How Normative Multiculturalism affects Immigrant Wellbeing

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Abstract

Objectives: In this study we examine the relationship between contextual factors, i.e., perceived multicultural norms, and immigrant wellbeing. Specifically, we test a model whereby each of the three dimensions of normative multiculturalism, perceived Multicultural Ideology, Multicultural Policies and Practices, and Multicultural Contact, positively predicts immigrant wellbeing both directly and indirectly via belongingness.

Methods: Korean immigrants in New Zealand (N = 306, 56% female) participated in the research. Their average age was 31.17 (SD = 10.46), and the average length of residence was 10.04 years (SD = 7.21). Participants completed a survey that included the Normative Multiculturalism Scale along with measures of belonging and wellbeing (flourishing, life satisfaction, and positive affect). **Results**: Structural equation modelling showed that perceived normative Multicultural Policies and Practices exerted a direct positive effect on wellbeing and an indirect positive effect via belongingness; Multicultural Ideology exerted only an indirect effect; and Multicultural Contact did not significantly relate to belongingness or subjective wellbeing. **Implications**: The results are discussed in terms of everyday experiences of intercultural encounters, social norms and the contextual influences of diversity climates, as well as the importance of distinguishing the defining features of multiculturalism in diversity science research. We also propose that multicultural norm-setting and norms marketing may lead to positive social and psychological outcomes for immigrants.

Public Significance Statement. Findings indicate that the extent to which immigrants perceive widespread appreciation of cultural diversity and policies and practices to ensure cultural maintenance and equitable participation, is conducive to immigrants' sense of belongingness and psychological wellbeing.

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How Normative Multiculturalism relates to Immigrant Wellbeing

Global mobility is increasing at an unprecedented rate. The worldwide number of immigrants now stands at 258 million, making up 3.4% of the global population (United Nations, 2017). Mounting immigration flows and growing cultural diversity within national borders have prompted calls to identify new ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of these social and demographic changes. Not only does this mean addressing the challenges of social cohesion in culturally plural societies, but also ensuring positive outcomes for immigrants.

Along with economic security, achieving and maintaining social and psychological wellbeing are among the most important of these outcomes (Berry & Sam, 2016; Boski, 2013); however, many of the circumstances associated with migration put immigrants at risk (Ward & Szabó, 2019). Learning a new language and acquiring the necessary skills to obtain employment in the destination country can be challenging and a significant source of distress, especially for recent and older immigrants (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013; Torres & Rollock, 2004). Navigating competing cultural demands from family, friends and the wider community and across public and private domains is inherently stressful and can compromise psychological wellbeing (Rodriguez, Flores, Flores, Myers, & Vriesema, 2015; Romero & Roberts, 2008). Confronting prejudice and discrimination is particularly detrimental to mental health as are loneliness, homesickness and feelings of cultural isolation (Miller, Kim, & Benet-Martínez, 2011). Moreover, the negative impact of these factors is often exacerbated by lack of adequate support networks to ensure immigrants' sense of belonging and social connectedness (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010; Kiang, Grzywacz, Marín, Arcury, & Quandt, 2010).

While there is now a vast psychological literature on immigration, research on the role of environmental factors in determining immigrant adaptation has been relatively scarce (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). More recently, however, increased emphasis has been placed on contextual factors, particularly the relationship between a multicultural climate and immigrant health and wellbeing (Stuart & Ward, 2015; Vedder, van de Vijver, & Liebkind, 2006; Ward, Fox, Wilson, Stuart, & Kus, 2010). Multicultural societies provide environments conducive to immigrants' integration by ensuring cultural continuity and equitable participation for all ethno-cultural groups (Berry, 2005). Such environments are achieved by meeting three core criteria: 1) the presence of culturally diverse groups that are in contact with one another; 2) a widespread valuing and appreciation of cultural diversity; and 3) policies and practices that support and accommodate that diversity. Evidence suggests that each of these three conditions can foster immigrant wellbeing (Berry & Sam, 2014; Berry & Ward, 2016).

Social, political and economic participation in heterogeneous societies requires exposure to and interaction with culturally diverse groups. If groups lead parallel, but separate lives, societies are segregated rather than multicultural, and this can have harmful consequences for subjective wellbeing. Research has shown that immigrants who live in neighborhoods with a high concentration of people from the same ethnic group experience a greater sense of social and cultural disengagement from the wider society (Miller et al., 2009) and that contact with the mainstream culture is associated with greater self-esteem and wellbeing (Tip, Brown, Morrice, Collyer, & Easterbrook, 2019; Tonsing, 2014). However, it is not only interaction with members of the majority culture that is associated with psychological benefits; for those born overseas contact with individuals from other ethnic and national backgrounds predicts better psychological adjustment (Kashima & Loh, 2006).

Widespread valuing of cultural diversity opens up a space for members of all groups to feel welcomed and included. It predicts lower levels of prejudice, stronger motivation for social change, greater support for minority rights and pro-minority policies, and more positive attitudes toward immigrants in the general population (Hutchison, Chihade, & Puiu, 2018; Urbiola, Willis, Ruiz-Romero, Moya, & Esses, 2017; Ward & Masgoret, 2006). Multicultural ideologies are associated with greater tolerance and cultural security and with less perceived discrimination in both majority and minority group members (Au, Hui, & Chen, 2016; Neto & Neto, 2016). This is particularly important for immigrants because perceived discrimination has been identified as a major threat to immigrant wellbeing (Miller et al., 2011; Vedder et al., 2006). It is therefore not surprising that negative national attitudes toward immigrants predict lower levels of life satisfaction in immigrant youth (Ward, Szabo, & Stuart, 2016)**.**

Multicultural policies support cultural maintenance for immigrants and promote their equitable participation in the wider society. International comparative research has shown that countries with more inclusive, multicultural policies have smaller native-immigrant gaps in depression and more positive indicators of wellbeing in immigrant children (Malmusi, Palencia, Ikram, Kunst, & Borrell, 2017; Marks, McKenna, & Garcia Coll, 2018). National multicultural policies have also been linked to better school adjustment and fewer behavioral problems in immigrant youth (Vedder et al., 2006) and to higher levels of life satisfaction in European Muslims and ethnic minorities (Jackson & Doerschler, 2016).

In sum, a multicultural climate can positively impact immigrant adaptation. Multi-country studies, assessing objective national level data on diversity (e.g., % of immigrants, ethnic fractionalization), ideology (e.g., the International Social Survey) and policy (e.g., MIPEX, the Multicultural Policy Index) and relating these factors to national or individual

level indicators of wellbeing have provided compelling evidence for positive outcomes of

multiculturalism (e.g., Jackson & Doerschler, 2016; Vedder et al., 2006). However, this

approach neglects the experience of "everyday multiculturalism," that is, how individuals

observe, understand and interpret their mundane intercultural encounters. This omission is

problematic for two reasons. First, citizens are not always aware of national policies, and

opinion polls have shown that diversity estimates often conflict with population data

(Transatlantic Trends, 2010). Second, these everyday perceptions and experiences of

multiculturalism are often more powerful and proximal predictors of important outcomes,

including intergroup relations and immigrant adaptation, than objective policy indicators

(Guimond et al., 2013; Vedder et al., 2006).

To address this gap Stuart and Ward (2019) introduced the construct of normative

multiculturalism, referring to the extent to which one perceives interactions among

culturally diverse groups, diversity-valuing ideologies and multicultural policies and practices

to be common or normative in one's society. Normative perceptions are related to objective

indicators of these phenomena; for example, comparative research has shown that

perceptions of multicultural norms accurately reflect national differences in multicultural

policies (Guimond et al., 2013). However, perceived norms are not perfect representations

of objective reality as they are also shaped by individual experiences, including one's social

networks and exposure to media (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005; Morris, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2015).

Norms are important because they define accepted standards of behavior and function as a

major source of social influence; they act as social guides and provide the context for

judging what is commonplace or rare, right or wrong, just or unjust. Moreover, ample

evidence from experimental and longitudinal research suggests that diversity and inclusion

norms affect intercultural experiences and outcomes (Nesdale, Griffith, Durkin, & Maass, 2005; Tropp et al., 2016; Tropp, O'Brien, & Migacheva, 2014).

Along these lines Stuart and Ward (2019) extended work by Guimond et al. (2013) on perceived diversity norms, constructing and validating a three-factor measure of normative multiculturalism: 1) Multicultural Contact (MC), 2) Multicultural Ideology (MI), and 3) Multicultural Policies and Practices (MPP). They also demonstrated that each aspect of perceived normative multiculturalism was related to greater social cohesion, defined in terms of trust, national attachment and diminished perceptions of threat. The present study further extends this line of research by examining the relationships among normative multiculturalism, belonging and wellbeing in South Korean immigrants in New Zealand.[1]

The New Zealand Context

Historically, New Zealand has been viewed as a bicultural country, built on the British colonization of and subsequent partnership with indigenous Māori tribes. However, changes to immigration policies in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to dramatic shifts in the country's demographic make-up with an influx of skilled immigrants from Asia. One in four residents in New Zealand is now overseas-born. At the time of the 2013 census the composition of the 4.2 million population was 74% New Zealanders of European descent, 15% Māori, 12% Asian and 7% Pacific peoples, with Asians being the most rapidly growing ethnic group (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a).[2]

Amongst Asian peoples, Chinese and Indians are the largest groups, followed by Filipinos and Koreans, neither of whom make up more than 1% of the New Zealand population. Unlike Chinese and Indians who have a long but sporadic history of migration to

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[1] Henceforth referred to as Koreans.
[2] The New Zealand census permits respondents to select more than one ethnic identity; therefore, the total percentage exceeds 100%.

New Zealand, Koreans, like other Asian groups, are more recent immigrants with 89% born

overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b). As such, they are less likely to be received into a

long established and integrated co-ethnic community. Moreover, unlike recent immigrants

from the Philippines, English language proficiency has been identified as a major barrier to

successful settlement outcomes for Korean newcomers (Chang, Morris, & Vokes, 2006; Park

& Anglem, 2012). Despite being a young and well-educated population (Statistics New

Zealand, 2014b), inadequate language skills present significant challenges for integration

into the wider New Zealand society. Moreover, Koreans have one of the highest rates of

unemployment and lowest median levels of personal income amongst New Zealand's ethnic

groups (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b).

As a result of these factors, concern has been expressed about experiences of

alienation, loss and social isolation among members of the New Zealand Korean community

(Kim, Hocking, McKenzie-Green, & Nayar, 2016; Park, Morgan, Wiles, & Gott, 2019).

Nevertheless, many New Zealand Koreans maintain significant transnational ties in terms of

personal networks and media consumption, fostered by South Korea's position at the

vanguard of information and communication technologies, and local Korean Christian

churches serve as prominent focal points for the community (Butcher & Wieland, 2013;

Epstein, 2007; Park & Anglem, 2012). A range of informal Korean community groups also

function as cultural buffers and provide sources of emotional support (Kang, Harington, &

Park, 2015). These characteristics make the Korean community in New Zealand an

appropriate choice for a study about multiculturalism, belonging and wellbeing.

How are immigrants received in New Zealand? Despite the recent terror attack in

Christchurch, the country is generally characterized by good ethnic relations with a low level

of conflict and relatively positive attitudes toward immigrants (Ward & Liu, 2012). A national

survey indicated that New Zealanders favor integration and reject assimilation, and they

have a stronger multicultural ideology than Australians and citizens of the European Union

(Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Moreover, expectations of race-based rejections are atypical, and

intergroup perceptions are generally warm (Sibley & Ward, 2013), including perceptions of

Koreans (Colmar Brunton, 2012). Although New Zealand has evolved into a multicultural

nation with a generally high level of acceptance of cultural diversity, issues of racism and

discrimination remain. Compared to Māori, Pacific peoples and New Zealanders of

European descent, Asians report the greatest frequency of recent racist experiences (Harris,

Stanley, & Cormack, 2018), and Korean youth perceive more discrimination than their

Chinese and Indian peers (Ward, 2009).

The Present Study

To date most research on multicultural norms has explored their relationship to

intergroup perceptions and relations. These investigations, though occasionally conducted

at the national (e.g., Guimond et al., 2013), regional, district and neighbourhood levels (e.g.,

Christ et al., 2014), most frequently occur in schools and classrooms (Schachner, Brenick,

Noack, van de Vijver, & Heizmann, 2015; Schwarzenthal, Schachner, van der Vijver, & Juang,

2018; Titzmann, Brenick, & Silbereisen, 2015). Across these diverse studies results converge

to link multicultural norms to more favorable intergroup outcomes.

Research examining associations between multicultural norms and wellbeing is rare

and has been exclusively situated in educational contexts. These studies indicate that

multicultural norms reflecting contact among diverse groups (e.g., teachers encourage

students from different backgrounds to work together on group projects), ideological

valuing of diversity (e.g., teachers show they value racial harmony) and multicultural

practices (e.g., students from different races and cultures are chosen to participate in school

activities) predict life satisfaction and subjective happiness; however, these associations are mediated by relational variables such as empathy and school belonging (Le, Lau, & Wallen, 2009; Schachner, Schwarzenthal, van de Vijver, & Noack, 2019). Following this line of research, we test a model whereby perceived normative Multicultural Contact, Multicultural Ideology, and Multicultural Policies and Practices predict wellbeing, exerting both direct effects and indirect effects through belongingness.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee under the delegated authority of Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee. Korean immigrants in New Zealand were recruited by a co-ethnic field assistant to complete an anonymous survey through personal, community (e.g., Korean newspapers, church congregations) and social media contacts. Participation was voluntary and required informed consent. We aimed for inclusive recruitment of participants, inviting immigrants from a wide age range, as social integration and wellbeing are known to be relevant to all age groups, and the experiences of older immigrants have been largely overlooked in the literature (Amit & Litwin, 2010).

We initially received survey responses from 376 ethnic Koreans living in New Zealand. We removed participants who were not born in South Korea; did not respond correctly to the attention check items (e.g., *if you are paying attention, mark 5*); had response times of less than one second per item on measures with reversed item; self-reported a poor level of English proficiency; gave identical responses to all items on the Normative Multiculturalism or General Belongingness scales; or did not complete the online version of the survey. The final sample was composed of 306 Koreans (56% female) whose

ages ranged from 16-67 years (*M* = 31.17, *SD* = 10.46). All participants were first generation

immigrants and had a mean length of residence in New Zealand of 10.04 years (*SD* = 7.21).

On average respondents were well educated, with two-thirds (68.63%) having at least an

undergraduate degree.

As a token of appreciation for participating in the research, survey respondents were

invited to enter a draw to win food or petrol vouchers. Contact information was collected in

a way that names could not be matched to survey responses.

Measures

In addition to demographic information (age, gender, education, country of birth,

and length of residence in New Zealand), the survey included measures of self-reported

English language proficiency (1 = *poor* to 5 = *excellent*), perceived multicultural norms,

belongingness and wellbeing. The survey and accompanying documents (i.e., information

sheet and debriefing statement) were in English.

Normative multiculturalism. The 17-item Normative Multiculturalism Scale (NMS)

by Stuart and Ward (2019) was used to assess perceived normative Multicultural Ideology

(e.g., *Most people think it is a good thing to have different groups with distinct cultural*

backgrounds living in the country.), Multicultural Policies and Practices (e.g., *Ethnic*

minorities are supported to preserve their cultures and customs.), and Multicultural Contact

(e.g., *Interacting with people from different cultures is unavoidable.*). The measure is

prefaced by "in New Zealand," and participants, who act as cultural informants about

national norms, indicate their agreement-disagreement with each item on a five-point Likert

scale where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. Higher scores reflect perceptions

of stronger multicultural norms. In calculating the Cronbach alphas for the Normative

Multiculturalism subscales, we examined the item total correlations, which suggested the

deletion of one MI item (*We are more able to tackle new problems as they occur because we have a variety of cultural groups.*) and one MPP item (*There are few ethnic minorities in leadership positions.*). With these modifications, the Cronbach alphas were .64 for Multicultural Contact and .65 for Multicultural Ideology and Multicultural Policies and Practices.

Sense of belongingness. The 12-item General Belongingness Scale (GBS) by Malone, Pillow, and Osman (2012) was adapted to measure a sense of belongingness. Sample items include "I feel connected with others" and "I feel as if people do not care about me" (reversed item). Some items were reworded slightly for the sample (e.g., for colloquialisms: "a place at the table with others" was changed to "a place among others"). In line with our emphasis on the national context, participants were instructed to think about their relationships with "all New Zealanders who make up the multicultural nation" and rate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree* so that higher scores reflect a stronger sense of belonging. In the current study, the scale achieved good internal consistency (α=.89).

Psychological wellbeing. Flourishing, life satisfaction, and positive affect were used to construct a latent variable for psychological wellbeing. Flourishing and Life satisfaction were gauged respectively by the eight-item Flourishing scale by Diener et al. (2009) and the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener, Emmonds, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). Sample items include "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" (SWLS), and "In most ways I lead a purposeful and meaningful life" (Flourishing). Participants were asked to report how they feel about themselves after reading each item on a 7-point scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* so that higher scores reflect greater flourishing and life

satisfaction. In the current study, measures of flourishing and life satisfaction yielded

Cronbach alphas of .89 and .88, respectively.

Positive affect was measured by a 5-item version of the Positive subscale (interested,

alert, enthusiastic, active, proud) of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

originally developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). Participants were asked to read

each item and indicate the extent to which they felt this way during the past four weeks

using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *very slightly or not at all* to (5) *extremely* so that

higher scores indicated more positive affect. In calculating the reliability for the positive

affect subscale, the item total correlation suggested the exclusion of one item ('alert'). This

modification yielded a satisfactory Cronbach alpha (.78) for the positive affect scale.

Results

We used R 3.5.3 (R Core Team, 2019) to conduct all the analyses. Userfriendlyscience

package (version: 0.7.2; Peters, 2018) was used to calculate Cronbach alphas, and Lavaan

(version: 0.6-3; Yves, 2012) was used for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with a Full

Maximum Likelihood Estimator retaining missing values. SemTools (version: 0.5-1) was used

for parcelling items with random allocation and calculating Monte Carlo confidence intervals

of the indirect effects (Jorgensen, Pornprasertmanit, Schoemann, & Rosseel, 2018). We

report all data used in the analysis and analytic script on the Open Science Framework

(https://osf.io/qz8jb/?view_only=f3ffb27027be40588feb360e828f60fc).

Psychometric Analyses and Inter-correlations

We conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on the 15-item version of the

NMS to validate its three-factor structure for Korean immigrants in New Zealand. The

analysis indicated: $\chi^2(84) = 195.987$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .066 [90% CI = .054, .078]; CFI =

.854; SRMR = .076. We then retested the model by randomly assigning the subscale items

to three parcels for the Multicultural Ideology subscale and two parcels for the Multicultural

Contact and the Multicultural Policies and Practices subscales (Blunch, 2016; Hayduk &

Littvay, 2012).[3] The results demonstrated an acceptable fit: $\chi^2(11) = 33.241$, $p < .001$; RMSEA

= .076 [90% CI = .043, .110]; CFI = .938; SRMR = .048. We also conducted a second order CFA

to construct a latent psychological wellbeing variable with measures of flourishing, life

satisfaction, positive affect. We found a good fit for this model, corroborating the construct

validity of the latent variable: $\chi^2(116) = 296.476$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .071 [90% CI = .061,

.081]; CFI = .936; SRMR = .050.

Table 1 shows the intercorrelations among the observed variables, means, standard

deviations, and reliabilities. As expected, bivariate correlations demonstrated significant

inter-relationships among the NMS subscales (rs = .14, p = .015, to .28, p < .001), and each

subscale was positively and significantly related to belongingness (rs= .18, p = .002, to .41, p

< .001). MI and MPP were significantly associated with each of the three indicators of

wellbeing in the expected direction (rs = .16, p = .006, to .26, p < .001), while MC was

significantly correlated only with flourishing (r = .17, p = .002) and positive affect (r = .12, p =

.034). When significant, the NMS wellbeing relationships demonstrated small effect sizes (rs

= .12, p = .034, to .26, p < .001).

Testing for Direct and Indirect Effects

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[3] The CFI did not meet Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria for an acceptable fit (RMSEA ≤ 0.08, CFI ≥ 0.9, SRMR ≤ 0.08). However, as the CFI declines slightly with an increasing number of variables (Kenny & McCoach, 2003), and as parcels are known to have higher reliability than single items (Little, Rhemtullah, Gibson, & Schoenmann, 2014), we deemed parcelling appropriate in this case. In line with recommendations by Sterba and MacCallum (2010) we conducted the random allocation to parcels 100 times and then averaged the results through parcelAllocation function of semTools package. Further information about this parcelling technique can be found at: https://www.rdocumentation.org/packages/semTools/versions/0.5-0/topics/parcelAllocation

Using ordinary bootstrapping with 5000 samples, we conducted two separate SEM

analyses: without and with belongingness. First, we fitted a model in which psychological

wellbeing was predicted by the three NMS subscales, including gender, age, and length of

residence as covariates. The model showed a good fit to the data: $\chi^2(12) = 23.950$, $p = .021$;

RMSEA = .057 [90% CI = .022, .090]; CFI = .973; SRMR = .025. Psychological wellbeing was

significantly predicted by perceived normative Multicultural Ideology ($\beta = .21$, $p = .007$) and

Multicultural Policies and Practices ($\beta = .20$, $p = .002$), but not by Multicultural Contact. We

then fitted a second model in which belongingness was added as a mediator between the

NMS subscales and psychological wellbeing. The full model showed a good fit to the data:

$\chi^2(14) = 32.288$, $p = .004$; RMSEA = .065 [90% CI = .036, .095]; CFI = .970; SRMR = .026. We

found perceived normative Multicultural Ideology ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$) and Multicultural

Policies and Practices ($\beta = .14$, $p = .019$), but not Multicultural Contact, positively predicted

belongingness, and both normative Multicultural Policies and Practices ($\beta = .11$, $p = .029$)

and belongingness ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$) had significant direct effects on psychological

wellbeing.

The full model and standardized path coefficients are reported in Figure 1. The

indirect effects are presented in Table 2, which includes the Monte Carlo confidence

intervals computed with 20,000 bootstraps to control for Type 1 error (for recent

recommendations, see Tofighi & MacKinnon, 2016; Yzerbyt, Muller, Batailler, & Judd, 2018).

Both perceived normative Multicultural Ideology ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) and Multicultural

Policies and Practices ($\beta = .08$, $p = .021$) had significant indirect effects on psychological

wellbeing through sense of belongingness.

To address the issue of directionality in the prediction of psychological wellbeing, we

tested a competing model in which belongingness was the exogenous variable and the three

components of normative multiculturalism were positioned as intervening variables. Using

the same procedures described above and including gender, age, and length of residence as

covariates, the competing model did not meet the criteria for an acceptable fit to the data:

$\chi^2(17) = 59.837$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .091 [90% CI = .066, .116]; CFI = .937; SRMR = .042.

Furthermore, there were no significant indirect effects of belongingness on psychological

wellbeing through the NMS facets. These results provide empirical support for the

directionality of the relationships proposed in our original model.

Discussion

The study set out to examine the relationship between perceived multicultural

norms and subjective wellbeing of Korean immigrants in New Zealand. More specifically, it

was proposed that Multicultural Policies and Practices, Multicultural Ideology, and

Multicultural Contact exerted positive effects on wellbeing both directly and indirectly

through a sense of belongingness. The proposed model received partial support. In terms of

perceived norms, Multicultural Policies and Practices positively predicted wellbeing directly

and indirectly; Multicultural Ideology predicted subjective wellbeing via belongingness; but

Multicultural Contact was not significantly related to belongingness or subjective wellbeing.

The findings on perceived normative Multicultural Ideology and Multicultural

Policies and Practices are largely consistent with studies about diversity climates in

educational settings. Perceptions of a culturally plural climate, characterized by

multicultural practices that reflect an acknowledgement and appreciation of cultural

diversity, have been shown to predict greater life satisfaction, happiness, psychological

adaptation and socio-emotional adjustment in immigrant and minority students (e.g.,

Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003) with the effects often mediated by

relational variables (Le et al., 2009), including connectedness (Bethel, Szabo, & Ward, 2016)

and a sense of belonging (Schachner et al., 2019). Here we show that the perceptions of

both normative Multicultural Ideology and normative Multicultural Policies and Practices

exert indirect effects on subjective wellbeing through belongingness.

Beyond school-based research, cross-cultural studies examining national diversity

policies have likewise demonstrated links to immigrants' psychological and social wellbeing.

These investigations have shown that multicultural policies are associated with a range of

positive psycho-social outcomes for immigrant groups, including higher levels of trust, lower

levels of discrimination (Wright & Bloemraad, 2012), more positive mental health outcomes

(Malmusi et al., 2017; Marks et al., 2018), greater life satisfaction and feelings of safety

(Jackson & Doerschler, 2016), and better socio-cultural adaptation (Vedder et al., 2006).

However, these studies have only been concerned with direct effects and have not

investigated potential intervening variables. Our research not only corroborates the

association between perceived multicultural policies and immigrant wellbeing, but also

demonstrates the significant role of belongingness in this relationship. There is no doubt

that inclusion, belongingness, and connectedness are important for immigrant wellbeing in

the wider community (Herrero, Fuente, & Gracia, 2011). Moreover, these phenomena form

the foundations of social capital, a principal driver of both individual and community

happiness and a critical component of social cohesion (Bollen & Hoyle, 2001; Chan, Ho-

Pong, & Chan, 2006; Portela, Neira, & del Mar Salinas-Jiménez, 2013; Rodríguez-Pose & von

Berlepsch, 2014). Taken together, these studies provide compelling evidence of the many

positive outcomes of multicultural policies.

In contrast to the findings on perceived normative Multicultural Ideology and

Multicultural Policies and Practices, and contrary to the specifications of our model,

Multicultural Contact neither significantly predicted immigrants' sense of belonging nor

psychological wellbeing. We suggest two possibilities that could account for these findings, both specific to the Korean community in New Zealand. These are: 1) non-normative levels of multicultural contact amongst New Zealand Koreans and 2) sub-optimal conditions of multicultural contact.

Kim et al. (2016) noted that together with cultural differences, language issues have limited Korean immigrants' participation in social activities and in the creation of relationships with New Zealand neighbours (Chang et al., 2006). Indeed, an earlier study by the New Zealand Immigration Service (2004) found that 18 months after arrival in New Zealand more than half of Korean immigrants had no friends outside their own ethnic group. Koreans were also the least likely immigrant group to join social organizations or sports clubs. These trends, coupled with exclusion from the workforce, suggest that the perceived national norms for multicultural contact may not accurately reflect the Korean experience. Accordingly, it may be normative co-ethnic, rather than multicultural, contact that fosters a sense of belongingness and wellbeing.

There is also the possibility that the conditions of New Zealand Koreans' multicultural contact are not in keeping with positive contact norms and a cultural diversity climate of equality and inclusion (Schachner et al., 2019; Schachner, Noack, van de Vijver, & Eckstein, 2016). For immigrant and minority groups who typically have lower status and less power than the mainstream majority, normative Multicultural Contact sometimes involves encountering prejudice and discrimination. This is known to inhibit positive outcomes of contact, including feelings of interracial closeness (Tropp, 2007) and a sense of welcomeness among immigrants (Tropp, Okamoto, Marrow, & Jones-Correa, 2018). As national surveys conducted in New Zealand show that immigrants perceive more discrimination than native-borns (Statistics New Zealand, 2012) and that Asians perceive

more racial discrimination than those from Māori, Pacific and European backgrounds (Harris

et al., 2018), these issues should be explored in future research.

Strengths, Weaknesses and Directions for Future Research

Our study offers further theoretical insights into the factors related to immigrant

wellbeing and has practical applications as immigrant-receiving societies become

increasingly diverse. First, the research highlights the importance of context, suggesting that

perceived norms set operating parameters that may shape individuals' experiences and

interpretations of their intercultural encounters and impact their psychological wellbeing.

Second, the study demonstrates that beyond classroom, school (Schachner et al., 2015,

2016, 2019; Schwarzenthal et al., 2018; Titzmann et al., 2015), neighbourhood, and regional

(Christ et al., 2014) norms, perceived national norms are also related to immigrant

experiences, despite appearing further removed from everyday activities. Third, the

research advances a sound theoretical framework for conceptualizing multiculturalism (see

Ward, Gale, Staerklé, & Stuart, 2018), which is often misconstrued in popular discourse

(Berry & Ward, 2016) and has been the subject of extensive and sometimes acrimonious

debate in the social science literature (e.g., Kymlicka, 2012; Malik, 2015). With its tri-

dimensional conceptualization the framework has the particular advantage of disentangling

the effects of ideology and policy, which have often been conflated in generic

measurements of multiculturalism in diversity science research (e.g., Plaut, Thomas, &

Goren, 2009). Moreover, these and related research findings show that each dimension of

perceived normative multiculturalism, Multicultural Contact, Multicultural Ideology, and

Multicultural Policies and Practices, independently contributes to positive social and

psychological outcomes (Stuart & Ward, 2019; Watters, Ward, & Stuart, 2018).

In terms of applications, research suggests that norm-setting may provide the means to achieve multicultural goals (Nyborg et al., 2016); however, developing, implementing and enforcing multicultural policies at the national level as a basis for normative practices is a lengthy process. Norm-setting can be more readily achieved within organizations and educational institutions. In contrast, public and political discourse on immigration-related topics in the national arena can foster more rapid changes in norms. Pervasive anti-immigrant rhetoric, along with the rise of nationalism in many Western countries, points to an increasingly negative ideological shift in diversity norms. Opposing this rhetoric with public and political discourse highlighting the benefits that immigration brings may erode these recent trends, if not garner more positive normative appreciation of and support for diversity.

While changing norms can change behaviors, norm-setting is just one part of the larger picture (Nyborg et al., 2016). Marketing social norms is a well-known intervention technique used to disseminate accurate information about norms (Miller & Prentice, 2016). Evidence suggests marketing may be required to ensure that immigrants are aware of and well-informed about New Zealand's multicultural norms as these norms can support successful settlement outcomes. For example, integration, i.e., maintaining traditional heritage culture while also adopting the national culture, is associated with psychological wellbeing in immigrant and minority groups (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). A New Zealand national survey revealed that the general population is not only highly receptive to cultural diversity, but also strongly endorses the multicultural principle of integration; however, immigrants largely underestimate normative support for these values (Ward, 2009; Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

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This is not to suggest that norm-setting and marketing are simple enterprises or that these endeavours would bring immediate benefits to Korean immigrants in New Zealand. First, social norms differ in many ways between South Korea and New Zealand (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2011), including the understandings of and reactions to multiculturalism (Kim, 2015; Stuart & Ward, 2019). Second, South Korea is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world, and managing diversity is a relatively new concern. With its immigrant population at 3%, the focus of multiculturalism in South Korea, particularly with respect to policies, has centered on immigrant wives and multicultural families (Kim, 2015; Olneck, 2011). In New Zealand, by contrast, 25% of residents are overseas-born, and addressing the multicultural principles of cultural maintenance and equitable participation has a longer, though not uniformly successful, history, including efforts to define the relationship between indigenous peoples and later arrivals (Ward & Liu, 2012). Nevertheless, despite different understandings and experiences of multiculturalism in South Korea and New Zealand, when Korean immigrants perceive that cultural diversity is normatively valued and accommodated by policies and practices in New Zealand, they experience a stronger sense of belongingness and greater psychological wellbeing. Therefore, norm-setting and marketing are worthy of further consideration.

Despite the theoretical advances and their potential for application, this study has notable limitations. First, this is the first time that the English version of the Normative Multiculturalism Scale has been used with a sample composed entirely of non-native English speakers. In this instance the Cronbach alphas as measures of internal consistency were lower than in previous studies and slightly less than the conventional criterion (Stuart & Ward, 2019; Watters et al., 2018). Even though those with poor English language skills were excluded from the study, a back-translated Korean version of the instrument may have been

preferable. Second, the research is based on a cross-sectional survey with a convenience

sample of a single immigrant group in one national context. A multi-national study, adopting

a multi-level modelling approach that incorporates both objective macro-level data on

multiculturalism and perceived multicultural norms, would provide a more comprehensive

understanding of the relationship between multiculturalism and immigrant wellbeing. Not

only would this address issues of external validity, but it could also encourage exploration of

a wider range of potential benefits of multiculturalism in culturally plural societies.

Longitudinal research is also recommended to corroborate the temporal relationships

proposed in our model.

Finally, research on normative multiculturalism is in its infancy. To date, only

markers of social cohesion (e.g., trust, threat and national attachment) and psychological

wellbeing have been examined as outcomes of perceived normative Multicultural Contact,

Multicultural Ideology, and Multicultural Policies and Practices. Future studies should

include both majority and minority groups and explore a wider range of variables, such as

civic participation, national identity, feelings of safety, and perceived discrimination, that

might moderate or mediate the impact of normative multiculturalism on intercultural

relations and psychological wellbeing.

In conclusion, this study has offered a new perspective on how a multicultural

diversity climate might be conceptualized and operationalized. It has highlighted the key

components of multiculturalism, the significance of contextual factors and the role of

perceived social norms in predicting immigrant wellbeing. We believe this perspective

complements current theory and research on multiculturalism and expands the ways in

which we can identify the risks and benefits of multiculturalism in culturally plural societies.

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Table 1. *Psychometric Properties of the Measurement Scales and their Intercorrelations*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	M	SD	α
1. Gender	–									1.56	0.50	–
2. Age	-.18**	–								31.17	10.46	–
3. LoR	-.13*	.36***	–							10.04	7.21	–
4. MI	-.04	.09	.05	–						3.63	0.60	.65
5. MPP	.09	.13*	.01	.17**	–					3.24	0.66	.65
6. MC	.09	-.07	.25***	.28***	.14*	–				4.08	0.70	.64
7. GBS	.13*	.04	.06	.41***	.23***	.18**	–			5.07	1.00	.89
8. Flourishing	.09	.08	.01	.26***	.25***	.17**	.58***	–		5.45	0.96	.89
9. SWLS	.12*	.10	-.05	.19***	.23***	.01	.48***	.75***	–	4.81	1.25	.88
10. PA	-.02	.11*	.05	.16**	.16**	.12*	.27***	.61***	.50***	3.65	0.78	.78

Note. Gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female), LoR = Length of Residence, MI = Multicultural Ideology, MPP = Multicultural Policies and Practices,

MC = Multicultural Contact, GBS = General Belongingness Scale, SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale, PA = Positive Affect.

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 2. *Indirect Effects of Normative Multiculturalism on Psychological Wellbeing through Sense of Belonginess*

	B	SE B	β	95% MC CI	
				LL	UL
MI	.46	.10	.22***	.28	.68
MPP	.15	.07	.08*	.02	.29
MC	.02	.06	.01	-.10	.15

Note. MI = Multicultural Ideology, MPP = Multicultural Policies and Practices, MC = Multicultural Contact, MC CI = Monte Carlo Confidence Interval, *LL* = lower limit, *UL* = upper limit.

p < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

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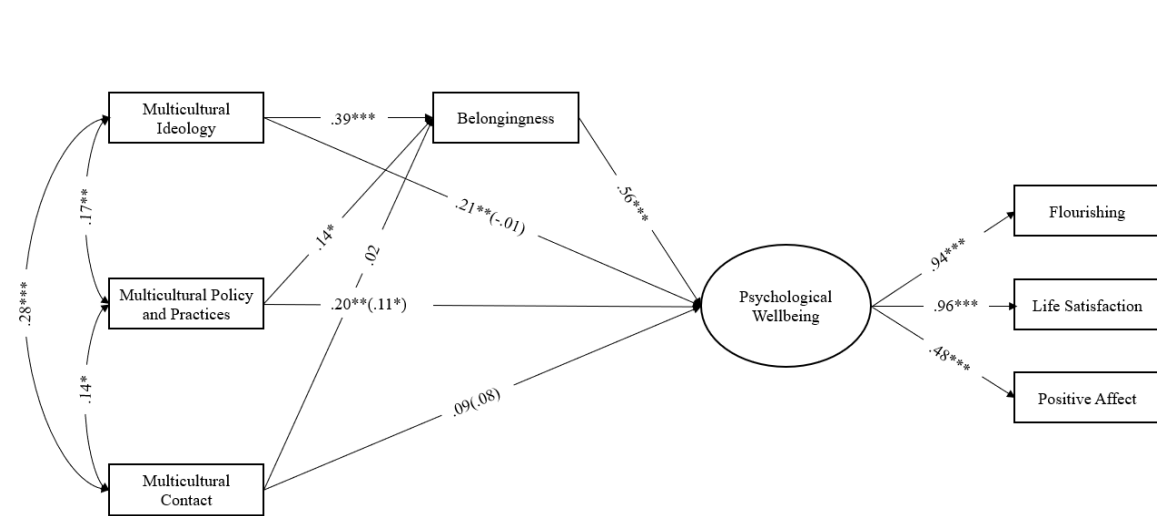11
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Figure 1. Structural of Model of Normative Multiculturalism, Belongingness and

Psychological Wellbeing

Note. Values are standardized estimate coefficients. The values in the parenthesis indicate

standardized estimate coefficients when the mediator was included. Gender, Age, and

Length of Residence were included as covariates.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

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