adjustment over and above religious identity centrality and American identity centrality. More importantly, religious-American harmony mediated the positive association between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment, and the negative association between perceived discrimination and adjustment. Implications of our findings for research on dual identities are discussed.

## Keywords

cultural identity, religious identity, dual identity harmony, discrimination, adjustment

Individuals belong to multiple social groups and define themselves in terms of multiple social identities (Ashmore et al., 2004), such as their gender, cultural, religious, and sexual identities (e.g., queer Muslim Egyptian American woman); however, this multiplicity of social identities is not often reflected in psychological research (Cole, 2009). Although there is extensive research on the association between single social identities and adjustment (e.g., Postmes et al., 2019; Smith & Silva, 2011), psychologists are only beginning to examine the association

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between multiple social identities and adjustment (e.g., Fattoracci et al., 2020). To more accurately capture the nuances of multiple social identities, we examined Muslim and Jewish American immigrants' adjustment as it relates to their identification with both their religious and American groups, the harmony they perceive between those two identities, and the discrimination they experience due to their minority religion.

## **Religious Minorities and Immigrants**

Research on immigrants tends to focus on the ways in which they integrate their host and heritage cultural identities (Berry, 2005)—and the effects of such integration on adjustment—while neglecting the role of religious identity in their immigration experiences (Tarakeshwar et al., 2003) despite religion being one of the most important buttresses of identity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Therefore, in this study, we focused on the religious identity, coupled with the host cultural (i.e., American) identity, of Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US. Muslim Americans and Jewish Americans comprise the two largest non-Christian religious groups in the US, with 58% of Muslim Americans and 14% of Jewish Americans being foreign-born (Pew Research Center, 2013, 2018). Due to their minority status, both groups have suffered a great deal of discrimination; however, these two immigrant groups are received differently by Americans (Pew Research Center, 2013). Despite strong anti-Jewish sentiments in the US, evidenced by the recent Charlottesville demonstration (Rosenberg, 2017), Judaism is the most favored minority religion in the US (Pew Research Center, 2013). On the opposite end of the spectrum is Islam, which is the least socially accepted minority religion (compared to Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, etc.; Pew Research Center, 2014). Therefore, we found it appropriate to study the identity processes of Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US.

## **Religious-American Identity**

According to social identity theory, social group membership is an important part of self-concept, and defining and evaluating oneself in terms of shared attributes with a social group forms one's social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Although individuals are typically a part of numerous social groups, some group memberships are more meaningful than others in shaping one's self-concept (Ashmore et al., 2004). This is referred to as identity centrality, or the explicit, subjective importance of an identity to one's self-concept (Cameron, 2004). Further, the more central a social identity is to one's self-concept, the more attached one's sense of esteem will be to that group membership. In this study, we examined the centrality of Muslim and Jewish immigrants' religious identity, American identity, and religious-American identity.

## ***American Identity***

Cultural identity is the feeling of belonging to a particular cultural group and the importance of such membership in defining oneself (Cheng et al., 2014). Immigrants typically have both a heritage cultural identity and a host cultural identity; however, for immigrants, host cultural identity, as compared to heritage cultural identity, is more strongly related to their adjustment because most immigrants are already strongly identified with their heritage culture (Tsai et al., 2000). Moreover, meta-analytic findings indicated that a strong orientation to and identification with the host culture is associated with greater adjustment as well as lower maladjustment, whereas a strong orientation to and identification with the heritage culture is only associated with greater adjustment but not associated with lower maladjustment (Yoon et al., 2013). Thus,

in terms of cultural identity, we examined Muslim and Jewish Americans' host rather than heritage cultural identity given the importance of host identity to adjustment for immigrants.

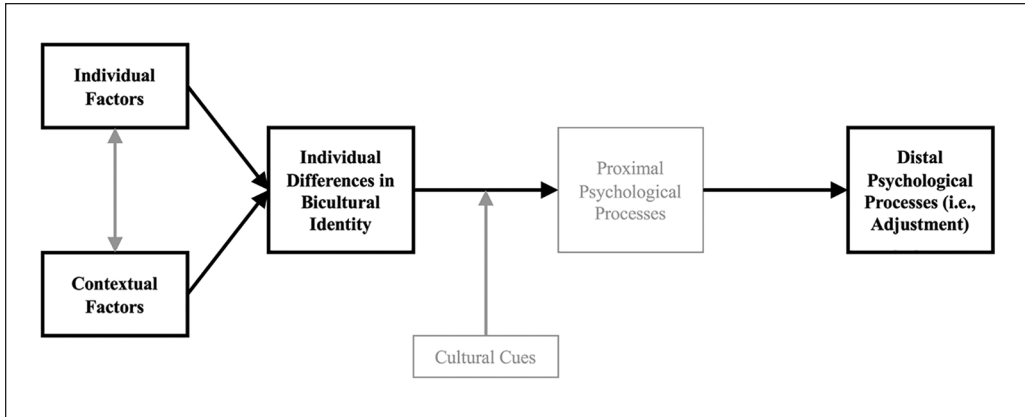
### *Religious Identity*

For religious-minority immigrants in the US, cultural identity is not the only relevant social identity; they are also negotiating their religious identity, which may predict their adjustment to the US. Religious identity refers to one's sense of belonging to a specific religious group and the significance of this membership to one's definition of self, regardless of religious participation or activity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010), and it is also one of the most frequently mentioned identities when individuals are asked to describe themselves. For Muslim and Jewish minorities, religious identity and heritage cultural identity are related but nonetheless distinct aspects of their identity (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Saroglou & Hanique, 2006). Muslim minorities tend to experience more conflict and discrimination due to their religious identity than their heritage cultural identity (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Saleem et al., 2018). Further, Jewish minorities' religious identity has been understudied compared to their heritage cultural identity (Haji et al., 2011). Therefore, in this study, we chose to focus on religious identity rather than heritage cultural identity, and we investigated both religious identity and host cultural (i.e., American) identity for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated a positive link between religious identity and psychological and physical adjustment (e.g., George et al., 2000; Paloutzian & Park, 2005), studies with immigrants have yet to reach a consensus on the direction of the association between religious identity and adjustment. For many immigrants, religious identity serves as an important source of self-worth, social support, and cultural continuity (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002), whereas for others, it acts as a sharp boundary that sets them apart from mainstream society and impedes their adjustment (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010). Variations in experiences with discrimination and stigma only partially account for these mixed findings on the religious identity-adjustment relationship for immigrants (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). These contradictory results suggest that in the case of immigrants, the religious identity-adjustment link is more complicated than previously assumed. Perhaps, for immigrants, the simultaneous identification with multiple groups (e.g., religious, American) is more important to adjustment than any one social identity (e.g., religious identity).

### *Religious-American Identity*

Because religious-minority immigrants in the US must juggle both their religious and American identities, it would be inappropriate to consider religious or American identity in isolation (van Dommelen et al., 2015). For example, previous research on Muslim and Christian Arab Americans examined religious identity and cultural identity as separate, rather than interconnected, predictors of well-being (Hakim et al., 2018). Thus, we deliberately set out to examine the ways in which religious identity and American identity work together, as a religious-American dual identity, to shape meaningfully different experiences than either religious or American identity alone. Based on literature on biculturalism and multiple social identities, a strong identification with two social groups, such as both one's religious and host cultural groups, may be associated with positive correlates, such as better adjustment, due to larger ingroups and social support networks, better intergroup relations, and greater social and cognitive flexibility (Amiot et al., 2007; Cheng et al., 2014; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Dual identities are often examined in biculturalism research in terms of two cultural identities; therefore, we turned to the biculturalism literature to provide the theoretical underpinning for our study.



**Figure 1.** Integrative psychological model of biculturalism (Adapted from Cheng et al., 2014).  
 Note. This study focused on only the bolded boxes and paths.

## Religious-American Harmony

Biculturalism refers to the internalization of two cultures (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007), and the integrative psychological model of biculturalism (IPMB; Cheng et al., 2014) provides a framework for understanding biculturalism dynamics. Based on the IPMB, individual factors and contextual factors lead to variations in bicultural identity, which in turn lead to differences in psychological processes, although the exact mechanisms depend on cultural cues in the environment (see Figure 1). For example, bicultural individuals who are less neurotic (individual factor) and those who experience less discrimination (contextual factor) tend to view their two cultures as more compatible (variation in bicultural identity), and these individuals are also better adjusted (psychological process) (Huynh et al., 2018).

The adjustment of religious minorities, cultural minorities, and other minorities is likely influenced not only by individual factors but also by contextual factors; thus, individual and contextual factors comprise the first part of the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014). Individual factors include variables such as generation status, host and heritage language proficiency, personality traits, and bicultural status, and contextual factors include variables such as acculturative stress, the cultural environment, and intergroup relations. In this study, we focused on identity centrality (specifically religious-American identity centrality) as an individual factor and religious discrimination as a contextual factor predicting religious-minority immigrants' adjustment. Based on the literature review earlier, we hypothesized that a more central religious-American identity (i.e., identification with *both* one's religious and American groups as a central part of one's self-concept) would predict better adjustment over and above religious identity centrality and American identity centrality alone for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US (Hypothesis 1). Further, discrimination is a particularly relevant variable considering that a meta-analysis of 134 studies found a negative relationship between perceived discrimination and mental and physical health (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Therefore, we hypothesized that more perceived discrimination would predict worse adjustment for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US (Hypothesis 2).

Variations in bicultural identity comprise the middle part of the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014). The feelings, beliefs, values, and actions associated with belonging to multiple social groups may be perceived as harmonious or conflictual (Amiot et al., 2007; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Bicultural harmony, a component of bicultural identity integration (Cheng et al., 2014), outlines differences in the ways in which individuals affectively manage their

two cultural identities: They may view those cultural identities as compatible and complementary, or as incompatible and conflictual. The construct of bicultural harmony may apply to other types of social identities beyond cultural identities. Recently, researchers extended bicultural harmony to the integration of religious and cultural identities (Saleem et al., 2018). For Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US, religious-American harmony refers to the degree to which these immigrants perceive their Muslim/Jewish identities and American identities to be compatible versus conflictual. Based on the IPMB and previous empirical findings (e.g., Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Huynh et al., 2018; Leong & Ward, 2000; Lin, 2008; Saleem et al., 2018), we hypothesized that a more central religious-American identity would predict greater religious-American harmony (Hypothesis 3) and that more religious discrimination would predict lower religious-American harmony (Hypothesis 4) for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US. When both one's religious and American group memberships are central to one's self-concept, participants may be more likely to attend to the compatible and complementary aspects of those identities, and thus perceive greater religious-American harmony. Conversely, greater experiences of discrimination may direct participants' attention to the conflictual and irreconcilable aspects of their identities, leading them to perceive lower religious-American harmony.

Psychological processes, both proximal and distal ones, comprise the last part of the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014). The five proximal psychological processes in the IPMB are cultural frame-switching, perceptions of one's self and one's ingroups, knowledge bridging and creativity, cognitive complexity, and motivation, and the path between variations in bicultural identity to these proximal processes is moderated by cultural cues (e.g., whether the host vs. heritage culture is primed, whether one vs. two cultures are primed). Distal psychological processes, which are the focus of the present study, refer to psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Previous studies have shown that bicultural harmony is related to greater well-being, less depression, greater tolerance for ambiguity, and greater perceived permeability of cultural group boundaries for bicultural individuals (Huynh et al., 2018; Leong & Ward, 2000; Lin, 2008; Tikhonov et al., 2019). In other words, it appears to be more adaptive to perceive greater, rather than lower, harmony. Thus, we hypothesized that higher religious-American harmony would be related to better psychological adjustment, lower psychological maladjustment, and better sociocultural adjustment for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US (Hypothesis 5).

Extending the IPMB beyond bicultural identity to religious-American dual identity centrality, and combining the above hypotheses, we hypothesized that religious-American harmony would mediate the positive link between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment (Hypothesis 6), and the negative link between religious discrimination and adjustment (Hypothesis 7). This variation in dual identity centrality is key to the relationship between individual and contextual factors and adjustment because of the perceptual nature of religious-American harmony (Cheng et al., 2014; Huynh et al., 2018; Tikhonov et al., 2019). That is, an individual who views both religious identity and American identity as central to their self-concept is also more likely (compared to those with a lower religious-American dual identity centrality) to see those identities as harmonious and compatible (rather than conflictual and contradictory), and it is this perception of harmony that is associated with better adjustment. Moreover, someone who experiences more discrimination is more likely to see their religious and American identities as conflictual and oppositional (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016), and this negative perception and appraisal of their religious-American duality (i.e., lower religious-American harmony) is what is associated with worse adjustment. In other words, better adjustment associated with a more central religious-American dual identity may be due to greater perceptions of harmony between one's religious and host cultural identities. Further, poorer adjustment associated with greater experiences of perceived religious discrimination may be due to lower perceptions of harmony between one's religious and host cultural identities.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity for Muslim and Jewish Participants.

	Muslim	Jewish
Age		
M	29.57	31.17
SD	7.70	8.83
Range	19–60	20–72
Gender		
Male	38	37
Female	22	32
Other	1	0
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian American	12	1
Black/African American	4	2
European American	5	44
Latinx	0	2
Middle Eastern American	36	11
Multiracial	4	9

## Method

### Participants

We recruited participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a cloud-based data platform which connects people who need tasks completed (requesters) to people who can complete those tasks (workers). There were four participation requirements: Participants must (1) be immigrants or refugees (i.e., not born in the US), (2) have lived in the US for at least 5 years, (3) be fluent in English, and (4) identify as either Muslim or Jewish. Of the 130 participants, 75 were male, 54 were female, and 1 identified as “other”. The sample had a mean age of 30.42 years ( $SD=8.33$ ), and participants had lived in the US for a mean of 18.64 years ( $SD=10.38$ ). In terms of religion, 61 identified as Muslim, and 69 identified as Jewish. For most participants, ethnicity was separate from religion, with only 26.92% specifying “Muslim” or “Jewish” as their ethnicity. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics for age, gender, and race/ethnicity by religion.

### Measures

**Adjustment.** To examine psychological adjustment, we measured self-esteem and satisfaction with life. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965;  $\alpha=.92$ ) asks participants to rate their level of agreement with 10 statements (e.g., “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”) on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985;  $\alpha=.92$ ) consists of 5 items (e.g., “In most ways, my life is close to my ideal”), asking participants to rate their level of agreement with each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). For both these scales, higher mean scale scores indicated higher levels of psychological adjustment (self-esteem and satisfaction with life, respectively).

To examine psychological maladjustment, we measured depression and anxiety using subscales of the Patient-Reported Objective Measurement Information System (Cella et al., 2010). Participants reported their experiences with depression (e.g., “I felt worthless”) and anxiety (e.g., “I felt fearful”) over a 7-day recall period, using a 5-point rating scale (1=*never*, 2=*rarely*, 3=*sometimes*, 4=*often*, 5=*always*). Responses to the 28-item depression subscale ( $\alpha=.99$ ) were



averaged to create a subscale score, with higher scores indicating greater severity of depression. Similarly, responses to the 7-item anxiety subscale ( $\alpha = .96$ ) were averaged to create a subscale score, with higher scores indicating greater severity of anxiety. Despite these very high Cronbach's alpha values, the scores for both scales formed a relatively normal distribution, with skewness (depression: 1.03; anxiety: 1.01) and kurtosis (depression: 0.11; anxiety: 0.24) values in the acceptable range (i.e.,  $<|2|$ ; George & Mallery, 2016).

To measure sociocultural adjustment, we used the Revised Socio-Cultural Adaptation Scale (Wilson, 2013), which asks participants about their life in the US and their behavioral competence (e.g., "interacting at social events"). Participants rated these 21 items using a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all competent*, 5 = *extremely competent*). This scale had excellent internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .96$ ), and higher mean scale scores indicated higher levels of sociocultural adjustment.

**Identity centrality.** Participants completed Cameron's (2004) identity centrality scale, which assesses the importance of a social identity in shaping one's self-image by asking participants about the amount of time they spent thinking about being a member of their social group. The identity centrality scale consists of 7 items, such as "Being a [Muslim/Jew/American] is an important reflection of who I am" and "The fact that I am a [Muslim/Jew/American] hardly enters my mind" (reversed-coded). Using a 5-point rating scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), participants responded to these items twice: once regarding their religious identity (Muslim or Jew;  $\alpha = .91$ ) and once regarding their host (American) identity ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Higher mean scale scores indicated a more central religious or American identity, respectively. Because bicultural identity is often operationalized as the product of host and heritage cultural identities (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007), we multiplied religious identity centrality and American identity centrality to create a religious-American identity centrality variable.<sup>1</sup>

**Religious-American harmony.** We measured religious-American harmony by adapting the bicultural harmony subscale of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (BIIS-2; Huynh et al., 2018;  $\alpha = .91$ ). We replaced references to participants' ethnic or heritage cultural identity with their religious identity: for example, "I rarely feel conflicted about being [Muslim/Jewish] American" (reverse-coded). Participants rated these 10 statements regarding their perception of harmony versus conflict between religious and American identities on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher mean scale scores indicated higher levels of religious-American harmony.

**Perceived discrimination.** We measured perceived religious discrimination using Noh and Kaspar's (2003) 7-item scale. Participants responded to these items (e.g., "Because of my religious background, I was treated unfairly") using a scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*all of the time*). We computed mean scores for this scale ( $\alpha = .95$ ), with high scores indicating higher levels of perceived discrimination due to one's religious background.

**Demographics.** The demographics questionnaire asked respondents for basic background information, including age, gender, and race/ethnicity. To ensure that respondents met participation requirements, we also asked about their country of birth, length of residence in the US, English language fluency, and religious affiliation.

## Procedure

After indicating that they met participation requirements, participants completed the above measures, along with four instructional manipulation check questions (e.g., participants were told to

type “hello” in a textbox or click on “five” from a list of options; Oppenheimer et al., 2009), via Qualtrics. Only participants who correctly completed all manipulation checks were included in the study (i.e., for a final sample of 130 participants out of an initial sample of 134 participants). The mean study completion time was 13.65 minutes ( $SD=8.03$ ), and workers received \$2 for completing the study.

## Results

As preliminary analyses, we compared Muslim American and Jewish American participants on their adjustment, identity centralities, religious-American harmony, and perceived discrimination. There were no significant religious group differences on psychological adjustment [self-esteem:  $t(128)=-1.65$ ,  $p=.10$ ,  $r=.14$ ; satisfaction with life:  $t(127)=-0.70$ ,  $p=.48$ ,  $r=.06$ ], psychological maladjustment [depression:  $t(128)=0.24$ ,  $p=.81$ ,  $r=.02$ ; anxiety:  $t(128)=-0.59$ ,  $p=.56$ ,  $r=.05$ ], or sociocultural adjustment [ $t(127)=-1.61$ ,  $p=.11$ ,  $r=.14$ ]. In addition, there were no significant religious group differences on religious identity centrality [ $t(127)=-0.32$ ,  $p=.75$ ,  $r=.03$ ], American identity centrality [ $t(128)=-1.23$ ,  $p=.22$ ,  $r=.11$ ], or religious-American identity centrality [ $t(128)=0.93$ ,  $p=.35$ ,  $r=.08$ ]. There were, however, significant group differences on religious-American harmony and perceived religious discrimination. Religious-American harmony was significantly lower for Muslim American participants ( $M=3.26$ ,  $SD=0.91$ ) than for Jewish American participants ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=0.79$ ),  $t(127)=-3.01$ ,  $p=.003$ ,  $r=.26$ . Conversely, perceived religious discrimination was significantly higher for Muslim American participants ( $M=2.16$ ,  $SD=0.90$ ) than for Jewish American participants ( $M=1.52$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ),  $t(105.45)=4.36$ ,  $p=2 \times 10^{-5}$ ,  $r=.39$ . (For a correlation matrix of all variables of interest, see Table 2.)

First, we hypothesized that religious-American identity centrality would predict better adjustment over and above religious identity centrality and American identity centrality (Hypothesis 1). To test this hypothesis, we conducted several multiple regression analyses, one for each adjustment variable (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, and sociocultural adjustment). Controlling for religious identity centrality and American identity centrality, religious-American identity centrality was a significant predictor of satisfaction with life [ $b=-.31$ ,  $t(125)=-2.30$ ,  $p=.02$ ], depression [ $b=.20$ ,  $t(126)=2.00$ ,  $p=.05$ ], and anxiety [ $b=.31$ ,  $t(126)=3.10$ ,  $p=.002$ ], but not of self-esteem [ $b=-.07$ ,  $t(126)=-1.04$ ,  $p=.30$ ] or sociocultural adjustment [ $b=-.10$ ,  $t(125)=-1.21$ ,  $p=.23$ ]. Religious-American identity centrality predicted some adjustment variables above and beyond religious identity centrality and American identity centrality, but the relationships were not in the expected direction. That is, religious-American identity centrality predicted lower (rather than higher) satisfaction with life, and higher (rather than lower) depression and anxiety levels. However, it is important to note that based on zero-order correlations (see Table 2; as opposed to the regression coefficients in the above multiple regression analyses), a more central religious-American identity is associated with significantly higher self-esteem, greater satisfaction with life, lower depression, lower anxiety, and greater sociocultural adjustment as expected. Therefore, although a more central religious-American identity is associated with better adjustment as expected (e.g., in the IPMB), it does not predict better adjustment after controlling for religious and American identity centrality; thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Second, we hypothesized that perceived discrimination would predict worse adjustment (Hypothesis 2). To test this hypothesis, we conducted several simple regression analyses, one for each adjustment variable (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, and sociocultural adjustment). Perceived discrimination was a significant predictor of lower self-esteem [ $b=-.28$ ,  $t(120)=-4.27$ ,  $p=4 \times 10^{-5}$ ], lower satisfaction with life [ $b=-.51$ ,  $t(125)=-4.05$ ,  $p=9 \times 10^{-5}$ ], higher depression [ $b=.59$ ,  $t(120)=7.19$ ,  $p=6 \times 10^{-11}$ ], higher anxiety [ $b=.49$ ,



**Table 2.** Correlation Matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Self-esteem	.41***								
2. Satisfaction with life	-.63***	-.59***							
3. Depression	-.58***	-.57***	.85***						
4. Anxiety	.44***	.32***	-.50***	-.39***					
5. Sociocultural adjustment	.34***	.16	-.24**	-.18*	.22*				
6. Religious identity centrality	.16	.17*	-.19*	-.21*	.16	.19*			
7. American identity centrality	.28**	.19*	-.24**	-.22*	.22*	.67***	.84***		
8. Religious-American identity centrality	.42***	.39***	-.42***	-.41***	.40***	.16	.37***	.35***	
9. Religious-American harmony	-.36***	-.35***	.55***	.44***	-.35***	-.06	-.08	-.08	-.45***
10. Perceived discrimination									

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

$t(120)=5.37, p=4 \times 10^{-7}$ ], and lower sociocultural adjustment [ $b=-.31, t(119)=-4.13, p=7 \times 10^{-5}$ ]. Supporting Hypothesis 2, perceived discrimination predicted lower psychological adjustment, higher psychological maladjustment, and lower sociocultural adjustment.

We also hypothesized that religious-American identity centrality would predict higher religious-American harmony (Hypothesis 3), whereas perceived discrimination would predict lower religious-American harmony (Hypothesis 4). To test these hypotheses, we conducted two simple regression analyses with religious-American harmony as the criterion variable: one with identity as the predictor variable and one with discrimination as the predictor variable. Religious-American identity centrality was a significant predictor of higher religious-American harmony [ $b=.06, t(127)=4.26, p=4 \times 10^{-5}$ ], and perceived discrimination was a significant predictor of lower religious-American harmony [ $b=-.46, t(120)=-5.47, p=2 \times 10^{-7}$ ]. Therefore, both Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported.

In addition, we hypothesized that religious-American harmony would predict better adjustment (Hypothesis 5). To test this hypothesis, we conducted several simple regression analyses, one for each adjustment variable (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, and sociocultural adjustment). Religious-American harmony was a significant predictor of higher self-esteem [ $b=.32, t(127)=5.13, p=1 \times 10^{-6}$ ], higher satisfaction with life [ $b=.58, t(126)=4.80, p=4 \times 10^{-6}$ ], lower depression [ $b=-.45, t(120)=-5.19, p=8 \times 10^{-7}$ ], lower anxiety [ $b=-.46, t(127)=-5.03, p=2 \times 10^{-6}$ ], and higher sociocultural adjustment [ $b=.34, t(119)=4.84, p=4 \times 10^{-6}$ ]. Supporting Hypothesis 5, religious-American harmony predicted higher psychological adjustment, lower psychological maladjustment, and higher sociocultural adjustment.

Our last hypotheses concerned the mediating effect of religious-American harmony. We hypothesized that religious-American harmony would mediate the relationship between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment (Hypothesis 6). We tested this mediational hypothesis using the PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2018), with religious-American identity centrality as the predictor variable, adjustment (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, or sociocultural adjustment) as the criterion variable, and religious-American harmony as the mediating variable. There was a significant indirect effect of religious-American identity centrality on adjustment through religious-American harmony for all adjustment variables (self-esteem:  $b=.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .03]$ ; satisfaction with life:  $b=.03, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .06]$ ; depression:  $b=-.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.05, -.01]$ ; anxiety:  $b=-.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.05, -.01]$ ; sociocultural adjustment:  $b=.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .03]$ ). Therefore, supporting Hypothesis 6, religious-American harmony mediated the relationship between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment.

However, it is also possible that religious-American identity centrality mediated the relationship between religious-American harmony and adjustment. We tested this alternative mediational model using the PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2018), with religious-American harmony as the predictor variable, adjustment (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, or sociocultural adjustment) as the criterion variable, and religious-American identity centrality as the mediating variable. Although there was a significant indirect effect of religious-American harmony on adjustment through religious-American identity centrality for self-esteem ( $b=.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [.004, .11]$ ), the indirect effect was non-significant for all the other adjustment variables (satisfaction with life:  $b=.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.09, .16]$ ; depression:  $b=-.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.12, .04]$ ; anxiety:  $b=-.03, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.11, .06]$ ; sociocultural adjustment:  $b=.03, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.02, .09]$ ). Therefore, it is *not* plausible that religious-American identity centrality mediated the relationship between religious-American harmony and adjustment instead of the mediational model described in Hypothesis 6.

We also hypothesized that religious-American harmony would mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and adjustment (Hypothesis 7). We tested this mediational hypothesis using the PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2018), with perceived discrimination

as the predictor variable, adjustment (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, or sociocultural adjustment) as the criterion variable, and religious-American harmony as the mediating variable. There was a significant indirect effect of perceived discrimination on adjustment through religious-American harmony for all adjustment variables (self-esteem:  $b = -.11$ , 95% CI  $[-.19, -.04]$ ; satisfaction with life:  $b = -.18$ , 95% CI  $[-.33, -.05]$ ; depression:  $b = .09$ , 95% CI  $[-.01, .19]$ ; anxiety:  $b = .13$ , 95% CI  $[-.02, .25]$ ; sociocultural adjustment:  $b = -.11$ , 95% CI  $[-.20, -.03]$ ). Therefore, supporting Hypothesis 7, religious-American harmony mediated the relationship between perceived discrimination and adjustment.

However, it is also possible that perceived discrimination mediated the relationship between religious-American harmony and adjustment. We tested this alternative mediational model using the PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2018), with religious-American harmony as the predictor variable, adjustment (self-esteem, satisfaction with life, depression, anxiety, or sociocultural adjustment) as the criterion variable, and perceived discrimination as the mediating variable. There was a significant indirect effect of religious-American harmony on adjustment through perceived discrimination for all adjustment variables (self-esteem:  $b = .08$ , 95% CI  $[-.02, .15]$ ; satisfaction with life:  $b = .15$ , 95% CI  $[-.02, .29]$ ; depression:  $b = -.22$ , 95% CI  $[-.36, -.11]$ ; anxiety:  $b = -.16$ , 95% CI  $[-.30, -.04]$ ; sociocultural adjustment:  $b = .09$ , 95% CI  $[-.004, .18]$ ). Therefore, it is plausible that perceived discrimination mediated the relationship between religious-American harmony and adjustment instead of the mediational model described in Hypothesis 7.

## Discussion

In the present study, we tested the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014) and extended it to religious-American dual identity. Specifically, we investigated religious-American identity centrality as a predictor of better adjustment, perceived discrimination as a predictor of worse adjustment, and religious-American harmony as a mediator of those two associations for Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US. We found support for almost all our hypotheses; therefore, our findings also support the IPMB and are congruent with previous findings on identity, perceived discrimination, bicultural harmony, and adjustment (e.g., Huynh et al., 2018). Religious-American harmony, or the perception of compatibility between these two identities, is the mechanism through which individual factors (i.e., religious-American identity centrality) and contextual factors (i.e., perceived religious discrimination) are linked to psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Furthermore, our study extends research on bicultural, or two cultural identities, to two identities from different social groups: religious and host cultural. Our results suggest that the processes of negotiating two cultural identities—and the adjustment correlates of those processes—may parallel those related to negotiating religious and host (American) identities.

With this study, we contributed to the dearth of literature on religious identity (Haji et al., 2011; Tarakeshwar et al., 2003), and more importantly, the literature on multiple social identities (Cole, 2009) through our focus on religious-American dual identity. We found that a more central religious-American identity is associated with better adjustment (supporting Hypothesis 1), but that is no longer the case after taking into account the independent effects of religious identity centrality and American identity centrality on adjustment (not supporting Hypothesis 1). Interestingly, dual identification with one's religious group in conjunction with the host culture is associated with poorer psychological adjustment after controlling for religious and American identity alone. More research is needed to better understand whether the purported benefits of dual identification (Berry, 2005; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013) applies beyond heritage-host cultural duality to religious-host cultural duality. Nevertheless, our findings highlight the importance of recognizing that individuals have multiple social identities because religious-American identity centrality was associated with better adjustment (at the bivariate level) and was able to

explain significant variability in adjustment beyond that explained by either religious identity centrality or American identity centrality alone. Thus, it is possible that previous mixed findings on the association between religious identity and immigrants' adjustment (e.g., Friedman & Saroglou, 2010; George et al., 2000; Paloutzian & Park, 2005) may be reconciled with the inclusion of religious-host cultural dual identity.

In addition to shedding light on religious-American dual identity, our findings also underscored the importance of religious-American harmony, or the perception of compatibility between religious and American identities. Supporting the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014), we found that religious-American harmony mediates the association between individual factors (i.e., religious-American identity centrality) and adjustment, and the association between contextual factors (i.e., perceived religious discrimination) and adjustment. Our analyses suggest that it is more likely that religious-American harmony mediates the identity-adjustment relationship (Hypothesis 6) as compared to religious-American identity centrality mediating the harmony-adjustment relationship. Viewing both one's religious and American identities as central to one's self-concept may enable one to see the compatibility between those two identities, and this perception of harmony is linked to better adjustment. Nevertheless, it may be equally likely that religious-American harmony mediates the discrimination-adjustment relationship (Hypothesis 7) as it is that perceived religious discrimination mediates the harmony-adjustment relationship. We posited that experiencing discrimination may increase perceptions of conflict between one's religious and American identities, and this perception of conflict may lead to poorer adjustment. Conversely, the reverse may be true. It is also possible that lower levels of religious-American harmony may lead one to perceive, recall, and report greater experiences with discrimination, which is associated with poorer adjustment. However, between these two plausible explanations, the first is more aligned with the theoretical literature in biculturalism (i.e., IPMB). Future research on dual identities should include measures for the perception of harmony versus conflict between those two identities. It is not enough to know that someone perceives membership in two groups as central to their self-concept; it is also important to know how that person evaluates the extent of tension (or lack thereof) between their two groups.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

This study exclusively examined foreign-born Muslim American and Jewish American participants, with at least 5 years of residency in the US, who were highly fluent in English. As a result, such a specific sample makes generalization of findings to other populations rather difficult. However, due to the homogeneity of our sample, we were able to control for possible confounding factors (e.g., generation status, language fluency). We deliberately chose to study religious-minority immigrants rather than U.S.-born religious minorities because religions may undergo acculturation (i.e., group-level acculturation) and become "Americanized" (Berry, 2005). For example, Islam and Judaism take different forms in the US versus other countries, with Muslims and Jews in the US being less religiously observant than those abroad (Pew Research Center, 2012, 2016). Although our sample is homogeneous in some respects, it is also very heterogeneous in terms of country of birth, race/ethnicity, and religious denominations. Therefore, another limitation of our study is that we were not able to explore within-group differences, such as racial/ethnic differences or denominational differences among religious-minority immigrants, on adjustment, religious-American identity centrality, religious-American harmony, perceived discrimination, and the relations among these variables. Future studies should examine these variables with other samples, with other combinations of social identities, and with the goal of investigating within-group differences. For example, previous research found that religious-host cultural identity conflict versus compatibility varied by context, specifically European city (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016); therefore, it may be insightful to study the adjustment,

religious-host cultural identity centrality, religious-host cultural harmony, and perceived discrimination of Muslim and Jewish immigrants across different cities and countries.

We recruited participants online via Amazon MTurk, and the use of MTurk has been the subject of debates (e.g., Rouse, 2015). For example, in our study, there was no way of determining whether participants actually belonged to the religious groups indicated in their answers. There is also a possibility that participants may have responded based on how they assumed immigrants or religious minorities should respond instead of responding honestly. However, numerous studies have found no significant differences between results obtained from MTurk compared to those obtained from in-person recruiting and other online methods (e.g., Bartneck et al., 2015), indicating that MTurk is a viable and economical option for recruiting participants and conducting studies. For our study, MTurk allowed us to recruit and collect data from an otherwise difficult to access population. Future studies should compare our findings to those based on data collected via other methods (e.g., in-person).

Last but not least, the current study is a correlational one, in which no causal claims can be made about the relationship between variables. For example, it is possible that adjustment actually causes variations in religious-American identity centrality (and not the other way around), or that a third variable causes both religious-American identity centrality and adjustment. Future studies, in the form of experiments, are needed to determine causality.

## Conclusion

Drawing on the IPMB (Cheng et al., 2014), we investigated the adjustment, religious-American identity centrality, religious-American harmony, and perceived discrimination of Muslim and Jewish immigrants in the US. For these religious-minority immigrants, who are negotiating both their religious and host cultural identities, their religious-American dual identity was predictive of adjustment. In addition, their perception of harmony (vs. conflict) between their religious and American identities mediated the association between religious-American identity centrality and adjustment, and between perceived discrimination and adjustment. With this study, we contributed to the literature in two major ways: by reflecting religious-minority immigrants' multiple, social identities in our research, and by extending research on biculturalism and bicultural harmony to religious-American dual identity and religious-American harmony.

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## Note

1. We operationally defined religious-American identity centrality as the product of religious identity centrality and American identity centrality, with variable scores ranging from low levels of identity centrality (less central) to high levels of identity centrality (more central). It is an extension of the additive approach, where two identity scores are summed to create a dual identity score (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007). Note that this operationalization is different from a statistical treatment of interactions (e.g., in multiple regression, religious identity centrality and American identity centrality are multiplied to create an interaction term, the interpretation of which requires controlling for main effects and examining simple slopes).

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