

How ethnic identity  
mediates  
acculturation stress  
depending



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With these complex trends of migration \* patterns, Van Hear (2010) viewed migration as a process which was an integral part \* of broader social transformations, but which also had its own internal dynamics with \* other factors related to the migrating process, shaping social transformation in their \* own way.

Migration was also linked in complex ways to class, gender, generation, \* ethnicity and other social factors, which were embodied in positions in home and host \* communities, and in work and domestic relationships, all of which might be \* transformed in the course of the migratory process (Van Hear, 2010). To understand this complex process of migration, especially under changing circumstances of one culture to another, it might be useful to build conceptual tools for understanding these transitory processes in migration studies and in social science more widely (Van hear, 2010).

They also include mediating agents and transitions that need also to be accounted for, as well as intersections among class, gender, generation, ethnicity and other social ruptures as well as the main driving forces of migration (Van Hear, 2010). Of course there were other important concepts such as relations between time and space, between dynamics or processes and outcomes, and between structure and agency that needed to get attention (Van Hear, 2010). However, it is impossible to discuss all different theoretical concepts involved in different types of migration process in the current limited study.

Rather, this study tried to focus on psychological impacts such as ethnic identity and self-esteem on migration through acculturation processes

particularly on family- related migration because different patterns of migration produced different communities and resulted in producing different migrant identities including varying levels of psychological distress (Jones, 2008). Further, few empirical studies have focused on migrant adults populations. Most migrants identification related literatures tended to relate more for adolescents or young children because identity formation might be particularly challenging in this cohort, especially when the values and beliefs of their natal culture differed significantly from those of the host society (Sadowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995; as cited in Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002). Therefore, this study focused on ethnic identity and self-identification issues of adult migrants' themselves within a family structure according to different theoretical models relevant to adaptation of new cultures, because family was the basic instrument in the society (Nesdale, Rooney, & Smith, 1997). In fact, most cultural acquisition theories developed and evolved in 1990s when international migration became a key issue in international politics at the beginning of 1990s. As Castle (2002) argued that migration, development and international relations were closely connected as migration was a major factor of transformation for both sending and receiving countries for different types of migrants (Castle, 2002). With this perspective, this study generally focused on those migration culture acquisition theories developed in 1990 rather than looking at current perspectives in the most recent literatures, which actually have evolved from these original theories in 1990s (Castle, 2002).

As the findings from these research studies has had been mixed or sometimes contradictory, it was important to understand the exact nature of

the relationship between migrant ethnic identification and the acculturation process both need to be specified and assessed properly with coherent measurements and theoretical assumptions (Nesdale et al. , 1997).

Important theoretical concepts: ethnic identity, acculturation, biculturalism, and marginalisation. According to Phinney (1990; as cited in Farver, Narang & Bhadha. , 2002), ethnic identity and acculturation were related but separate constructs.

Ethnic identity involves an individual's self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to an ethnic group, attitudes toward ethnic group of membership, and degree of ethnic group involvement (Farver et al. , 2002).

The term acculturation was defined in anthropology as those phenomena, which resulted when groups of individuals having different cultures came into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original pattern of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936; as cited in Birman, 1994).

Although acculturation was a neutral term in this context (that is, change might take place in either or both groups), in practice, acculturation tended to induce more changes in one of the groups than in the other (Berry, 1990a; as cited in Berry, 1997) Berry (1997) argued that in all plural societies, cultural groups and their individual members, in both dominant and non-dominant situations, must deal with the issue of how to acculturate.

According to Berry (1997), four acculturation strategies were introduced: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with

other new cultures, the assimilation strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the separation is defined (Berry, 1997).

When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, integration is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network (Berry, 1997). Last, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then marginalization is defined (Berry, 1997).

However, this acculturation categories model has been criticized methodologically (Rudmin, 2003, 2009; as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010) because all four of Berry's categories were represented in the same way by creating the two by two matrix of acculturation categories between high and low. However, the cut off point between high and low was arbitrary and would differ across samples, making comparisons across studies difficult, resulting in the fact that all four categories existed and were equally valid (Rudmin, 2003; as cited in Schwartz et al. 2010) and suggesting that not all of Berry's categories might exist in a given sample or population, and that some categories might have multiple subtypes (Schwartz et al. , 2010). In particular, Berry (1997) viewed the term " biculturism" as referring to acculturation that involved the individual simultaneously in the two cultures that were in contact in integrative ways, which appeared to be a consistent

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predictor of more positive outcomes than the three alternatives of assimilation, separation, or marginalization.

Berry and his colleagues (Sam & Berry, 1995) assessed the acculturation strategies of various immigrant groups in North America and the results showed that bicultural individuals experienced less acculturative stress, anxiety and fewer psychological problems significantly, while marginalized individuals suffered the most psychological distress, including problems with self-identification and cultural alienation, which adversely affected their self-esteem (Farver et al. , 2002).

However, Shiraev and Levy (2007) explained acculturative stress as a negative feeling that a marginalized person might experience as a distressing psychological reaction to any unfamiliar cultural environment based on the assumption that person and groups undergoing any social and cultural change should experience a certain amount of psychological distress. Generally, many early definitions of acculturation focused on exposure to two cultures simultaneously as a culture shock, which was a reactive state of specific pathology or deficit, rather than taking advantage of being bicultural (Berry & Annis, 1974; Shiraev et al. 2007). The validity of marginalization as an approach to acculturation by Berry (1997) was also questioned (Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004; as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010). Schawartz et al. argued that the likelihood that a person would develop a cultural sense of self without drawing on either the heritage or receiving cultural contexts would be less likely to. The marginalization approach might be true only for the small segment of migrants who rejected both their heritage and receiving cultures (Berry, 2006b).

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Indeed, studies using empirically based clustering methods have found small or nonexistent marginalization groups and scales that attempted to measure marginalization typically had poor reliability and validity compared with scales for the other categories (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Unger et al. , 2002; as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010). As described earlier, the impact of migrant ethnic identity on psychological distress had comparatively diverse points of views if they were either negative or positive reactions, depending on different theoretical frames. In another words, acculturation phenomena resulted from contact between two or more cultures and research on acculturation had to be comparative in order to understand variations in psychological outcomes that were the result of cultural variations in the two groups in contact (Berry, 1997).

In particular, this framework viewed the integration model of acculturation strategies the most desirable among other strategies, considering it the same as the biculturalism model (Berry, 1997). For example, Berry and his colleagues (Berry, 1980; Berry, J. W. , Kim, U. , Power, S. , Young, M, & Bujaki, M. , 1989; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Sam & Berry, 1995 as cited in Farver et al. 2002) assessed the acculturation strategies of various immigrant groups in North America and the result showed that integration was the most psychologically adaptive attitude, arguing that integrated or bicultural individuals experienced less acculturative stress and anxiety and manifested fewer psychological problems than those who were marginalized, separated, or assimilated, whereas marginalized individuals suffered the most psychological distress, including problems with self-identification and cultural alienation, which also affected their self-esteem (Farver et al. 2002).

However, Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1997) found that American identity was associated with self-esteem only for non-Hispanic Whites, but not for other ethnic groups. These mixed results as explained above raised two issues in the acculturation literatures. First of all, cultural practices might offer only a substitute for cultural adaptations, as Portes and Rumbaut (2001 as cited in Schwartz et al. 2010) mentioned that many Asian American young adults in their sample were not proficient in their native languages, even though they still perceived their identification with their parents' countries of origin and maintained many of their values (Schwarz et al. , 2010). Secondly, most researchers on biculturalism did not sufficiently define an accurate operational definition of biculturalism so that interpretation of those research results were problematic (Birman, 1994).

Indeed, one finding in the United States, was that self-identification as American was markedly higher in non-Hispanic Whites than in ethnic minority groups (e. g. , Devos & Banaji, 2005; as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010) and many White Americans did not perceived themselves as members of an ethnic group (Schildkraut, 2007; as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010). In brief, different operational definition problems of acculturation arose from different theoretical models of acculturation regarding to their assumptions (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).

LaFromboise et al. (1993) assumed acculturation as one of substitutes among the biculturalism models. Biculturalism as defined in this theory was viewed as the alternation model, which implied an individual in two culture contacts could be competent in both cultures without losing one of the cultures' competencies in distinct cultural contexts as alternation model, <https://assignbuster.com/how-ethnic-identity-mediates-acculturation-stress-dependig/>

whereas, fusion model meant a blended cultural identity, consisting of a synthesis of aspects of both cultures (LaFromboise et al. 1993). However, Berry's (1997) integrating approach of biculturalism differed from the bicultural model (LaFromboise et al. , 1993; as cited in Birman, 1994) and it emphasized more on the relationship between the two cultural groups based on its implicit assumption that one of two cultures were higher than the other within a single social structure (LaFromboise et al. , 1993).

Benet-Martinez and colleagues found that “blended” bicultural individuals tended to report higher self-esteem and lower psychological distress than a marginal population (Chen et al. , 2008 as cited in Schwartz et al. , 2010) because the consistent availability of both cultural flows within the person's everyday life increased the ease of activating the correct cultural schema in accordance with their environmental situations (Schwartz et al. , 2010).

In contrast, Tadmor, Tetlock, and Peng (2009) argued that the bicultural model considered those marginal individuals in positive ways, when there was little interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with others, suggesting positive aspects of being a marginal person might be (1) sharing his or her condition with others of the same original culture; (2) engaging in institutional practices that were shared by other marginal people; (3) experiencing no major frustration from social expectations; and (4) still perceiving himself or herself to be a member of a group (LaFromboise et al. 1993). According to Sam and Berry (2006), many studies of how migrants coped with intercultural contacts had discrepancies in the ways in which they were operationalized and measured. As no

standardized or widely accepted acculturation measures existed, it was <https://assignbuster.com/how-ethnic-identity-mediates-acculturation-stress-depending/>

necessary to design a clear and explicit formulation of acculturation instrument in order to assess acculturation adequately (Sam et al. , 2006).

Further Sam and Berry (2006) pointed out that most empirical studies widely used a self-report type of questionnaires that had been recognized limitations such as social desirability, emphasizing obtaining divergent validation by source of information other than the respondents' reports. Therefore, it is vital to understand each theory within its specific assumptions and not to generalize across all situations regardless of their similar findings (LaFromboise et al. , 1993).

As this study discovered migrants' acculturation processes so far within specific theoretical frameworks, literature findings in different research were mixed as to whether individuals could be highly acculturated and at the same time be strongly identified with their ethnic group (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha. , 2002). These confusing problems initially evolved because of the context in which migration arrangements and their acculturation processes were fundamentally transformed and increasingly uncertain due to globalization (Landolt & Da, 2005).

Shiraev & Levy (2007) suggested a new approach to cross-cultural psychology in the twenty-first century, which was linked to the concept of globalization. Globalization was defined as a proliferation of cross-border flow and transnational networks due to new technologies of communication and transport that allowed frequent and multi-directional streams of people, ideas and cultural symbols (Castle, 2010). Castle also argued that globalization leads to major changes in the character of international

migration. In other words, the context for migrant incorporation has already changed radically and will continue to do so.

The rise of multiculturalism itself rather than assimilation or biculturism is one sign of this, but is not the end of the story: new forms of identity and belonging go beyond multiculturalism (Castle, 2010). Even though there is limited empirical evidence for clear statements for globalization, there probably are highly cosmopolitan groups who feel at home everywhere such as global business and professional elites might correspond with this image. But most members of transnational communities fall between these extremes, and probably have contradictory and fluctuating identities (Castle, 2002). Conclusions

This study explored that a special case of cultural psychology was the study of how individuals respond to situations where they were in transition between their original culture and another that differed from it in some respects in terms of acculturation, especially within a specific theoretical frame that could apply to the specific situation (Adler & Gielen, 1994). There was no single theory widely accepted by all social scientists to agree with the emergence and perpetuation of international migration patterns in the world under globalization (Van Hear, 2010), suggesting that the contemporary migrating context in which such migrating arrangements were realized fundamentally kept transforming so that it became increasingly uncertain (Landolt and Da, 2005) Although the topic of cultural contact and individual change has attracted considerable attention in contemporary cross-cultural psychology, the field has been characterized by a lack of theoretical coherence, definitional problems with key constructs, and single sample

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studies that limit the external validity of empirical cross-cultural research (Ward and Kenney, 1994). As acculturation is a process which takes place over time, and which results in changes both in the culture and in the individual culture changes, it would be ideal to compare two sets of data are compared over time using the same people. However, in practice, it is impossible in most acculturation research settings (Sam et al. , 2006). Instead, a common alternative to longitudinal research is cross-sectional research in which a time-related variable, such as length of residence or generational status can be used for the generalizability of acculturation theories (Sam et al. , 2006). In general, researchers of migrating studies need to be aware that it is the selective nature of the sample that happens across all migrating research.