

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ACCULTURATION: MODELS AND STRATEGIES OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION

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Annotation: *The article examines the process of acculturation as an exchange of cultural characteristics and the interaction of two independent cultural systems. Various approaches to the problem and models of acculturation are analyzed.*

Key words: *acculturation, culture, assimilation, integration, identification.*

As early as 1880, the term “acculturation” was introduced by American anthropologists to describe the process of cultural change that occurs when two different cultural groups come into contact with each other. Within anthropology, the first major studies of acculturation were conducted in the 1930s, and the first classical definition of acculturation was presented by R. Redfield, R. Linton, and M. J. Herskovits in 1936:

“Acculturation encompasses those phenomena that occur when groups of individuals with different cultures come into prolonged direct contact, with subsequent changes in the cultural patterns of one or both groups.” According to this definition, acculturation “must be distinguished from general cultural change and from assimilation, which is sometimes a stage of acculturation” [1, p. 150].

Thus, from the very beginning, acculturation was understood as a bidirectional process involving changes within both groups that come into contact.

Long-term or short-term contact with representatives of different cultures may lead to a phenomenon known as acculturation. Acculturation is the process through which one culture influences another through direct interaction. During acculturation, individuals from one culture who interact with members of another culture may modify their cultural values, norms, and worldviews under the influence of the new cultural environment. In this process, individuals face two main challenges: maintaining their own cultural identity and determining the degree of their involvement in intercultural contacts.

Acculturation, as an exchange of cultural traits, represents the interaction of two independent cultural systems. The origins of this interaction arise from direct cultural transmission from the dominant or incoming culture and internal adaptation through the acceptance of foreign traits and behavioral patterns. Both acculturation and enculturation may occur simultaneously during cultural interaction. Acculturation is associated with the influence of a foreign culture, whereas enculturation refers to the internalization of cultural norms within one's native culture.

Ultimately, the acculturation process results in the selection and adaptation of those cultural values that enable both individuals and their cultural groups to continue to exist while maintaining varying levels of group and individual differentiation and integration. Ward and Kennedy (1993) note that acculturation outcomes can be divided into group-level and individual-level attitudes, distinguishing between two types of adaptation: psychological and sociocultural.

The first refers to internal psychological outcomes, such as good mental health and psychological well-being, which ultimately lead to satisfaction with the new culture. The second refers to external sociocultural outcomes that connect the individual to the new cultural environment. Acculturation therefore

influences an individual's sense of self-identity and ultimately affects consumer behavior.

Acculturation, as a long-term and complex process of cultural interaction, is a multifaceted and multilevel phenomenon. Mutual changes in the cultural patterns of individuals or groups that come into contact are typically determined by numerous factors, including the purpose of communication, its duration and consistency, the degree of voluntariness on both sides, and the situational context.

Intercultural communication is closely connected with demographic, political, and social processes and undoubtedly represents one of the most important aspects of global population migration. Adaptation strategies have gradually moved beyond traditional one- or two-dimensional models, becoming more diverse and complex. For this reason, acculturation theories have led an increasing number of researchers to apply various methods and approaches in order to study transnational processes and conceptualize intercultural interaction within different theoretical frameworks.

Contemporary cultural studies, together with a wide range of adaptation models, have developed various mechanisms for building harmonious intercultural communication based on a competency-based approach. Intercultural competence is a crucial element of any adaptation model. An individual's level of competence directly influences the nature and dynamics of their cultural adaptation experience. This experience becomes a "nutrient medium" for developing the potential for effective intercultural interaction.

The range of models of intercultural competence and sensitivity is extensive and diverse (for example, those developed by B. Spitzberg, D. Deardorff, K. Hunter, S. Ang, M. Bennett, and S. Ting-Toomey). At the same time, a basic competency model is sufficient to highlight the key elements necessary for a successful acculturation process.

The unidirectional acculturation model, which describes the cultural changes experienced by individuals in a minority group, was first proposed by Gordon (1964). According to this model, members of minority groups gradually abandon their cultural attitudes, beliefs, behavioral patterns, customs, and values in favor of those of the dominant culture (Garcia and Lega, 1979). This process is known as the linear acculturation theory. The basic premise of this model is that a member of one culture gradually loses their original cultural identity as they acquire a new identity within the host culture [2, p. 398]. Furthermore, within this framework, members of minority groups are often held responsible for their failure to assimilate into the host society.

Similar unidirectional acculturation models have been developed within social psychology to describe acculturation along a continuum from the full retention of the heritage culture to complete assimilation into the dominant culture. However, criticism of unidimensional models eventually led to the development of bidimensional acculturation models, in which immigrants' identification with two cultures is assessed along two independent dimensions.

The bidimensional acculturation model emerged as a response to criticism of unidirectional approaches by Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernandez (1980) and Szapocznik and Kurtines (1993). These models define acculturation in terms of an individual's behavior, values, and identification with both the ethnic and dominant cultures.

Unlike unidirectional models, these approaches recognize that ethnic minority identity and dominant cultural identity are independent and orthogonal rather than located at opposite ends of a single bipolar continuum (Zak, 1973, 1976; Der-Karabetian, 1980). Based on empirical research, Zak proposed that individuals can evaluate themselves positively or negatively along both dimensions of identity simultaneously. These findings were later confirmed by Der-Karabetian, who demonstrated that the relationship between

these identities depends on the specific social context in which group members find themselves.

In a tetrapolar model created and studied on a sample of Indian girls living in England, N. Khutnik proposed four strategies of ethnic self-identification:

- assimilative (“British, not Indian”);
- acculturative or bicultural (“British and Indian at the same time”);
- marginal (“neither Indian nor British”);
- dissociative (“Indian, not British”).

Khutnik emphasized that these strategies should not be viewed as static but rather as dynamic processes [3, p. 38]. This model also allows for discrepancies between cultural adaptation styles and self-categorization.

One of the two-dimensional acculturation models in social psychology, based on social identity theory, is the mobility model of cultural integration developed by F. Moghaddam. This model examines the strategies immigrants use to improve their economic and social status in Canada by analyzing their position along two dimensions: assimilation versus cultural preservation and normative versus non-normative behavior.

The model proposes four mobility strategies:

1. Normative assimilation
2. Normative cultural preservation
3. Non-normative assimilation
4. Non-normative preservation of cultural heritage

Normative assimilation is considered the most typical strategy among immigrants.

The author identifies three main spheres in migrants’ lives: private life; life within their ethnic community, where the norms and values of their native culture dominate; and public life, where the norms and values of the host society prevail.

The best-known acculturation model, in which identification with the heritage culture and the host culture are assessed independently, was developed by J. Berry within the framework of cross-cultural psychology. According to Berry, immigrants who settle in a host society must answer two fundamental questions: how important it is to maintain their original cultural identity and how important it is to establish relationships with the new culture.

These two dimensions intersect to form four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization.

The integration strategy reflects a desire to preserve one's original culture while maintaining regular interaction with other cultural groups. Assimilation is characterized by a willingness to interact with the dominant culture while abandoning the preservation of one's original cultural identity. Separation refers to maintaining one's native culture while avoiding interaction with other cultures. Marginalization describes individuals who have little opportunity or interest in preserving their native culture and little interest in interacting with other cultural groups.

According to Berry, integration is the most favorable acculturation orientation, as immigrants who adopt this strategy typically demonstrate the highest level of adaptation. Marginalization, on the other hand, is considered the least favorable orientation and is associated with the lowest level of adaptation.

The results of numerous studies conducted over recent decades confirm this pattern. For example, research has shown that immigrants who adopt separation or marginalization strategies demonstrate lower levels of adaptation. In addition, immigrants living in Canada who adopt an integration strategy experience the lowest levels of acculturative stress, while those who adopt marginalization experience the highest levels.

In a 1993 review, L. Sayegh and J.-C. Lasry provided a comprehensive assessment of various bidimensional acculturation models. Their main

conclusion was that many existing models do not fully ensure the orthogonality of the two dimensions. For example, in Moghaddam's model the dimension of normative behavior depends on the acceptance of immigrants by the host society, which links it indirectly with ethnic identity. Similarly, in Berry's model the first dimension measures identification with the heritage culture, while the second measures the desire for contact with the host society, which also raises questions about the independence of these dimensions.

Despite this criticism, Berry's acculturation model remains the most widely used framework in cross-cultural psychology and migration studies.

In recent years, two new acculturation models have emerged that further develop Berry's theoretical approach. The first is Bourhis's Interactive Acculturation Model, which considers not only immigrants' strategies but also the strategies adopted by the host society toward immigrant groups.

In 2005, M. Navas proposed the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM). According to this model, migrants may either assimilate into the host culture or preserve elements of their native culture in different areas of life [5, p. 34].

Acculturation as a process does not lead to complete cultural homogeneity. The acculturation process may sometimes be destructive, leading to the absorption of a particular culture, but it can also be constructive when a group revives or strengthens its original cultural traditions.

The ultimate outcome of acculturation is adaptation. However, adaptation itself is a complex process that may be evaluated as either positive or negative and includes many different forms of coexistence with a new cultural environment.

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