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Greeks and Albanian Immigrants' Perceptions on Family Values, Marriage Myths and Love: The Role of Acculturation

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THEORY

PRACTICE

RESEARCH

This paper aims to shed light on issues examined in the framework of social pedagogy, such as those that influence and often determine the values and the integrative model of individuals and groups as well as their subsequent perceptions and behaviours. The study focuses on comparative data from Greek and Albanian immigrants related to family values, parental roles, emotional models, family relationships as well as dimensions such as cultural integration and assimilation. More specifically, this article presents results regarding family values, marriage myths, intimacy, passion and commitment among 231 native Greeks and 102 Albanian immigrants. Next, it presents the correlations of acculturation of immigrants with family values, marriage myths and love. Participants completed the Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 1997), the Marriage Quiz (Larson, 1988) and the Family Value Scale (Georgas, 1999). Immigrants' acculturation was measured using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000). Traditional values such as the father as protector, the woman as subordinate, and restriction of emotions of intimacy were more prevalent among immigrants than among Greeks. Married people with children scored lower in intimacy, passion and commitment than unmarried and married participants without children. Immigrants' orientation toward heritage culture and marriage myths was related to lower levels of intimacy. Both native Greeks and immigrants related good relationships of parent and children to higher intimacy, passion and commitment.

Key words: immigrants, acculturation, family values, integrative model, marriage myths, love.

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Theoretical background

Family and romantic relationships are important throughout our lifespan, but family relations are different compared to love relationships. Family relations consist of intimacy and commitment, while romantic relationships have passion as one of their basic elements (Sternberg, 1998). Social psychologists suggest that culture plays an important role in how people engage in interpersonal relationships (Hofstede, 2001). Each culture has its hierarchical ordering of a values system, which serves as a guiding principle in people's lives and interpersonal relations (Rokeach, 1973). This system includes beliefs linked to affect which influence people's perceptions and interpretation of the world, their preferences and actions (Schwartz, 2012). Specifically, individualistic and collectivistic cultures differ in the importance people place on family and love, in how individuals display emotions, how they react to the emotions of others and in the dynamics of parent-child relationships.

The interdisciplinary field of social pedagogy pays special attention to the various aspects of individuals' lives throughout all their developmental stages and major events in different cultural contexts (Kornbeck & Rosendal-Jensen, 2011). Marriage in more individualist cultures is consistent with broader values that promote personal goals and feelings of mutual love, whereas most collectivistic cultures endorse the values of harmony promotion, belonging, promoting the goals of others, the balance of personal concerns with family needs (MacDonald et al., 2012). Whilst strong kinship networks and family ties are highly emphasized in collectivistic cultures, passionate relationships are the most important factor for marriage in individualistic cultures (Kim & Hatfield, 2004). Another difference between individualistic and collectivist cultures is the dynamic of paths of development of mating and parent-child relationships. Previous research has indicated a decline in marital satisfaction following the birth of a child in Western cultures, in which people expect that romance and eros should continue beyond marriage and children. In collectivistic cultures people may feel content with the harmony of marital satisfaction because they seem to have lower expectations for refuelling passion and emotional intimacy (Wendorf et al., 2011). However, the birth of a child can have a negative impact on marital satisfaction (Bradbury et al., 2000).

Social pedagogy highlights the role of the family as an ideal pedagogical means for individual and social development (Mylonakou & Kekes, 2007). Research indicates that many social pedagogical problems are associated with specific family parameters and especially with parents' behaviour (Georgiou, 2008a, 2008b). In general, social pedagogy research asserts the need to improve a strong values system aimed at the cooperation and group dynamics related to the development of communication and conflict management skills (Petrie, 2011). Furthermore, qualities such as accepting others, the value of dialogue, dignity, love and respect of 'difference' (Eichsteller & Holthoff, 2011) are very significant. Thus, harmonic co-existence is ensured through investigation and projection of the positive characteristics of everyone involved (Mylonakou-Keke, 2012, 2013).

Most studies have focused on immigrants' behaviour and values that guide family life. These studies focus on how this behaviour is related to acculturation as an ongoing process of changes over time in beliefs, emotions, attitudes, values, and behaviour and identification patterns in individuals and groups after they have moved from one culture to live in a different one (Liebkind, 2001). It may proceed along diverging options: assimilation and integration, separation and marginalization (Berry, 2003) or as an orientation toward mainstream and heritage culture (Nguyen et al., 1999; Ryder et al., 2000). Studies that have examined the family values of Albanian immigrants in Greece have observed that they endorse the conservative roles of mother and father in the family more than Greeks do. However, Albanian immigrants' family conservatism seems to be caught between the modern and the traditional, the patriarchal and the autonomous, the dependent and the empowered (Besevegis et al., 2010). Other research indicates that, since the financial crisis in Greece, emotional dependency and family relationships have increased among Albanian immigrant families (Gaki et al., 2013). In addition, research indicates that Albanian immigrants are less likely compared to Greeks to express their negative emotions; they are more restrained and more

reserved in their expression of anger (Besevegis et al., 2010). When values guiding Albanian family life were studied in Albania, investigators observed a family model of total interdependence (Antoniou et al., 2013) prevalent in traditional cultures characterized by emotionally and materially interdependent and hierarchical relationships between family members, and the prevalence of the extended family (Kagitcibasi, 1996, 2007). One of the more fascinating features of traditional Albanian society is its large 'extended family' structure, termed 'fisi'¹, which expresses the principle of kinship, the fact of being kin or parents (Meyer, 1891).

There has been an absence of studies on differences between immigrants and native Greeks in romantic relationships and how family values and acculturation can affect intimate relationships. Family models do not examine romantic relationships, although they describe emotional and social role differentiation between genders with the status of women in traditional cultures as lower than in individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2011). The focus on the parents' role and on relationships between parents and their children is an important issue for the socialization role of the family. However, romantic attachment relationships (proximity, passion and commitment) are associated with satisfaction and personal fulfilment in marital relationships (Dion & Dion, 1996), with reduced risk of divorce (Schneller & Arditti, 2004) and enhanced psychological and physical well-being (Hassebrauck & Fehr, 2002). Of specific interest, research has found that traditional values may support love as friendship and an altruistic style of love (agape) (Dion & Dion, 1996) and discourage self-disclosure in relationships (Neff & Suizzo, 2006), related to inhibited intimacy, whereas individualistic values place greater emphasis on mutual attraction-love (eros), on love as a basis for marriage (Dion & Dion, 1996) and self-disclosure for enhancing intimacy (Adams et al., 2004). In collectivistic cultures intimacy needs are primarily satisfied through interdependent family relationships rather than through romantic relationships (Dion & Dion, 1993). Given cultural change, acculturation is important for understanding the experience of love and close relationships among immigrants. Ataca and Berry (2002) found that cultural identification influences the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that guide dating and marital relationships. Koutrelakos (2004) found that Greek Americans endorsed greater self-disclosure in relationships than did native Greeks, due to exposure to American values and norms that encourage open expression.

Based on past research, the aim of this study was to examine the differences between Greeks and Albanian immigrants with regards to family values, marriage beliefs and love styles. Furthermore, the current study also examined if the degrees of acculturation would affect immigrants' love styles by comparing two groups: immigrants preferring an orientation toward their heritage culture and immigrants preferring an orientation toward Greek culture. Specifically, we hypothesize that:

1. Albanian immigrants would score higher on traditional family dimensions and marriage beliefs and lower on love dimensions (intimacy, passion and commitment) compared to Greeks;
2. Married people with children would score higher in family values and marriage beliefs and lower in love dimensions than married people without children and unmarried individuals.
3. An orientation of immigrants toward their heritage culture would be more predictive of lower love dimensions, while an orientation toward Greek culture would be more predictive of higher love dimensions.

¹ etymology from the Modern Greek word 'physis' which means 'nature, character'.

Methodology

Participants

Overall, 333 people recruited from the wider area of Athens, aged from 18 to 66 years ($M=34.26$, $S.D.=11.97$), took part in this study. Of the participants 231 (69.4%) were Greek (89 males and 142 females) and 102 (30.6%) were immigrants from Albania (30 males and 72 females). There were no significant differences regarding the country and the gender of participants. About 49.5% (163 people) were married with children, 21.9% (72 people) were married without having children and 28.6% (94 people) were unmarried.

Procedure

Data collection took place in 2011. The questionnaires were administered individually to every participant after having obtained consent. Each participant was given a randomly ordered questionnaire packet that required them to answer questions. It was emphasized that the data were anonymous, the participation voluntary and there was no obligation to participate or to continue participating.

Measures

The scales of the questionnaire package were translated from Greek into Albanian by bilingual speakers (and translated back into Greek). All participants completed the following measures:

The **Family Value Scale** (Georgas, 1999), used in the current example, measures two factors: (a) hierarchical roles of father and mother (the father should be the head of family, the mother's place is at home, the mother should be the go-between, the father should be the breadwinner, the mother should accept the father's decision) and (b) relationships within the family and with kin (parents should teach children proper behaviour, should honour and protect the family's reputation, problems should be resolved within family, should maintain good relations with relatives, children should take care of elderly parents). The questions were measures on a five-point scale, with one indicating 'disagree' and five 'agree'. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Albanian immigrants were $\alpha=0.80$ for the hierarchical roles of father and mother, and $\alpha=0.74$ for family relationships. For Greeks, coefficients were $\alpha=0.75$ and $\alpha=0.60$ respectively.

Immigrants' acculturation was measured using an adapted version of the **Vancouver Index of Acculturation** (Ryder et al., 2000). The version of 18 items used in this study assesses the heritage and mainstream dimensions of acculturation. The two-dimensional framework enabled us to investigate the integration into two cultures separately. Items were in pairs with regard to different life domains (everyday lifestyle, global involvement, group interaction), with one item in each pair referring to heritage and to Greek culture. Examples of items include 'I am interested in maintaining or developing traditions of my heritage culture' 'I am interested in Greek traditions'. Each item had a 5-point Likert-style rating. Every subscale yielded an overall rating of involvement in heritage and in mainstream Greek culture, with a rating of 1 indicating a low degree of culture involvement and a rating of 5 indicating a high degree of culture involvement. In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both Greek and Albanian participants were $\alpha=0.84$ for heritage dimension and $\alpha=0.75$ for mainstream dimension.

The **Triangular Love Scale** (Sternberg, 1997) was adapted for the Greek sample by Kordoutis (2008). The Greek version contained minor changes from Sternberg's version, reflecting cultural differences between countries. The Triangular Love Scale consists of three subscales: Intimacy, Passion and Commitment. The Intimacy subscale consists of 15 items designed to assess feelings of warmth, closeness, connectedness and bondedness in a loving relationship ('I receive considerable emotional support from ____,' 'I feel close to ____,' 'I feel that I can really trust ____,' etc.). The 15

items that make up the Passion subscale assess 'the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships' ('I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as ___ does', 'There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with ___', 'My relationship with ___ is very romantic') (Sternberg, 1997, p. 315). The Decision/Commitment subscale (15 items) assesses feelings of stability and commitment to maintaining the love ('I will always feel a strong responsibility for ___', 'I expect my love for ___ to last for the rest of my life', 'I can't imagine ending my relationship with ___'). The questions were measures on a nine-point scale, with one indicating 'strongly disagree' and nine 'strongly agree'. In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Albanian immigrants were for Intimacy $\alpha=0.93$, for Passion $\alpha=0.90$ and for Commitment $\alpha=0.93$. For Greeks, coefficients were $\alpha=0.96$, $\alpha=0.90$ and $\alpha=0.95$, respectively.

The *Marriage Quiz* (Larson, 1988), adapted by Pavlopoulos (2006), measures myths about marriage and family relations (e.g. in most marriages, having a child improves marital satisfaction for both spouses). Participants responded to 17 close-ended statements about marriage that were answered as either true or false. To obtain a total score, the 17 statements were counted. The higher the score, the greater is the belief in marital myths. Reliability in the current sample was $\alpha=0.60$ for Greeks and $\alpha=0.81$ for Albanians.

Findings

Family values, marriage myths and perception of love by country

We used multivariate analyses of variance to explore differences between groups and gender (2X2) on a measure of family values and perceptions of love. According to the findings, Albanian immigrants seemed to show a higher level of hierarchical roles of mother and father than Greeks $F(1,328)=27.9$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=8\%$. Greeks showed a higher level of relationships within the family and with kin compared to Albanian immigrants $F(1,328)=6.64$, $p=0.01$, $\eta^2=2\%$. Regarding perceptions of love, Albanian immigrants indicated lower levels of intimacy $F(1,295)=17.93$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=5.8\%$ and passion $F(1,295)=15.46$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=5\%$ than Greeks. A univariate analysis on a measure of marriage myths indicated no differences between groups. Females showed higher level of relationships within the family and with kin $F(1,328)=12.5$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=4\%$ and passion $F(1,295)=5.22$, $p<0.05$, $\eta^2=1.8\%$ than males did (Table I).

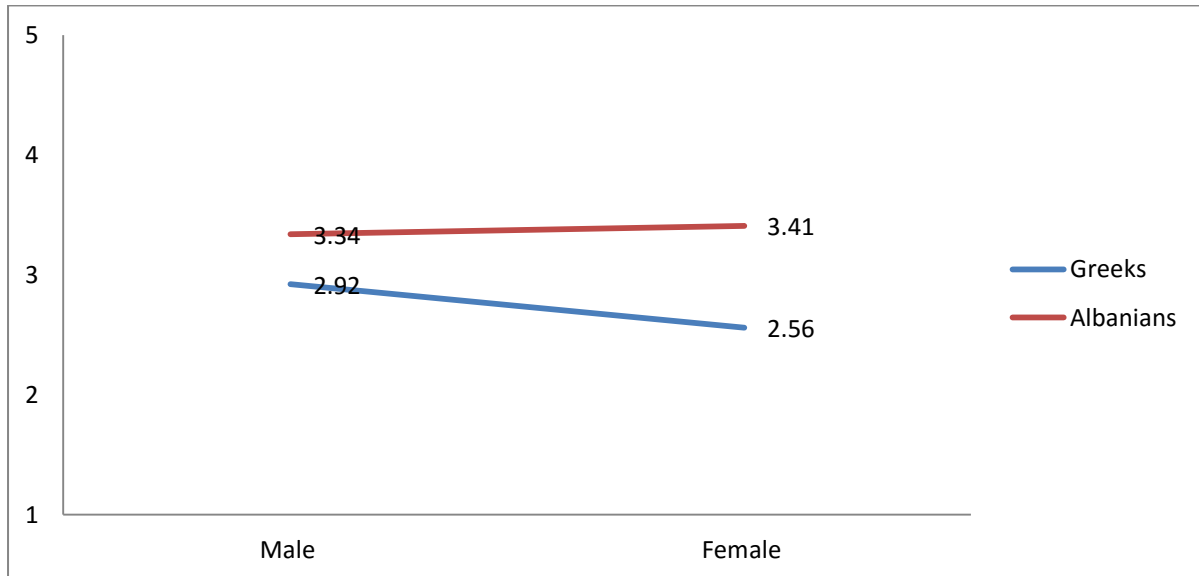
Table I. Means of family values, marriage myths and perception of love as a function of ethnicity and gender

	Group				Gender			
	Greeks		Albanians		Male		Female	
	M	M	F	η^2	M	M	F	η^2
<i>Family values</i>								
1. Hierarchical roles	2.65	3.39	27.9***	0.08	3.13	2.94	2.14	0.002
2. Family relationships	4.52	4.34	6.64**	0.02	4.33	4.55	12.5***	0.04
<i>Marriage Myths</i>								
1. Marriage Myths-total	14.89	14.68	0.70	0.002	14.76	14.80	0.003	000
<i>Love</i>								
1. Intimacy	7.36	6.67	17.93***	0.058	6.94	7.09	0.75	0.003
2. Passion	6.67	5.85	15.46***	0.05	6.02	6.49	5.22*	0.018
3. Commitment	7.07	6.76	2.58	0.009	6.74	7.10	3.61	0.012

Note: * $p<0,05$ ** $p<0,01$ *** $p<0,001$

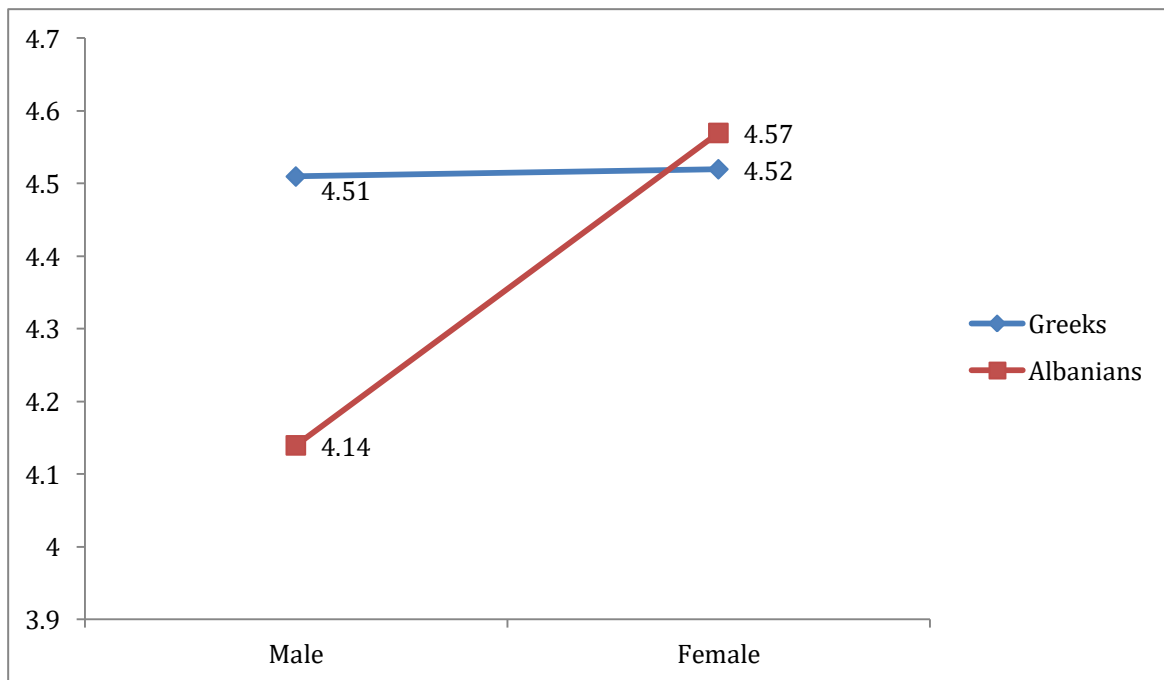
The interaction of ethnicity (Greeks and Albanian immigrants) and gender indicated that Greek men reported higher levels of hierarchical roles of mother and father than Greek women, while there were no differences between male and female immigrants $F(1, 328)=3.91, p<0.05, \eta^2 =1.2\%$ (Figure I).

Figure I. Interaction of ethnicity and gender in hierarchical roles of father and mother

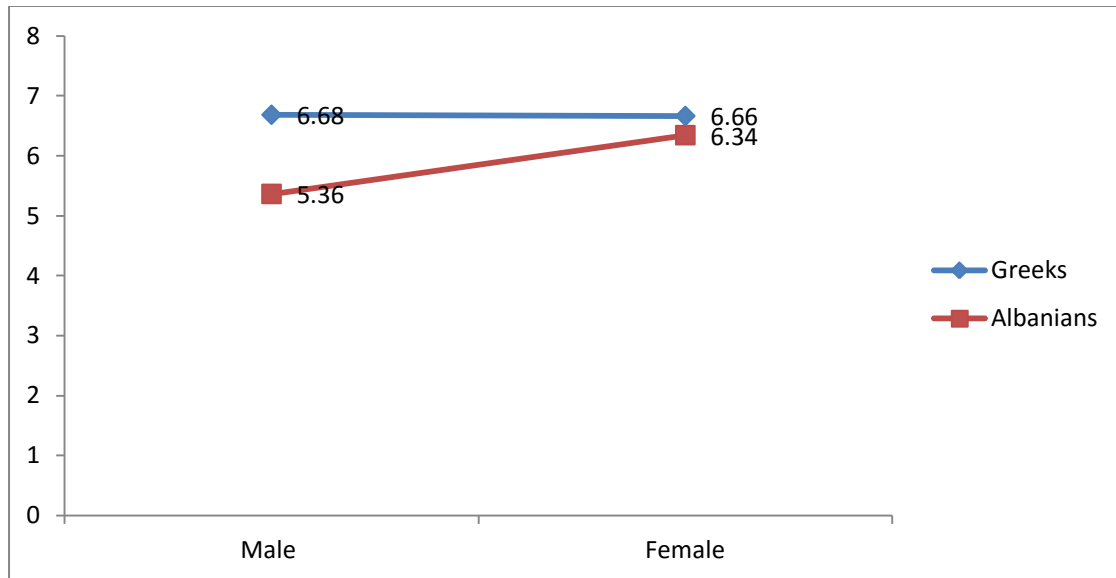


A significant interaction of ethnicity and gender $F(1, 328)=11.12, p<0.001, \eta^2 =3.3\%$ indicated that Albanian men indicated a lower level of relationships within the family and with kin compared to Albanian women and Greek males and females (Figure II).

Figure II. Interaction of ethnicity and gender in relationships within the family and with kin



A significant interaction of ethnicity and gender $F(1, 292)=5.86, p<0.05, \eta^2 =2\%$ indicated that the passion level of Albanian men is lower than that of Albanian women. There were no significant differences between Albanian women, Greek women and Greek men in terms of passion levels (Figure III).

Figure III. Interaction of ethnicity and gender in passion**Family values, marriage myths, perception of love by family status**

A univariate analysis of the measure of family values showed that married individuals with children indicated a higher level of hierarchical roles within the family than their unmarried counterparts and married individuals without children $F(2,325)=20.46$, $p<0.001$. There were no differences regarding marriage myths. Unmarried people showed the highest level of intimacy $F(2,295)=5.50$, $p<0.01$, commitment $F(2,295)=5.02$, $p<0.01$ while married people with children scored lowest. Unmarried people and married individuals without children showed the highest level of passion while those who were married and with children scored lowest $F(2,295)=12.84$, $p<0.001$ (Table II).

Table II. Means of family values, marriage myths and perception of love as a function of family status

	Group			<i>F</i>
	Unmarried	Married without children	Married with children	
	M	M	M	
<i>Family values</i>				
1. Hierarchical roles	2.57b	2.46b	3.23a	20.46***
2. Family relationships	4.51	4.50	4.49	0.05
<i>Marriage Myths</i>				
1. Marriage Myths-total	14.86	14.74	14.82	0.009
<i>Love</i>				
1. Intimacy	7.44a	7.38ab	6.93b	5.5**
2. Passion	6.93a	6.95a	6.02b	12.84***
3. Commitment	7.37a	7.06ab	6.59b	5.02**

Note: ** $p<0,01$. *** $p<0,001$.

Prediction of love by family values, family myths and ethnicity

Regression analysis was used in order to test the predicted patterns of love by family status, family values and myths and ethnicity. Step 1 of the model included gender, with family status entered at Step 2. The hierarchical roles of family was entered at Step 3, relationships within the family at Step 4, marriage myths at step 5 and ethnicity at Step 6.

Positive relationships within the family were significantly related to intimacy $\beta=0.21$, $t=3.45$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=5.5\%$. Being an immigrant from Albania is related to a lower level of intimacy $\beta=-0.17$, $t=-2.61$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=2\%$. Being unmarried $\beta=0.23$, $t=3.68$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=6.5\%$, positive family relationships $\beta=0.16$, $t=2.75$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=3.6\%$ and marriage myths $\beta=0.13$, $t=2.22$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=1.7\%$ are positively related to passion. Only positive family relationships contribute to the prediction of commitment $\beta=0.13$, $t=2.09$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=2.1\%$.

Table III. Hierarchical Regression for the Prediction of love by family values, myths and ethnicity

Prediction variables	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
	B	t	Total R ²
1. Gender	-0.006	0.05	0.09
2. Family status (1=married with children, 2=married without children, 3=unmarried)	0.10	0.23***	0.02
3. Hierarchical roles of family	-0.44	0.002	0.12
4. Relationship within the family	0.21**	0.16**	0.13*
5. Marriage myths	0.07	0.13*	0.05
6. Ethnicity (1=Greeks, 2=Albanians)	-0.17**	-0.06	-0.09
Total R ²	0.12	0.13	0.057

Note. * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$

Acculturation of Albanian immigrants by gender

We compared the means of Heritage and Mainstream subscales of acculturation for Albanian immigrants according to gender and found the same means for males and females regarding heritage and mainstream dimensions of acculturation (Table IV). A paired sample t-test indicated that the mean of heritage dimension of acculturation was higher than the mean of mainstream dimension $t(94)=4.23$, $p<0.001$.

Table IV. Means of heritage and mainstream dimensions of acculturation of immigrants by gender

Acculturation	Male	Female	Total	F
	M	M	M	
Heritage dimension	3.57	3.74	3.69	0.78
Mainstream dimension	3.13	3.14	3.13	0.006

Prediction of love by family values, family myths and acculturation of immigrants

Regression analysis was used in order to test the predicted patterns of love by family status, family values and myths and acculturation of immigrants. Step 1 of the model included gender, with family status entered at Step 2. The hierarchical roles of family entered at Step 3, relationships within the family at Step 4, marriage myths at step 5, and acculturation at Step 6.

Positive relationships within the family $\beta=0.47$, $t=3.52$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=10\%$ and marriage myths $\beta=0.22$, $t=1.98$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=3\%$ were significantly related to intimacy. High heritage dimension is related to a lower level of intimacy $\beta=-0.39$, $t=-3.56$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=12\%$. Only family relations within the family contributed to the prediction of passion, $\beta=0.27$, $t=1.94$, $p=0.05$, $R^2=4\%$ and commitment $\beta=0.43$, $t=2.93$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=8\%$.

Table V. Hierarchical Regression for the prediction of love by family values, myths and acculturation of immigrants

Prediction variable	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
	β	t	Total R ²
1. Gender	-0.11	0.16	-0.03
2. Family status (1=married with children, 2=married without children, 3=unmarried)	0.08	0.15	0.05
3. Hierarchical roles of family	-0.05	0.07	-0.009
4. Relationship within the family	0.47**	0.27*	0.43**
5. Marriage myths	0.22*	0.21	0.01
6. Acculturation			
6a. Heritage orientation	-0.39**	-0.22	-0.16
6b. Mainstream orientation	-0.21	-0.08	-0.15
Total R ²	0.30	0.26	0.16

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

The present study examined the perception of family values, marriage myths and love in two groups: native Greeks and Albanian immigrants in Greece. The design allowed us to examine ethnicity and gender effects as well as the interaction of these variables with family values, marriage myths and love. To the best of our knowledge, we have investigated the relation between acculturation of immigrants, family values, myths and love dimensions. Finally, we studied the presence of children and its impact on family values and love.

Family values, marriage myths, love and ethnicity

Consistent with previous research and our predictions, the results indicated that Albanian immigrants have values that differ from those of mainstream Greeks. The findings suggest their importance for conceptualizing the father as head of the family and mother's tasks as including child-rearing, cooking, cleaning the house and serving. However, similar to Greeks, Albanian immigrants perceive family relationships, the relations between parents and children as much more important than the traditional roles of father and mother. The second common feature of Greek and Albanian families is the high level of beliefs in marriage myths, such as that having children usually increases marital satisfaction for both parents, that marriage benefits men much more than it does women, that men tend to be less involved in their marriages than women, etc.

The degree of closeness between family members in a Greek family is greater than that found in Albanian families. Furthermore, Albanian men, as compared to Albanian women and Greeks, disagree with close relationships within family and kin. These findings suggest that Albanian men seem to have a stronger traditional orientation than Albanian women and Greeks in terms of family relationships, showing the importance of interdependence, conformity and children's readiness to make sacrifices for the welfare of family as Santisteban & Mitrani (2002) indicated.

Regarding their perception of love, Albanian immigrants indicated a lower level of intimacy than Greeks. It seems that immigrants tend to be more restrained in expressing their feelings of intimacy and love. Especially, Albanian men, compared to Albanian women, disagree with the expression of high levels of passion. They view physical and sexual attraction and emotional attachment as less important than women in determining love relationships. These findings can be interpreted as reflecting the cultural traditions of masculinity and emotional control in Albanian culture. These traditional values of masculinity are maintained by beliefs that it is feminine and weak for men to be passion oriented. A 'real man' ought to be able to control himself properly for love. By contrast,

revealing feelings of intense longing and attraction to a partner is often viewed as effeminate or 'foolish'.

In spite of this suggestion, cultural differences in intimacy and passion can be linked not only to masculinity, but also to personal goals and relations to one another. One possibility is that intimacy is more important for these outcomes in individualistic than in collectivistic cultures. In individualistic settings, where romantic relationships may be a primary vehicle for satisfying intimacy personal needs, low intimacy in these relationships may have a particularly negative impact on self and interpersonal relations (Dion & Dion, 1993). In collectivistic settings, however, romantic relationships may serve more traditional values, such as strengthening the family rather than satisfying one's own personal goals, so passion and intimacy may simply not have the same negative consequences in interpersonal relations. Indeed, several studies suggest that people in individualistic cultures place greater emphasis on self-disclosure for enhancing intimacy than do people in collectivistic cultures (Adams et al., 2004).

The presence of children, family values, marriage myths, love

Our results indicated that the presence of children has a significant impact on family values and love perception. Married people with children value more highly the hierarchical roles of father and mother compared to unmarried individuals and married couples without children. Furthermore, married people with children showed a lower level of intimacy, passion and commitment than their married counterparts without children and unmarried persons. According to an evolutionary perspective on the impact of children, fading amorousness may reflect the redirection of attention towards children or may be offset by a rise in satisfaction derived from children (Twenge et al., 2003; Wendorf et al., 2011). However, 'married couples are not less happy in general than childless ones, even if they are less happy with each other' (Wendorf et al., 2011). Indeed, perhaps the transition to parenthood is increasingly associated with a decline in marital quality due to the fact that parents and especially mothers expect to devote more time and emotional energy to the children, even as their expectations for emotional satisfaction in marriage have increased. With children, the couples may lose spousal time, which permits them to deepen and sustain an emotionally intimate relationship (Dew & Wilcox, 2011).

The link between acculturation of immigrants, family values, myths and love dimensions

Psychologists recognize that two dimensions of acculturation – heritage culture identification and involvement in the host culture – make different contributions to immigrants' lives (Ward et al., 2001). Taking into account the two dimensions of acculturation, we found no relationship between this mainstream dimension of acculturation and love dimensions. In contrary, high involvement in one's heritage culture is associated with a lower level of intimacy. In other words, traditional Albanians view specific qualities of a romantic partner such as intimacy and affection as more appealing. A better way to understand this difference may rely on the view of romantic relationships in respective traditional values that endorse an affective love style in the sense that people feel they control their emotions and affections towards a romantic partner (Dion & Dion, 1996).

Previous research indicates that immigrants' emotional patterns change in response to their engagement in a (new) cultural context (De Leersnyder et al., 2011). According to Tsai, Knutson and Fung (2006) high arousal emotions, such as intimacy, excitement, etc., may be experienced positively in a culture in which personal goals are valued but more negatively in a culture in which social harmony is more important. Changes in emotional patterns of immigrants due to exposure and contact with a second culture can lead to emotional acculturation (De Leersnyder et al., 2011). In this view, the emotional experience of low intimacy amongst immigrants may be the function of their orientation to the heritage collectivistic culture. Overall, it appears that the differences in

expressing emotion may exist as a collectivistic and individualistic difference instead of just an ethnic difference.

The data obtained suggest not only that Albanian immigrants strongly accept marriage myths, but also that there seems to be an important association of myths with intimacy as feelings of warmth, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in a loving relationship. Myths as collective beliefs are of primary importance through which cultures codify expectations and norms of marriage. Myths such as 'having children usually improves marital happiness', 'children do better in step families than in single-parent homes' reflect a traditional Albanian marriage, which may be satisfied to the extent that it fulfils familiar duties of fertility, the production of male offspring who will continue the family line and provide care and security for the couple in their old age (Doja, 2005). It seems that this marriage view serves fewer personal hedonistic goals of husbands and wives and represents obligations and duties as more important than personal preferences. In many collectivistic cultures, love is conceptualized as a state following marriage rather than one that precedes it, and adolescents and adults respect parents' desires regarding their choice of partner (Goodwin & Cramer, 2000). Studies indicated that the influence of heritage culture extends to second generation immigrants in their preferences of traditional values of marriage (Lalonde et al., 2004).

Lastly, Greeks and Albanian immigrants see eros, affection and commitments as components of marriage to the extent that they integrate good relationships within the family and with kin (parents should teach children proper behaviour, should honour and protect the family's reputation, problems should be resolved within the family, should maintain good relations with relatives, children should take care of elderly parents). The results suggest that Greeks and Albanian immigrants have similar notions regarding romantic love in marriage, which include good relationships between parents and children. The two groups share a focus on personal feelings and family cohesion, harmony and cooperation which is greater in collectivistic cultures (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Previous research found the same level of family cohesion among Greek and Albanian families. Although extensive individualization has taken place in Greek society, there is a relatively strong attachment to traditional orientations and values (Pouliasi & Verkuyten, 2011).

In conclusion, the results reported here illustrate similarities and differences regarding the perception of love and family values and marriage myths by Greeks and Albanian immigrants. The results indicate that traditional values such as father as protector, woman as subordinate, restriction of emotions of intimacy continue to be more prevalent among immigrants than among Greeks. With respect to acculturation, less acculturated immigrants seemed to associate marriage myths with intimacy, conceptualizing love as a state that includes not the couple's hedonistic goals but family obligations and duties. The present study indicates a common perception of love among Greeks and Albanian immigrants as relationship oriented. The promotion of relatedness and interdependence on children seems to be a positive factor for intimacy, passion and commitment among husband and wife.

The strengths of this study need to be considered in the context of its limitations. One limitation concerns factors included in the study. For example, individualism/collectivism and interdependence/dependence can help better interpret cultural differences regarding the concept of family and love. Secondly, there is still a need for studies that examine how variations in perceptions of family values and love alter over the life course or how long-term relationships are related to intimacy, passion and commitment.

The in-depth investigation of all these factors examined in the present study is useful given that it facilitates the understanding of the ways that individuals and groups of natives and immigrants interpret reality and interact in social settings. In addition, it helps us understand how they behave as parents and explains how all these factors can influence children's behaviour in school environments, the potential manifestation of problems and its implications for designing social pedagogical interventions.

As the primary cultural agent of socialization, family plays an essential role in the transmission of values to its members (Antoniou et al., 2013). Children learn from early on to adapt to family values and to become an obedient member of their family (Gernhardt et al., 2013). In this study, immigrant families built different cultural contexts in which family values and love relationships are combined with acculturation. Especially, low acculturated immigrant families are oriented towards traditional values of psychological interdependence, while children attending school experience values encouraging the psychological aspect of autonomy. It is important for educators to build an integrative model that can combine an orientation towards psychological autonomy and integrate cultural values of different cultural immigrant groups.

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