

# A Brief Overview of Acculturation Theory

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The goal of acculturation theory is to comprehend how people or groups adapt to and integrate with a new culture when they come into contact with diverse cultural norms and practises. Acculturation theory is a well-known idea in the domains of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Acculturation has developed into a crucial field of research in order to understand how various civilizations interact and continue to globalise. The main ideas of acculturation theory are summarised below, along with how it affects social cohesiveness, mental health, and cross-cultural interactions. The theory investigates the dynamic interaction between the host culture and the heritage culture and provides numerous acculturation tactics that people and communities may use when confronted with cultural contact. Assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization the four main acculturation processes identified by John W. Berry are extensively covered in the paper. Assimilation entails giving up certain features of the heritage culture while embracing the customs of the host culture. Maintaining ties to both the host and heritage cultures is a need for integration. Marginalisation means not engaging with either culture, whereas separation means emphasising the heritage culture while avoiding integration with the host culture. The study looks at the variables that affect acculturation, including the context of migration, personal traits, and societal receptivity. It also looks at how various acculturation techniques affect identity development, psychological health, and social harmony. The abstract also examines how cultural maintenance, intergroup interaction, and intercultural communication affect acculturation processes. It is essential to comprehend how people from different backgrounds communicate in order to encourage tolerance, empathy, and healthy cross-cultural relationships.

## **KEYWORDS:**

Acculturation, Cultural, Culture, Ethno cultural, Integration.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The cohabitation of many cultures has turned into one of the distinguishing characteristics of modern society in an age of unparalleled globalisation and rising migration. A transformational process known as acculturation occurs when people and communities come into contact with new cultural norms and practises. Acculturation theory, a well-known idea in the anthropological, psychological, and sociological disciplines, aims to explain the complex processes of cultural adaptation and integration in the context of intercultural encounter. The word "acculturation" comes from the Latin "acculturare," which means "to adopt the cultural traits of another group." Understanding this intricate process, which includes both the acquisition of features from the host culture and the retention of aspects from the heritage culture, is the goal of acculturation theory [1], [2].

Human cultures have been changed by cultural connections for thousands of years, but modern migration, communication, and transportation advances have accelerated this process. As a consequence, acculturation has emerged as a crucial field of research for understanding how civilizations change, interact, and adapt in a world that is becoming more linked. The many tactics people and groups use when meeting a new culture are explored by acculturation theory. These tactics have important effects on social cohesiveness, psychological health, and identity development. Acculturation is shaped through interactions between the host culture and the heritage culture, and the

results may vary from seamless cultural integration to instances of friction and conflict. John W. Berry, a Canadian psychologist, made significant contributions to the theory of acculturation by identifying four main acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation. These tactics show several ways to strike a balance between engaging with the host culture and the heritage culture. To fully appreciate the intricacies of acculturation, it is essential to comprehend the variables that affect the choice of various tactics [3], [4].

The ramifications of acculturation theory go beyond scholarly inquiry as communities struggle with the difficulties and possibilities brought on by cultural variety. This information may be used by social workers and policymakers to create inclusive initiatives that promote social peace, ease intercultural tensions, and promote cultural integration. Societies may foster empathy, mutual respect, and a feeling of belonging among their different people by emphasising the importance of intergroup interaction and intercultural dialogue. We explore the complexities of acculturation theory in this extensive study with the goal of illuminating its theoretical underpinnings, research procedures, and practical applications. We can embrace cultural variety, foster inclusive societies, and create a shared future where people from many origins live and thrive peacefully by comprehending the varied nature of acculturation. Let's start exploring the fascinating realm of acculturation theory and its revolutionary consequences for our linked global society[4], [5].

## **II. DISCUSSION**

When individuals from many cultures work together, they bring with them their cultural beliefs and behaviours. To accomplish efficient operations, they must be recognised and included into organisational policies and practises. Since all nations (and the majority of organisations) are now culturally diverse, this requirement for understanding presents difficulties that are often based on the antiquated notion that people and groups from various cultural backgrounds who join the organisation are the only ones who need to adapt. However, in order for mutual accommodation to be achieved, all players must be willing to adapt, which is a need for efficient operations in cultures with a variety of cultural perspectives. This item starts with a definition of the terms "acculturation" and "process" before moving on to a discussion of the many methods (referred to as "acculturation strategies") by which this process is carried out. The long-term result of this process is a different level of mutual adaptation between the parties.

People and groups interacting. With some consequences, the entry comes to a close. The fundamental definition of acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological transformation that occurs as a consequence of interactions between cultural groupings and the individuals who make up such groups. Many factors (such as colonisation and migration) lead to such contact and change; they persist beyond the first encounter in societies with a diversity of cultures, where ethnic groupings continue to preserve aspects of their ancestral cultures over many generations; and they affect both groups involved. The longer-term effects of the acculturation process are referred to as adaptation. While it might be difficult on occasion, it often leads to some kind of mutual accommodation between people and between organisations. The early focus on acculturation looked at the consequences of European colonial and indigenous peoples' dominance. Later, the emphasis was on how immigrants' (both voluntary and involuntary) changes occurred after they entered and assimilated into host cultures. Much of the research done more lately has focused on the relationships and changes that occur between ethnocultural groups and people as a consequence of their efforts to coexist in multicultural communities. These days, these three study disciplines are crucial because of how the globalisation of trade and politics has affected both. The term psychological acculturation describes changes that occur in a person who is involved in a scenario of cultural contact and is being affected both directly by the external (often dominant) culture and by the changing (typically nondominant) culture of which they are a part. It is important to maintain the cultural and psychological levels separate for two reasons. The first is that individual human behaviour is seen in cross-cultural psychology as interacting with the cultural setting in which it takes place; hence, independent ideas and measures are needed at the two levels. The second reason is that even among individuals who reside in the same acculturative arena,

there are significant group and individual variances in psychological acculturation. Not every group or person enters into, participates in, or evolves in the same manner[6], [7].

A map of the phenomena that need to be conceptualised and assessed during acculturation research is provided by a framework that defines and connects cultural and psychological acculturation and identifies the two or more groups in touch. In order to fully understand the two original cultural groups before their significant encounter, academics need to look at some of their fundamental characteristics. Understanding this precontact variance among the communities who are now seeking to coexist in a wider civilization is crucial. The old community contains a range of cultural and psychological traits, and new immigrants contribute their own to the new society. Understanding the acculturation process that is initiated in both groups requires looking at the compatibility or incompatibility of traits like religion, values, attitudes, and personality between the two cultural communities that are in touch. Understanding the nature of their touch ties is also crucial. One group may dominate the other, or there may be mutual respect or antagonism. Researchers must also comprehend the cultural shifts that both groups experience as a consequence of acculturation on a cultural level. After culture contact, no cultural group is left untouched; acculturation is a two-way process that produces behaviours and responses to the circumstance of the encounter. The majority of change often occurs in minority populations. However, after years of welcoming new immigrants, all societies of settlement (especially their metropolises) have undergone profound changes. This data collection requires intensive ethnographic, neighborhood-level investigation. These adjustments might be little or significant, simple or difficult, and they can cause significant cultural disturbance[8], [9].

At the individual level, it is important to take into account the psychological changes that members of all groups go through and to look at how they ultimately adjust to their new circumstances. These adjustments may consist of a few simple behavioural changes (such as how one speaks, dresses, or eats), or they may be more difficult, leading to acculturative stress symptoms including uncertainty, worry, and melancholy. According to Ward (2001), adaptations might be largely internal or psychological (such as self-esteem or a feeling of well-being) or social (such as competence in the tasks of everyday intercultural life). The first statement relates to "feeling well," while the second to "doing well." A large portion of this study on acculturation

### **Acculturation Strategies**

As was already said, not every group or person approaches the process of acculturation in the same manner. The phrase "acculturation strategies" refers to the numerous means through which people and organisations attempt to blend in. These variances have cast doubt on the notion that everyone will blend in with the dominant group and assimilate. The two groups in touch (dominant or nondominant) typically have some idea of what they are trying to accomplish at the cultural level (for example, colonial policy). Individuals will differ within their cultural group on a personal level, depending on things like their educational or professional history. Two fundamental problems that all acculturating peoples face have led to the development of four acculturation methodologies. The difference between orientations towards one's own group and those towards other groups in society at large serves as the foundation for these difficulties[10].

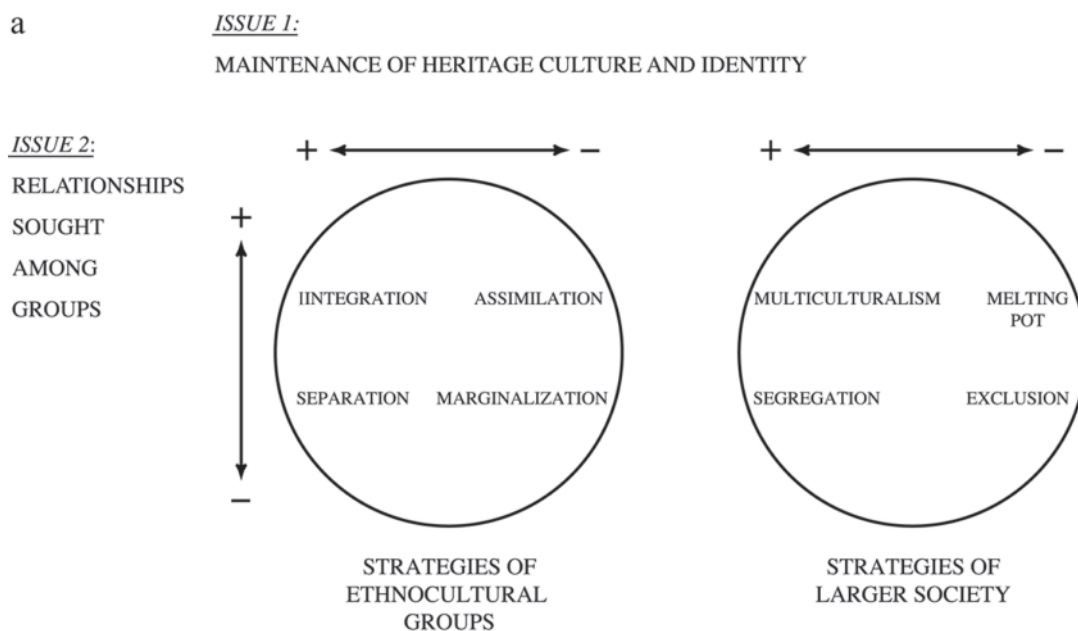
This division may be expressed as a relative desire for maintaining one's ancestral culture and identity and a relative preference for interacting with and participating in the greater society alongside other ethnocultural groups. On attitudinal dimensions, extending along bipolar dimensions from positive to negative preferences, these two difficulties may be reacted to. These two dimensions are now widely established to be distinct from one another. As a result, Figure 1 presents these two dimensions in an orthogonal relationship. The beliefs held by members of ethnocultural groups are on the left, while those held by the general public are on the right. Four acculturation techniques are defined by the intersection of these problem orientations. Assimilation is a tactic used for members of non-dominant ethnocultural groups who want to engage with people from other cultures on a daily basis but do not want to keep their cultural identity. In contrast, the separation option is described when people value maintaining their own culture while also wanting to avoid interacting with outsiders. Integration is a

choice when one wants to connect regularly with people from different groups while yet preserving their own culture. In this instance, some degree of cultural integrity is preserved while simultaneously attempting to engage as an important part of the greater social network as a member of an ethnocultural group.

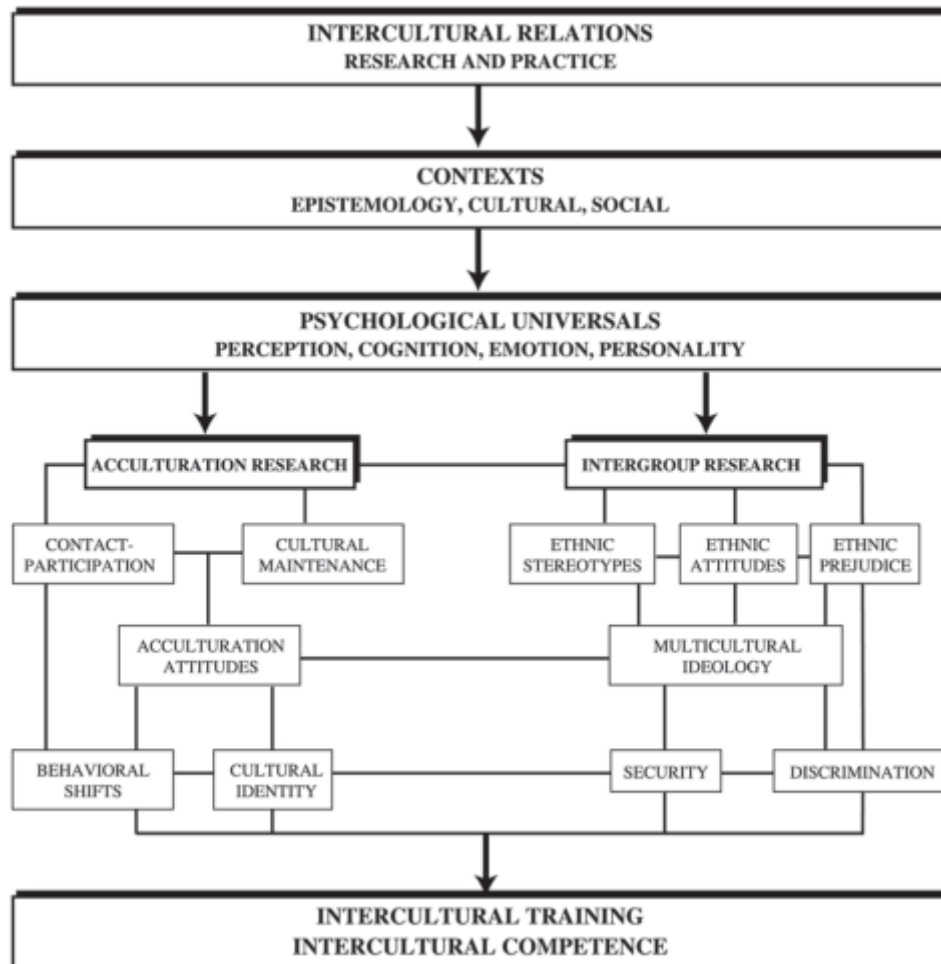
Finally, where cultural preservation is unlikely or uninterested (typically due to grounds of imposed Marginalisation is characterised as a lack of interest in interacting with others (sometimes due to exclusion or prejudice) and cultural loss. The original definition made it very obvious that both groups coming into touch would undergo transformation and acculturation. The four words mentioned above characterised the nondominant peoples' acculturation methods. On the right side of Figure 2, several terminology are used to characterise the dominating bigger society's tactics. When the dominant group seeks assimilation, it is known as the melting pot. Segregation occurs when a group's dominance forces isolation. Exclusion is marginalisation when it's enforced by the dominant group. Multiculturalism is the term used for integration when diversity is generally acknowledged as a characteristic of the community at large. Comparisons between individuals and their communities, as well as between nondominant peoples and the greater society to which they are assimilating, may be made using these ideas and metrics. Core components of acculturation study include the ideology and policies of the wider society's acculturation techniques as well as the preferences of nondominant peoples. For persons going through acculturation, contradictions and conflicts between these multiple acculturation preferences are frequent causes of hardship. This may happen when people disagree with the dominant ideology of their culture (for instance, when people reject the preservation of immigrant cultural traditions in a country where diversity is the official policy or when immigrant children contest their parents' methods of acculturation). Researchers often detect the phenomena of acculturative stress, with differences in degrees of adaptability, when acculturation events produce issues for acculturating people.

**Importance**

Numerous studies have shown that marginalised individuals have the worst psychological and sociocultural adaptations while those that seek the integration approach of acculturating (maintaining a twofold cultural engagement) have the greatest results. Transitional degrees of adaptability are often correlated with assimilation and separation techniques. The case of young immigrants exemplifies this tendency quite well. Understanding and using the three basic ideas (acculturation, acculturation techniques, and reciprocal adaptation) has the following implications:



**Figure 1: Relationships Sought Among Group.**



**Figure 2: Acculturation Strategies in Ethnocultural Groups and the Larger Society[sagepub].**

These concepts, as well as the research that supports them, have an influence on how management and workers interact across cultural barriers in organisations with a diverse workforce. For persons involved in intercultural living, the integration strategy defined here as participation in both cultural contexts is especially important given the advantages of seeking and attaining integration. The benefits of the integration acculturation plan should be explained to managers and their families who are deployed abroad, both before they leave (via training programmes) and while they are there through social and cultural assistance. Making employees and their families who have immigrated to the society aware of the advantages of integration may also be beneficial. In both situations, there is much to be gained by developing training and support programmes for people going through acculturation for managing all levels of staff.

### III. CONCLUSION

The intricate processes of cultural adaptation and integration in many civilizations have shown to be well-understood by acculturation theory, which has proven to be a potent and informative framework. In the context of current global relations, we have looked at the theoretical foundations, essential elements, and consequences of acculturation theory throughout this work. The process of acculturation influences the identities and well-being of both people and communities and is fueled by greater globalisation, migration, and intercultural interactions. People use a variety of acculturation tactics when they move between their heritage culture and the host culture, which affects how they feel about themselves, how they see themselves, and how they interact with others. Assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation are John W. Berry's four main acculturation tactics, and they illustrate the many ways that people and communities interact with cultural variety. Each technique has unique effects on both individual and societal well-being, with integration often appearing as the best course of action since it fosters successful results and social cohesiveness.

We have also learned that the acculturation process is significantly influenced by elements including the context of migration, individual traits, and the openness of the host society. Customised tactics are required to enhance seamless cultural integration and reduce intercultural disputes because context-specific dynamics affect how acculturation strategies are adopted and have an impact on intercultural interactions. Furthermore, we now understand how crucial intergroup contact and intercultural communication are to promoting harmonious relationships between various cultural groups. These components are crucial in building an inclusive atmosphere where cultural diversity is acknowledged and cherished through improving mutual understanding, empathy, and respect. Acculturation theory's ramifications go beyond scholarly investigation. This information may be used by policymakers, educators, and social workers to create interventions that are sensitive to cultural differences, encourage social integration, and foster a feeling of community among varied populations. Societies may achieve this by fostering environments in which people from many cultural origins can thrive, provide their distinctive viewpoints, and work together to solve common problems.

This study's conclusion makes it clear that acculturation theory provides a prism through which we may accept cultural variety and endeavour to create communities that are more inclusive and cohesive. We can promote international peace, encourage empathy, and construct bridges of understanding between people and cultural groups by comprehending the complexity of cultural adaptation and integration. Looking forward, understanding the changing dynamics of globalisation and intercultural encounters will need further study and continued engagement with acculturation theory. Together, we can use the power of acculturation to create a better future—one in which cultural variety is cherished rather than just tolerated, and in which inclusive communities flourish on the basis of respect for one another, cooperation, and shared humanity.

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