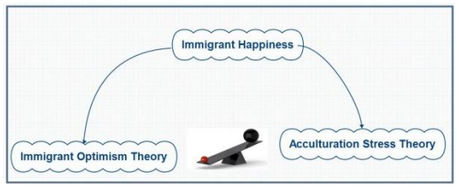
Migration to a Happier Life

The acculturation strategy as a predicator of satisfaction with life, resiliency & depressive symptom of Iranian immigrants in Canada

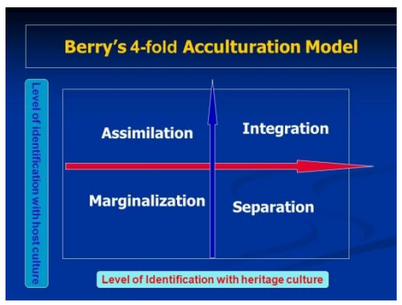
By Omid Alaei -

Objectives

As the number of immigrants globally has been increasing each year, immigrants' level of happiness is an increasingly important issue for host countries. Happy people were found to do better in nearly every domain of life: They had higher levels of productivity, physical health, creativity, and social ability. Therefore, happy immigrants may have better employment prospects in host countries and thus rely less on public health services. Migration to a new country may consist of numerous personal, professional, social, and financial stressors, each with a Life-Change Unit between 27 and 60, according to Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Rahe, 1980).



Immigrants may choose different acculturation strategies in order to adjust to the host country. Berry (2003) proposed four acculturation attitudes or strategies can be distinguished: Assimilation, Separation, Marginalization & Integration strategy.



This paper examines the relationship between happiness , resiliency and the acculturation strategy taken by the immigrant, making a new contribution to the literature by analyzing the subject through cross-cultural and positive psychology perspectives. For this thesis, it was hypothesized that less acculturated Iranian-born adults in Canada experience reduced subjective well-being and have less level of resiliency.

Methods

Participants

Seventy individuals - thirty four male and thirty six female - were recruited among bilingual Iranian - Canadian living in North York, Canada. Respondents were sourced through Iranian Community Center (Parya Trillium Foundation) and random direct contacts, a convenience sampling techniques. Within the sample, the minimum year of immigration was one year and maximum was forty seven years.

Measures

The following specific self-report scales were used in the current study. Items were presented in participant's first language (i.e. Farsi).

Satisfaction With Life Scale

SWL was measured using the 5-item scale to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression (CES-D) Scale

CES-D was measured using 20 items that assess frequency of symptoms experienced during the prior week (i.e., rarely, some, occasionally, and most or all of the time). The items are compatible with criteria for depression given in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). A scoring guide indicating items that are reverse scored is included. A score of 16 or above suggests a high level of depressive symptoms.

Brief Resilience Scale

The BRS is a brief self-rating questionnaire to measure resilience. The BRS includes six questions, with an equal number of positive and negatively worded items to reduce the effects of social desirability and positive/negative response bias.

Iranian Acculturation Scale

IAS is a self-rating measures of acculturation developed in Farsi to assess cultural identity, attitudes and language expression and preferences. A final acculturation score is calculated by dividing the total score by number of items. Response alternatives range from (1) low acculturation or greater adherence to Iranian values to (3) high acculturation or greater adherence to Canadian culture. The total score can also be interpreted based on Berry's model as score 1 represents *Separation,* 2 represents *Integration* and 3 represents *assimilation*.

In the present study, I aimed to address the following question: How (positively, negatively, or not at all) and to what degree (weak, moderate, or strong) is one's integration strategy (biculturalism) related to satisfaction with life, resiliency and depressive symptom.

Results

Correlations

		SWL	RES	IAS	CESD	Gender	Education	Age
SWL	Pearson Correlation	1	.273*	.369**	-.354**	.112	.031	.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.022	.002	.003	.358	.798	.403
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
RES	Pearson Correlation	.273*	1	.185	-.519**	-.211	.227	.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022		.126	.000	.079	.058	.894
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
IAS	Pearson Correlation	.369**	.185	1	-.120	-.008	.301*	-.351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.126		.324	.947	.011	.003
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
CESD	Pearson Correlation	-.354**	-.519**	-.120	1	.117	-.335**	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.324		.334	.005	.589
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.112	-.211	-.008	.117	1	-.285*	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.358	.079	.947	.334		.017	.575
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Education	Pearson Correlation	.031	.227	.301*	-.335**	-.285*	1	-.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.798	.058	.011	.005	.017		.002
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Age	Pearson Correlation	.102	.016	-.351**	.066	-.068	-.369**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.403	.894	.003	.589	.575	.002	
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70	70

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- The immigrants who respond to acculturation pressure with integration strategies will have higher level of satisfaction with life (SWL). Bicultural Identity Integration strategy will help immigrants to adopt the majority culture and cope with the everyday life stressors such as discrimination, negative stereotyping, intergenerational acculturation gaps and pressure of language barriers.
- The study result doesn't show correlation between immigrants level of acculturation, resiliency and level of depressive symptoms.
- The immigrant with higher level of education and migration at earlier age could report higher level of acculturation.

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