Measuring globalization-based acculturation in Ladakh: Investigating possible advantages of a tridimensional acculturation scale

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ABSTRACT

Theories and methodologies within acculturation psychology have been advanced in order to capture the complex process of intercultural contact in various contexts. Differentiating globalization-based acculturation from immigrant-based acculturation has broadened the field of acculturation psychology to include groups who are exposed to global cultural streams without international migration. The globalization-based acculturation process in the North Indian region of Ladakh appears to be a tricultural encounter, suggesting an addendum to the bidimensional acculturation model for this group (and perhaps for others as well). This study explores the development, usability, and validity of a tridimensional acculturation measure aiming to capture the multicultural orientations initiated by the process of globalization in Ladakh. The tridimensional acculturation scale was found to fit the data significantly better compared to the bidimensional scale. Implications for the study of globalization-based acculturation are discussed.

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1. Introduction

Given the increase in intercultural contact that has occurred in recent decades, acculturation has emerged as a central field of research within (cross-) cultural psychology. The majority of work on acculturation has focused on international migrants (e.g., immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers; Sam & Berry, 2010). However, exposure to globalization may also induce acculturative change (Arnett, 2002; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011) In conceptualizing acculturation as a process instigated by both international migration and globalization, acculturation has been defined as "what happens when groups or individuals of different cultures come into contact-whether continuous or intermittent, firsthand or indirect-with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of one or more parties" (Ferguson, 2013). Globalization-based and remote acculturation may represent a different form of cultural change from the immigration-based acculturation that has been traditionally studied (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Here we include internal migration under the heading of globalization, given that the current wave of rural-to-urban migration has occurred largely in concert with the rise of global culture.

Research within the dominant framework theory of acculturation psychology employing a bidimensional conceptualization and operationalization represents a strong advancement from unidimensional models where heritage and receiving

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cultures were placed at opposite ends of a continuum. However, the bidimensional model has some clear limitations when applied to culturally complex contexts where more than two cultural streams are prominent. Specifically, in some societies, a tridimensional or multidimensional model may be needed in cases where multiple cultural streams and/or complex globalization-based influences are present within a given context (e.g. Doucerain, Dere, & Ryder, 2013; Ferguson, 2013).

Advances needed in the field of globalization-based acculturation include an exploration of whether globalization-based acculturation in culturally complex contexts is best captured through bicultural or tricultural models. Research has suggested that, in some contexts characterized by globalization-based acculturation, examining only local and global cultural streams might be insufficient. Thus, measuring three or more dimensions may allow for tapping into more of the various cultural streams involved in globalization as a multicultural process (Benet-Martínez, 2012; Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012). In line with this suggestion, we argue that, because globalization-based acculturation in some minority and indigenous groups is more complex and likely involves more than two cultural streams (e.g. ethnic, national, and global streams), it is essential to compare bidimensional and tridimensional acculturation scales to investigate what is gained by moving from a two-culture approach to a three-culture approach. That is, just as Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) compared unidimensional and bidimensional acculturation scales vis-à-vis immigration-based acculturation, it is necessary to compare bidimensional and tridimensional scales vis-à-vis globalization-based acculturation in a multicultural context.

The aims of the current study were twofold: (1) validating an instrument for assessing globalization-based acculturation in Ladakh, a region in India that is attracting foreign and domestic tourists, and where many young people travel to other parts of India to study; and (2) investigating the advantages and disadvantages of adding a third dimension (orientation toward a third cultural stream) to the bidimensional operationalization of measuring orientations toward the local and global cultural streams. We expected the tridimensional operationalization to fit the data from Ladakh significantly better than the bidimensional operationalization would. Furthermore, we expected the tridimensional scale to be a better predictor of global identity as compared to the bidimensional scale. Overall, the present study was intended to contribute methodologically to elucidating the implications of operationalizing globalization-based acculturation as a multidimensional construct in complex cultural contexts such as Ladakh.

2. Acculturation and globalization from a psychological perspective

Acculturation has widely been measured and studied through a bidimensional conceptualization in which international migrants relate independently to both heritage and receiving cultural streams during the process of cultural transition. Given this operationalization of acculturation, Berry (1980) and others have proposed an orthogonal theory including four acculturation orientations, each of which is defined by maintenance or discarding of the heritage cultural stream and adoption or rejection of the receiving cultural stream. These four categories are (1) assimilation (discarding one's cultural heritage and adopting the receiving cultural stream); (2) integration (also termed biculturalism; high orientation toward both heritage and receiving cultural streams); (3) separation (retaining the heritage and rejecting the receiving cultural stream); and (4) marginalization (rejecting both the heritage and receiving cultural streams).

Although the fourfold, orthogonal acculturation model has been adapted to refer to globalization as well as to immigration (Jensen & Arnett, 2012), it may be most applicable to situations where international migrants move from one predominantly homogeneous cultural context to another. This model may not capture the complexity that is widely prevalent in contemporary multicultural and globalized societies that are influenced by other cultural streams through media and internal migration. Extending the acculturation orientations within a tridimensional model assessing three interacting cultural streams would subdivide the assimilation orientation into orientations toward either or both of the new cultural streams. Likewise, the integration orientation would be subdivided into two bicultural orientations comprising either of the new cultural streams along with the ethnic cultural stream, as well as a tricultural orientation (Ferguson et al., 2012).

Globalization, understood as the proliferation of complex forms of connectedness that transcend nation-states and cultural borders (Tomlinson, 2007), has the potential to initiate cultural change in people who are not international migrants. Indeed, globalization has been presented as contact providing the starting point for some acculturation processes, and therefore it plays a similar role as international migration does in setting the acculturation process in motion (Berry, 2008). Young people in the contemporary globalized world do not become members of just one culture, but instead – to various degrees – have to negotiate multiple cultural affiliations (Jensen & Arnett, 2012). The intersection of acculturation and globalization has led to new advancements within acculturation psychology, termed globalization-based and remote acculturation (Chen et al., 2008; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012).

2.1. Globalization-based and remote acculturation

The distinction between immigration-based acculturation and globalization-based acculturation was proposed by Chen et al. (2008), following Arnett's (2002) conception of globalization as leading to a multidimensional cultural identity. The distinction between the two types of acculturation was based on whether acculturation was caused by international relocation (e.g., immigrants, refugees, and sojourners) or caused by the influence of globalization through direct and mediated intercultural contact leading to adoption of both ethnic/local and "worldwide" cultural streams (Chen, Benet-Martínez, Wu, Lam, & Bond, 2013).