ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS: WHAT ARE WE REALLY MEASURING?

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Acculturation: Issues in Conceptualisation and Measurement

- Two dimensions or four categories?
- Which two dimensions?
  - Cultural maintenance and intercultural contact
  - Cultural maintenance and cultural adoption
- Behaviours or cognitions?
- Which cognitions: Identity or attitudes?
THE STUDY
RESEARCH SAMPLE

- 317 first generation migrants in NZ
- 55.7% female
- Age: 15-86 years (M = 38.8, SD = 12.0)
- LoR: 1-67 years (M = 8.16, SD = 9.44)
- Indians (28%), Pakistanis (14%), Chinese (10%), Filipino (10%)
- Religion: 28% Christian, 28% Muslim, 20% Hindu and Sikh
- 45% NZ citizens
- 19% native language English
- ELP: M = 4.25 (.60) on 5-point scale
- 86% tertiary educated
RESEARCH CONTEXT: NEW ZEALAND

• 1 in 5 NZ residents are overseas born
• High level of cultural and linguistic diversity
• Strong multicultural ideology
• Preference for migrant integration
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

• Measures of Acculturation
• Measures of Adaptation
  – Life Satisfaction ($\alpha = .86$)
  – Sociocultural Adaptation ($\alpha = .88$)
  – Identity conflict ($\alpha = .89$)
• Measures of Intercultural Relations
  – Perceived Discrimination ($\alpha = .88$)
  – Perceptions of NZers
ACCULTURATION MEASURES
ACCULTURATION DIMENSIONS

- **Cultural Maintenance**
  - It is important that my ethnic group maintains its own culture in NZ.

- **Participation**
  - It is important that my ethnic group engages with the wider NZ society.

- **Cultural Adoption**
  - It is important that my ethnic group adopts NZ culture.
ACCULTURATION INDEX
(BEHAVIOURS)

• Actual and Ideal similarity to co-nationals ($\alpha = .95$) and host nationals ($\alpha = .93$)
  • Food
  • Clothing
  • Cultural activities
  • Family life
  • Friendships
  • Communication styles
  • Etiquette
  • Time management
ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS: CLASSIFICATION
### ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS: ATTITUDES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Maintenance x</th>
<th>Cultural Adoption</th>
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ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS: BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES

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<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Behaviours (Real)</th>
<th>Attitudes (Ideal)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>54% 158</td>
<td>71% 186</td>
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<td>Separated</td>
<td>30% 91</td>
<td>14% 36</td>
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<td>Assimilated</td>
<td>8% 24</td>
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<td>Marginalized</td>
<td>8% 24</td>
<td>6% 16</td>
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Does not add to 100% due to rounding
ACCULTURATION AND ADAPTATION
### MAIN AND INTERACTION EFFECTS

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TRENDS

• Acculturation Behaviours relate more strongly to intercultural relations and adaptive outcomes than acculturation attitudes
BEHAVIOURAL ACCULTURATION

- Greater similarity to host culture
  - Greater life satisfaction
  - Fewer behavioural problems
  - Less identity conflict
  - Less perceived discrimination
  - More positive perceptions of NZers
- Greater similarity to co-nationals
  - Less identity conflict
SCAS PROBLEMS

F (1, 299) = 3.77, p< .05
PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

\[ F (1, 300) = 4.22, p < .04 \]
CONCLUSIONS

• Two dimensions: Cultural adoption and engagement have different consequences for the distribution of acculturation patterns

• Acculturation behaviours bear a stronger relationship to intercultural relations and migrant adaptation than acculturation attitudes

• There is some evidence that Integration is associated with the most favourable outcomes

• Acculturation researchers should be clear about WHAT they are measuring
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