УДК: 159.9.316.455

ACCULTURATION GOALS AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS PREDICTORS OF SUCCESSFUL SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Dr. Liudmyla Smokova
Institute of Postgraduate Education
Odessa National I. Mechnikov University, Ukraine

Abstract: *This presentation focuses on the connections between intercultural competence and specific attitudes toward acculturation of Minority in Germany to the host culture. We have sought to explain how the Intercultural Sensitivity determines acculturation expectations of the host society, hence the intercultural interaction between immigrant and members of the majority group. The success of the intercultural contact and the process of psychological adaptation of the minority though will depends largely on what is the assistance of the host society in the acculturation process. The* relevant questions in this regard *are: what is the notion of the dominating society on how the foreigners could be integrated (acculturation ideology) and to what extend the intercultural competence determines that the interaction with the minority group is viewed as valued and desired for the members of the majority group?*

Intercultural competence was examined with scales like Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Emotional Stability, Orientation to Action and Flexibility. The participants of the experiment were 306 representatives of the title nationality members of Germany and 64 Russian-speaking immigrant undergraduates and workers.

Key words: *intercultural competence, acculturation orientations, socio-cultural adaptation, cultural integration*

INTRODUCTION

During the last decades the mass mobility, international migration and other forms of intercultural encounters have become prominent in many parts of the world. Every year over half a million of people come to the EU countries using different illegal channels, and 400 000 more officially seek shelter on the European continent. Enhanced interaction between the different cultures increases the necessity of practical and theoretical knowledge of factors for successful intercultural adaptation.

Migration causes permanent processes of acculturation, involving migrants but also members of the mainstream society. Acculturation can be defined as 'the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact' (Gibson, 2001, p. 19). This definition implies that both cultural groups are influenced by their mutual intercultural contacts and transformed of their respective cultures as a way of adapting to one another (Berry, 1997; Sam, 2006).

Consequences of such contact can be either cultural dualism- coexistence of cultures without violent internal imposing of one culture over the other, or assimilation- total and systematic oppression and discrimination of one culture over the other.

Results of surveys reveal that successful socio-cultural adaptation of minority groups is accomplished through the acquisition of adequate social and behavioral skills necessary for successful interaction with members of the host culture, i.e. by choosing an integration strategy (Berry, 1997; Schmitz, 2001). However, the achievement of successful adaptation and cultural integration depends not only on the immigrants' acculturation orientations (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization), but also on the involvement of the host majority members in the acculturation process, on what acculturation goals they have and on how they can shape the acculturation orientations of immigrant groups.

Host intercultural competence and predisposition are also major variables in the structure of cross-cultural adaptation and interaction. They facilitate or inhibit intercultural transformation (Gudykunst & Mody, 2001). IC as a type of behavior is defined by the knowledge of the native and other cultures, by the ability to accept the socio-cultural differences, by the respect for the others and by the ability to live and act successfully together with people of other cultures, languages and religions (Paelman & Verlot (2003).

If we refer to the results of socio-psychological research examining various aspects of intercultural competence, we can see that the structure of the construct consists of three main components:

- *cognitive dimension-* (knowledge of their own culture and other cultures, knowledge of techniques to prevent and resolve intercultural conflicts; methodical readiness to work in a multicultural classroom, etc.),

- *value-affective dimension-* (developed system of humanistic values and value orientations, consistent with the principles of multiculturalism, positive ethnic identity, tolerance);

- *behavioural dimension -* (the level of formation of intercultural interaction skills; ability to apply methods of pedagogical work in a multicultural team; humanistic-oriented style of pedagogical interaction, etc.) *(Sercu 2004; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).*

This study, respectively, investigates how the intercultural competence of the host society members in Germany relates to their acculturation goals and attitudes towards immigrants.

QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Research in cross-cultural psychology has shown that two interacting cultural groups have different preferences for acculturation strategies and, as a result of this conflict, the dominant host majority has problems in interaction with minority groups (Sam & Berry, 2006; G. Barrette et al., 2004). Host majority members can shape the acculturation orientations of immigrant groups.

Hypothesis 1: Acculturation goals with which the sample of the "new Germans" identifies itself will significantly differ from the acculturation strategies, adopted by the minority group. Acculturation goals of host society and acculturation strategy of migrant group are related.

In literature host intercultural competence is the major variable in the structure of cross-cultural adaptation and interacts. It facilitates or inhibits intercultural transformation (Gudykunst & Mody, 2001). This makes it a important indicator of socio-cultural adaptation and cultural adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: Intercultural Competence by host society members has effect on predicting acculturation goals.

Hypothesis 3: Intercultural competence by host society members influence on attitudes towards migrant groups.

Hypothesis 4: Intercultural competent may function as a mediator in relationship between acculturation goals and attitudes towards migrants.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

Participants in this survey were native German undergraduates and workers (N = 306; 68,3 % female and 31,7% male) as well as Russian-speaking immigrant undergraduates and workers (N = 64; 74,8% female and 25,2% male).

The age of the interviewed people lies between 18 and 55 (M = 25.53; SD=9.56 and the median is MD=23.5 years). 67,2% of the German sample are students and 32,8% work full time. 24,7 % of the participants with immigrant background are students while 75,3% are workers.

Data Collection:

The results of this study were gathered by administrating anonymous Questionnaire:

- Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) developed by Van der Zee, K.I. and Van Oudenhoven, J.P. (2000). The questionnaire has scales for Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Emotional Stability, Orientation to Action and Flexibility (Van der Zee, & Van Oudenhoven, 2000).

- Scales for acculturation strategies (acculturation goals) based on the model of Berry (1997). Variables: acculturation strategies/goals - integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, and marginalization / exclusion.

- Scale for measuring of hostility towards immigrants (Wetzels, Gabriel, Pfeiffer, 1998).

- Scale for Attitudes towards the out-group developed by Waldzus et al. (2003). Variable: sympathy, willingness for intergroup contact, favorable behavioral intentions towards the out-group and tolerance towards out-group

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The acculturation orientations of both studied groups were compared. Results reveal that the referred acculturation goals, endorsed by the German host majority members towards immigrant members, are integration (M: 3.71) and assimilation (M: 3.25), while segregation (M: 2.74) and exclusion (M: 2.26) are at least endorsed. By immigrant members the order of orientation preference is different. Most strongly

supported is again integration (M: 3.75). Separation is moderately endorsed (M: 3.06), whereas assimilation (M: 3.00) and marginalization (M: 2.23) are at least approved acculturation orientations.

A comparison between the preferred acculturation orientations of both cultural groups gave statistically significant results. Immigrant members prefer separation to assimilation (t= -3.926, df = 346, p = .000), while host majority members-assimilation to segregation (t= 3.598, df = 345, p = .000).
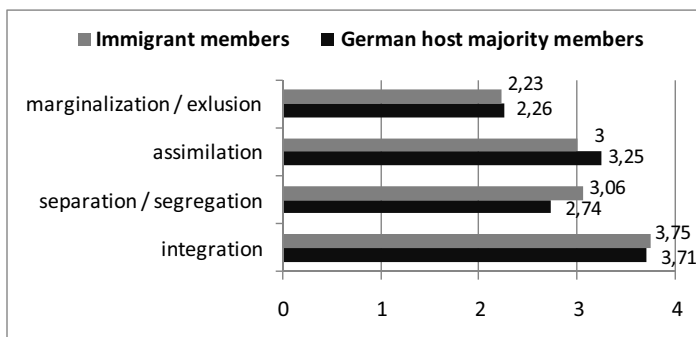

FIGURE 1. German majority members' acculturation goals towards immigrants and Russian-speaking immigrants' acculturation strategy.

Pearson product correlations revealed meaningful negative correlations between immigrant orientation- integration and host goal- exclusion (r = -.809**; p = .000), and between host goal- assimilation and immigrant orientation-separation (r = -.572**; p = .000).

The results indicated that host Intercultural Competence is correlated with acculturation goals (Table 1). Cultural Empathy is slightly associated with assimilation (r= -.129*; p < .01), integration (r= .152*; p < .001), segregation (r= .115*; p < .01) and exclusion (r= -.165*; p < .001). The variable openmindedness has a moderate correlation with integration (r= .273**; p < .001), assimilation (r= -.218**; p < .001) and exclusion (r= -.202**; p = .000).

The correlation analysis shows that host Intercultural Competence has influence on the Attitudes towards the out-group. Cultural Empathy is highly associated with favorable behavioral intentions towards the out-group (r= .388; p < .001) and with willingness for intergroup contact (r = .276; p = .000). Openmindedness is significantly associated with sympathy (r = .296; p = .000), willingness for intergroup contact (r = .416; p = .000), favorable behavioral intentions towards the out-group (r= .402; p= .000) and tolerance towards the out-group (r= .150; p= .028). Orientation to Action is slightly related to sympathy (r= .138; p = .042) and favorable behavioral intentions towards the out-group (r =0,140; p = .040). Flexibility is highly associated with tolerance (r = .166; p = .015), sympathy (r

=0,205; p = .002) and favorable behavioral intentions towards the foreign group (r = .175; p = .01).

There is also a negative correlation between Hostility towards minority groups and Open-mindedness (r = -.232; p = .001), Flexibility (r = - .203; p = .010) and a positive correlation on a significant level with Emotional Stability (r = .113; p = .04). Simple regression analysis shows that emotional stability is a predictor for exclusion (ß= - .194*, p < .001) and integration (ß= .224**; p < .001; R²= .216). The hostility towards immigrant groups is predicted by flexibility (ß= - .206*; p = .000), emotional stability (ß= .153*; p < .01) and open-mindedness (ß= - .167*; p < .001; R²= .483).

TABLE 1

Correlations between Intercultural competence components and Acculturation goals and Attitudes towards the out-group

	Cultural empathy	Open-mindedness	Orientation to action	Flexibility
Integration	r= .152* p< .001	r= .273** p< .001		
Assimilation	r= -.129* p< .01	r= .274** p< .001		
Segregation	r= .115* p< .01			
Exclusion	r= -.165* p< .001	r= -.202** p= .000		
Hostility towards immigrants		r = -.232** p = .001		r = - .203** p = .010
Sympathy		r= .296** p= .000	r= .138* p< .01	r= .205** p< .001
Willingness for intergroup contact	r= .276** p= .000	r= .416** p= .000		
Favorable behavioral intentions towards the out-group	r= .188* p< .001	r= .402** p= .000	r= .140* p< .001	r= .175* p< .01
Tolerance towards out-group		r = .150* p < .01		r = .166* p < .001

When checking for a mediation effect, we have found that the contribution of intercultural competence does not make a significant effect on the relationship between acculturation goals and attitudes towards migrants.

CONCLUSIONS

We also found many strong links between the components of intercultural competence and the attitudes and behaviours towards migrants.

In conclusion, this report emphasized that IC plays a major part in intercultural interaction. Understanding the relationships between IC and acculturation strategies

can help social scientists develop and apply adequate methods and give suggestions for the development of acculturation programmes.

The results of this study support hypothesis that there is a significant difference between acculturation strategies adopted by the minority groups and acculturation goals of the host majority members. While the German host majority members ture expect immigrants to be assimilated into their new host society, the immigrants themselves prefer a strategy of separation. Both cultural groups choose integration as the preferred strategy for intercultural interaction. These findings are congruent with previous studies (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004).

As expected, the host majority's acculturation goals influence immigrant orientation. The highest levels of assimilation result in a stronger movement towards the separation strategy by immigrants.

The study also revealed that the IC components influence the acculturation goals of the host majority group with regard to attitudes towards the out-group. Higher indicators of emotional stability enforce the choice of integration and diminish the movement towards exclusion. A high level of cultural empathy and openmindedness helps the choice for integration and makes the choices of assimilation and exclusion less probable.

REFERENCES

1. Barrette, G., Bourhis, R. Y., Personnaz,M, & Personnaz, B. (2004). Acculturation orientations of French and North American undergraduates in Pais. Interruttional Joumal of Intercultural Rektions, 28, 415-438.

2. Berry, J.W.(1997). Lead Article Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46 (1), 5–68.

3. Bourhis, R. Y. & Dayan, J. (2004). Acculturation orientations towards lsraeli Arabs and Jewish immigrants in lsrael. International journal of psychology, Vil. J9 (2), 118 - 131.

4. Gibson, M. A. (2001). Immigrant adaptation and patterns of acculturation. Human Development, 44, 19-23.

5. Gudykunst, W. & Mody, B. (2001). Handbook of Intercultural and International Communication, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. Review, 46, 5-34.

6. Cui, G., & Van den Berg, S. (1991). Testing the construct validity of intercultural effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 15*, 227-241.

7. Sam, D. L. & Berry, J. W. (2006). The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 11-26.

8. Sercu, L. (2004). Assessing intercultural competence: A framework for systemic test development in foreign language education and beyond. *Intercultural Education, 15*, 73-89.

9. Strobl, R. & Kuehnel, W. (2000). Dazugehörig und ausgegrenzt. Analysen zu Integrationschancen junger Aussiedler. Weinheim / München.