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Negative Acculturation Conditions, Wellbeing, and the Mediating Role of Separation in the Workplace

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Abstract

This article reports on the results of research which assessed adverse acculturation conditions in the workplace. Acculturation conditions such as racism, discrimination, segregation and separation were evaluated as predictors to ascertain how they affect acculturation outcomes such as intentions to quit and ill-health, both physical and psychological, of workers in the workplace. A convenience sample ($N = 327$) was taken from various sectors, for example retail, banking, mining, police service, and the municipality. The study aimed to test the mediating role of separation in the relation between adverse acculturation conditions and wellbeing as measured by ill-health and intentions to quit. The results indicated that racism, discrimination, segregation and separation, ill-health and intentions to quit were positively related. The hypothesized model was confirmed in a structural equation modelling analysis. This meant that more mainstream segregation demands, discrimination, and subtle racism, coupled with a dominant ethnic separation acculturation strategy and co-ethnics demanding that their members keep to themselves at work (with limited or no intercultural contact), were associated with the experiences of higher physical and psychological ill-health, and frequent thoughts of intentions to quit. In addition, mainstream segregation demands, compared to subtle racism and discrimination, were much more strongly associated with ethnic preference to separate. Blacks reported higher segregation demands and discrimination experiences at work (conditions), an individual separation acculturation strategy and physical ill-health at work (outcomes) compared to Whites, although the effects were relatively small. Recommendations for future research are provided.

Introduction

Since 1994, with the eradication of the apartheid system, South African businesses and public sectors have been confronted with large scale socio-political, cultural and economic challenges. Bhorat and Kanbur (2006) have reported that businesses were compelled to convert their unfair or discriminatory structures to ones which can accommodate the broader South African 'Rainbow Nation'. This implied transforming into institutions that are represented by the larger group of interest and still meet the needs of the economy in a sustainable manner. This is where the post-1994 transition was seen as the basis for redressing the economic deficit suffered by the majority of the South African population. As a result, apartheid policies were abandoned and policies such as employment equity, affirmative action and black economic empowerment were introduced (Bhorat & Kanbur 2006), which gave rise to a more multicultural workforce. Contrary to the aim of policies such as employment equity, affirmative action and black economic empowerment, research conducted after 1994 concluded that little change has been seen regarding deprived citizen's sociopolitical and economic conditions since liberation, and that black and white South Africans remain segregated (Christopher, 2001). In addition, recent events such as the killing of White farmers including the right-wing Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) leader, poor representation of Blacks in top management positions as well as general Black unemployment and poverty levels seem to suggest that the South African society still suffer from and struggle with racial polarization. These occurrences impact on acculturation conditions and its associated outcomes in the broader society as well as in the workplace. We propose and test a model of a negative acculturation context, mediators and outcomes in the workplace.

A Model of Negative Acculturation Context, Mediators, and Outcomes in the Workplace

Our theoretical framework combines a mediation model of acculturation in the broader society (Ar-ends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006) and in the workplace (Jackson, Van de Vijver, & Burckard, 2011). The acculturation context variables (i.e., racism, discrimination, segregation) are being investigated in the workplace and this study aims to test the mediating role of ethnic separation as measured by ethnic separation demands and an individual separation strategy in the relation between adverse acculturation conditions such as segregation demands, subtle racism and discrimination and wellbeing as measured by ill-health and intentions to quit.

Acculturation

Acculturation studies focus on issues arising when groups/individuals from different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. Marisol, Rojas, María, and Pablo (2007) argue that the acculturation concept started to be used by various American social anthropologists towards the end of the 19th century and they added that one of the first definitions of acculturation as a process came from American social anthropologists. Graves (1967) further indicated that acculturation is a term used to describe the process of bidirectional change that takes place when two ethno-cultural groups come into sustained contact with each other. This definition of acculturation implies that dominant and non-dominant cultural groups are influenced and transformed by their intercultural contacts and are expected to modify some aspects of their respective culture as a means of adaptation to ethno-cultural diversity.

Mainstream Acculturation Context

Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997) indicated that attitudes of dominant groups are important for the outcome of the acculturation process. In addition to the aforementioned, Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) have reported that all pluralist societies consist of both dominant and mainstream as well as minority groups. Mainstream acculturation conditions such as racism, discrimination, segregation and separation have been considered in previous research (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004; Jackson, Van de Vijver, & Burckard, 2011) and it was reported (Gee, Ro, Shariff-Marco, & Chae, 2009) that racism by majority group members impacts negatively on the mental health of immigrants and that discrimination was associated with and impacts on mental and physical health adversely. In this study the focus is on establishing the role that contextual variables such as mainstream segregation demands, subtle racism, discrimination, and separation play in the workplace and how they impact on ill-health and intentions to quit.

Segregation. Zagefka and Brown (2002) indicate that segregation is about demands exerted on ethnicities to keep to their own, while racism and discrimination refer to negative attitudes during intercultural contact. Barrette, Bourhis, Personnaz, and Personnaz, (2004) have reported that host members do not wish minorities to contaminate their culture, and hence accept that minority groups uphold their heritage culture on condition that they keep their distance. For Berry et al. (2006), on the other hand, segregation occurs when individuals or groups become separated from each other, implying minimal or no contact between groups from different cultures. Dahlberg, Fredriksson and Monseny (2010) reported that high levels of segregation are observed in the US and elsewhere. Hofmeyr (2006) has reported that South Africans have little contact with people from other ethnic groups and do not wish to increase future contact with other groups in their private space. However, contact in the workplace is unavoidable. The positive relation between mainstream segregation demands, subtle racism, discrimination, separation and ill-health have been confirmed in previous studies in the South African workplace (Jackson, van de Vijver, & Burckard, 2011). Considering that intergroup contact is on the increase in the South African workplace, this study aims to assess the role of mainstream segregation demands in the workplace in health outcomes and intentions to quit.

Discrimination. Causes of discrimination could be ascribed to different reasons and intentions from different individuals or groups, ranging from isolation of individuals or groups to attitudes of individuals or groups. Ong, Fuller-Rowell and Burrow (2009) have reported that a large-scale national survey established that almost 49% of Black respondents encountered some form of discrimination in their lifetime, for example, by

not being given promotion at work, hassled by police, or even being denied service. 89.7% of these respondents reported race as a reason for the discrimination. In addition, research with adolescents found that 36% of African American adolescents reported having been called a racially insulting name, 46% believed that racial discrimination resulted in them receiving a lower grade than they deserved, and a further 75% reported having been bothered by store personnel because of their race (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). 70% reported racial experiences of others perceiving them as a threat, for example being treated suspiciously, being perceived as incompetent or being talked down to. Roscigno (2007) reported that allegations of racial discrimination in employment are more likely to arise in the high wage service and public sectors, and it is perceived that racial discrimination complaints are most likely to be of alleged discriminatory termination or firing, while complaints of discrimination in hiring or promotion are fewer.

Pavalko et al. (2003) reported that a growing body of research points to an association between discrimination and physical and mental health outcomes. Reports and research documenting discriminatory experiences leave little doubt that these events are frustrating and stressful and do impact on physical and emotional health (Feagin 1991; Feagin & Vera 1995). Most research investigating the association between discrimination and health has found a significant relation between discrimination and psychological wellbeing (e.g., Broman & Clifford 1996). Ayalon and Gum (2011) documented that overall research (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999) has shown that everyday discrimination, for example, minor but daily hassles, take a greater toll on one's health than major lifetime discrimination, such as major life events. Research by Moomal et al. (2009) on discrimination and health reported that the broad perception of unfair treatment tends to adversely affect people's health, regardless of whether the discriminatory behavior is attributed to race or other factors.

Racism. Vernellia (2008) defines racism as any action or attitude, conscious or unconscious that undermines an individual or group based on their skin color or race. Racism continues to dominate society and will do so for decades if assumptions held by whites regarding black incompetence are not outgrown. In addition, the defensiveness in reaction from black people allows political interference in what people think, say and do in the economy. The last 30 years have witnessed a change in the way racial attitudes are measured (Durrheim, Baillie, & Johnstone, 2006). Early measures of racism have been characterized as old-fashioned or blatant, containing crude expressions of hate and stereotypes of racial inferiority. Heaven and Moerdyk's (1977) adaptation of Ray's anti-black scale, for example, included such items as "Blacks are not very hygiene-conscious" and "Blacks are a rather ugly race". On the other hand, Swim, Aikin, Hall, and Hunter (1995) reported that the nature of racism has transformed from old-fashioned and blatant types to modern and subtle types. Deitch Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, and Bradley (2003) have reported that everyday discrimination may become more general, as blatant racism becomes less established among dominant group members. Hodson, Dovidio, and Gaertner (2002) point to empirical evidence of the adverse effects of subtle racism in the daily life of people as well as in the workplace. Recommendations for admission to colleges were investigated and a key mechanism underlying subtle racism was identified to be the credibility that people give to different types of information when they make their decisions. It was found that more racially biased white people sees the weaker aspect of a black applicant's credentials as more important for admission decisions than when the candidate was white. Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) reported that white employers were less likely to recommend black candidates for positions in the workplace or admission to colleges than the white candidates, when the formers' qualifications for the position or admission were less obvious, or even that the appropriate decision to allow blacks to succeed was more ambiguous.

Ethnic acculturation context. Heim, Hunters, and Jones (2010) reported that racial and ethnic identity is measured on how it develops over time through comparing identities on a social level, and that it is an element of how one sees oneself. Phinney (1990) argued that the way one perceives oneself is derived from belonging to, identifying with, and/or participating in the social and cultural practices of a dominant ethnic group. This normally helps to uphold one's self-esteem when faced with racism (Phinney, 1995). Mallinckrodt and Leong (1992) reported that ethnic social support is crucial for positive wellbeing and is providing people with coping tools when they experience stressful life changes, including the stress when adjusting to unfamiliar customs,

whilst Heim et al. (2010) reported that discrimination appears to draw attention or put emphasis on ethnic identification, which turns out to benefit wellbeing of minority groups. For Berry et al. (2006), separation from cultures or even confusion about where one fits in makes adaptation very difficult. This study aims to establish the mediating effect of ethnic separation in the relationship between adverse mainstream conditions and ill-health, as well as intentions to quit.

Ethnic separation demands and an individual separation acculturation strategy. Various ethnic groups have different attitudes towards cultural adherence and toward having contact with the dominant groups. Separation research on adolescents (Berry et al., 2006) concluded that separation is an acculturation strategy aimed at preventing the influence dominant groups have on minority groups. Research (Pham & Harris, 2001; Zagefka & Brown, 2002) suggests that minority groups of adolescents are mostly rooted within their own culture and show little involvement with the dominant groups. Separation is an acculturation strategy that refers to the minority groups who accept their own cultural principles and uniqueness and reject the dominant culture's principles (Berry, 2001). Belonging to the ethnic profile was associated with poorer sociocultural adaptation, while belonging to the national profile was associated with moderately poorer psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2001). In this study ethnic separation demands refer to pressure from co-ethnics to keep to themselves while an individual separation strategy refers to an individual's preference to have only contact with co-ethnics. Overpowering support seems to exist for the notion that integration strategies are usually the most successful, and separation strategies are intermediate (Berry & Kim, 1988; Berry & Sam, 1997). However, Ward (2001) has argued that minority groups may easily move to a separation strategy should the dominant groups react negatively to their integration strategy. Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) reported that minority groups will adopt an integration strategy, attempting to be similar to the members of the dominant group, rather than a separation strategy.

Acculturation Outcomes

Ward and Kennedy (1992) reported that sociocultural outcomes related to minority groups' participation and acceptance of the dominant group's surroundings. Acculturation outcomes can be grouped under categories, namely individual acculturation outcomes, family acculturation outcomes and health (physical and psychological) outcomes. Different types of individual acculturation outcomes, for example integration, separation, assimilation, rejection and deculturation, have been studied. Integration refers to the process of successfully combining aspects from both cultures and this has been empirically supported as the healthiest acculturation outcome (Cuellar & Paniagua, 2000). Separation has been defined as to remain separate from dominant cultures, whereas assimilation is the replacement of home culture and language by the new culture, and rejection occurs when the individual rejects the native culture for new culture or vice versa (Berry, 2001). Assimilation and integration preferences were highly related to psychological health and sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Deculturation takes place when the individual accepts neither home culture nor the new culture. We were interested in the mediating role of ethnic separation, a combination of ethnic separation demands and a separation acculturation strategy in the relation between negative acculturation conditions and well-being at work using ill-health and intentions to quit as indicators.

Psychological acculturation outcomes: Ill-health and intentions to quit. Bennett and Murphy (1997) defined health (physical and psychological) as a state of complete mental and social wellbeing and as a sense of wholeness and happiness on a physical, cultural, spiritual, and mental level. Research (Berry, 2003; Berry & Sam, 1997) indicated that those minority groups who integrate are usually achieving the most encouraging outcomes as opposed to those who separate themselves. Parker, Chan and Tully (2006) suggested that minority members who do not integrate with the dominant group would be more likely to show signs of depression. Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, and Rummens, (1999) reported that it has been widely known that the experience of race discrimination indeed has a significant negative effect on a person's wellbeing. They also alluded to the fact that racism is the most serious factor facing minority groups and their mental health. With regards to intentions to quit, it can be construed as thoughts that are often triggered when the minority groups do not abide by or adapt to the dominant cultures. Intentions to quit can be seen as a psychological acculturation outcome

indicator as they convey information about how well the individual feels in the acculturation context, and can be linked to education and length of stay of minority groups (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

Group Differences in the Experience of Intercultural Relations in South Africa

Recent surveys, both national and also international, investigating ethnic differences in opposition to such policies, suggested an element of group self-interest at play in the policy attitudes (Durrheim, 2010; Van de Vijver, Breugelmans, & Schalk-Soekar, 2008). Members of the group that had most to gain from the policies (usually the groups with the least power in society) rated them most favorably, whereas members of the group that had most to lose rated the policies most negatively. The self-interest hypothesis that was proposed as an explanation for resistance to racial policies has received mixed support (Durrheim, 2010). Initial research found that unlike group or collective self-interest (Bobo, 1983), individual self-interest was not related to racial policy attitudes (McConahay & Hough, 1976; Sears & Allen, 1984). Opposition to policies like affirmative action was therefore not so much influenced by the possibility of individuals being personally affected by the policy as well as by the extent to which their group as a whole was likely to be affected by the policy (Bobo, 1988). Recent studies have indicated that Whites still experience the recent South African diverse workplace more positive compared to non-Whites despite recent legislative changes such as the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998) and the use of affirmative action policies that favor non-whites in both private and public institutions (Jackson & Van de Vijver, submitted; Jackson, Van de Vijver, & Ali, 2011).

Contextualizing the Study

No industries in the South African workplace are untouched by the socio-political changes, such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and affirmative action, or the challenges faced by the South African society as a result of these changes. Although they have transformed the landscape of the South African workplace, issues such as racism and discrimination prevail (Smith, Stones, & Naidoo, 2003) and are implied under with news headlines such as *“Employees of leading accounting firm KPMG are embroiled in a racial clash after a night of drinking at the company’s action-cricket league finals”* (Van Wyk, 2011) and *“For the first time today I was able to feel what discrimination felt like when our payroll department phoned me to enquire what race I was”* (David, 2011), *“Recently a gender audit by the South African National Editors Forum found that white male journalists are paid more and hold more top positions in the South Africa’s newsrooms”* (Anonymous, 2011). Such alleged incidents are continual reminders that the challenges related to racism, discrimination and challenges in cultural contact remain prominent in various spheres of South African society, including the workplace. Given this reality, the study aimed at establishing the extent of employees in the workplace experiencing racism, discrimination, segregation and separation, and how these conditions influence employees’ intentions to quit and their wellbeing.

The goals of the study were therefore to:

- investigate the associations between mainstream adverse conditions such as racism, discrimination, segregation, ethnic separation, and wellbeing at work, as measured by ill-health and intentions to quit;
- to test whether or hypothesized mediation model holds for Black and white group or whether systematic differences in components of the model can be observed;
- determine the mediating effect of ethnic separation in the relationship between adverse acculturation conditions and well-being in the workplace; and
- compare experiences of mainstream adverse conditions of racism, discrimination, segregation, ethnic separation, and wellbeing at work, as measured by ill-health and intentions to quit for Black and white race groups in the workplace.

Research method

Research design and procedure

The aim of the research design is to explain the approach the research will follow. The research design used is classified as quantitative. Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, (2005) explain quantitative research as an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the

meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. The specific methods used include questionnaires to gather information. Survey questionnaires were distributed to conveniently selected employees in various sectors of the workplace. These employees were mostly the colleagues and co-workers of network members and acquaintances. In addition, permission was acquired through formal verbal requests to line managers during fiscal visits to various workplaces to gather data from employees not acquainted with the researcher filling out the questionnaires. The purpose, anonymity and voluntary nature of the research and its advantages were explained to prospective participants after permission were granted during lunch break briefings. Participants were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires, which were then to be dropped in a sealed box in the HR section that were later collected by the researcher.

Sampling and Participants

Participants were conveniently sampled from different sectors in the workplace. The usefulness of this sampling technique is that it allows one to gather basic data and trends and is useful in identifying relationships among different phenomena. The participants of this study were therefore employees from various sectors in the South African workplace that were available for, and willing to answer questions on race relations in the workplace (conveniently selected). Table 1 represents some of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1
Participant Characteristics

Item Description	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	146	44.65
	Female	181	55.35
Age	18 – 25	76	23.24
	26 – 33	133	40.67
	34 – 41	82	25.08
	42 – 49	24	7.34
	50 – 60	12	3.67
Race	White	77	23.55
	Black	109	33.33
	Coloured	113	34.56
	Indian	26	7.95
	Other	2	0.61
Qualifications	Grade 12	101	30.89
	Certificate	74	22.63
	Diploma	82	25.08
	Degree	41	12.54
	Postgraduate	25	7.65

The sample ($N = 327$) consisted mainly of female employees (55.35%), in the age range between 26 and 33 years (40.67%), coloured (34.56%) and holding a grade 12 or National Senior certificate (30.89%).

Despite their cultural differences, given the history of the country we decided to combine Blacks and Coloureds in the multigroup analyses, thereby maintaining adequate sample size for these groups. There are various cultural differences between these ethnic groups, which would be an argument against their combination. However, we argue that for the purposes of our research, the combination is adequate. It may be noted that our combination of groups is in line with the Employment Equity Act in which all previously disadvantaged groups are called Black: 'Black people' is a generic term which refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians in the South

African Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998). Furthermore, both Blacks and Coloureds share a history as the victims of institutionalized racism and oppression, and they share the same position in the commonly perceived divide of 'Black' and 'White' in South Africa (Makhalemele, 2005).

Measures

Some instruments with well-established psychometric properties used in other cultural contexts were adapted (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004). Adaptations involved replacing Dutch and Moroccans with South African and own ethnic group respectively. All acculturation scales follow a five-point Likert format ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1), and some negatively phrased item were reversed before the analyses so that higher scores reflect more endorsement of the underlying attitude. The measuring instrument consisted of four sections, namely the mainstream domain, the ethnic domain, work-related psychological acculturation outcomes and a biographic section to facilitate comparisons.

Mainstream domain instruments

- *Mainstream segregation demands* (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004). This is a 12-item measure of the extent to which participants think that mainstream members hold segregationist attitudes towards minority members. A sample item is *"I think that most of my fellow residents would be happy to have people from other cultures than their own to be thrown out of our organization"*.
- *Perceived discrimination* (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004). The scale is an 11-item measure of the extent to which participants think the situation in the workplace is discriminatory and requires them to drop their cultural characteristics. Discrimination refers to pressure exerted on the minorities to apply fully to the regulations and the general atmosphere regardless of whether these regulations encroach on minority sensitivities. The scale contains items such as *"I experience discrimination in our organization"*.
- *Subtle racism* (Subtle Racism Scale of Duckitt, 1991). This is a 10-item (four of the items were filter items and were not used in the final analysis) measure of the extent to which co-workers hold subtle racist attitudes. A sample item includes *"Some groups in South Africa are getting too demanding in pushing for equal rights"*.

Ethnic domain instrument

- *Perceived co-ethnic separation demands at work* (Ait Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004) is a four-item measure of the extent to which participants think their own ethnic members want them to keep away from the majority culture. Separation is a strategy aimed at the prevention of mainstream influence on minority ways. The scale contains items such as *"My cultural group members do not want me to make contact with members from other cultural groups in our organization"*.
- *Individual separation acculturation strategy*. This new instrument is a three-item measure of the extent to which participants prefer contact with their own ethnic group members and do not seek participation in the 'Rainbow Nation' culture. The scale contains items such as *"I actually avoid contact with members from other cultures"*.

Psychological acculturation outcomes

- *Well-being*: This is an adapted version of the 18 physical health symptoms of the PSI of Spector and Jex (1998), complemented with a list of 9 common psychological complaints based on a slightly modified version of the World Health Organization Cross-National Survey of Psychological and Somatic Symptoms (1988). The scale employs a frequency format that ranges from never (1) to every day (5). The self-report measure asks respondents to indicate whether or not in the past three months they had suffered any of the mentioned symptoms. Some examples of symptoms included in the scale are headaches, backache, fatigue, eyestrain and trouble sleeping, concentrating and constant anxiety or panic attacks.

- *Intentions to quit* (developed for the study). This is a three-item measure of participants' intentions to quit their work. All of the items are positively phrased. It contains items pertaining to.

A *Biographical questionnaire* was also included, dealing with basic biographical questions such as age, sex, and race.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis was completed with the help of the SPSS-programme (SPSS Inc., 2009). Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, skew and kurtosis) was used to scrutinize data. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and uni-dimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the variance proportion of the items on a scale in terms of total variance explained by that particular scale. Exploratory factor analyses were carried out to determine construct validity of the measuring instruments. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables in terms of statistical significance; we set the value at a 95% confidence interval ($p < .05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify relationships between the variables. A cut-off point of .30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. To investigate the mediating role of ethnic separation in the relations between adverse mainstream conditions and wellbeing for Black and White employees, structural equation modelling (SEM-) with multigroup analysis was performed using AMOS 18. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was carried out with race (two levels: Black and White) as independent variable and the mean scores of the scales as dependent variables. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) were used in addition to statistical significance to determine the significance of relationships. Effect sizes indicate whether obtained results are practically important (whereas statistical significance may often show results which are of little practical relevance).

Results

The results of this study consist of three parts: (1) the descriptive statistics of measuring factors/variables and correlation between adverse acculturation conditions or characteristics, mediating variables and wellbeing (the acculturation psychological outcomes as measured by physical and psychological ill-health and intentions to quit); (2) the testing of the mediating role of ethnic separation in the relationship between the adverse acculturation antecedents and wellbeing amongst employees in the South African workplace; and (3) comparisons of Black and White groups.

Exploratory factor analyses and associations between antecedent conditions, intervening variables and wellbeing at work

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted first to confirm that the hypothesized items load on the factors or latent variables. Items with factor loadings higher than .30 were considered as sufficient descriptors of the latent variable. The results indicated that all scales used were uni-factorial; the first factor explained 56.60% of the variance in *Perceived Mainstream Segregation Demands*; 45.87% in *Subtle Racism at Work*; 60.33% in *Perceived Discrimination at Work*; 56.29% in *Ethnic Separation Demands at Work*; 62.48% in an *Individual Separation Acculturation Strategy*; 42.87% in *Physical Ill-Health*; 61.20% in *Psychological Ill-Health*; and 81.12% in *Intentions to quit*. The descriptive statistics the product-moment correlation coefficients between the different constructs used in this research project are presented in Table 2.

Inspection of Table 2 shows that all the alpha coefficients were higher than the recommended lower threshold of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 2 also revealed that *Segregation demands* are statistically significantly related to perceived discrimination (with a large effect for both groups), subtle racism (large effect for both groups), ethnic separation demands (large effect for Blacks and medium effect for Whites), and individual separation strategy (large effect for both groups). *Perceived discrimination* is statistically and significantly correlated to subtle racism (with a large effect), ethnic separation demands (large effect for Blacks and medium effect for Whites), and individual separation strategy (with a medium effect for both groups). *Subtle Racism* is

statistically significantly related to ethnic separation demands (large effect for Blacks and medium effect for Whites) and individual separation strategy (large effect for Whites and medium effect for Blacks). *Physical health* is statistically significantly related to psychological health (large effect for both groups).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics (n = 327) and correlations between acculturation constructs and outcomes: White (above diagonal) and Black (below diagonal) group

Variable	α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Segregation Demands	.93	2.29	.80	-	.54**	.53**	.35**	.65**	-.06	.03	.09
2 Perceived Discrimination	.92	2.64	.88	.64**	-	.68**	.43**	.40**	.14	.04	.09
3 Subtle Racism	.89	2.57	.76	.64**	.74**	-	.46**	.54**	.15	-.09	-.02
4 Ethnic Separation Demands	.80	2.40	.85	.62**	.51**	.53**	-	.33**	.10	-.10	-.17
5 Individual Separation Strategy	.70	2.25	.90	.54**	.39**	.42**	.46**	-	-.06	-.10	.04
6 Intentions to Quit	.88	2.63	1.09	.09	.08	.14*	.12	.16*	-	.13	.24*
7 Physical Ill Health	.93	1.93	.72	.16*	.10	.16*	.23**	.08	.16*	-	.77**
8 Psychological Ill Health	.91	1.93	.85	.28**	.11	.20**	.37**	.21**	.18**	.64**	-

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

A model testing the mediation effect of separation in the relation between mainstream conditions and wellbeing Black and White groups at work

In this hypothetical model three perceived adverse mainstream attitudes (*segregation demands, discrimination and subtle racism at work*) are antecedent conditions that impact on a single latent variable (wellbeing at work) that is measured using three indicators, namely *physical and psychological ill-health* and *intentions to quit* (psychological acculturation outcomes) through a mediating latent variable (involving ethnic separation) that is measured by two indicators, namely *ethnic integration demands at work* and an *individual separation acculturation strategy*. The similarities and differences between the Black and White groups were explored by testing the fit of a hierarchy of models with increasing constraints on the number of invariant parameters. We used various indices to assess the goodness of fit of the model. However, the solutions for the different hierarchical models proved to be not admissible.

We then decided to report the fit statistic for the hypothetical model using the total sample as this model yielded acceptable results. We used various indices to assess the goodness of fit of the model. The structural equation model analysis (see Figure 1) yielded an acceptable fit: $\chi^2(15, N = 327) = 22.68, p < .09$; $\chi^2/df = 1.51$ [the χ^2/df (recommended value in small samples, < 3), the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) was .96 (recommended, $\geq .90$), the Tucker Lewis index (TLI) was .99 (recommended, $\geq .90$), the comparative of fit index (CFI) was .99 (recommended, $\geq .90$), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .04 (recommended, $\leq .06$). As can be seen in Figure 1, the acceptable fit of the empirical data to the conceptual model indicates that mainstream acculturation conditions are associated with wellbeing at work as measured with three indicators, namely physical and psychological ill-health and intentions to quit through separation as the intervening variable.

Figure 1 indicated that the paths from mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism to ethnic separation were significant, with mainstream segregation demands yielding the strongest association with ethnic separation compared to the other mainstream adverse conditions and ethnic separation. In addition, the path from ethnic separation to wellbeing at work was also significant. This finding suggests that perceived mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism are related to wellbeing at work in this sample. Employees who experienced more mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism at work also reported less wellbeing at

work. We can therefore conclude that perceived mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism are significant factors in wellbeing at work.

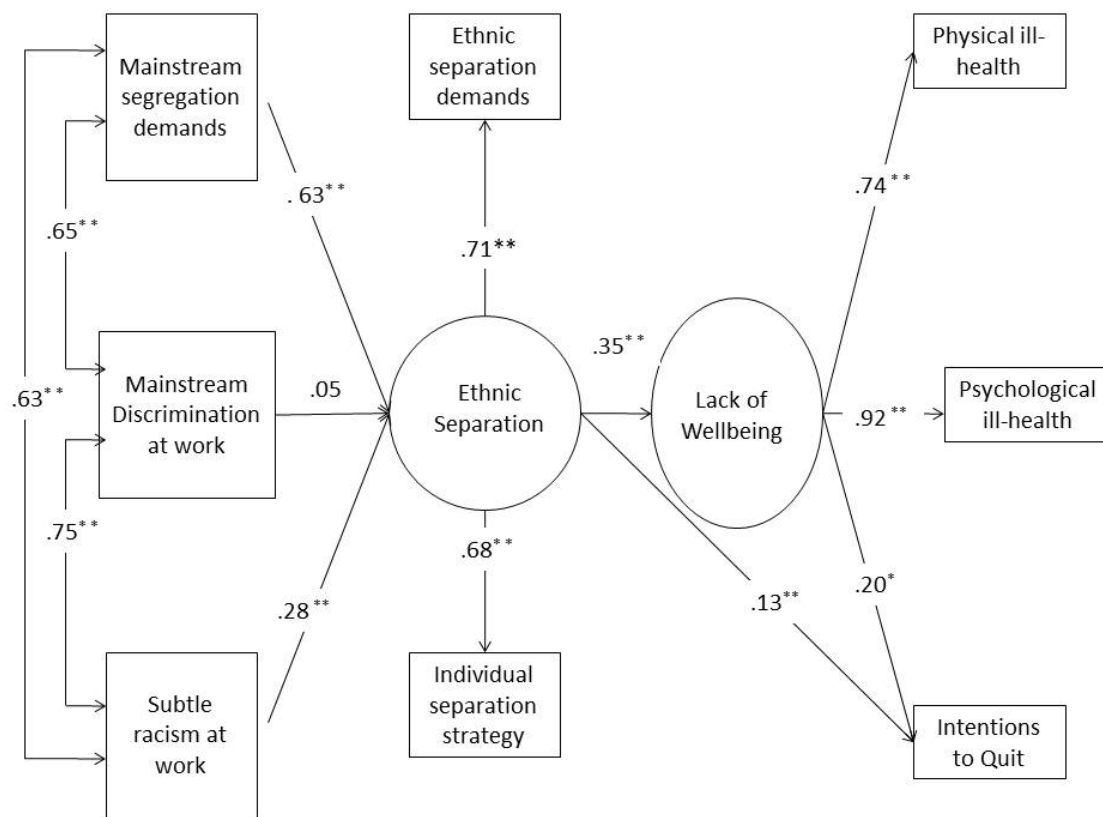


Figure 1. Results of the mediating acculturation model analysis

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Mediating effects of ethnic separation

The hypothesized model is a mediation model in which adverse antecedent conditions influence ethnic separation, which in turn impacts on wellbeing of workers. We made a closer examination of the direct and indirect effects to evaluate their relative sizes. There is some literature on the testing of the mediation effect (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986; Holmbeck, 1997; Hoyle & Kenny, 1999; Judd & Kenny, 1981; Kline, 1998; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). It has been found that the method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) can have a low statistical power in many situations and that joint significance tests involving the product of coefficients have been found to have greater statistical power than that of other formal methods of assessing mediation, including the Baron and Kenny approach (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). Therefore, we stayed within the structural equation framework to compute the significance of mediation effects by using the bootstrap procedure as implemented in the AMOS programme.

The results of the mediation analysis can be found in Table 3. A close inspection of Table 3 indicated that in line with observations from Figure 1, total and indirect effects were observed for physical and psychological ill-health as well as intentions to quit. In addition, the insignificance of all direct effects between predictors and outcomes suggests that the link with physical and psychological ill-health as well as intentions to quit is fully mediated by ethnic separation. *Mainstream segregation demands* and *subtle racism* have, therefore, an indirect and significant influence on *psychological acculturation outcomes* (physical and psychological ill-health as well as intentions to quit). It can be concluded that *ethnic separation fully mediated* the path from *mainstream segregation demands* and *subtle racism* to *psychological acculturation outcomes* and that *mainstream segregation demands* and *subtle racism* matter for the experience of wellbeing at work.

Comparisons of Black and White groups

In order to examine Black and White group differences in the experience of mainstream antecedent conditions, ethnic intervening separation at work and an individual separation strategy as well as well-being, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was carried out with race (two levels: Black and White) as independent variable and the mean scores of the scales as dependent variables. The mean scores of the scales per race group are presented in Table 3. The multivariate effect of race just was significant, Wilks' Lambda = 0.94, $F(8, 290) = 2.531$, $p < .01$. Univariate analyses showed that segregation demands and discrimination at work (conditions), an individual separation acculturation strategy and physical ill-health at work (outcomes) were the only dependent variables that showed a significant race difference. Blacks reported higher segregation demands and discrimination experiences at work (conditions), an individual separation acculturation strategy and physical ill-health at work (outcomes) compared to Whites. The last column of Table 4, presenting Cohen's d values, which gauge the size of the race differences, shows that this effect size is small. Our data suggest that the participants of our study are well aware of negative acculturation conditions and outcomes of the workplace and seem to acknowledge that their environment puts pressure on them to act in a certain fashion in relation to its diversity. Scores on discrimination at work are rather high compared to the scores on the other scales, which suggest that this is the most common adverse acculturation condition faced by these mine employees.

Table 3

Mediation Effects of Separation in the Workplace (Standardized Effects)

	Physical Ill-health			Psychological Ill-health			Intentions to Quit		
Predictor	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
Segregation	.00	.17*	.17*	.00	.21*	.21*	.00	.12*	.12*
Subtle Racism	.00	.07*	.07*	.00	.09*	.09*	.00	.06*	.06*
Discrimination	.00	.01	.01	.00	.01	.01	.00	.01	.01
Ethnic Separation	.00	.26*	.26*	.00	.32*	.32*	.13	.07*	.20*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 4

Mean scores (SD) per scale for the Black (A combination of Blacks and Coloureds in the sample: $n = 222$) and White ($n = 77$) group

Scales	Black M	Black SD	White M	White SD	Cohen's d
1. Segregation demands at work	2.37	(0.84)	2.03	(0.61)	0.45** [#]
2. Discrimination at work	2.72	(0.90)	2.41	(0.74)	0.33* [#]
3. Subtle racism at work	2.61	(0.77)	2.44	(0.70)	0.23
4. Ethnic separation demands (work)	2.41	(0.85)	2.31	(0.82)	0.12
5. Separation acculturation strategy	2.32	(0.92)	2.06	(0.72)	0.31* [#]
6. Physical ill-health	1.93	(0.72)	1.75	(0.54)	0.28* [#]
7. Psychological ill-health	1.92	(0.85)	1.82	(0.81)	0.24
8. Work success	2.69	(1.09)	2.52	(1.12)	0.15

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ [#] small, significant effect size

Discussion

The aim of the study was to determine the relationships between adverse acculturation conditions (pressure to segregate and overt and covert discrimination), separation attitudes, and (lack of) wellbeing at work. Adverse mainstream conditions were positively related to ethnic separation demands and work and an individual separation strategy, ill-health and intentions to quit. This implies that a work environment characterized by more mainstream segregation, discrimination and subtle racism is more likely to contribute to ethnic members encouraging each other to separate and limited mainstream contact as well as higher levels of ill-health symptoms and frequent thoughts of intentions to quit. Our finding seems to concur with previous consistent

links between perceived racism, discrimination, and poor psychological outcomes (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Gee, Ro, Shariff-Marco, & Chae, 2009).

The study also tested the association between acculturation mainstream antecedent conditions and wellbeing through separation as a latent mediating ethnic variable. The hypothesized model was confirmed in a structural equation modelling analysis. This means that more mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism, coupled with a dominant ethnic separation acculturation strategy and co-ethnics demanding that their members keep to themselves at work (with limited or no intercultural contact), are associated with the experience of higher physical and psychological ill-health and more frequent thoughts of intentions to quit. In addition, mainstream segregation demands, compared to subtle racism and discrimination, were much more strongly associated with ethnic preference to separate. This result supports the positive relations found (Berry et al., 2006; Heim, Hunter, & Jones, 2010; Jackson et al., 2011) between negative acculturation conditions, separation and ill-health as well as the importance of taking both the mainstream and ethnic conditions into consideration in acculturation studies, as recommended by the Integrated Acculturation Model (Bourhis et al., 1997). It therefore seems likely that a workplace culture that promotes ethnic cultural separation coupled with encouragement by ethnic members at work contributes to the experience of higher levels of ill-health symptoms (Jackson et al., 2011).

The study also focused on the mediating effect of the separation in the path from adverse antecedent variables to wellbeing, as measured by ill-health symptoms and intentions to quit. Our findings suggest an indirect and significant influence of adverse conditions (excluding discrimination) on physical and psychological ill-health symptoms and intentions to quit. It could, therefore, be concluded that separation mediates the path from mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism to physical and psychological ill-health symptoms and intentions to quit. It can be concluded that separation demands fully mediate the path from mainstream segregation demands and subtle racism to psychological acculturation outcomes at work, and that mainstream adverse conditions matter for the experience of wellbeing at work. Our findings are in line with a recent review of discrimination and health that suggests that racism precedes, rather than follows negative mental health outcomes and health-related behaviors (Gee et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2011).

Our study also challenges public perception and discourse that portrays some groups as victims and others as perpetrators of negative intercultural attitudes (Jackson et al., 2011). Therefore another aim of the study was to determine whether Blacks and Whites experience the mainstream antecedent conditions, intervening variables and well-being at work differently. The results showed that segregation demands and discrimination at work (conditions), an individual separation acculturation strategy and physical ill-health at work (outcomes) were the only dependent variables that showed a significant race difference. Blacks reported higher segregation demands and discrimination experiences at work (conditions), an individual separation acculturation strategy and physical ill-health at work (outcomes) compared to Whites, although the effects were relatively small. Our findings differ from those of Jackson et al. (2011) who found that only subtle racism was reported by Blacks as more common in the workplace than by Whites. Blacks still see more discrimination in their work environment. The results did not show major differences in perception of adversity in the work place. Therefore, our main conclusion partly support public perception and discourse that portrays Blacks as victims of negative intercultural attitudes and that racism, discrimination and segregation are still prevalent in the workplaces that we studied.

This paper extends the psychological knowledge by incorporating cross-cultural and social-psychological theories into a framework for explaining the dynamics involved in the relationship between segregation, racism, discrimination, separation and well-being of the workplace. The findings of the study contribute to the growing literature on acculturation in South Africa in relation to how South Africans cope with the separatism, discrimination and racism at work. This study also extends national surveys that look at race perceptions on changes in the new South Africa by combining the influence of both mainstream and ethnic perception in predicting specifying paths to wellness at workplace of post-Apartheid South Africa. These findings are important in an effort to facilitate better future race relations in a young democracy with a history of bad ethnic relations. It

is recommended that institutions with a multicultural workforce deal with overt and, even more importantly, subtle racism in the work place to increase wellness at work to support national initiatives to facilitate better intercultural relations.

The main limitations of the study involve the limited sample size and the cross-sectional design used. Future studies could consider specific industries with larger sample sizes as well as longitudinal design to firmly establish cause and effect as well as the impact of the issues covered as well other issues of relevance for sound race relations in South Africa. In the light of recent racial polarization in South Africa, future research could consider the experience of Indians as well as various immigrant groups in the workplace of the “New” South Africa.

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