



Negotiating cultural Identities: A narrative study into identity formation of adolescent immigrants.

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ABSTRACT

Building upon Berry's model of acculturation (Berry, 1990) this research aimed to gain an understanding of the acculturation strategies used by adolescent immigrants to negotiate their identity. Previous research suggests integration strategy to be the most successful strategy in producing the best psychosocial outcomes (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005); the present research aimed to explore the extent to which this claim is true. The study used a qualitative design; six semi-structured interviews were conducted. Narrative analysis was used to analyse the data. This method of analysis was employed as it is 'concerned with how human life is storied' (Miller, 2000: 310). Four themes emerged from the data; these were negotiating identity through religion, barriers to identity development, role of discrimination and a bit of both. The themes are discussed, a model was developed and implications for further research are considered.

KEY WORDS:	MIGRATION	ACCUULTURATION	IDENITY	NARRATIVE	INTERVIEW
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Introduction

In recent years, the United Kingdom has seen a significant increase in the immigration rate, with over 583,000 people migrating into the UK in the year ending June 2014 (Office for National Statistics: 2014). The migration population has not only become prominent in the UK but has also spread to many parts of the world (van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004). This rise has led to a substantial body of research being carried out by psychologists (Schwartz et al, 2010) to enable an understanding of the processes linked to migration and the impact it has on the migrant individual.

Berry's (1990) Acculturation Model (BAM)

The term Migration refers to a process of social change whereby an individual leaves the country of birth and moves to another country for permanent settlement (Ostby, 2013), or even prolonged stay depending on the reasons for their move such as better work opportunities, education and so on. This process of change involves leaving social networks and experiencing a sense of loss, which can then lead to acculturation (Bhugra, 2004). Acculturation can be defined as the 'process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact' (Berry, 2003:305). According to Berry et al., (2006) there are four stages of acculturation: Assimilation, Separation, Integration and Marginalization. These stages have derived from two basic concepts, which are that, all acculturating individuals face: 1) a preference to maintain one's own culture, identity and heritage and 2) a preference to participate in the larger society with members of other ethno cultural groups (Berry, 2005).

The first stage of acculturation is assimilation; where it is claimed that an individual seeks to become part of the majority culture with little interest in maintaining one's own culture. Secondly, the separation stage is described as the avoidance of people from the majority culture and the desire to maintain one's own culture. Following separation, marginalization occurs which can be referred to as the isolation from both cultures; neither maintenance nor interaction is sought (Berry et al, 2006). The final stage is integration, which is also known as biculturalism (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005) whereby the individual feels comfortable in both cultures. According to Berry (1992, 1997) integration is the most effective strategy out of the four, which provides the best psychosocial outcome for the acculturating individual and in particular for young immigrants (David et al., 2009). This idea has been supported by research that found that bicultural individuals adjusted better in terms of self-esteem as the findings indicated that these individuals showed higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression (Szapocznik et al., 1980; Chen et al., 2008).

Although Berry's (2005) model has been very influential in the research of acculturation, it fails to take into account factors such as individual differences, which may act as a facilitator in the process of acculturation (Padilla & Perez, 2003). For example the concept of integration does not explain how individuals go about maintaining dual cultures and why certain individuals would experience biculturalism over others (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Individuals may seek different levels of involvement with the host culture and attachment to their heritage cultures.

However, the extent to which an individual acculturates will depend on their preference and personality characteristics. Some individuals may seek higher levels of involvement with the host culture and others might decrease their level of involvement with both the host and heritage cultures. To strengthen our understanding about why some individuals choose one culture over another, it may be useful to also consider the group processes involved in acculturation of migrants. To aid our understanding about these processes, theories such as the social identity theory can be employed.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) holds the view that 'individual behaviour reflects individuals' larger societal units' (Padilla & Perez, 2003:42). The theory postulates that identity is the 'tendency to extend the self-concept to include others in one's group' (Mana et al., 2009:453). It is best understood as a fluid concept but one that is dependent on the context and tied to social structural characteristics (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003). Although social identity theory does not specifically deal with identity in relation to migration, it does however comprise sub-theories concerning intergroup relations (Tajfel, Turner & Brown, 1978). According to social identity theory, an individual's self-concept is influenced by societal structures such as groups, organisations and cultures (Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2004), and upon identification with these collective units, the individual begins to think, feel and act as a member of a collective society (Padilla & Perez, 2003). People strive to maintain a positive social identity, which is derived from favourable comparisons between in-group and outgroups (Phinney et al, 2001, Brown, 2000).

The social identity approach considers an individual's way of thinking to be socially constructed depending on their groups of reference. For example, immigrants who perceive people to label them negatively due to their skin colour or lack of English fluency will be reluctant to acculturate. This could be due to their belief that such negative views will be held by people of the dominant culture regardless of their willingness to acculturate. Although social identity theory and Berry's model of acculturation are two different theories developed independently of each other, research shows a link between the two distinct approaches (Mana, Orr & Mana, 2009). A number of studies have combined Berry's (1990) model of acculturation (BAM) and social identity theory (SIT) in order to study immigrant identities as both theories involve intergroup processes (Mana, Orr & Mana, 2009). Research conducted by Verkuyten & De-Wolf (2002) found variables such as self-esteem and intergroup similarity to be predictive of acculturation attitudes (Piontkowski et al., 2000).

Previous studies

Other research focussing specifically on acculturation has made use of narrative methods to study this rather complex phenomenon of acculturation. A study carried out by Onishi & Murphy-Shigematsu (2003) conducted a narrative study into the experiences of Muslim foreign workers in Japan and their findings indicated that people adopted various strategies in order to help them construct an identity. For example Onishi & Murphy-Shigematsu (2003) found that one way of constructing

identity was to accept the dominant culture describing oneself as 'almost like Japanese'. Other strategies included rejection of the dominant narrative and maintenance of original cultural narrative. The research failed to find any support for integration strategy. Other research concerning this topic has employed more quantitative methods, for example, Berry et al (2006) conducted research into acculturation and adaptation of immigrant youth using a questionnaire. They aimed to find how well immigrant youth adapt to their new culture. They found immigrant youths preferred to maintain their heritage culture as well as willingness to actively participate in the new culture and society.

Most research in the field of cultural psychology has employed quantitative methods instead of qualitative (Chirkov, 2006). The present study aimed to fill this gap by conducting a qualitative study into acculturation and its role in the formation of identity. The study aimed to gain an insight into the acculturation experiences of individuals who moved to the UK from another country. It further aimed to understand how individuals living with two cultures negotiate their identity and the strategies that they use to make sense of their new culture.

Aims and Objectives

A vast amount of research has been conducted to investigate the phenomena of acculturation amongst immigrant adults but very little research has focused on how immigration influences adolescent youth (Berry, 2006). The present research aimed to follow the footsteps of Schwartz et al (2006) and focus on adolescents and emerging adults, as identity issues are more salient to individuals belonging to these two stages of development (Arnett, 2000). This research therefore aimed to gain an insight into the acculturation strategies adopted by adolescent and emerging adult immigrants to help them make sense of their new culture.

Research Questions

1. With respect to Berry's (1990) acculturation model examine;
 - a) The validity of the claim that 'integration strategy produces the best psychosocial outcomes of acculturation'.
 - b) To examine how Berry's acculturation model and social identity theory can explain adolescent youths individual responses to acculturation.
2. To examine, building on Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) work, 'how individuals who have internalised more than one culture negotiate their different and often opposing, cultural orientations, as well as the role external and internal forces play'.

Methodology AND Justification for Methodology

Design

The research design was qualitative, semi structured interviews were used to collect the data which was then analysed using narrative analysis. Qualitative research emphasises individuality and attempts to understand individuals' subjective experiences (Howitt, 2010). It seeks to explore phenomena of interest such as acculturation in context specific settings (Golfshani, 2003). The present study aimed to gain an insight into how individuals make sense of their new identity after moving from one culture to another. A qualitative design was therefore deemed suitable as it is mainly concerned with how individuals interpret events and makes sense of the world around them (Willig, 2013).

The influential models described and evaluated in the literature review (BAM and SIT) have mainly employed quantitative methods. Additionally Benet-Martinez & Haritatos (2005) also used questionnaire in their study on bilingual identity integration. Although the present research intended to build on research findings obtained using the two models and on Benet-Martinez & Haritatos (2005) suggestion; it aimed to do so using a qualitative approach. Research concerning the two models has focused on individual differences in acculturation strategies, which is an area that lends itself to quantitative techniques such as questionnaires. Whilst these studies have advanced our knowledge of acculturation by detailing the acculturation processes, very little attention has been paid to improving our understanding of the subjective acculturation experiences of immigrant individuals (Gonzales, 2006). A qualitative study was therefore considered beneficial in accessing individual experiences, which allowed the generation of meaningful data and empowered acculturating individuals to voice their experiences (Cross, 2004).

Participants

Using purposive sampling six participants were recruited; participation was voluntary. Purposive sampling is the 'deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses' (Tongco, 2007). Once the research question is set, the researcher then sets out to find individuals who possess the knowledge or experiences required for the research and are willing to share that information with the researcher (Lewis & Shepard, 2006; Bernard, 2002). Purposive sampling was chosen, as it is a non-random form of sampling which enables derivation of great depth of information from a small sample of selected units (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The inclusion criterion for participation was individuals who migrated to the UK during their early adolescence and had been living here permanently for more than 5 years. This was crucial to the study considering the fact that acculturation is a process that occurs over time. It was therefore important to allow individuals time to reflect on their experiences and make the important decision to either integrate into the new society or choose another strategy (Berry et al, 2006). Participants were aged between 18-25 for reasons stated above (see aims and objectives section) and belonged to different social and cultural backgrounds to allow the exploration of different stories and perspectives (Ostby, 2013). Although there's no fixed number of participants necessary in qualitative research (Fossey et al, 2002), the sample size is influenced by the time and resources available to the researcher (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Therefore, a sample of six participants was used in the present study.

Data Collection

Six in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted to collect the data; each interview was 30 minutes long because interviews in qualitative research produce a great amount of data that requires time for analysis (Runswick- Cole, 2011). The time for each interview was therefore carefully planned to allow the researcher to gain sufficient amount of data, which can then be analysed in the time available. Interviews were conducted in a private room at the site most convenient to the participants. All interviews were audio recorded using a mobile device. Semi structured interviews were a suitable choice of data collection method for the present study as they allowed the researcher to 'delve deeply into social and personal matters' (DiCico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) such as the formation of identity. Considering the present research was interested in identity formation, a standardised interview would not have been suitable to all participants due to the individual differences that existed between them and also as they belonged to different social and cultural backgrounds (Ostby, 2013).

Before conducting the interviews an interview schedule was constructed which served as a guide for the interviewer (Flick, 2002). The flexibility of the interview schedule allowed the researcher to cover the main issues as well as enabling the participants to talk about their experience without being interrupted. Participants were able to talk about their different experiences of moving cultures in a conversational manner. Face to face interviews were conducted as these help build rapport enabling the participants to freely share their stories and experiences with the researcher (Knox & Buckard, 2009). Prior to devising the interview schedule, a thorough review of previous literature on the chosen topic was carried out as advised by King & Horrocks (2010).

Narrative and Identity

Narratives are considered to be an ideal way to get close to the sociolinguistic experiences of individuals (Pavlenko, 2007) and 'offer a way of bringing coherence to immigrants fragmented and shifting linguistic and identity experiences' (Barkhuizen & Klerk, 2006:281). Since a narrative is another form of storytelling, it is proposed to serve 'as a lens by which to listen to identity formation' (Bazuin-Yoder, 2011:80). By constructing narratives, individuals are able to make sense of issues that are important to them such as identity; by making claims about who they are and how they relate to others (Barkhuizen, 2013). Research concerning narrative and identity theories has found both conscious and unconscious processes to be important in identity formation (McAdams et al, 2006). Identity is created through stories that we tell and by sharing experiences (McLean, 2008). Mclean et al (2009) argues that when an individual shares stories it enables a connection to be made between their experiences and self, which in turn makes up a healthy narrative. Narratives are never just about the event but 'include a range of evaluative comments which are of the main interest for identity work' (Hatoss, 2012:48).

Data Analysis

Once the interviews had been conducted they were transcribed verbatim and a narrative analysis was carried out. Narrative analysis 'refers to a family of methods

for interpreting texts [e.g., oral, written, and visual] that have in common a storied form' (Reissman, 2008:11). A narrative is a term assigned to any spoken or verbal text 'giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected' (Czarniawska, 2004:17). Narratives therefore serve as constructed templates used by people to tell their stories (Smith et al, 2009). As identity is considered a socially constructed phenomenon, it can be understood by reflecting on past experiences and understanding meaning of events (Hadjikakou & Nikolarazi, 2006), it is therefore safe to say identity is shaped by the stories or narratives we tell others (Sikes & Gale, 2006). In order to conduct the analysis, the transcripts were read on a number of occasions in order to become familiarised with the data. They were then analysed and themes were found which were woven into a coherent story. The story was then written up as a research report.

Ethics

During the conduction of this research, the BPS code of ethics was closely followed. The BPS code of ethics is based on four main principles: respect, integrity, competence, and responsibility (BPS, 2010). Before conducting the research ethics approval from university was gained through the completion of an Application for Ethics Approval Form (Appendix 1) and Ethics Check Form (Appendix 2). All the participants were sent an invitation letter (Appendix 3) and an information sheet (Appendix 4) detailing the aims of the study so they could gain an understanding of the research they were being asked to take part in. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point they felt uncomfortable. Informed consent was gained through a consent form (Appendix 5).

Furthermore, there was no deception involved in the research and participants' were made aware of the aims and objectives of the study. They were also informed of their interview being recorded and used for analysis. Confidentiality was maintained by removing personal details of participants from the transcripts. Once the interviews had been conducted participants were given a debrief sheet (Appendix 6). Participants' identity was kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, the data provided by the participants was kept on a password secure computer and only the researcher and the supervisor were permitted access to it. Once the study had been completed all the data was destroyed.

Social Ethics

Throughout the research, every effort was made to maintain social ethics. Social ethics refer to the idea of protecting the integrity of the society. Individuals' actions must benefit the society as a whole. In social psychological research, social ethics can be ensured through the researcher and the participant working together, 'acting in the best moral interests of both the individual and the community' (King & Horrocks, 2010:107). Keeping this in mind, we propose a number of potential benefits to result

from the conductance of the current research. Firstly, exploration of the link between acculturation and identity can help design interventions to provide support for immigrant youth during their cultural transaction. Interventions can facilitate the development of a positive identity and help young people navigate the acculturation processes as smoothly as possible. Additionally knowledge of acculturation strategies that produces desirable psychosocial outcomes could help government and institutions provide support and encouragement for immigrant youth to pursue that particular strategy.

Analysis

Following narrative analysis, four main themes were identified. These were: 1) Negotiating Identity through Religion 2) Role of Discrimination 3) Barriers to Identity Development 4) A Bit of Both.

Negotiating identity through religion

This theme was characterised by feelings of a strong sense of identification with one's religion. This was reported by majority of participants who felt religion to be the one most important thing that resulted in their successful acculturation. Arabiya narrated her experience of how religion helped her cope when she "felt left out" (L.147) and whenever she felt this way she'd pray to God which brought coherence and stability over time, Arabiya believed this stability was down to the power prayer, it was something which "had been given by God" (Arabiya: L.150).

Furthermore, in spite of the conflicting national identities, religious identity was found to provide certainty and reassurance to the acculturating participants. For example, Arabiya felt overwhelmed by her transition from one culture to another reporting that she had "too much going on at the same time" (L.127), and if questioned who she is she would say, "I am a Muslim, I am not German or British" (Arabiya: L.131). She had a clear understanding of her religious identity and the guidelines set by her faith and felt that this identity was the only thing she was certain about amidst all the chaos. Arabiya along with other female participants was seen to enculturate into the society through adopting the religion of her culture of origin (Matsomuto & Juang, 2004).

Moreover, majority of participants placed emphasis on their religious identity and found it to be a source of comfort during the tough phase of acculturation, "[religion] is what kept me going through the hard time and helped me come out stronger" (Remsha, L.125-126). For Meera, religion brought "positivity" and made her positive (L.200), she described herself as being both British and Pakistani but more importantly Muslim, "I am a Muslim and proud" (L.203) stressing her Muslim identity above others. She felt her religious identity to be the "one thing that has been stable all [her] life, it's one identity that hasn't changed" (Meera, L.204). Remsha who narrated being confused about what she was "Pakistani or British?" (L.113) also held similar beliefs, she reported being confident and certain about her Muslim identity as that was the "one identity that would never change" (L.138). This is congruent with past research, which

found Muslim immigrants show a tendency to keep their religious identity more strongly as a means for self-identification (Law, 2000).

Although majority of the participants interviewed for the research had migrated from Muslim countries not all of them stressed their Muslim identity. Research shows Pakistani immigrants were more likely to emphasise their distinctive identity as a Muslim compared to immigrants from countries such as Africa or India (Law, 2000). This view was supported by present research, which found differences between participants in terms of having a strong religious identity. Majority of participants who belonged to Pakistan asserted their Muslim identities and used this as a means to maintain a sense of control over their identity. Furthermore a difference between males and female participants was found, females emphasised their religious identity more than did males.

Role of discrimination

All participants narrated their experience of being discriminated against due to the cultural differences and the identity they carried. Nesdale & Mark (2000) found level of acceptance from dominant groups affect degree to which an individual will identify with the host country and the possibility of them integrating with the rest of the society. The narratives in the present study supported this claim.

Arabiya: “Some people were quite racist because they didn’t like that more and more people were coming into their culture (L.66-67) ... all these things together literally kills someone’s confidence like how are they supposed to become a part of it then” (L.211-213).

Research suggests that the amount of discrimination faced by an acculturating individual can influence their decision to accept or reject the receiving culture. It further suggests discrimination to be directly related to a desire to reject the dominant culture and become isolated. Interestingly however, this was not true for the participants interviewed for the current research and opposing findings surfaced from the interviews. For instance, Remsha felt the discrimination motivated her to change her situation and “turn it all around” (L.133).

Contrary to past research, it was found that discrimination could also lead to results that are more positive. Many participants reported feeling motivated to bring change in their selves, integrate with the rest of the society and “accept what it is” (Sam, L.90). None of the participants reported feelings of rejection towards the receiving culture due to the discrimination they faced, instead they showed a greater need to be accepted and “to do something” (Meera, L.174) to “blend in basically” (Hasan, L.119) so they could become an active member of the wider society.

It was additionally discovered that Pakistani immigrants did not only suffer discrimination at the hands of people from the host society but a greater degree of discrimination was received from the members of their own culture. Meera narrated her experience of coming across “some people that were really good some people weren’t as good” (Meera, L.68) in the majority culture. Interestingly however she placed more emphasis on people whom even though “were Asian themselves [British Pakistanis] but were brought up here” (L.69) were more discriminatory than the British people. Remsha also reported facing more discrimination from British/Pakistanis.

Remsha: “those [British-Pakistanis] who were supposed to be my people and I say that because they were from the same country as me yet I was made to feel more unwelcomed by them than the English people” (L.61-64).

This view is consistent with Schwartz et al’s (2005) research who found immigrants experienced discrimination from both members of receiving culture and members of heritage culture. Furthermore, they believed experiences such as this could lead to confusion in successfully being able to identify who they are and where they belong as well as causing difficulty in integration.

Barriers to identity development

Another important narrative that emerged from the analysis was the differences and similarities between heritage culture and host culture. Whilst similarities facilitate integration, differences can often act as barriers to identity development. One such barrier was found to be language proficiency. Language was emphasised to be an important factor that largely determines an individual’s competency to integrate into the new culture and be accepted by host society. This is evident in all of the transcripts, which voice participants struggle of acquiring a new second language and how this impacted their self-esteem and confidence.

It took Meera a long time to talk to people, even after three years of college (Meera, L.121) she only had one Bengali friend and she says she “wouldn’t even talk to Pakistani people” because she “lacked confidence” (Meera, L.122). Similarly, Hassan also felt he couldn’t talk to people because he “used to get nervous” and he would only “talk to a limited number of people” (L.72) those that he was comfortable being around. For many participants language difficulties lead to isolation and a lack of social connectedness. For instance, Tina felt embarrassed and “inferior” (L.199) to others in social situations because she was not able to pronounce words in the accent spoken by the majority.

For other participants such as Arabiya, learning a new language was a “big challenge” (L.69) one that determined the behaviour of others towards her, she believed “people be nice to you as long as you can sort of speak to them the second they realise you can’t speak the language it sort of changes their whole attitude” (L.69-71). Barker et al (2001) suggest that due to the inability to speak the language of the host country,

members of the host country might perceive this to be a threat and as a result withhold resources from immigrants.

Furthermore, participants reported feeling accepted by the society once they had mastered the language skills and were able to communicate fluently. They also felt this enabled them to become a part of the society and widen their social network, “one day I woke up and I could just speak to everyone and everyone was my friend” (Arabiya: L.93). People “started to accept” (L.80) Remsha once she was able to converse with them in English and she easily blended in (L.81). She no longer felt new into the country and believed being able to speak English allowed her to “become like them” (L.82). Fluency in language enables the acculturating individual to communicate and socialise, which in turn builds social networks reducing the acculturative stress (Oh et al., 2002). Language competency is therefore considered to be one of the major factors in determining the identity development of an acculturating individual (Weldeyesus, 2007).

A bit of both

The theme ‘a bit of both’ was characterised by a strong desire to maintain some parts of the heritage culture and take on certain aspects of the receiving culture as opposed to fully incline towards the new culture. This theme was a reflection of the integration stage of Berry’s Model (1999) (see discussion). Majority of participants reported feeling satisfied with being part of two cultures and felt they could successfully balance two identities.

Sam: *“I love being part of two cultures, having two identities I love it, am happy with it. Before I was neglecting my new identity, I didn’t know which identity to use, you know like for example going out, what do I class myself as but now I can balance it really well” (L.79-81).*

Hassan: *“No I can balance easily and am happy doing that am not confused at all, I feel both British and Somali” (L.133-134).*

Meera: *“Well I’d say I am both, British and Pakistani (L.202) I think balancing two identities in a way it’s hard but do you know I think with time you learn” (L: 135-136).*

Although the initial move from one culture to another was confusing, participants felt with time they learnt the ways of the new culture and so they were able to balance two conflicting cultures. The ability to balance culture of origin and host culture was reportedly related to optimal developmental outcomes with 4 out of 6 participants reporting it had a positive effect on their personality and social relationships. Moreover, It was interesting to see participants report they were able to control which identity they wanted to show through their social interactions rather than having to choose one.

Hassan: “Yes depends where I am, basically if am here I adapt like how people are and erm the culture (L.123-124)... so I choose what I want to be, so if am with Somali people I speak Somali and with English people I speak English” (L.125-126).

Sam: “I’d say I feel pretty comfortable now, why, because I know that that I can get both cultures out whenever I want to” (L.200-201).

Both Sam and Hassan reported they were able to exhibit the specific culture they felt comfortable in; they were able to switch between the two cultures and had the power to display the acts most suited to their needs and accepted by the society. Moreover, Sam was cautious to point out that his adaptation to the new culture did not mean he has “left the Asian culture behind” (L.169) it is still a part of his identity. Poppitt & Frey (2007) found that the sense of ethnic belonging is not necessarily reduced particularly when a person acquires a sense of belonging to a new culture. They further suggested that an individual’s ability to identify with their culture of origin primarily but not exclusively can be an indicator of successful adaptation to living with two cultures.

Furthermore, it was interesting to see exactly how participants balanced the two identities, this was linked to context, which included the home setting and outside environment.

Sam: “The things that I used to do back are still inside of me, but outside I have took on the British identity (L.172-173)...One is in me, the other I show more because I have to since I live here” (L.175-176).

Hassan: “Well at home I eat rice which is eaten mostly in Somalia and outside pasta, so inside Somali food outside English” (L.130-131).

Meera: “when I come out of the house I speak English wear different clothes to what I would wear at home (L.127-128), at home I wear Pakistani clothes because I feel comfortable” (L.130-131).

Participants clearly demonstrate that within the home environment, they eat/ dress accordingly to their culture of origin. Whereas outside they eat/dress in a certain way to feel a sense of belonging to the society. This allows them to develop an identity that incorporates the two cultures so they can enjoy aspects of both cultures, the culture of origin internally, and new culture externally.

Discussion

Following on from narrative analysis it was found that participants were positioned into three conflicting identities: religious identity, cultural identity and British identity. Negotiation of identity is therefore a fluid process, which occurs throughout the identity formation stage of the acculturating individual. Participants were found to continuously reposition themselves changing from one identity to the other. For some participants,

religion provided solace and a way to reconcile the conflicting identities. It was at the centre and closely tied to participant's sense of self. For majority of participants the two identities, British and cultural, were fused together to provide a more coherent, whole identity described by Dwyer (2000) as the 'hybrid' or 'dual' identity. For the Muslim female participants in particular a hybrid identity allowed them to bring together British and Asian-Islamic identities enabling them to dress according to the Islamic standards using both British and Asian clothing (Dwyer, 2000, cited in Loy, 2010). Identity was also found to be contextual and not fixed.

The findings from narrative theme 1 were congruent with Social Identity Theory (SIT), which postulates that an individual's identification with their group allows them to distinguish themselves and their group from other groups in order to attain self-enhancement and maintain positive self-esteem. Social identity theory further predicts that in order to achieve positive identification an optimal balance between motivations for individual uniqueness and for group belonging is required. Additionally, positive identification can also be achieved through reducing uncertainty by aligning one's self closely to a clearly defined group (Hogg et al., 2007). The present findings were in line with this theory as some individuals seemed to identify with religious groups more than groups representing cultural identities. It is considered that some group memberships such as religious identity are central to the self-concept and therefore may be particularly important in distressing circumstances in which an individual's sense of safety is under threat (Holt et al., 2005). In this regard, identifying with one's religious group may provide a source of stability (Kinnvall, 2004) stemming from a shared reliance on a higher power (Paragment, 2002).

Furthermore, findings from narrative theme 2 were also consistent with previous research, which posits that the amount of discrimination faced by an individual can be a major factor in determining their will to integrate with the wider society. Therefore suggesting that individuals who experience more discrimination are more likely to reject the receiving culture and would be more inclined towards maintaining their heritage culture (Yoon et al., 2012). However, in the present study an interesting find regarding this was the reported willingness to integrate into the society regardless of the level of discrimination experienced. Majority of participants reported that the high level of discrimination forced a desire to acquire knowledge about the practices and values of the new culture as opposed to rejecting it as a whole. This was a strategy employed to facilitate integration, which in turn lead to a positive outcome. This positive outcome was characterised by feelings of enhanced self-esteem, increased confidence in one's ability to be able to create social networks and improved psychological well-being.

In addition, another interesting finding from the narratives was the reported discrimination of Pakistani immigrants by their own in-group members. Participants who migrated from Pakistan narrated receiving hostile treatment from British Pakistanis more than the British people. It was found that this particular identity was subjected to more stigmatisation than compared to participants belonging from other groups such as India or Somalia. More specifically, the term 'freshie' was used by British-Pakistanis to refer to the newcomers from Pakistan. A likely explanation for this

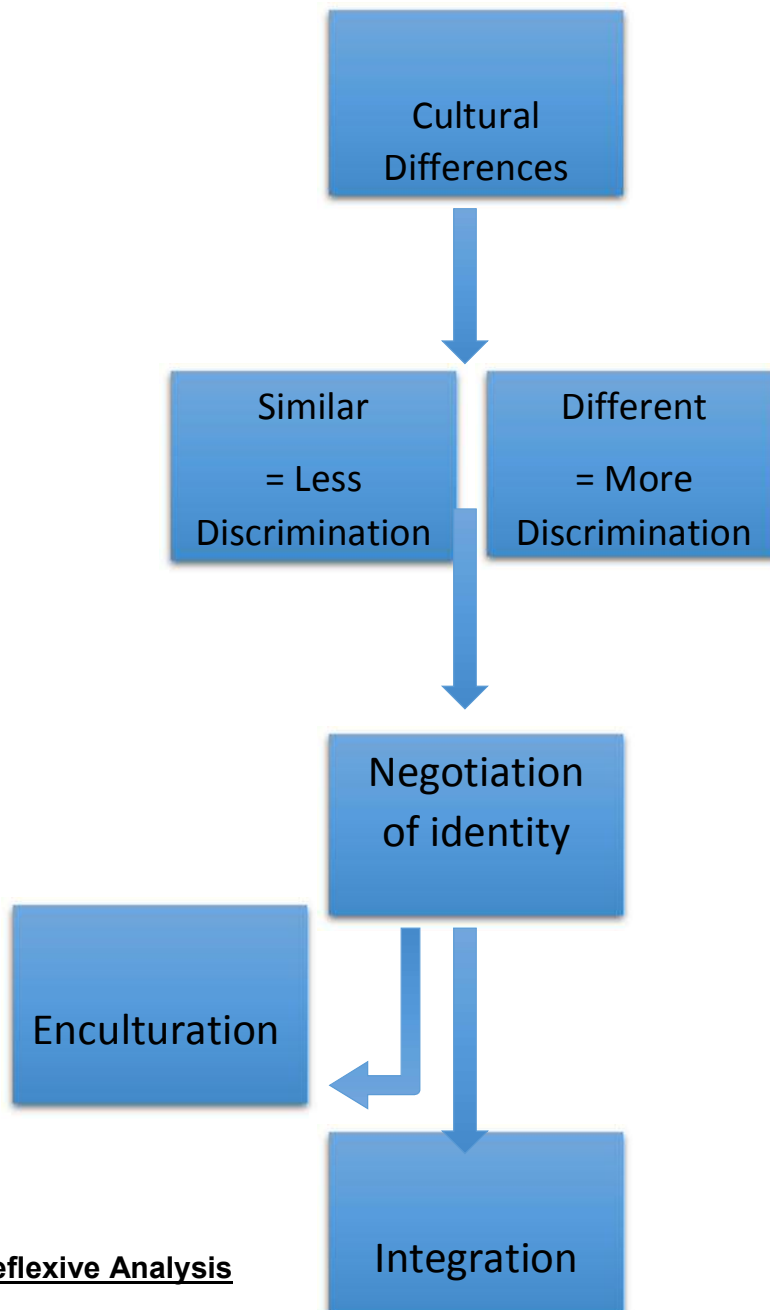
treatment could be the structural integration of British born Pakistanis into the British culture. Structural integration is a type of integration that is defined by “ones level of access to economic and educational opportunities” (Bhatia & Ram, 2009: 147). Therefore, individuals who are born in the UK might identify strongly with the British culture and see individuals belonging from Pakistan as out-group members. This can cause distress to the acculturating individual and make it harder for them to identify exactly what they are and who the in-group is (Mann, 2004).

Findings from narrative theme 3 revealed the importance of language fluency in order to integrate and create social networks. Fluency in the English language was found to be a factor that facilitates an immigrant’s negotiation in his/her daily life and broadens social ties and resources (Choi & Thomas, 2009). As language is a prominent factor in the formation of identity, it is therefore, seen to reflect a given culture’s values and beliefs (Zhang, 2008). Language usage and proficiency are therefore associated with social networks and acculturation. The findings of present research were consistent with previous research, which also found language fluency to facilitate immigrant’s adaptation into the new culture (Lu et al., 2011). Moreover, Bhugra (2003) in their study found that youth that had better facility of the host language were more acculturated in to the American culture. Yeh (2003) also found that English fluency facilitated assimilation of Chinese, Japanese and Korean immigrant youth into the American culture. In addition, Gong et al (2003) conducted a study on Filipino immigrants and found that strong English proficiency increased a sense of cultural identity.

Finally, narrative theme ‘a bit of both’ was found to be supportive of past research, which suggests integration strategy to be the one that produces the best psychosocial outcomes. It was found that majority of participants preferred to integrate into the society. This is consistent with previous research by Phinney et al (2006) who also found integration of the two cultures to be the most common type of identification in immigrant adolescents. Integration allows individuals to be part of two cultures without having to choose between them. Adolescents have a choice of integrating traits of two cultures rather than solely living by the rules of one specific culture (Suarez-Orozco, 2004). This therefore leads to improved sociocultural and psychological outcomes. As one of the aims of this research was to test the claim that integration is the most successful strategy for acculturating individuals, this claim was found to be true. Majority participants studied in the present research reported that successful integration had a positive effect on the quality of their lives.

Proposed from the current research is a model of acculturation presented in figure 1 below. Further research is needed to authenticate this model.

Figure 1. Model of Acculturation



Reflexive Analysis

My interest in this topic area stemmed from my own personal experience as I myself moved to the UK from Pakistan during early adolescence. This was advantageous to the research as I was able to build rapport with the participants, which enabled me to gain a meaningful insight into the participants' unique experience of moving cultures. As an insider researcher with similar experiences to the participants, I was able to make them feel comfortable so that they were able to share their experiences without any hesitation. I acknowledge that my role as a researcher may have influenced the findings however, I ensured that I conduct the analysis and semi structured interviews with an open mind avoiding researcher bias.

A limitation of this study was the imbalanced size of the participants as only two out of the six participants were male; this makes it harder to draw conclusions since a difference was found between male and female participants in terms of asserting their religious identity. Future research could therefore utilize a more balanced sample to shed light on these differences. Additionally, in the future a sample comprised of Pakistani immigrants could be studied in order to improve our understanding of the discrimination faced by Pakistani immigrants by their own in-group members.

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