

CONSTRUCTION AND STANDARDIZATION OF ACCULTURATIVE STRESS ASSESSMENT SCALE

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Abstract *The present paper focuses on the standardization of the Acculturative Stress Assessment Scale (ASAS). This scale helps to find the level of adjustment in another culture by using a specific acculturation style in migrated individuals. Acculturative stress assessment scale has total 35 items with 7 sections having 5 items each. These items were selected on the basis of experts' opinion and item analysis (correlation value). Items are scored both positively (4 to 1) and negatively (1 to 4) on 4 point scale— (Always (4), Frequently (3), Sometimes (2), and Never (1)). The test-retest reliability of this scale is 0.93 (N=100) and Cronbach alpha coefficient is $\alpha = 0.70$ (N=300). Only those items were retained in scale with high correlation values and were internally consistent. So, the content validity of this scale was found to be high. The norms of this scale were established on 300 migrated adults. On the basis of norms it was found that high individual scores indicate preference for integrated acculturation style and experience less acculturative stress, and low scores indicate preference for marginalized acculturation style leading to feeling of acculturative stress.*

Keywords: *Acculturation, Acculturative Stress, Integration, Assimilation, Separation, Marginalized Acculturation Style*

INTRODUCTION

Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous contact; the original culture patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain distinct. An anthropological definition was first used to describe acculturation as changes that occur as a result of continuous first hand contact between groups of individuals of differing cultural origins (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 1936). Acculturation is a dual process affecting the members of two or more culture groups as each adapts to the presence of the other (Berry, 2006). The concept is distinct from enculturation, which refers to the learning of a culture's values, beliefs, and norms during development, and also from culture change, which are changes in a culture resulting from innovation, invention, and discovery (Castro, 2003). The psychological literature of acculturation further distinguishes between group and individual acculturation, primarily focusing on individual level changes resulting from intercultural contact (Graves, 1967) and adaptive outcomes of the process in both psychological and social domains (Ward, 2001).

According to Berry's model of acculturation (Berry, 1980; Berry, Kim, and Boski, 1988; Berry et al., 1989), there are four ways ethnic group members can associate with their host culture, individuals can assimilate (identify solely with the dominant culture and sever ties with their own culture); marginalize (reject both their own and the host culture); separate (identify solely with their own group and reject

the host culture); and integrate (become 'bicultural' by maintaining characteristics of their own ethnic group while selectively acquiring those of the host culture). Research on acculturation attitudes and psychological functioning suggests that integration is the most adaptive form of acculturation. In several studies assessing the acculturation strategies of various immigrant groups in North America, Berry and others (Berry, 1980; Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok, 1987; Sayegh and Lasry, 1993) found integration was the preferred mode of acculturation, followed by either assimilation or separation, with marginalization as the least preferred mode. Integrated individuals experienced less 'acculturative stress' (Berry et al. 1988; Sam and Berry, 1995) and anxiety, and manifested fewer psychological problems, than those who were marginalized, separated, or assimilated. Overall, marginalized individuals suffered the most psychological distress, including problems with self-identification and cultural alienation which adversely affected their self-esteem.

Acculturative stress is an outcome due to the acculturation process between two cultures. Psychocultural stress occurs due to cultural differences found between a host culture and an incoming culture marked by reduction in the physical and mental health status of individuals or groups undergoing acculturation. Acculturative stress has numerous effects upon an individual, such as substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, low self-esteem, and family dysfunction. Research so far has shown that acculturative stress is an important factor in the mental health of immigrants, as it increases the risk for various psychological problems.

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Belizaire and Fuertes (2011) investigated the relationship between attachment, coping, acculturative stress, and quality of life (QOL) in a sample of Haitian immigrants in the United States and found that an increase in years living in the United States and greater anxiety attachment were negatively associated with QOL and that higher levels of adaptive coping were associated with higher QOL and lower levels of acculturative stress. In another study Guinn, Vincent, Wang and Villas (2011) suggested to identify variables distinguishing more acculturated versus less acculturated Latinos residing near the United States—Mexico border and indicated educational attainment, higher self-esteem, and marriage differentiated between high- and low-acculturated participants with gender, health status, and physical activity showing no group differentiation.

Telzer (2010) stated acculturation gap-distress model examined that immigrant children acculturate to their new culture at a quicker pace than their parents, leading to family conflict and youth maladjustment. In contrast to the original model, which only discusses 1 type of acculturation gap, there are at least 4 types of acculturation gaps: (1) the child is *more* acculturated than the parent in the *host* culture, (2) the child is *less* acculturated than the parent in the *host* culture, (3) the child is *more* acculturated than the parent in the *native* culture, and (4) the child is *less* acculturated than the parent in the *native* culture.

In connection to this the after thirty years of racial/ ethnic identity development (R/EID) studies by Harbour (2009) has shown how racial identity is a reflection of one's political affiliation with a racial group. It is shown that R/EID of college students affects psychological well-being. The relationship between racial/ ethnic identity and acculturation to Black student's attitudes toward professional help-seeking was examined and results indicate that acculturation, personal problems, and having a positive experience in counselling were significant predictors of attitude toward professional help-seeking.

Studies on gender differences in acculturation and ethnic identification reveal females tend to be more identified with their native culture than do males. For example, Japanese females scored higher than males on Japanese ethnic identity scale (Masuda, Hasegawa and Matsumoto, 1973). As immigrants achieve and/or maintain middle-class status, they prefer assimilation over other modes of acculturation. Indicators of SES, such as parents' level of education and their employment status have been positively associated with acculturation (Barankin, Kostantareas and DeBosset, 1989).

Further, self-esteem is frequently used as a measure or indicator of adolescent well-being and psychological adjustment. Research has linked self-esteem with ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). Overall, results show that for adolescents of varying ethnic backgrounds, the more

positive about, committed to, and identified they are with their ethnic group, the higher their self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadnax, 1994; Phinney, 1992; Phinney, Cantu and Kurtz, 1997). Further, La Fromboise, Coleman and Gerton, (1993) theorize that integration leads to better psychological health.

It is observed, that today's organizations are becoming more and more ethnically diverse. It is important to understand what constitutes the well-being of ethnic minority employees. Maria and Wido (2009) explored the extent to which acculturation orientations (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization) were related to the well-being of 79 ethnic minority and 124 ethnic majority employees working in two different organizations. In line with predictions based on social identity theory and the acculturative stress paradigm, results showed that an integration orientation relates positively to work-related well-being, whereas a marginalization attitude relates negatively to well-being. Moreover, the relationship between acculturation orientations and work-related well-being is much stronger for ethnic minority employees than it is for ethnic majority employees.

Vang (2009) examined the relationships among acculturation, cultural adjustment problems, and psychological distress among Hmong Americans living in the Midwestern portion of the United States and showed that acculturation was significantly related to place of birth, education, and religion. Cultural adjustment difficulty was significantly related to psychological distress, education, and income.

Acculturation is a two-way process, but the fact that minority groups typically occupy weaker positions in society means that intercultural contact has greater consequences for them. This inequality raises questions about the extent to which immigrants and minority groups can determine acculturation and adaptation outcomes and the extent to which situational and contextual factors influence these responses (Kus and Ward 2008).

In a study, Lin (2008) examined that while the family may face a variety of challenges in the acculturation process, it has also been suggested that the ways in which individuals relate to their families can function to alleviate the stressful aspects of cultural contact and change. In another study Yoon, Lee and Goh (2008) suggested that sense of connectedness to both ethnic and mainstream community has been observed to mediate between acculturation and well-being, with individuals who interact with both ethnic and dominant community manifesting lower levels of stress. A study by Portnoy and Rebecca (2007) showed that immigrant who is less integrated into the host society is more satisfied with employment than immigrants who are more integrated. Therefore it is not only well-being but language also determines adjustment to other cultures.

Kang (2006) explored that language competence was a stronger predictor of adjustment than the other domains of acculturation, implying that of acculturation among Asian Americans. In addition to this, the relations among language acculturation, biculturalism, and psychological adjustment were studied by Lopez and Contreras (2005) and indicated that biculturality significantly predicted adjustment above and beyond monocultural involvement. Although biculturality and bilingualism were both significantly related to psychological adjustment, linguistic balance showed a stronger association with adjustment than biculturalism. In another study by Barrette, Bourhis, Richard, Personnaz, Personnaz, and Bernard (2004) the interactive acculturation model (IAM) proposed that acculturation orientations endorsed by host majority and immigrant minority members influence the quality of their intergroup relations. Confirming basic premises of the IAM model, results showed that French majority and North African undergraduates who endorsed integrationism and individualism were those who perceived the most harmonious relational outcomes with out-group members. French majority undergraduates who endorsed segregationism/ exclusionism and North African undergraduates who endorsed separatism were more likely to perceive problematic/ conflictual relations with out-group members.

Ghorpade, Lackritz and Singh (2004) concluded that US is comprised of a patchwork of ethnic groups. To varying degrees, such groups have become acculturated into the White Anglo American. The consequences and predictors of psychological acculturation when examined, showed that grade point average (GPA) and income earned were positively related to psychological acculturation. Religion, ethnicity, age of entry to the US, enrolment in a graduate program, and self esteem affected psychological acculturation.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this exploratory study was to understand how Asian Indian immigrant families adjust to U.S. culture by examining factors that influence acculturation preferences or styles and how these styles may be associated with their children's psychological functioning as measured by self-esteem and academic performance. Results showed parents and adolescents had similar styles of acculturation. However, adolescents were more likely to self-identify as 'Indian American' than were their parents. The findings lend tentative support for an integrated style of acculturation promoting positive outcomes for first generation Asian Indian adolescents (Farver, Bhadha, and Narang, 2002).

Moreover, ethnographic studies show that Asian Indian immigrants have a tendency for bicultural functioning largely due to their experiences with the British colonial rule of India (Kurian and Ghosh, 1983; Saran, 1985; Wakil,

Siddique, and Wakil, 1981). In general, Asian Indians are relatively fluent in English and have had some exposure to Western values (Leonard-Sparks and Saran, 1980). On the other hand, studies have also reported some Asian Indian immigrants in Western cultures continue to base their lifestyles on traditional values, beliefs, and expectations. That is, they maintain a relatively collectivistic orientation (i.e. emphasizing the extended family, traditional gender roles, obedience to elders, and group interdependence), many years after immigration (Segal, 1991; Patel, Power and Bhavnagri, 1996).

Whatever may be the acculturation style the family plays an important role in fostering the psychological well being of its members by providing a system of social support, transmitting cultural values, and developing a sense of cohesion (Phinney and Ong, 2002). While discipline such as sociology and anthropology have indeed stressed the importance of the family in the acculturation processes, until recently the psychological literature was lacking in this area.

When viewing acculturation in an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998), it is in the context of community that many acculturation process occur and the level at which the "other culture" is potentially encountered (Sabatier, 2008). Acculturation is a two-way street, with both the mainstream community and the immigrant or minority community having to adapt in varying degrees to the presence of the other (Tseng and Yoshikawa, 2008). The degree to which two (or more) groups differ affects the amount of accommodation required (Tadmor, Tetlock and Peng, 2009). Intergroup attitudes also affect the acculturative process: tolerance of diversity or attitudes of prejudice and exclusion lead to very different process and outcomes for the minority community (Green, 2009).

The community forms a constant context across lifespan development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998), and a sense of belonging and meaning within society are considered key to well-being (Withlock, 2007). The absence of a stable ethnic community to join has been linked to poor mental health and well-being (Salant and Lauderdale, 2003). It is also a level at which informed social policy and action can effectively lead to better outcomes in acculturative adaption (Smith, 2008).

In summary, there is a strong link between acculturation and intercultural relations. Although integration is widely preferred by immigrants and is associated with positive psychological and socio-cultural outcome (Berry, 2006) in the international arena, it can only be achieved in multicultural societies that appreciate cultural diversity and ensure participation for minority ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic groups. It is critical to understand the views of both the mainstream and minority groups in a society and the historical, political, social and economic factors that shape them.

Table 1: Coefficients of Correlation for Acculturative Stress Assessment Scale (ASAS)

Item No.	Coefficients of Correlation
1	.53
2	.47
3	.44
4	.43
5	.44
6	.48
7	.54
8	.38
9	.39
10	.36
11	.43
12	.45
13	.44
14	.50
15	.46
16	.60
17	.60
18	.59
19	.64
20	.59
21	.65
22	.64
23	.51
24	.50
25	.56
26	.45
27	.52
28	.51
29	.40
30	.44
31	.46
32	.45
33	.46
34	.50
35	.53

To be more focused with the concept at the intrastate level we see that when a person moves from one region to another region, one state to another state or culture due to any specific reason, his cultural aspects and dimensions change and acculturation occurs. To study this problem the researcher constructed a scale that helps in measuring this problem. On the basis of this scale, one can measure the acculturation style of migrating person that will further determine his/her adjustment to the circumstances. Thus, with the help of this scale one can measure and know how an individual becomes integrated when he migrates to another culture or how does he assimilate, separate or marginalize in order to adjust

to the acculturation process. For measuring this problem of adults in Indian culture, no scale had been constructed till now. By constructing this scale the focus is to generate related data to understand the level of acculturation in adults and also to know their acculturation stress. With the review of related literature and discussion the dimensions on which the items could be based were identified for 'Acculturative Stress Assessment Scale'. They are: - for cultural identity item like "It is important for me to maintain my own ethnic/heritage culture" for family item like as "My parents told me that I should spend more time with my own ethnic group" and for language item as "I prefer to speak ethnic language".

The items were selected and written taking these dimensions as the base.

CONSTRUCTION OF ASAS

Firstly, the researcher planned construction of the scale which is related to acculturative stress. After that, items for all sections were selected. Item selection for these broad sections was based on experts' opinion and available related literature in the field. Thus, some items for each dimension were selected. After that with the generated large pool of items pilot study was conducted. The researcher found problems in some items as reported by the respondents, so for those items amendments were made like, their language was changed, ambiguity removed or made them pin pointed. Some items were even discarded. Therefore, the editing work with regards to the first draft was completed. Now for the first try out the researcher administered this scale on 100 migrated individuals in Agra city who had come to the city from some other state like Maharashtra, Bihar, and West Bengal etc. After this, item analysis was done, in which each item of every dimension whose correlation value was more than $r=.36$ was retained as in Table 1. After this analysis ASAS was finally prepared in which there were 35 items covering seven dimensions.

An individual takes 15-20 minutes to respond to the scale. Finally, it was administered on 300 migrated individuals. These individuals were from different states and working in organizations like BHEL (Jhansi), and banking sector in Agra. On the basis of the scores, reliability, validity, and norms were established and it was known that the reliability of this scale is very high and items are internally consistent with each other. After rejecting extra items it becomes easy to fill the scale and the significance of this scale has been proved. It is helpful to fulfil the purpose for which it has been made.

STANDARDIZATION OF SCALE (ASAS)

According to Popham (1999) a standardized test is a test that is administered and scored in a consistent or "standard" manner. Standardized scales are designed in a way that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and are administered and scored in a predetermined, standard manner.

RELIABILITY

After amendments in the length of the scale the researcher calculated Cronbach alpha α and test-retest reliability for the present scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale is $r=.70$ which is high. It shows that items are internally

consistent. The test-retest reliability shows $r=.93$ shown in (Table 2) which is very high with the second administration of test after 20 days. The reliability coefficient in this case is simply the correlation between the scores obtained by the same persons on two administrations of the scale.

Table 2: Test- retest and Cronbach alpha reliability values

	N	Reliability Coefficient
Test – retest	100	.93
Cronbach alpha	300	.70

VALIDITY

The validity of a test concerns what the test measures and how well it does so. The item analysis conducted for the scale items determines content validity of this scale to be high with the item correlation ranging in between (0.36-0.65) and also showing the high internal consistency of items.

NORMS

A purposive sample of 300 migrated individuals was taken from Agra and cities around Agra. The norms of ASAS are established on the basis of median and quartile deviation along with mean and SD, that determines the acculturation style of the subject (shown in Table 3).

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, Q₁, Q₂ and Q₃ for ASAS

S. No	Sample	Scores	Interpretation of scores
1	Q ₃	104.79	The obtained scores at or above Q ₃ Integrated acculturation style
2	Q ₂ (Mdn)	94.31	94.31-104.79 Assimilated style
3	Q ₁	89.35	89.35 – 94.31 Separated Style
			89.35 below Marginalized Style
4	Mean	96.63	
5	S.D.	10.82	

INTERPRETATION OF SCORES

It can be said that more the individual or employee scores higher, more he prefers the integrated acculturation style in his organization which is an indicator of his better adjustment, performance, and less of acculturative stress; and more he scores lower, more marginalized acculturation style is preferred which indicates poor performance and high acculturative stress. The range of these high and low scores are shown in the norm table.

IMPLICATION OF THE SCALE

The migration of people is an ongoing process having different cultural parameters from one region to another, from one state to another state, also from one country to another country for seeking better employment and better living. So, like in India, a country of diversities, we have succeeded to keep it united so far. A big achievement has been made in raising the economic condition of our country but still we see the problem is coming between two different generations. The younger generation has shown the sign of better adjustment but not the older generation. The scale constructed to measure acculturation can help to identify this gap between two generations. This scale will also help in knowing, if any individual migrates from another culture which style he prefers in acculturation. If he prefers integrated acculturation style, he will easily adjust in that culture but if he feels marginalized from that culture, he will have many problem while adjusting in that culture. This scale also helps to know the adjustment level of migrated employees within the organization and their acculturation style.

Acculturation is a problem which can be seen in organizations, institutions, and defence areas etc., and also within the soldiers and civilians. If any problem in their adjustment is found, counselling programmes for better adjustment can be framed accordingly. This scale can also be used in research areas. Thus the scale will help to generate relevant data on adults to understand acculturative stress.

Some sample items are as follows:

1. I would be willing to live with a person from my own ethnic group/culture.
2. When I have a personal problem I ask for help even from friends not from my ethnic group.
3. My parents told me that I should spend more time with my own ethnic group.
4. A teacher/ school administrator treated me unfairly because I am from other ethnic culture.
5. I listen to regional music.
6. I prefer to speak ethnic language.
7. I prefer to read regional language newspapers/ magazines/ books.

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