



# Social Dominance Orientation and Perceived Discrimination in Gender Context



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## Abstract

Current study aimed to understand how social dominance orientation (SDO) and perceived discrimination (PD) is related for different genders. It is expected that the association between SDO and PD would be different for women and men because men are dominating and women are dominated group in society. For that purpose, three hundred eighty-nine university students completed demographic information form, Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) Scale, and Perceived Personal and Group Discrimination Items. Results showed that increased PD is associated with decreased SDO for women whereas, increased PD is associated with increased SDO for men. Results are discussed from SDO and system justification (SJ) perspective.

## Introduction

Even though minority groups, such as women, are harmed by existing system, they have tendency to justify it. However, this SJ is based on complementary nature of the existing system (Kay & Jost, 2003). When majority (i.e. men) and minority (i.e. women) groups perceive that the system benefits them as well as it harms them, they evaluate the system as fair and legitimate (Jost & Kay, 2005). SDO, on the other hand, can be defined as the orientation of preferring hierarchy among social groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) so it is related with endorsement of existing group system (Overbeck, Jost, Mosso, & Flizik, 2004). Its Group Based Dominance (GBD) sub factor measures favoritism toward dominance of one group onto others and Opposition to Equality (OEQ) sub factor refers to opposing the equality of groups. Current study, on the other hand, aimed to understand the relationship between negative and non-complementary nature (i.e. discrimination) of the system and SJ tendencies (measured by SDO) of both genders.

Researchers have examined mainly discrimination against women (Glick & Fiske, 1996) but not only women but also men may face discrimination (Glick & Fiske, 1999). It also has adverse consequences such as low self-esteem (Bourguignon, Seron, Yzerbyt, & Herman, 2006) and health problems (Pascoe & Richman, 2009); therefore, it is essential to understand the correlates of discrimination. When discrimination is co-anchored with non-discriminatory/protective treatments, they could make people to justify the system (Jost & Kay, 2005), so it is also related with SJ and might be with SDO.

The study aimed to find correlates of discrimination and to reveal the relationship between non-complementary nature of existing system (i.e. discrimination) and SJ tendencies (i.e. SDO) of majority and minority group members. Regarding the hypotheses, SDO and PD are expected to negatively correlate for women and positively for men.

## Methods

**Participants.** Three hundred eighty-nine university students (218 Women and 171 Men) participated in the study. Mean age of participants was 22.11 (SD = 2.48).

**Measures.** Participants completed Demographic Information Form, Social Dominance Orientation Scale including two subscales as GBD & OEQ, and Perceived Discrimination (PD) as Perceived Personal Discrimination (PPD) and Perceived Group Discrimination (PGD).

**Procedure.** The scale packet was completed via an online web site, Qualtrics. Participants were recruited for an exchange of course credit and completed the scale packet in their free times. After completion of scales, participants were debriefed and thanked for their efforts.

## Results

### Gender Differences

Independent Samples T-Test showed that women and men significantly differed on subscales of SDO. GBD scores were higher for men ( $M = 2.49, SD = .72$ ) compared to women ( $M = 2.26, SD = .68$ );  $t(387) = 3.21, p < .01$ . Similarly, OEQ scores were higher for men ( $M = 2.18, SD = .64$ ) than for women ( $M = 1.97, SD = .63$ );  $t(387) = 3.24, p < .01$ . On the other hand, PPD scores were higher for women ( $M = 3.39, SD = .94$ ) than for men ( $M = 1.87, SD = .77$ );  $t(387) = 17.22, p < .001$ . Also, PGD scores were higher for women ( $M = 3.96, SD = .76$ ) compared to men ( $M = 1.91, SD = .75$ );  $t(387) = 26.68, p < .001$ .

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analyses revealed expected results. The relationship between GBD and both PGD ( $r = -.22, p < .01$ ) and PPD ( $r = -.22, p < .01$ ) are negatively correlated for women but these relationships are positively correlated for men (for PGD;  $r = .22, p < .01$  and for PPD;  $r = .23, p < .01$ ). On the other hand, PPD ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ) and PGD ( $r = -.21, p < .01$ ) with OEQ are negatively correlated for women but OEQ only positively correlated with PGD of men ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ) but no correlation was found with PPD of men.

Table 1. Gender Differences on Variables

Variables	Women		Men		t	df
	M	SD	M	SD		
GBD	2.26	.68	2.49	.72	3.21**	387
OEQ	1.97	.63	2.18	.64	3.24**	387
PPD	3.39	.94	1.87	.77	17.22***	387
PGD	3.96	.76	1.91	.75	26.68***	387

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

Table 1. Intercorrelations among Variables Based on Gender

Variables	GBD	OEQ	PPD	PGD
GBD	1	.63***	-.22**	-.22**
OEQ	.56***	1	-.20**	-.21**
PPD	.23**	.11	1	.57***
PGD	.22**	.17*	.69***	1

**Note:** Correlations regarding women are above diagonal and correlations regarding men are below diagonal. GBD = Group Based Dominance; OEQ = Opposition to Equality; PPD = Perceived Personal Discrimination; PGD = Perceived Group Discrimination  
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## Discussion

The gender differences on SDO subscales and PD items are in accordance with the literature. Women were found to report higher PD (group and personal) than men (Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997) and men to report higher SDO scores (Pratto et al, 1994).

Decreased PD in times of increased SDO in women does not contradict with women's disadvantaged position in society because when the system only harms (non-complementary) but not not protects them (complementary) and when they receive more discrimination toward themselves, they should be less likely to endorse existing system of society. On the contrary, when this discrimination is low, they could support the existing system since it will benefit them.

Increased SDO in times of increased PD for men also in concert with men's advantaged position. When men perceive discrimination against themselves or their group, they should endorse their existing advantaged position in society to possibly overcome discriminatory approaches. Having more SDO is a one way to support their advantaged position in the society.

## Conclusions

This study showed that minority groups could stop endorsing the existing status-quo if they perceive that they are only discriminated but not discriminated and protected (Glick & Fiske, 1996). When men perceive that they are discriminated, they continue to support the existing status-quo which dictates men superiority. These results clearly show that both minority and majority members are aware of the implications of existing system for themselves as individuals and as groups. Because their responses to perceived discrimination differ as a result of their status positions in society.

Furthermore, results showed that minority groups do not necessarily obey existing status-quo especially when they are not protected and discriminated but only discriminated and might want to challenge it when they perceive that they and their group are unequally treated.

## Contact

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