

DOES ETHNIC IDENTITY SALIENCE MODERATE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN NEUROTICISM EXPRESSION AND DISCRIMINATION?

Lu Zaki & Kelci Harris, Ph.D.
 Department of Psychology, University of Victoria

This research was supported by the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards, University of Victoria. Supervised by Dr. Kelci Harris.

Introduction

- Neuroticism was classically viewed as a stable, genetic trait; however, research shows that the environment has a large impact on neuroticism expression^{1,2}.

Neuroticism: a personality trait characterised by a propensity for negative emotionality and poor coping with life stressors³.

- For racialized individuals, environmental cues may be race-relevant. Other individual differences, such as ethnic identity, could also impact neuroticism expression.

Ethnic Identity Salience (EIS): the significance of an individual's ethnicity relative to their overall self-concept at a specific moment in time⁴.

- Discrimination has been shown to predict facets of neuroticism, such as depressed and anxious mood⁵.
- Existing research shows an inverse association between EIS and neuroticism^{6,7}; however, findings about the moderating role of EIS in the associations between neuroticism and discrimination are mixed^{8,9}.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: EIS will *buffer* against the association between discrimination and neuroticism expression.

Hypothesis 2: EIS will *exacerbate* the association between discrimination and neuroticism expression.

Methodology

Participants: 180 racialized post secondary students at the University of Toronto Mississauga

ESM study: completed surveys **5 times per day over 12 days** via the **Ethica mobile application**. Responses reflected **the past hour**.

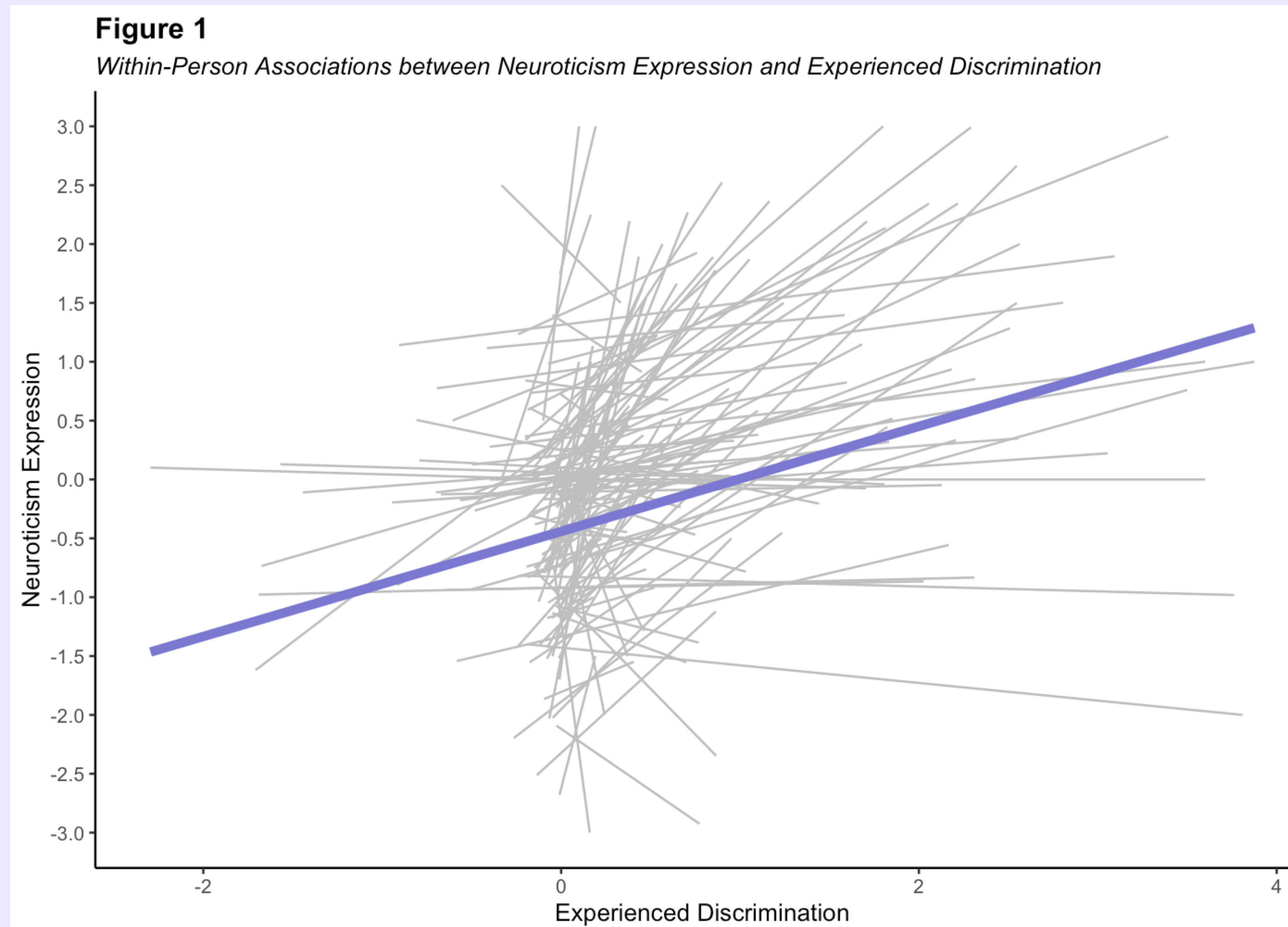


Measures (ESM study only)

- Ethnic Identity Salience**
 - “Thinking about all the aspects of yourself that make up who you are, which of those were prominent in the past hour?” — did or didn't select “ethnicity” (M = .15, SD = .35).
- Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS)**
 - 5 item scale measuring experienced discrimination¹⁰. (M = 1.9, SD = .58).
- Neuroticism**
 - 2 bipolar adjective items from the Big Five Personality States scale that reflect facets of neuroticism¹¹. (M = -.42, SD = 1.37).

Findings

Experiencing Discrimination is Predictive of Neuroticism Expression both Between and Within Persons



Note: n = 180.

Table 1

Estimates of Hierarchical Linear Model Predicting Neuroticism Moderated by Ethnic Identity Salience

Within-Person Level Between-Person Level	Neuroticism <i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)
Intercept (average within-person level)	-.42(.08)***
Average EIS	.08(.35)
Discrimination	.61(.11)***
Average EIS	.19(.40)

Note: n = 180. ***p < .001.

However, EIS does not Moderate this Association.

Discussion

- Race-relevant environmental cues impact the personality expression of racialized individuals.
- Participants expressed more neuroticism at times when they experienced more discrimination than they usually do.
- This association was neither buffered nor exacerbated by their average EIS.
- Participants who experienced more discrimination on average also expressed more neuroticism on average.
- Notably, the short version of the EDS does not specifically mention race or ethnicity; further research using racism-specific measures may better represent associations with other race-relevant variables such as EIS.

Please scan this QR code for additional information on acknowledgements, participant demographics, statistical analyses, measures, and references.

