

A review of organizational research on acculturation from a nonwork–work spillover perspective: Content analysis and future research guidelines

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Abstract

Acculturation has played an important role in understanding the behaviours, intergroup relations and adjustment of cultural minorities in their mainstream national culture. Additionally, organizational research has shown that acculturation is associated with a range of work-related variables. Prior reviews on acculturation have not approached the literature from this angle, which we termed a *nonwork–work spillover perspective* on acculturation. To fill this gap, we conducted a content analysis of quantitative empirical research to examine how acculturation from a nonwork–work spillover perspective has been studied in terms of its conceptualization and operationalization and what has been studied per its association with work-related variables. This review is especially important given the complexity associated with the conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation, which may affect the validity of the interpretation of research results in this area. We also offer recommendations for addressing the extant research limitations and provide guidance for future research on acculturation in organizational settings.

INTRODUCTION

[W]ithout the inclusion of acculturation as a variable, the explanation of similarities and differences in human behavior across populations would remain incomplete, since acculturation experiences have an obvious impact on most human behaviors. (Berry, 2006, p. 129)

As cultural diversity in organizations increases and managers constantly face the challenge of integrating cultural minorities and fostering intercultural relations in

organizations, acculturation emerges as a critically important concept in organizational research. Historically, acculturation has played a crucial part in understanding human behaviour and intergroup relations as different cultural groups increasingly interact with each other. Though not restricted to cultural minorities (e.g. immigrants, sojourners), acculturation often examines how they negotiate their orientations to the heritage culture and the mainstream national culture to adjust to their new or changing cultural context. Indeed, there is no shortage of studies that highlight the importance of acculturation and its effects on the psychological and sociocultural adjustment of cultural minorities (e.g. Gupta et al., 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2010; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Yoon et al., 2013).

Notably, acculturative changes also affect work-related variables, such as workplace attitudes (e.g. Leong, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2007), social relations in the workplace (e.g. Jian, 2012; Olson et al., 2013), task performance (e.g. Tadmor et al., 2012) and ultimately career success (Hajro et al., 2019). In other words, this perspective of acculturation in organizational research—what we refer to as a *nonwork-work spillover (NWS) perspective*—purports that one's cultural orientations in the larger nonwork societal culture will have spillover effects in the organization by influencing work-related variables. Thus, organizations should be concerned about cultural minorities' experiences beyond the workplace to understand their work-related experiences better.

Despite the relevance and importance of acculturation as a construct to organizational research, there is currently no review of the effects of cultural-minority employees' acculturation on their work-related behaviours and outcomes. This is particularly problematic because conducting and interpreting acculturation research can be complicated, with multiple and sometimes inconsistent conceptualizations and operationalizations across disciplines (e.g. Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006b; Broesch & Hadley, 2012; Lopez-Class et al., 2011; Matsudaira, 2006; Rudmin, 2009). Such inconsistencies may result in questionable validity of results; hence, not surprisingly, the impact of acculturation in organizational research is considered inconclusive (Shore et al., 2009). In other words, without a common language in the form of consistent conceptualizations and operationalizations, it is impossible to propose, evaluate or expand on theories related to acculturation and organizations.

Therefore, the purpose of our paper is to fill this gap and review the growing literature on acculturation from an NWS perspective. Specifically, we conduct a content analysis of quantitative empirical research to review (a) *how* acculturation has been studied in terms of its conceptualization and operationalization and (b) *what* has been studied per its association with work-related variables. In doing so, we identify current limitations of research on acculturation and, more importantly, provide directions for future research so that researchers can work towards developing a theory of acculturation specific to organizational settings.

ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is a relevant construct in multiple disciplines; therefore, it is not surprising that there are varying definitions of acculturation by discipline (Lakey, 2003; Rudmin, 2003, 2009). The long history of acculturation first began in anthropology before it gained significant interest in sociology and cross-cultural psychology (Sam &

Berry, 2006). In this paper, we adopt a cross-cultural psychology perspective on acculturation and present evidence for its importance for understanding human behaviour and intercultural relations in organizational contexts.

Commonly, the term 'acculturation' refers to 'those phenomena which result when groups or individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the heritage culture patterns of either group or both groups' (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). In other words, acculturation refers to the *process* where cultural groups change their behaviours, values and/or identities due to intercultural contact to adjust to their new or changing cultural context. However, these cultural changes occur not only at the societal/group level, but also at the individual level (or *psychological acculturation*, which we will refer to as simply 'acculturation' in this paper), where individuals rather than groups undergo cultural changes to adjust to their new or changing cultural context (Berry, 1997; Graves, 1967). Under this conceptual view, individuals may adopt and/or retain (and have a preference towards) the mainstream national culture, the heritage culture or other culture(s) across different settings. Examples of individuals who typically go through acculturation are immigrants, expatriates, sojourners and their descendants.

It is crucial to include acculturation in organizational research because acculturation describes how individuals' cultural orientations *change* to adjust to and interact with their organizational contexts. Recent reviews on acculturation in international business and human resource management emphasize the importance of acculturation in the career adjustment and organizational integration of international skilled workers and other cultural minorities (Gonzalez-Loureiro et al., 2015; Hajro et al., 2019). Nevertheless, little is known about *how* acculturation has been studied in terms of its conceptualization and operationalization in organizational research, and *what* has been studied per its association with work-related variables. Further, there is a lack of consensus among researchers on which theoretical perspective to use; therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions from extant research on acculturation in organizational contexts and identify necessary future directions for this promising research area. In this paper, we address these problems by introducing the NWS perspective and reviewing acculturation in organizational research using this perspective.

The NWS perspective

We define the NWS perspective on acculturation as one that examines the influence of acculturation of the mainstream national culture, heritage culture or other

nonwork culture on organizational work-related variables. The premise of this perspective is that one's cultural orientations in the larger nonwork settings have spillover effects in the work setting by influencing workplace variables such as job attitudes, behaviours and performance. Below, we underscore different theoretical reasonings for using the NWS perspective to explain the relationship between acculturation and work-related variables. Due to our focus on acculturation and work-related variables, we limit our discussion to these theoretical reasonings rather than, for example, the general mechanisms for how or why acculturation itself occurs or is internalized by individuals (e.g. see Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Ward & Geeraert, 2016 for these insights).

One main theoretical rationale behind the NWS perspective is that an organization's culture reflects its mainstream national culture (Adler, 1991; Alkharaji et al., 1997; Hofstede, 1991, 1999; Hofstede et al., 1990), and how cultural minorities adapt to their organizations should mirror how they adapt to the mainstream national culture in which those organizations operate. For example, Alkharaji et al. (1997) found that immigrants' adoption of the US culture was positively related to accepting the US organizational culture. Although organizational and national cultures do not always fully match, the national culture tends to shape the culture of organizations that operate in the country and that of its members. Because organizational culture influences employees' attitudes and behaviours, and thus organizational outcomes (Schein, 2004), it follows that one's tendency to adhere to the mainstream national culture and/or the heritage culture may influence one's work-related variables (e.g. Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009).

The NWS perspective similarly draws inspiration from social identity and categorization theories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), which has important implications for relational work-related outcomes. Social identity and categorization theories postulate that individuals categorize themselves and others into ingroups and outgroups and engage in ingroup-outgroup comparisons to increase self-esteem. These comparisons may lead to more positive work-related outcomes for ingroup members, but may lead to stereotyping, intergroup bias and discrimination against outgroup members (Dovidio & Hebl, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The similarity-attraction paradigm postulates that ingroups may be composed of similar others because individuals are attracted to those they perceive as more similar to them, which leads to higher social integration with similar others. Generalizing to organizational research on acculturation, cultural minorities who adopt the mainstream national culture (and consequently the

organization's culture) are likely to be perceived as more similar to other organizational members and as ingroup members, resulting in greater perceptions of 'fit' within the organization and more favourable work-related outcomes (Horverak et al., 2013a). This, in turn, may lead to more favourable coworker relations with others in the organization (e.g. Jian, 2012). Research also suggests that as long as the mainstream national cultural orientation is strong, a strong heritage cultural orientation may not be detrimental and may still lead to similarity with others in the organization (e.g. Jian, 2012). In contrast, a weak mainstream national cultural orientation may lead to perceptions of dissimilarity, producing less favourable work experiences such as higher discrimination and stress (e.g. Leong & Chou, 1994). This is consistent with previous fit research emphasizing the importance of the match between one's cultural orientations and those of the organization and its different entities (e.g. Edwards & Cable, 2009; Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2014).

The NWS perspective also draws inspiration from spillover theories such as work-family interference theories and role-conflict theories (Beigi et al., 2019; Bhagat, 1983; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kahn et al., 1964). These theories posit that occurrences or roles in one's life setting, such as a nonwork setting, may impact occurrences or roles in other life settings, such as a work setting. For example, Bhagat (1983) argued that stressful life events and personal life strains could reduce job involvement, performance and job satisfaction in the organization. Generalizing to organizational research on acculturation, mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations may have spillover effects in organizational settings and influence work-related variables. For example, combining role-conflict theory and conservation of resources theory (which describes individuals' motivation to protect current valued resources and pursue new ones; Hobfoll, 1989), Shang et al. (2018) argued that individuals facing more ambiguous family/work roles experienced greater psychological strain and required more resources for their work/family, resulting in fewer resources left for their family/work.

Although different—yet related—acculturation perspectives exist in organizational research, we focus on the NWS perspective.¹ In the next section, for the purpose of contributing to theory building, we synthesize previous empirical studies to examine *how* acculturation has been studied in terms of its conceptualization and operationalization, and *what* has been studied per its association with work-related variables. Concurrently, we identify limitations of the current state of the literature and provide recommendations for conducting future research on acculturation in organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking the NWS perspective, we conducted a content analysis of quantitative empirical research to review how organizational researchers have studied acculturation (how they have conceptualized and operationalized this complex construct), and what has been studied in terms of acculturation's association with work-related variables (see Table 1). The inclusion criteria were that the study must (a) contain quantitative data, (b) examine individual-level acculturation as a variable of interest and (c) investigate acculturation along with a work-related variable. Note that these criteria naturally exclude qualitative studies because such studies do not contain quantitative data and do not categorize acculturation as a predictor, outcome, moderating or mediating variable (see coding below). We excluded topics of employment status from our criteria (i.e. whether or not someone is employed; e.g. Gorinas, 2014; Nekby & Rödin, 2010) because becoming employed concerns events that occur before an individual enters an organization. We also excluded studies that used experimental designs ($k = 2$: Horverak et al., 2013a ,b), where acculturation was simulated for different experimental conditions (e.g. study participants were asked to read vignettes about hypothetical employees or coworkers of different acculturation profiles or watch videos where such employees or coworkers were played by actors) rather than measured among real employees or coworkers.

To conduct a comprehensive review, we did not restrict our search to any set of journals or publication dates and included all relevant literature available as of February 2021. Similar to other acculturation reviews (e.g. Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009), we searched for 'acculturation AND (work or organization or workplace)' in titles, keywords and abstracts in peer-reviewed journals found in PsycINFO and Business Source Premier. The search yielded 175 articles in Business Source Premier and 690 articles in PsycINFO. After reviewing our initial search, a total of 35 studies met our inclusion criteria of containing quantitative data, examining individual-level acculturation and investigating acculturation along with a work-related variable. Next, we coded these studies to determine (a) the acculturation aspects (domain specificity, dimensionality, real-ideal specificity, setting specificity and reciprocity; see below for more information) study authors used in their conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation and (b) the role of acculturation on work-related variables (whether acculturation is a predictor or outcome of a work-related variable or whether acculturation is a moderator or mediator of the association between two work-related variables; see below for more information). The list of the categories and codes can be found in Table 1 and they are

explained in the following sections. Each study was independently coded by two co-authors (the inter-rater agreement average was 92%). When discrepancies arose, the third co-author served as the mediator, and all three co-authors discussed the discrepancies until an agreement was reached and the study was coded accordingly.

HOW TO STUDY ACCULTURATION: REVIEW OF CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION

In this section, we review current organizational literature in terms of *how* acculturation from the NWS perspective has been studied: its conceptualization and operationalization. We do so by examining five main aspects of acculturation: domain specificity, dimensionality, real-ideal specificity, setting specificity and reciprocity. We derived and synthesized these five aspects from current acculturation literature and models (e.g. Berry, 1997; Navas et al., 2005; Schwartz et al., 2010). In our coding, we determined how a study *conceptualized* acculturation according to each of the above aspects (e.g. for domain specificity, whether the study conceptualized acculturation in terms of changes in behaviours, values and/or identities) by analysing the acculturation definition provided and used throughout the study. We determined how a study *operationalized* acculturation according to each aspect by analysing the acculturation measure administered (e.g. scale items, score computation) in the study. For each acculturation aspect, we (1) describe its conceptualization and operationalization based on existing acculturation literature, (2) review and summarize our corresponding findings in organizational research and (3) propose recommendations for expansion in future research (see Table 2).

Domain specificity

Description

Acculturation includes changes in different domains, and domain specificity points to *what* cultural elements, such as behaviours, values and/or identities, are changing during the process of acculturation (Sam & Berry, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2010; Zane & Mak, 2003). Though we acknowledge the broadness of cultural domains, we restrict our discussion to behaviours, values and identities as per much of the literature (Schwartz et al., 2010) and for the sake of parsimony. The behavioural domain is the most frequently studied in acculturation research (Sam & Berry, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2010), and it refers to the social and intercultural activities and skills related to effective

TABLE 1 A qualitative review of current empirical research in terms of conceptualization, operationalization and association with work-related variables

	Conceptualization (based on study's definition and use)				Operationalization (based on measurement instrument)				Association
	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Reciprocity (who is changing)	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Role with work-related variables	
Alkharaji et al. (1997)	Behaviours and values	Real	Both nonwork and work settings	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Real	Both nonwork and work settings	Predictor	
Au et al. (1998)	Behaviours and identities	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Both real and ideal	Both nonwork and work settings	Predictor	
Bernardo et al. (2018)	Unspecified/vague	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Non-setting specific	Outcome	
Booth-Kewley et al. (1993)	Behaviours and values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Ea et al. (2008)	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Galvez et al. (2015)	Unspecified/vague	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Gassman-Phes (2015)	Unspecified/vague	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Non-setting specific	Moderator	
Gheorghiu and Stephens (2016)	Unspecified/vague	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Both real and ideal	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Gillespie et al. (2010)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural majority	Behaviours, identities and values	Other (in terms of similarity)	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Gomez (2003)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Jackson et al. (2011)	Identities	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours	Real	Non-setting specific	Mediator	
Jian (2012)	Behaviours and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Kim-Jo et al. (2010)	Values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural majority and minority	Identities	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Conceptualization (based on study's definition and use)				Operationalization (based on measurement instrument)				Association
	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Reciprocity (who is changing)	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Role with work-related variables	
Komisarov (2009)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Lee et al. (2018)	Identities	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Identities	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Leong (2001)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Lion et al. (2013)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Lu et al. (2011)	Behaviours, identities and values	Ideal	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Outcome	
Lu et al. (2012)	Behaviours and identities	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Lu et al. (2016)	Behaviours and identities	Ideal	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Outcome	
Manrai and Manrai (1995)	Behaviours and identities	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Real	Non-setting specific	Moderator	
Neto et al. (2018)	Behaviours	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Nguyen et al. (2007)	Unspecified/vague	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Nonwork setting	Predictor and moderator	
Oerlemans and Peeters (2010)	Unspecified/vague	Ideal	Work setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Olson et al. (2013)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Conceptualization (based on study's definition and use)				Operationalization (based on measurement instrument)				Association
	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Reciprocity (who is changing)	Domain specificity (what is changing)	Real-ideal specificity (actual vs. preferred)	Setting specificity (where it is changing)	Role with work-related variables	
Peeters and Oerlemans (2009)	Behaviours	Ideal	Work setting	Cultural majority and minority	Behaviours and values	Ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Rojas and Metoyer (1995)	Behaviours and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Both real and ideal	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Shang et al. (2017)	Behaviours and identities	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Real	Non-setting specific	Moderator	
Shang et al. (2018)	Values	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and identities	Real	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Tadmor et al. (2012)	Identities	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours, identities and values	Other (in terms of similarity)	Non-setting specific	Predictor	
Valdivia and Flores (2012)	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Predictor	
Valentine (2006)	Values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Mediator	
Valenzuela et al. (2020)	Behaviours and values	Real	Work setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours and values	Real	Work setting	Predictor and Outcome	
Virgă and Iliescu (2017)	Behaviours, identities and values	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Behaviours	Real	Nonwork setting	Moderator	
Wassermann et al. (2017)	Identities	Real	Nonwork setting	Cultural minority	Identities and values	Real	Non-setting specific	Moderator	

TABLE 2 Aspects of acculturation: description, main review findings and recommendations for future research

Aspect	Description			Recommendations
	Conceptualization	Suggestions for operationalization	Main review findings	
Domain specificity	Indicates <i>what</i> cultural elements are changing during acculturation. Mostly conceptualized in terms of behaviours, values and identities.	Emphasize what cultural domains are examined.	A mismatch between the way cultural domains were conceptualized and operationalized.	Match conceptualization with operationalization. Examine other cultural domains that directly influence work-related outcomes (e.g. decision-making processes, leadership and communication styles).
Dimensionality	Refers to whether one is adopting and/or retaining cultural orientations from one, two or multiple cultures. Conceptualized as unidimensional, bidimensional or multidimensional.	For bidimensional and multidimensional models, scales made of independent unipolar scales, one for each cultural orientation. For acculturation strategies, clustering or latent profile analyses are suggested.	A mismatch between the way dimensionality was conceptualized and operationalized.	Match conceptualization with operationalization. Move away from mean-or-median splitting techniques. Examine multidimensional models.
Setting specificity	Indicates <i>where</i> acculturation is unfolding (e.g. work and nonwork settings).	Specify in the acculturation measurement where acculturation is taking place.	Many measurement instruments do not specify the setting.	Indicate the setting in measures. Examine work-nonwork spillover perspectives.
Real-ideal specificity	Indicates whether the cultural orientations are <i>actually adopted</i> (i.e. real plane) or <i>wished to be adopted</i> (i.e. ideal plane).	Specify in the acculturation measurement instrument whether the cultural orientations are actually adopted or wished to be adopted.	A mismatch between the way real-ideal specificity was conceptualized and operationalized.	Match conceptualization with operationalization. Examine how acculturation may lead to cognitive dissonance and affect work-related variables when cultural orientations adopted (i.e. real) do not match those desired (i.e. ideal).
Reciprocity	Indicates <i>who</i> is changing during acculturation. It may include the cultural majority or minority groups, or both.	Indicate who and in what ways cultural groups are changing based on the other aspects of acculturation.	The majority of studies focus on cultural minority group members.	Examine both cultural majority and minority members, especially when examining intercultural conflict or work-related well-being (e.g. job satisfaction, work discrimination).

TABLE 3 Conceptualization and operationalization results

Aspect	Conceptualization		Operationalization	
	Frequency (no.)	%	Frequency (no.)	%
<i>Domain specificity</i>				
Behaviours	22	62.9	32	91.4
Identities	17	48.6	16	45.7
Values	16	45.7	17	48.6
Unspecified/vague	6	17.1	0	0
<i>Dimensionality</i>				
Unidimensional	7	20.0	12	34.3
Bidimensional	27	68.6	22	62.9
Multidimensional	1	2.9	1	2.9
<i>Setting specificity</i>				
Nonwork setting	18	51.4	17	48.6
Work setting	16	45.7	1	2.9
Both nonwork and work settings	1	2.9	2	5.7
Non-setting specific	0	0	15	42.9
<i>Real-ideal specificity</i>				
Real	29	82.9	19	54.9
Ideal	6	17.1	6	17.1
Both real and ideal	0	0	8	22.9
Other/not clear	0	0	2	5.7
<i>Reciprocity</i>				
Cultural minority	27	77.1	–	–
Cultural majority	1	2.9	–	–
Both cultural majority and minority	7	20.0	–	–

Note: $N = 35$. Some sections do not add up to 35 because some dimensions were studied concurrently.

interactions (e.g. communication styles, language competence, social affiliations, adoption of norms and rules) (Sam & Berry, 2010). In contrast, the values domain refers to both ‘cultural’ values that generalize across ethnic groups (e.g. individualism and collectivism) and those that are considered ethnic-specific (e.g. communalism, familism, humility) (Schwartz et al., 2010). Finally, the identity domain refers to the sense of belonging to one’s social group (e.g. ethnic identity; Berry, 1997; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

These three domains are conceptually and empirically related, yet distinct (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Rudmin, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2010). For example, acculturation domains may vary independently of one another (e.g. socializing with others does not necessarily mean adopting their values or identifying with them, or high levels of language proficiency does not guarantee adherence to cultural values; Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Selmer & de Leon, 1993; Tsai et al., 2002) and may differ in their rate of devel-

opment (e.g. behaviours in the form of language use may occur faster than changes in values; Kim et al., 1999; Yoon et al., 2020). For this reason, it is important to indicate the domain of interest when conceptualizing and operationalizing the domain-specificity aspect of acculturation.

Review

Table 3 shows a summary of our results regarding how acculturation is conceptualized and operationalized in organizational research. It was not possible to determine the acculturation domains under investigation in some studies (17.1%) because they used general, vague or unspecified terms (e.g. using only the term ‘culture’) instead of specific cultural domains to conceptualize acculturation. Based on only the studies for which we could code for domain specificity, and similar to other interdisciplinary reviews (Sam & Berry, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2010), our results showed that most studies (62.9%)

conceptualized acculturation in terms of the behavioural domain followed by identities (48.6%) and values (45.7%). These three domains were examined independently in some studies (31.4%), though some examined them conjunctively (68.6%). For example, all three domains were examined conjunctively in eight (22.9%) of the studies, and 10 (28.6%) studies studied a pair of these three domains (e.g. behaviours and identities).

In terms of the operationalization of the domain-specific aspect of acculturation, most measurement scales contained items related to behaviours (91.4%), followed by items related to values (48.6%) and identities (45.7%). Out of these measurement scales, 16 (45.7%) included items related to two domains, and seven (20.0%) measures included items containing all three domains. Interestingly, our results indicate a mismatch between the way cultural domains were conceptualized and how they were operationalized in the measure. That is, the measure did not include, included more or included fewer cultural domains than the ones theorized in the conceptualization. For example, although Gomez (2003) conceptualized acculturation in terms of the domains of behaviours, values and identification, the measure used to operationalize acculturation assessed mostly the behavioural domain (language use, media and ethnic relations).

Recommendations

Based on our review of the conceptualization and operationalization of the domain specificity of acculturation, we recommend specifying the domain(s) (e.g. behaviours, values and identities) under study and aligning conceptualization with operationalization by selecting appropriate measures (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009). The cultural domains should meaningfully relate to the work-related variables of interest based on theory (e.g. Taras et al., 2013). We also recommend avoiding proxies (e.g. length of residence; see Cabassa, 2003; Rudmin, 2009) because demographic variables are not accurate reflections of one's acculturation. In addition, organizational researchers can expand on the domain specificity of acculturation by examining other domains such as work-specific domains (Doucerain, 2019). For example, Jaffe et al. (2018) found that acculturation may apply to immigrants' business ethic attitudes (values domain), given the relationship between culture and ethics. Future studies may similarly look at other work-specific changes in the behavioural domain, such as leadership and communication styles. In addition, researchers can examine additional domains, such as decision-making processes, which occur in the cognitive domain.

Dimensionality

Description

Dimensionality refers to whether one's acculturation concerns one, two or more cultures. Early literature on acculturation suggested a unidimensional approach (e.g. Gordon, 1964; Graves, 1967), where individuals adopt the mainstream national culture while discarding their heritage culture (i.e. assimilation). However, such an approach represents an oversimplification of the acculturation process (Alba & Nee, 1997; Sam, 2006), and the unidimensional approach has since been rejected. Instead, most acculturation research adopts a bidimensional approach where cultural orientations to the mainstream national culture and heritage culture are assumed to change independently from each other (e.g. Berry, 1994; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Gupta et al., 2013; Ryder et al., 2000; Schwartz et al., 2010). That is, under a bidimensional view, individuals can adopt the mainstream national culture without necessarily rejecting their heritage culture.

Berry's (1994, 1995, 1997) framework is one of the most influential in research on acculturation depicting the bidimensional aspect of acculturation. Berry's framework is a 2×2 framework with two axes: orientation to the mainstream national culture and orientation to the heritage culture. The two axes cross to form four acculturation strategies (Berry, 1994, 1995, 1997), which are 'the various ways that groups and individuals seek to engage the acculturation process' (Berry, 2013, p. 58). The four acculturation strategies are integration (strong orientation to the mainstream national culture and weak orientation to the heritage culture), assimilation (strong orientation to the mainstream national culture only), separation (strong orientation to the heritage culture only) and marginalization (weak orientations to the mainstream national culture and heritage cultures; note that with marginalization, it is possible to have a strong orientation to a culture that is not the mainstream national or heritage culture). Even though this typology is not without its criticisms (e.g. Lazarus, 1997; Rudmin, 2003) and limitations (e.g. Gonzalez-Loureiro et al., 2015; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Ward, 2008), it is the most widely known component of Berry's theory and is widely embraced in psychology (Yoon et al., 2013).

Although most researchers conceptualize acculturation as a bidimensional process, more recent literature has suggested that a multidimensional approach is also possible (Doucerain, 2019; Doucerain et al., 2013; Gonzalez-Loureiro et al., 2015; Harush et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2018; van de Vijver, 2015; Vora et al., 2019). The multidimensional approach argues that individuals may internalize

other cultures in addition to the mainstream national culture and the heritage culture. It may also be that a single culture such as that of the mainstream national culture may not easily be defined (Caprar et al., 2015), or hybrids of cultures may exist (Martin & Shao, 2016; West et al., 2017). These approaches open room for concepts such as global, multiple or inclusive identities that a bidimensional approach does not accurately capture (van de Vijver, 2015).

To operationalize the dimensionality of acculturation, the current literature suggests using bidimensional scales made of two independent unipolar subscales, one for each cultural orientation (see Rudmin, 2009 for a discussion and examples). For instance, in terms of identity, researchers should separately measure the extent to which an individual identifies with the heritage group and with the mainstream national group. Scales made of bipolar items with the heritage group on one end and the mainstream national group on the other (e.g. an item ranging from 'I most likely identify as part of my ethnic group' to 'I most likely identify as part of the cultural majority group'), or ipsative scales composed of forced-choice items (e.g. in terms of identity, an item containing the options 'ethnic group', 'cultural majority group', 'neither'), result in biased and double-barrelled items that reflect the unidimensional rather than the bidimensional approach to acculturation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006a; Cabassa, 2003; Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Matsudaira, 2006; Rudmin, 2003, 2009). Conceptualizing multidimensional models of acculturation may also be assessed through multiple subscales made of independent unipolar scales for each cultural orientation (e.g. Lee et al., 2018). However, more research is needed (van de Vijver, 2015).

An alternative approach is to operationalize bidimensional models of acculturation by categorically creating acculturation strategies (e.g. integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization) using the two dimensions of acculturation (i.e. mainstream national culture and heritage culture). One popular way is through a 'split' approach based on mean, median or scalar values of the two dimensions of acculturation (high vs. low). However, the 'split' method has been criticized on conceptual and statistical grounds (Rudmin, 2003; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2010) because it may produce inconsistent results across studies. Another more recent alternative is cluster analyses (e.g. Nieri et al., 2011) or latent profile analyses (e.g. Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). In sum, the bidimensional aspect of acculturation should be operationalized either by its separate dimensions or by its categorization into acculturation strategies using clustering or latent profile analyses.

Review

Our results show that most studies conceptualized acculturation as bidimensional (68.6%), whereas only some considered it unidimensional (20.0%) and one (2.9%) considered it multidimensional (see Table 3). The measures used to operationalize acculturation were somewhat inconsistent with their conceptualization, with most being bidimensional (62.9%), only some being unidimensional (34.3%) and one (2.9%) being multidimensional. A major problem we found in the measurement scales was that many studies operationalized bidimensional conceptualizations of acculturation with bipolar items, which signal a unidimensional operationalization of acculturation, instead of using the more appropriate unipolar items for each dimension (see Rudmin, 2009).ⁱⁱ In other words, although most researchers recognize that acculturation is a bidimensional rather than a unidimensional process, they do not always measure it bidimensionally, resorting to outdated unidimensional scales. These results suggest a mismatch between conceptualization and operationalization. Furthermore, about half of the studies (45.7%) operationalized acculturation with some form of acculturation strategies, and half of those (50%) used a mean or median split approach to do so.

Recommendations

Based on our review of the conceptualization and operationalization of the dimensionality of acculturation, we recommend (a) matching the conceptualization with the operationalization of dimensionality and (b) moving away from traditional mean- or median-splitting techniques when operationalizing acculturation strategies. We also suggest further examining multidimensional models as a way to expand the dimensionality aspect of acculturation. Although acculturation research has recently recognized the importance of a multidimensional approach (Doucerain, 2019; Doucerain et al., 2013; Ferguson et al., 2012; Harush et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2018; van de Vijver, 2015; Vora et al., 2019), only one study in our review adopted a multidimensional approach. The multidimensional approach is a promising approach to study the identity domain of acculturation (Lee et al., 2018; Vora et al., 2019); therefore, a multidimensional approach may also be beneficial when studying other domains of acculturation, such as behaviours and values. Equally important would be to consider appropriate methods to operationalize multidimensional models of acculturation (van de Vijver, 2015). For example, Lee et al. (2018) utilized

a polynomial regression along with a response-surface method and moderated polynomial regression to examine the simultaneous effect of home, host and global identities and their possible interactions.

Setting specificity

Description

Acculturation occurs in multiple settings, and setting specificity refers to *where* acculturation is unfolding. Setting specificity denotes that acculturative changes are not fixed and may occur differently depending on the setting (e.g. Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007; Horenczyk, 1997; Phalet & Kopic, 2006; van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004). Instances of settings include a public or work setting (e.g. organizational) and a private or nonwork setting (e.g. family and friends). For example, individuals may emphasize the mainstream national culture (an integration or assimilation strategy) in a work setting to function effectively but may emphasize the heritage culture (an integration or separation strategy) in a private setting (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004; Oerlemans & Peeters, 2010).

The operationalization of setting specificity should involve outlining in the acculturation measurement where acculturation is taking place. For example, in terms of behaviours, the researcher can point out where the desired behaviours take place (e.g. 'At your organization, to what extent do you socialize with people from your ethnic group?'). Not specifying the setting of interest may lead to ambiguous results because individuals acculturate differently based on the setting at hand (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004; Navas et al., 2005).

Review

About half (51.4%) of the studies conceptualized acculturation in general in a nonwork setting. Sixteen (45.7%) studies explicitly conceptualized acculturation as occurring in a work setting (i.e. individuals adopting and retaining their nonwork cultural orientations in the workplace and its influence on work-related variables). Only one study (2.9%) examined both nonwork and work settings. In terms of operationalization, almost half of these studies used measures or items in the measure that did not indicate the setting of acculturation (i.e. non-setting-specific, 42.9%), with only a bit more than half (57.2%) indicating the corresponding setting (i.e. either a work or nonwork

setting, or both). This creates a potential mismatch between conceptualization and operationalization.

Recommendations

Based on our results, we recommend that researchers explicitly indicate the acculturation setting in both their conceptualization and operationalization. For example, they can state the setting in either the instructions or measurement items to clarify whether the adoption or retention of cultural orientations occurs in a nonwork or work setting. Although the NWS perspective concerns the spillover of nonwork cultural orientations to work occurrences (e.g. influence on work-related variables), it is possible that work-related cultural orientations may also influence nonwork occurrences (for a review, see Beigi et al., 2019). Therefore, it would also be interesting to pursue a work-nonwork spillover perspective and examine how the strength of one's work-related cultural orientations has spillover effects in a nonwork setting by influencing nonwork variables. For example, future research may look at how orientation to the organization's culture may relate to better relations with family members and friends. Cross-cultural management research on expatriate adjustment may provide interesting insights into these issues (e.g. Moeller et al., 2010).

Real-ideal specificity

Description

Real-ideal specificity refers to whether 'acculturation' reflects one's *actual* cultural orientations (i.e. real plane) or one's *desired* cultural orientations (i.e. ideal plane) (Navas et al., 2005; Ward & Kus, 2012). Although Berry (1997) originally defined acculturation as attitudes, cultural minorities are not always free to choose their acculturation strategies or cultural orientations (Berry, 1997) because their acculturation may be influenced by the cultural majority group's acculturation expectations (e.g. Bourhis et al., 1997; Kopic et al., 2005). For example, in a work setting, behaviours such as contact and participation with members of the cultural majority group and language (i.e. speaking English) may be required, but not necessarily desired, to be adopted as part of the structural context (Luijters et al., 2006). In other words, 'attitudes are not actions' (Doucerain et al., 2013, p. 689). In the operationalization of the real-ideal specificity aspect of acculturation,

measurement items should outline whether cultural orientations reflect reality (i.e. real plane) or preference (i.e. ideal plane).

Review

Results indicate that acculturation was more frequently conceptualized as real (i.e. actually adopted; 82.9%) than ideal (i.e. preference; 17.1%). In terms of its operationalization, half of the measures operationalized acculturation as real (54.9%), followed by ideal (17.1%) or a combination of the two (22.9%). Only in two studies (5.7%) was this distinction not explicit in the measure. Overall, results indicated a mismatch between the conceptualization and operationalization of the real-ideal specificity aspect of acculturation. That is, some studies conceptualized acculturation as real but operationalized it as ideal or a combination of both.

Recommendations

Similar to other aspects of acculturation, we suggest aligning the conceptualization and operationalization of real-ideal acculturation. This real vs. ideal distinction is especially important considering cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), which posits that individuals experience discomfort when their actions are in dissonance or incompatible with their attitudes (for a review, see Hinojosa et al., 2017). Generalizing to organizational research on acculturation, cognitive dissonance may occur when the strength of one's cultural orientations (i.e. real) do not match those desired (i.e. ideal; e.g. Samnani et al., 2012). For example, subscribing to mainstream national culture's values and behaviours in a work setting due to structural pressures instead of personal preference would cause cognitive dissonance and result in tension and discomfort.

Reciprocity

Description

Reciprocity refers to *who* is changing during the acculturation process. More specifically, reciprocity refers to the idea of mutual change, where acculturative changes are not restricted to cultural minority groups but also extend to cultural majority (note that 'majority' refers to power and dominance rather than the numerical majority) groups in the mainstream national culture (Redfield et al., 1936; Sam, 2006). In other words, acculturation is a 'two-way street' (Celeste et al., 2014, p. 304), where changes occur for both cultural minority and cultural majority groups. However,

members of the cultural majority group may experience these changes differently. This is because the influence of one cultural group over the other is not equivalent. Usually, cultural majority groups have greater power and thus are denominated 'dominant' groups, whereas cultural minority groups (e.g. immigrants) have less power and thus are denominated 'non-dominant' groups.

The study of acculturation and cultural majority groups may come in two forms. First, cultural majority group members, like cultural minority group members, may undergo individual-level acculturative changes, where members of the cultural majority group adopt the cultural minority group's culture and/or retain the mainstream national culture in certain settings (Sam, 2006). The second form concerns cultural majority group members' perceptions of cultural minorities' actual acculturation and their preferences about cultural minorities' acculturation (Navas et al., 2005). Related to real-ideal specificity, incongruence or discordance between cultural minorities' actual acculturation and cultural majority group members' preferred acculturation of cultural minority groups may result in intercultural conflict (Bourhis et al., 1997; Florack et al., 2003; Navas et al., 2007; Piontkowski et al., 2002).

Review

Consistent with prior observations (e.g. Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Matera et al., 2011), our results show that most studies focused on cultural minorities (77.1%), and only very few focused on the cultural majority (2.9%) or both (20.0%). These results obscure acculturation's influence on cultural majority members' workplace variables. For example, Gillespie et al. (2010) found that cultural majority groups obtain higher promotions when adopting other cultural orientations besides their own. Failing to include cultural majority group members in acculturation research may also limit the understanding of cultural minority members' acculturation, because minorities' acculturation outcomes may depend on the preferences and pressures of cultural majority groups (Celeste et al., 2014; Sam, 2006; Van Bakel, 2019), especially in intergroup relations (Bourhis et al., 1997; Florack et al., 2003; Navas et al., 2007; Piontkowski et al., 2002). For example, Komisarof (2009) and Oerlemans and Peeters (2010) found that incongruence in acculturation strategies between cultural majority and minority members decreased coworker relations.

Recommendations

In operationalizing reciprocity and its conceptualization, we suggest considering who is changing (and in what

ways) due to acculturation, while considering power relations between cultural groups. Some researchers warn about using one-sided acculturation, where change occurs in one group only (Sam, 2006). Consequently, future studies should expand research in this aspect and include both cultural majority and minority perspectives if possible, especially when examining intercultural conflict or work-related well-being (e.g. job satisfaction, commitment, workplace discrimination).

Summary

In sum, acculturation refers to the multidimensional process (i.e. dimensionality; orientation to the mainstream national culture, the heritage culture or other culture(s)) of actual and preferred (i.e. real-ideal specificity) cultural change by cultural majority and minority group members (i.e. reciprocity) in various domains (i.e. domain specificity; behaviours, values and identities) as a consequence of intercultural contact in order to adjust to a given cultural setting (i.e. setting specificity). An accurate conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation should, at a minimum, consider all these aspects, and all five aspects of acculturation should be included in any theory regarding the role of acculturation in organizational settings.

Overall, although studies generally conceptualized acculturation accurately (i.e. congruent with acculturation theories), their operationalization of acculturation remains problematic. In other words, our results indicated a disconnect between the conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation. This is visible in all but the reciprocity aspect of acculturation. These problems, which are also found across disciplines, increase the difficulty of drawing inferences and comparing findings across studies (Bono & McNamara, 2011; Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009), and may imply that our current understanding of acculturation in organizational research is limited or even misleading. As mentioned by Miller and Kerlow-Myers (2009), these problems may have an 'adverse impact in terms of theory development, validation, and/or revision' (p. 375).

Based on these results, we suggest that future research properly conceptualize all relevant aspects of acculturation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006a).ⁱⁱⁱ A proper conceptualization allows readers to gain a more complete understanding of acculturation as a process and evaluate acculturation findings more consistently across studies (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009). Proper conceptualization is also essential because clearly defined constructs are the foundation for theory building in organizational research; construct clarity eases communication and comparability of findings (Bono & McNamara, 2011; Cappelli, 2012;

Suddaby, 2010). Construct clarity may also prevent the problem of mismatching the conceptualization of acculturation and its theorizing (e.g. a study conceptualizing acculturation in terms of behaviours or attitudes but theorizing in terms of identity).

After conceptualizing acculturation, researchers should properly operationalize it by selecting an appropriate measurement instrument: one that aligns with the conceptualization of acculturation (Celenk & van de Vijver, 2011). If operationalization and conceptualization are not aligned, then the collected data neither support nor reject a study's hypotheses; no valid conclusions can be drawn (Berry et al., 1986). For example, if researchers conceptualized acculturation as taking place in a nonwork setting (setting specificity), then they should also operationalize (i.e. measure) acculturation as occurring in that same nonwork setting. Because individuals' acculturation may differ depending on the setting, not specifying the setting may lead to misleading results. Similarly, if the study's theoretical foundation is focused on the cultural domain of values, then values should be part of the operationalization of acculturation. We refer interested researchers to previous interdisciplinary reviews of acculturation measures (e.g. Cabassa, 2003; Matsudaira, 2006; Rudmin, 2009; Wallace et al., 2010; Yoon et al., 2011; Zane & Mak, 2003; Zea et al., 2003) for details on the measures' psychometric properties and the aspects of acculturation assessed (e.g. domain specificity, dimensionality, setting specificity).

WHAT HAS BEEN STUDIED: REVIEW OF ASSOCIATION WITH WORK-RELATED VARIABLES

In this section, we review *what* has been studied in terms of the association between acculturation and work-related variables from the NWS perspective because synthesis of existing research could help researchers develop a theory for how acculturation functions in organizational settings. We do this by identifying the role of acculturation in organizational research (whether acculturation is a predictor or outcome of a work-related variable or whether acculturation is a moderator or mediator of the association between two work-related variables) based on its operationalization and summarizing research findings related to acculturation and workplace variables (see Table 4). For studies that operationalized acculturation bidimensionally, we discuss whether a mainstream national, heritage or a combination of both cultural orientations was related to work-related variables. Although limited, we also discuss studies that operationalized acculturation unidimensionally to provide insights on this line of research.

TABLE 4 Association with work-related variables

Role of acculturation	N	Frequency (no.)	%	Work-related variables
Predictor	35	25	71.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopting the organizational culture (Alkhazraji et al., 1997) Job satisfaction (Au et al., 1998*; Ea et al., 2008*; Leong, 2001*; Lu et al., 2012; Neto et al., 2018; Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009; Valdivia & Flores, 2012) Turnover (Booth-Kewley et al., 1993) Work-related intimate partner violence (Galvez et al., 2015*) Perceptions of work conflict (Gheorghiu & Stephens, 2016) Positions in upper management (Gillespie et al., 2010) Contextual job attributes (Gomez, 2003*) Workplace relationships (Jian, 2012) Interpersonal conflict resolution styles (Kim-Jo et al., 2010) Coworker relations—social support, social interaction (Komisarof, 2009) Leadership perception and cultural intelligence (Lee et al., 2018) Occupational stress and strain, supervisors' performance ratings (Leong, 2001*) Organizational commitment (Liou et al., 2013*; Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009) Work-related well-being (Neto et al., 2018; Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009) Mentoring and career satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2007) Quality of work relations (Oerlemans & Peeters, 2010) Work–family conflict (Olson et al., 2013*) Social support and work stability (Rojas & Metoyer, 1995*) Strain-based work–family conflict (Shang et al., 2018) Creativity, promotion rates and positive reputations (Tadmor et al., 2012) Perceived person–organization and person–workgroup fit (Valenzuela et al., 2020)
Outcome		4	11.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abusive supervision (Bernardo et al., 2018) Social support at work (Lu et al., 2011, 2016) Intercultural group climate (Valenzuela et al., 2020)
Moderator		6	17.1	<p>Relationship between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily perceived workplace discrimination and child family outcomes (Gassman-Pines, 2015*) Social context for interactions and perceptions of time usage for work-related activities (Manrai & Manrai, 1995) Mentoring and career satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2007) Workload and strain-based work interference with family (Shang et al., 2017) Job insecurity and well-being outcomes—burnout and mental health complaints (Virgă & Iliescu, 2017*) Perceived overqualification and job satisfaction (Wassermann et al., 2017)
Mediator		2	5.7	<p>Relationship between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainstream segregation demands and subtly racism and well-being (Jackson et al., 2011*) Self-esteem and scepticism of women's employment (Valentine, 2006*)

Note: Two studies simultaneously examined multiple roles, resulting in totals exceeding 35 studies and 100%.

*Indicates the study operationalized acculturation as unidimensional.

Review

Acculturation as a predictor

Acculturation has mostly served as a predictor of work-related variables under the NWS perspective (71.4%). For the findings reviewed below with acculturation as a predictor of work-related variables, researchers generally operationalized acculturation as a bidimensional and real process involving behavioural changes and operating in nonwork settings for cultural minorities. Research suggests that a *mainstream national* cultural orientation is positively associated with a higher likelihood of accepting the national work culture (Alkhazraji et al., 1997), lower perceptions of work conflict (Gheorghiu & Stephens, 2016), higher job satisfaction (Lu et al., 2012; Neto et al., 2018; Valdivia & Flores, 2012) and better coworker relationships (Jian, 2012). However, a mainstream national cultural orientation is associated with greater work–family conflict (Shang et al., 2018). Overall, findings indicate that a mainstream cultural orientation is mostly associated with positive work outcomes.

In terms of one's *heritage* culture, research suggests a positive relationship between a heritage cultural orientation and higher job satisfaction (Neto et al., 2018), and higher career satisfaction and greater mentoring from same-race mentors (Nguyen et al., 2007). However, a heritage cultural orientation is associated with higher turnover (Booth-Kewley et al., 1993). In addition, it is not significantly related to job-related well-being when controlling for other adjustment and demographic factors (Neto et al., 2018). In other words, it is unclear how (in what direction) a heritage cultural orientation is associated with work-related variables.

Studies investigating acculturation as a heritage cultural orientation coupled with a mainstream national cultural orientation (e.g. *integration* acculturation strategy) are usually inherently bidimensional because they recognize both cultural orientations: heritage and mainstream national. In these studies, integration is positively associated with higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower burnout (Peeters & Oerlemans, 2009) and greater levels of overall creativity, higher promotion rates and more positive reputations than those who assimilated or separated (Tadmor et al., 2012). Integration is also related to more complex conflict resolution styles (Kim-Jo et al., 2010), greater perceptions of person–organization and person–workgroup fit (Valenzuela et al., 2020) and a greater extent of mentoring as compared to those using an assimilation strategy (Nguyen et al., 2007). In addition, those using the integration (or marginalization) strategy are more likely to be in upper management positions

than those using a separation strategy (Gillespie et al., 2010). Further, cultural minorities' use of the integration, assimilation or marginalization strategy as compared to the separation strategy—when mainstream group members prefer that they use an integration or assimilation strategy—is associated with greater perceived social support from and social interactions with outgroup coworkers (Komisarof, 2009). Unlike the mixed findings with a heritage cultural orientation, it is clear that integration (being oriented to both cultures) is associated with more positive work outcomes.

In addition to the mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations (i.e. integration), one study also concurrently examined the influence of a third dimension, a 'global' cultural orientation, as a predictor of leadership perceptions and cultural intelligence (Lee et al., 2018). Results indicated that individuals with balanced mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations (i.e. when mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations are both low or both high; e.g. bicultural) were more likely to be perceived as leaders by their multicultural teams, and demonstrated higher levels of cultural intelligence as compared to those with unbalanced cultural orientations (i.e. when the mainstream national cultural orientation is high and the heritage cultural orientation is low or vice versa; e.g. monocultural), but only when their global cultural orientation was low. When individuals' global identity was high, the above differences were not apparent for those with balanced vs. unbalanced cultural orientations. These results suggest that other cultural orientations, in addition to the more commonly studied mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations, may also influence work-related variables.

Compared to the above studies on mainstream national, heritage or global cultural orientations and integration, some studies used the outdated *unidimensional* framework for its operationalization of acculturation (with low scores representing separation, middle scores representing integration and high scores representing assimilation). These studies found that assimilation (vs. separation) is associated with greater job satisfaction (Au et al., 1998; Ea et al., 2008; Leong, 2001), higher supervisors' performance ratings (Leong, 2001), higher organizational commitment (Liou et al., 2013) and greater social support (Rojas & Metoyer, 1995). Conversely, assimilation (vs. separation) is also related to greater occupational stress and strain (Leong, 2001), greater work-related intimate partner violence (Galvez et al., 2015), greater work–family conflict (Olson et al., 2013) and less work stability, whereas integration was associated with greater work stability (Rojas & Metoyer, 1995). In addition to these findings being inconsistent, it is uncertain whether the above findings on

assimilation (or unidimensional acculturation) are driven by a strong mainstream national cultural orientation or a weak heritage cultural orientation.

Acculturation as an outcome

As opposed to being a predictor, acculturation has been investigated as an outcome of a work-related variable under the NWS perspective (11.4%). Most studies examining acculturation as an outcome operationalized it as a bidimensional and ideal process involving changes in behaviours and values and unfolding in work settings for cultural minorities. For example, for Chinese immigrants in Australia, a mainstream national cultural orientation is predicted by higher social support at work (Lu et al., 2011). In contrast, the separation strategy is predicted by lower social support at work (Lu et al., 2016). Interestingly, for Filipino immigrant workers in Macau, a weaker heritage cultural orientation is predicted by higher levels of abusive supervision (Bernardo et al., 2018). For Mexican immigrants in the USA, an integration strategy is positive predicted by an intercultural group climate (i.e. the extent to which an individual perceives that the workgroup values cultural differences; Valenzuela et al., 2020). In other words, perceived support (e.g. vs. abuse) from coworkers and supervisors may influence one's acculturation.

Acculturation as a moderator

In addition to being a part of the bivariate relationship with workplace variables (predictor vs. outcome), acculturation has also been viewed as a moderator of work-related relationships (17.1%). For the findings reviewed below with acculturation as a moderator of work-related relationships, researchers generally operationalized acculturation as a bidimensional and real process involving changes in behaviours and identity domains and operating in nonwork settings for cultural minorities. For example, a study with Chinese immigrants in New Zealand found that acculturation in the form of mainstream national language proficiency moderates the positive relationship between workload and strain-based work interference with family (SWIF), such that the relationship is stronger for respondents more proficient (vs. less proficient) in the mainstream national language (Shang et al., 2017). In addition, mainstream national language proficiency moderates the positive relationship between SWIF and anxiety/depression, such that the relationship is stronger for respondents more proficient (vs. less proficient) in the mainstream national language. Moreover, a study with Italian and Spanish immigrants in Germany found

that acculturation in the form of mainstream national identity moderates the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and job satisfaction, such that the relationship is significant for those with a stronger mainstream national identity but non-significant for those with a weaker mainstream national identity (Wassermann et al., 2017).

Furthermore, a mainstream national orientation in terms of behaviours and identities moderates the relationship between the social context for interactions (low- vs. high-context cultures) and perceptions of time usage for work-related activities (Manrai & Manrai, 1995). Specifically, individuals from high-context (vs. low-context) cultures perceive a higher number of work hours in the day, but only if their mainstream national cultural orientation is weak; there was no association between social context and perception of time for those with a strong mainstream national cultural orientation. In general, expected relationships are stronger for immigrants who are more oriented to the mainstream culture than for those less oriented to the mainstream culture.

Examining both mainstream national and heritage cultural orientations, Nguyen et al. (2007) found that acculturation moderates the relationship between mentor's race and the extent of mentoring received for Asian Americans, such that same-race (i.e. Asian American) mentors are perceived to offer more mentoring by protégés with a strong (vs. weak) heritage cultural orientation. In addition, cross-race mentors from the cultural majority group (i.e. European American) are perceived to offer more mentoring by protégés using an assimilation strategy.

Operationalizing acculturation as unidimensional (ranging from separation to assimilation), one researcher found that acculturation moderates the magnitude of the positive relationship between fathers' daily experiences with perceived workplace discrimination and their anxiety levels, their children's externalizing (delinquent) behaviours and the degree to which father-child interactions are withdrawn (Gassman-Pines, 2015). More specifically, these relationships are stronger for fathers using the separation strategy than for those using the integration strategy; no fathers were categorized as using the assimilation strategy. In addition, acculturation moderates the direction of the relationship between mothers' experiences with workplace discrimination and the warmth of mother-child interactions. More specifically, workplace discrimination is associated with warmer interactions for mothers using the integration strategy, but it is associated with less warm interactions for mothers using the separation strategy; no mothers were categorized as using the assimilation strategy. Last, Virgă and Iliescu (2017) found that the assimilation strategy also moderates the relationship between job insecurity and

lower work engagement, higher burnout, greater physical health complaints and greater mental health complaints among Romanian workers in Spain, such that assimilation weakens these relationships between job insecurity and negative outcomes. However, as mentioned earlier, it is uncertain whether these assimilation findings are due to a strong mainstream national cultural orientation or a weak heritage orientation.

Acculturation as a mediator

Although more rarely, acculturation has also been conceptualized as a mediator of work-related relationships (5.7%). For the following two studies with acculturation as a mediator of work-related relationships, the researchers operationalized acculturation as a unidimensional (ranging from separation to assimilation) and real process involving behavioural changes and operating in nonwork settings. Focusing on assimilation (vs. separation) of a cultural minority (Hispanic Americans), Valentine (2006) found that assimilation in language preferences mediates the negative relationship between self-esteem and scepticism about women's work abilities, such that self-esteem predicts greater language assimilation, which in turn predicts lower scepticism about women's work abilities. Focusing on separation (vs. assimilation) for both cultural majority and cultural minority members (Black and White workers in South Africa), Jackson et al. (2011) found that separation mediates the negative relationship between segregation and subtle racism at work and well-being, such that segregation and subtle racism at work predict greater separation, which in turn predicts lower well-being. The lack of studies on acculturation as a mediator suggests the need to explore this opportunity more in future research.

Recommendations

Acculturation is a predictor in most of the studies reviewed, and we agree that acculturation is a meaningful predictor of important workplace variables: those reviewed and those yet to be investigated. For example, because acculturation is associated with intergroup relations (Bourhis et al., 1997), future studies may further examine the association of acculturation with variables associated with intergroup relations in organizations, especially between cultural minority and majority members. Examples of relevant topics to organizations include intergroup processes such as conflict, negotiation, communication and politics. For instance, it would be interesting to see if a mainstream national cultural orientation as opposed to, or in conjunction with, a heritage cultural orientation is asso-

ciated with different negotiation styles (Thompson et al., 2010), perceptions of organizational politics (Atinc et al., 2010) or types of communication and cooperation (Balliet, 2010). In addition, vast research on acculturation points to the relationship between acculturation and psychological and sociocultural variables (e.g. Gupta et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2011, 2013). Similarly, researchers may examine such variables but within organizations.

Another insightful venue for future research of 'acculturation as a predictor' is to further examine the influence of the acculturation strategy of marginalization on work-related variables. As opposed to other acculturation strategies, marginalization is conventionally considered as non-productive in terms of cross-cultural adjustment, and often associated with the most negative adjustment outcomes (e.g. stress, well-being), even when researchers have long argued the theoretical validity of such claims (e.g. Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004; Rudmin, 2003). More recent research has pointed to different conceptualizations of marginalization and its possible correlates as compared to other acculturation strategies such as assimilation or separation (e.g. Gillespie et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2018; Tadmor et al., 2009). This emerging line of research suggests that the cognitive flexibility and complexity of not identifying strongly with the mainstream national culture or the heritage culture may actually help individuals reduce negotiating conflicting identity and cultural issues, becoming more tolerant and open to others. Thus, future research may want to explore further, both theoretically and empirically, the potentially beneficial role of marginalization on work-related outcomes.

To complement the above research, we recommend examining contextual factors, such as national policy, organizational practices and cultural minority groups' sociopolitical history, as predictors of acculturation (i.e. acculturation as an outcome). Like in organizational research (Griffin, 2007; Szkudlarek et al., 2019), contextual factors are critical yet often overlooked in acculturation research (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Chirkov, 2009a,b; Vora et al., 2019). This omission is significant because contextual factors may act as a predictor of acculturation, influencing how individuals internalize, adapt to and retain cultures (Berry, 2006). Contextualizing studies may be done in different ways. At a minimum, Phinney (2010) suggests describing the local and national setting of the research conducted and providing information about the groups being studied, including their history and current status. Status, or status differentials, refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their cultural groups or themselves as socially disadvantaged (Liebkind, 2001). In organizations (a work setting), the role of status and its implications in terms of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination among different cultural groups are well established (e.g. DiTomaso et al.,

2007; Leslie, 2017; Paunova, 2016; Toyoki & Brown, 2014) and thus should be part of future studies' theorizing. Some factors that may influence status differentials and describe context include meaningful societal (e.g. political, economic, societal and immigration policies), organizational (e.g. diversity climate, organizational culture, HRM practices) and individual (e.g. immigration status, generation status, socioeconomic status, personality traits, motivation for migrating) factors (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006a; Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1996; Cabassa, 2003; Gupta et al., 2013; Hajro et al., 2019). Thus, future studies might examine how these factors may influence acculturation and, consequently, organizations. Because some contexts are difficult to capture with only quantitative measures (Phinney, 2010), it is also beneficial to employ qualitative approaches. Qualitative approaches are a valuable source of information in understanding acculturation, its context and the ways in which people from different cultures interact with one another (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Chirkov, 2009a,b; Matsudaira, 2006; Phinney, 2010; Rudmin, 2003).

In addition to predicting acculturation, contextual factors may also moderate the relationship between acculturation and work-related outcomes. That is, certain processes are more likely to occur under some contextual factors than others (Berry & Sam, 1996; Lopez-Class et al., 2011). For example, future research may examine if cultural minorities are more likely to be engaged with cultural majority group members in organizations with higher levels of diversity climate as compared to those with a poor diversity climate. Similarly, employees may be more likely to be oriented to both mainstream national and heritage cultures under such contexts.

Lastly, future research should further explore the mediating and moderating roles of acculturation. For example, acculturation may be a moderating variable, such that relationships typically found in samples drawn from the cultural majority population (e.g. a negative association between overqualification and job satisfaction; Wassermann et al., 2017) hold for those cultural minorities with a strong mainstream national cultural orientation but not for those with weak mainstream national cultural orientation. In terms of mediation, acculturation may mediate the relationship between new employees' socialization tactics and perceptions of organizational fit within the organization. It may be that socialization tactics encourage adopting the mainstream national culture, which in turn leads to higher perceptions of organizational fit.

We strongly recommend that future research on acculturation and its role in the work context study the phenomenon longitudinally. Although acculturation is a process of change that unfolds over time, most of the reviewed studies relied, unfortunately, on a cross-sectional

research design (e.g. Murray et al., 2014). Although cross-sectional studies are important and necessary (for a review and best practices, see Spector, 2019), longitudinal studies are better suited to study acculturation as a process of change (Sam, 2006), including in organizations (Gonzalez-Loureiro et al., 2015). With a longitudinal design, researchers can identify what has changed and how that change came about (Sam, 2006). For example, using a longitudinal design, Shang et al. (2018) found subjective well-being mediated the effect between acculturation and work-family conflict. In organizational research, longitudinal studies are also helpful in establishing the direction of causality among variables. Therefore, future research may want to adopt analytical techniques such as time series analysis (Jebb & Tay, 2017), which captures variance in cultural orientations across time, and latent growth models (e.g. Knight et al., 2009). As a resource, Ployhart and Vandenberg (2010) provide nontechnical best practices for developing and evaluating longitudinal research for organizational scholars. Some ideas for future research include examining how cultural minorities' cultural orientations may change before and after certain organizational events (e.g. joining an organization) or interventions (e.g. orientation and training), especially as a recent migrant.

Summary

Overall, our results indicate that acculturation from the NWS perspective may be an influential and important factor associated with various work-related variables. More specifically, our results suggest mixed findings for a heritage cultural orientation, but positive workplace correlates for a mainstream national cultural orientation and the integration strategy. This highlights the importance of being oriented to the mainstream national culture, especially while also being oriented to one's heritage culture (i.e. integration strategy). In addition, our findings indicate that few studies included acculturation as an outcome, moderator or mediator in organizational research. Importantly, the association of acculturation and work-related variables is still far from conclusive when considering the conceptualization and operationalization issues identified earlier. Consequently, our current recommendations should be considered with the previous suggestions of aligning the conceptualization and operationalization of psychological acculturation.

CONCLUSION

We reviewed the literature on acculturation from the NWS perspective to describe how acculturation from the NWS

perspective has been studied in terms of its conceptualization and operationalization and what has been studied per its association with work-related variables. While doing so, we provided best practices for studying acculturation in organizational research. Our results indicate a discrepancy between the conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation in organizational research, limiting the validity of its association with work-related variables and making it impossible to develop, validate or revise relevant theories; thus, we recommend that organizational researchers pay special attention to their conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation. We also reviewed the extant literature on acculturation and workplace variables. We end by proposing various ways to expand future research in organizational research on acculturation from the NWS perspective, with the intention of eventually developing a comprehensive theory on the role of acculturation in organizational settings.

NOTES

- ⁱ Per the focus of this review, we exclude different—yet related—acculturation perspectives such as those in organizational socialization (e.g. Cranmer et al., 2017; Davis & Myers, 2019; Morrison, 1993), which study workers' socialization into their job role and organization. We also exclude perspectives in organizational/group acculturation (e.g. Luijters et al., 2006; Rupert et al., 2010), where the referent is the organization (and its units) rather than the mainstream national and heritage culture. Excluded is also a multiculturalism perspective, which focuses on identity as a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to one or more cultural groups (e.g. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005; Phinney and Ong, 2007) and the internalization of cultural knowledge, values and schemas (for a review, see Vora et al., 2019). According to the multicultural perspective, the acculturation process operates similarly for anyone who has internalized more than one culture, whereas the NWS perspective emphasizes the differences in acculturation processes for cultural minority versus majority members. Lastly, we exclude perspectives at the organizational level (e.g. Cox, 1991; Marks and Mirvis, 2011; Nahavandi and Malekzadeh, 1988; Olsen and Martins, 2012).
- ⁱⁱ Details about the examination of acculturation measurement scales used in all studies are available from the main author upon request.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Importantly, though these aspects should be outlined, they should not set a limit on the conceptualization of acculturation based on theoretical foundations. For example, in terms of dimensionality, some studies recognized the bidimensional aspect of acculturation, but were explicit in examining one of the two bidimensional aspects only (adopting the mainstream national culture or retaining the heritage culture) based on their theoretical reasoning (e.g. Shang et al., 2017, 2018).

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