

# Major Approaches to the Measurement of Acculturation Among Ethnic Minority Populations: A Content Analysis and an Alternative Empirical Strategy

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Acculturation constitutes one of the most important individual difference variables in the study of ethnic minority populations. Acculturation involves the changes that result from sustained contact between two distinct cultures (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Psychologically, acculturation reflects the extent to which individuals learn the values, behaviors, lifestyles, and language of the host culture. Ethnic minorities have great social, economic, and political pressure to adjust to the traditions and lifestyle norms of White American culture. Consequently, it is not surprising that acculturation is often involved in the mental health issues of ethnic minorities. Important individual differences in acculturation have been associated with the willingness to use counseling or see a counselor (Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Gim, Atkinson, & Whiteley, 1990), personality variables (Sue & Kirk, 1972), educational achievement (Padilla, 1980), attitudes toward mental health (Atkinson & Gim, 1989), and the credibility of a counselor (Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Gim, Atkinson, & Kim, 1991).

Given the importance of acculturation to the psychological study of ethnic minority issues, extensive efforts have been made to operationalize and assess the acculturation level among ethnic minority individuals. Ethnic minority-based research has developed numerous measures to assess individual differences with respect to acculturation to White American culture. Primarily self-report in nature, these measures have assessed behaviors as well as attitudes related to acculturation. The behavioral and attitudinal domains have included language use, preference, and proficiency; social affiliation; daily living habits; cultural traditions and cus-

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This study was supported in part by the National Research Center on Asian American Mental Health (National Institute of Mental Health Grant MH 59616).

toms; communication styles; perceived prejudice and discrimination; family socialization; cultural knowledge and beliefs; cultural values; and cultural identification, pride, and acceptance. However, these measures also reflect the wide range of methods that investigators have used to assess acculturation. Notwithstanding the widespread use that some of these measures have enjoyed, it has often been unclear to what extent these measures have content validity—namely, the extent to which a measure adequately samples the behavior of interest. Some of this variation can be attributed to the lack of consensus in the field about which behavioral and attitudinal domains are directly associated with acculturative change. Needless to say, this would not be a problem if the domains were concordant such that individual variation in one domain directly covaried with change in other domains. However, Berry (1980) noted that the acculturative process and its effects on various aspects of behaviors and attitudes can vary greatly among different people.

In the past 2 decades, acculturation has become recognized as a major explanatory variable in the study of the psychological issues of ethnic minorities. Thus, it seems wise to more closely examine the content validity of the major measures that have been used to operationalize this important construct. This analysis should be informative in several ways. First, by studying the variation in domains assessed by different measures, an assessment can be made of the extent to which studies can converge in terms of investigating the same construct. Second, a content analysis of these measures may clarify the pattern of findings among studies of acculturation. Finally, the assessment of content validity can identify measures that may be more suited to assessing certain types of acculturation.

This analysis examines the various approaches to conceptualizing and operationalizing acculturation, particularly with respect to the study of immigrant ethnic minority populations. First, the various conceptual models that often guide the development of acculturation measures are presented. Second, content analyses are conducted on the most commonly used acculturation measures to determine which specific aspects of acculturation are being operationalized in various studies. Finally, an alternative approach to the study of acculturation is proposed based on assessing single psychological elements such as culturally based values. A case example of research that focuses on one such value orientation, loss of face, is presented to demonstrate the potential utility of this approach for studying acculturation among Asian Americans.

### **Approaches to the Assessment of Acculturation**

Approaches to the assessment of acculturation among ethnic minorities have differed in numerous ways. First, investigators have varied in their sampling of the domains of psychosocial functioning that change with acculturation (e.g., language use, social affiliations). Depending on the investigator, one particular area of functioning may be emphasized. Second,

approaches can vary in the assumptions made about change parameters that specify how ethnic minority group members can relate to their culture of origin and host culture. Some measurement approaches have assumed more of a bipolar type of adaptation. It is assumed that as people become more acculturated to the host White American society, the attachment to their culture of origin (i.e., the culture of their own ethnic group) simultaneously weakens. In contrast, other measures have allowed for the possibility that acculturation (to White American culture) and retention of one's ethnic minority culture can vary independently. Finally, the populations for which the measures have been developed tend to vary with respect to their psychosocial characteristics. A closer examination of each type of variation can help explain the differences in acculturation instrumentation.

### **Domains of Psychosocial Functioning**

Acculturation measures vary in the types of domains that are assessed for cultural change. The most frequently assessed domain seems to be the use of language, either a person's ethnic language, English, or both. However, within this domain are great differences in how language use is assessed. This variation is apparent even when the analysis is confined to one particular ethnic minority group, such as Hispanic Americans. With respect to this group, some measures primarily assess language use (e.g., the Hispanic Background Scale; Martinez, Norman, & Delaney, 1984), others primarily assess language preference (e.g., the Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980), and other measures primarily assess language proficiency (e.g., the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale; Marín & Gamba, 1996). Moreover, variation exists within these modes of language sampling. For example, even when language use or preference is sampled, measures may differ on the specificity of the context in which language is used (or preferred). Some instruments sample language use in general or across situations, whereas others assess use in specific social contexts such as with family members, at work, or with friends.

Another frequently sampled domain involves the people with whom an individual chooses to socialize and affiliate. Moreover, measures that sample social affiliation tendencies can vary in whether they assess only actual affiliation practices (e.g., the Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory; Ramirez, 1983) or affiliation practices and social preferences (e.g., the Cultural Life Styles Inventory; Mendoza, 1989). Daily living habits such as the types of foods eaten or the type of music to which one listens are another frequently sampled area of functioning (the Behavioral Acculturation Scale; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & de los Angeles Aranalde, 1978). In this domain, measures again can vary depending on whether preferences in daily living habits (e.g., the Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire; Szapocznik et al., 1980) or actual practices (e.g., the

African American Acculturation Scale; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994) are assessed.

Another domain that is often assessed involves a person's identification with a particular culture, either one's own ethnic culture or the White American culture. In this domain, measures can differ in whether they assess actual identification (e.g., the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987), cultural pride (e.g., the Cultural Life Styles Inventory; Mendoza, 1989), or perceived acceptance by a certain cultural group (the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-Revised; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Other areas less frequently sampled include cultural traditions; communication style; perceived discrimination or prejudice; generational status; family socialization; and cultural knowledge, beliefs, or values.

### Change Parameters on the Pattern of Acculturation

Measures often differ in assumptions about how a person can acculturate. The majority of measures assume a bipolar adaptation in which individuals' ties and psychological involvement with their culture of origin weaken as they acculturate to the majority culture. On the other hand, Berry (1980) developed a two-dimensional model of acculturation that recognized the possibility that acculturation to the majority culture did not preclude retention of one's ethnic group culture. However, few of the acculturation scales have adapted this multidimensional orthogonal framework by measuring two or more cultures independently along various dimensions (e.g., Cuellar et al., 1995; Marín & Gamba, 1996; Szapocznik et al., 1978; Ramirez, 1983).

The bipolar model of adaptation becomes even more problematic when one considers the environmental and social ecology of U. S.-born members of ethnic minority groups, which makes the whole acculturation model of adaptation questionable. In other words, it is unclear whether U.S.-born ethnic minority individuals such as third- or fourth-generation Asian Americans actually experience acculturation in the sense of having to learn and adapt to a new culture. First-generation immigrants have been socialized to their own culture of origin and after immigration must adapt by learning the culture of the host society. In contrast to this discrete and sequential process of socialization, U.S.-born ethnic minorities are situated in a multicultural context beginning from birth that comprises ethnic minority and primarily Western European cultures. In these cases, it is unclear whether acculturation measures, particularly bipolar-based measures, are sensitive to cultural variations among these individuals.

Tsai (1998) conducted a study on U.S.-born Chinese and immigrant Chinese and measured the extent to which they were living according to "being Chinese" or "being American." For immigrants, she found a bipolar relationship between these two acculturation attitudes ( $r = .26$  for early immigrants—in the United States for more than 6 years;  $r = -.33$  for recent immigrants—in the United States for 6 years or less), whereas for

their U.S.-born counterparts, she found no correlation between the Chinese and American acculturation attitudes. These findings tend to indicate that the bipolar pattern of adaptation only holds for certain subgroups of ethnic minorities, and the low correlations suggest that even this pattern is a weak one. A related study (Huh-Kim & Zane, 1998) provided more empirical support for the orthogonal model of adaptation than for the bipolar model. Ethnic identity measures based on the orthogonal model of adaptation were more strongly related to other personality measures than a measure based on the bipolar model of adaptation.

### **Differences Among the Ethnic Populations for Which Measures Were Developed**

The psychosocial characteristics of an ethnic minority population largely determine which domains of psychosocial functioning are assessed and which models of cultural adaptation are emphasized. Consequently, the types of domains that are assessed by a measure and the underlying adaptation model point to salient behaviors, attitudes, and values that are primarily involved in the acculturation process for that group.

Challenges arise when particular subgroups of that ethnic minority population experience major ecological and social changes. As indicated previously, one of the most striking examples involves assessing U.S.-born and immigrant subgroups within an ethnic group such as Asian Americans. In this case, significant differences in the salience of certain adaptation issues as well as patterns of adaptation may exist between the two groups. In fact, growing empirical evidence shows that adaptation for U.S.-born ethnic minorities is qualitatively different than for immigrants, which suggests that the former may be a great source of error variance when assessed by acculturation measures (e.g., Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Tsai, 1998).

It is clear from the previous analysis that a large array of psychosocial domains has been addressed by different measures of acculturation. It also seems that substantial variation exists among the measures in how one particular domain is assessed. To better examine this variation in domains among and within measures, a content analysis study was conducted on the most frequently cited acculturation measures that have been used with ethnic minority groups in the United States.

### **Content Analysis Study**

The content analysis study examined the most frequently cited acculturation measures that have been used to assess acculturation variation among three major ethnic minority groups in the United States, namely, Asian, Hispanic, and African American.

### *Measures Evaluated*

The contents of the following 21 measures were examined.

*Behavioral Acculturation Scale.* The Behavioral Acculturation Scale (BAS; Szapocznik et al., 1978) assesses the extent to which respondents adopt overt and observable aspects of the host American culture relative to the Spanish/Cuban culture. It consists of 24 items measuring the relative frequency with which the respondent engages in each behavior on a 5-point Likert scale. Although the wording of the anchors differ among the four sets of items (language use and preference, daily cultural activities, adherence to cultural tradition, and personal preferences), they generally follow the bipolar format from 1 (*Spanish/Cuban all of the time*) to 3 (*both cultures equally*) to 5 (*American all of the time*). The BAS had high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ) and a 4-week test-retest reliability of .96. The measure was positively related to years living in the United States for both males ( $r = .49$ ) and females ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ) and negatively related to age, with early adolescents (ages 13–17) having the highest mean acculturation score. After controlling for age, males also had higher acculturation scores than their female counterparts (Szapocznik et al., 1978).

*Value Acculturation Scale.* The Value Acculturation Scale (VAS; Szapocznik et al., 1978) measure was developed concurrently with the BAS to assess acculturation with respect to cultural values and behavioral practices among Cuban Americans. The measure consists of 6 problem situations in which the respondents choose what they consider to be the best alternative and the worst alternative among the three options provided for each situation. The VAS's internal consistency was .77, and its 4-week test-retest reliability was .86; it was related to years living in the United States for men ( $r = .31$ ) and women ( $r = .38, p < .005$ ). VAS was related to psychosocial stage, with respondents in their early adulthood (ages 23–30) being the most acculturated in value orientations in comparison with older and younger respondents (Szapocznik et al., 1978).

*Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire.* The Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire (BIQ; Szapocznik et al., 1980), which is based on the BAS, consists of (a) 24 items that independently measure the respondent's level of enculturation to Hispanic culture and acculturation to the majority American culture and (b) 9 bipolar items that assess the respondent's cultural preferences. For the first two sets of items (items 1–10), the respondent indicates the level of comfort in speaking either Spanish or English in different situational contexts (e.g., at home, at work, with friends) using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all comfortable*) to 5 (*very comfortable*). The third and fourth sets of items (items 11–24) measure the extent to which the respondent enjoys participating in either Hispanic or American activities (e.g., music, dances, television programs) using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The final set of items (items 25–33) assesses the respondent's lifestyle preferences

(e.g., food, language, music) in a bipolar format using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely Hispanic*) to 3 (*both Hispanic and American*) to 5 (*completely American*). "Americanism" scores are obtained by summing all items related to involvement in the American culture (items 6–10, 18–24, and 25–33). "Hispanicism" scores are obtained by summing all items related to involvement in the Hispanic culture (items 1–5, 11–17, and the reversed scores of 25–33). Based on these two scores, the BIQ measures biculturalism (the difference between the Hispanicism and Americanism scores) and cultural involvement (the sum of two scores). Its internal consistency was .93 and .89 for the Hispanicism and Americanism scales, respectively; .94 for the biculturalism scale; and .79 for the cultural involvement scale. The 6-week test–retest reliabilities for the Cubanism, Americanism, biculturalism, and cultural involvement scales were .50, .54, .79, and .14, respectively. Biculturalism ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ) and cultural involvement ( $r = .22, p < .05$ ) were positively related to the teacher's impression of the student's level of biculturation (Szapocznik et al., 1980).

*Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans.* The Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA; Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980) is the most widely used instrument in the assessment of acculturation among Mexican Americans. Moreover, other acculturation measures either have been modeled after the ARSMA (e.g., the Suinn–Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale) or have extensively adapted items from this measure. The ARSMA consists of 20 items that evaluate a respondent's extent of acculturation to the White American culture in the areas of language use and preference, ethnic identification, social affiliation, and daily practices on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Mexican/Spanish*) to 3 (*bicultural/bilingual*) to 5 (*Anglo/English*). In the original validation study, the ARSMA had an internal reliability coefficient of .88 for nonhospitalized respondents and .81 for the hospitalized respondents, and its 5-week test–retest reliability was .80 and .72 for the respective samples (Cuellar et al., 1980). Its high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .92) was replicated in another validation study with a college sample (Montgomery & Orozco, 1984). The measure was positively related to hospital staff ratings of Mexican American patients' level of acculturation (Spearman  $r = .75, p < .01$ ). The ARSMA also was significantly related to age and socioeconomic status (Montgomery & Orozco, 1984). The measure was able to differentiate three different ethnocultural groups: Mexicans ( $M = 1.67$ ), Mexican Americans ( $M = 2.88$ ), and Anglos ( $M = 4.39$ ). It was positively related to generation status in two separate studies: (a) Kendall's Tau B = .55,  $p < .01$  (Cuellar et al., 1980) and (b)  $r = .62, p < .001$  (Montgomery & Orozco, 1984). Cuellar et al. (1980) found support for the measure's concurrent validity in that the ARSMA was positively related to the BAS and to the Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory (Ramirez, 1983): Spearman  $r_s = .76$  and  $.81, p < .001$ , respectively.

*Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory.* The Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory (B/MEI; Ramirez, 1983) is a

69-item questionnaire that is divided into three sections: demographic-linguistic information, personal history, and multicultural participation. Part 1 uses mostly open-ended questions in the assessment of generation status and language use and close-ended questions in the assessment of length of residence, ethnic identification, and social affiliation. It also assesses demographic information including gender, age, marital status, educational level, and occupation. Part 2 assesses the ethnicity of the respondent's social affiliations (e.g., friends, coworkers, church members) on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*all Mexican Americans and/or Latinos*), to 3 (*Mexican Americans and/or Latinos about evenly*), to 5 (*all Anglos*) to 6 (*other*). Part 3 measures the respondent's level of involvement in various interpersonal activities and social contact with both majority American culture and the Latino culture on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*extensively*) to 5 (*never*; Ramirez, 1983). Split-half reliability coefficients for Parts 2 and 3 of the measure were .79 and .68, respectively. To assess the measure's concurrent validity, a respondent's cultural identification was categorized based on life history interviews as well as from scores on the B/MEI. Almost all of the respondents (97%) were similarly classified as either bicultural, traditional, or atraditional by the two methods (Ramirez, 1984).

*Children's Acculturation Scale.* The Children's Acculturation Scale (CAS; Franco, 1983) consists of 10 items assessing language usage, language preference and proficiency, cultural identification, and social affiliation on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Spanish only*) to 3 (*both Spanish and English*) to 5 (*English only*). The CAS had an internal consistency of .77 and a 5-week test-retest reliability of .97 among a sample of first-grade children. The mean CAS scores increased significantly with education and age in a comparison of first, third, and sixth graders, and the measure clearly differentiated Mexican American students from their Anglo counterparts. The CAS also was significantly correlated with the ARSMA:  $r = .76, p < .01$  (Franco, 1983).

*Children's Hispanic Background Scale.* The Children's Hispanic Background Scale (CHBS; Martinez et al., 1984) is a 30-item inventory that measures the respondent's exposure to the Hispanic culture by assessing language use with family members (23 items), language preferences in using the media (5 items), and food preferences (2 items) on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*almost always*) to 4 (*almost never*). The CHBS had a test-retest reliability of .92,  $p < .001$ . The measure was related to the parents' ratings of the child on a bilingual classification scale used by schools:  $r = .50, p < .001$ . It was also positively related to generational status and significantly differentiated between Chicano and Anglo students (Martinez et al., 1984).

*Media-Based Acculturation Scale for Mexican Americans.* The Media-Based Acculturation Scale for Mexican Americans (MAS; Ramirez, Cousins, Santos, & Supik, 1986) is a 4-item measure of acculturation that fo-



cuses on language use, media preferences, and language proficiency. The items have dichotomous alternatives involving 0 (*all/some or Spanish only*) or 1 (*rarely/never or English only*). The MAS was significantly and positively related to place of birth, years living in the community, education, and income as well as negatively related to age (Ramirez et al., 1986).

*Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics.* The Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (SAS; Marín, Sabogal, VanOss Marín, Otero-Sabogal, & Pérez-Stable, 1987) is a 12-item measure that evaluates the extent to which the respondent engages in behaviors related to the culture of origin (Hispanic) or the host American culture on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*only Spanish/all Latinos*) to 3 (*both equally/about half and half*) to 5 (*only English/all Americans*). The SAS emphasizes language use but has 4 items assessing social affiliation. The measure had an internal consistency of .92. It was significantly related to generational status ( $r = .65$ ), length of residence in the United States ( $r = .70$ ), self-evaluation of one's acculturation ( $r = .76$ ), and age of arrival in the U.S. ( $r = -.69, p < .001$ ). The SAS also accurately discriminated Hispanic respondents from their non-Hispanic counterparts (Marín et al., 1987).

*Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale.* The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) is the most widely used instrument in assessing acculturation variation among Asian Americans. It is a 21-item instrument consisting of multiple-choice questions, many of which were modeled after items on the ARSMA. The respondents provide information about resident experiences in the United States such as the number of years they have been living there. This information is used to determine their generational status. The SL-ASIA also assesses language use, ethnic identity, personal preferences, and friendships. Responses are elicited using a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting greater acculturation to the American society. The measure demonstrated high internal consistency reliability across different Asian American samples (Cronbach's alphas ranging from .88 to .91; Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Suinn et al., 1987; Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992). In terms of concurrent validity, the SL-ASIA was correlated with the following demographics: total years going to school in the United States ( $r = .61$ ), age entering school in the United States ( $r = -.60$ ), years living in the United States ( $r = .56$ ), age entering the United States ( $r = -.49$ ), and years living in a non-Asian neighborhood ( $r = .41$ ),  $ps < .001$  (Suinn et al., 1992).

*Cultural Life Styles Inventory.* The Cultural Life Styles Inventory (CLSI; Mendoza, 1989) assesses the extent to which the respondent can be classified into one of the four types of acculturation (cultural resistance, cultural shift, cultural incorporation, and cultural transmutation) as proposed by Mendoza and Martínez (1981). The CLSI is a 29-item measure that assesses culture-related practices and personal preferences in five areas: intrafamily language use, extrafamily language use, social affilia-

tion, cultural familiarity, and cultural identification. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Spanish*) to 3 (*both Spanish and English*) to 5 (*English*) for the first two sections on language use and from 1 (*Hispanic*) to 3 (*both Hispanic and American*) to 5 (*American*) for the last three sections on social affiliation, cultural familiarity, and cultural identification. The internal reliability coefficients for the five acculturation dimensions were .87, .91, .89, .84, and .89, respectively. Two-week test-retest reliabilities ranged from .88 to .95,  $p < .001$ , for groups that completed the measure in either English or Spanish. In the evaluation of its construct validity, cultural resistance scores decreased, whereas cultural shift scores increased with generation level. Unexpectedly, cultural incorporation scores were not related to generation level because bicultural adaptation seemed to be prevalent across generations. Exposure to mainstream culture was positively correlated with cultural shift ( $r = .66, p < .001$ ) and negatively correlated with cultural resistance and incorporation ( $r = -.60, p < .001$  and  $r = -.25, p < .01$ , respectively). Moreover, concordant patterns were found; the respondent's CLSI score was significantly related to the CLSI rating made by an immediate family member (father, mother, or sibling;  $r = .71, p < .001$ ; Mendoza, 1989).

*Acculturation Scale for Southeast Asians.* The Acculturation Scale for Southeast Asians (AS-SEA; Anderson et al., 1993) is a 13-item self-report measure of acculturation that was specifically developed for adult Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese) immigrants and refugees. It assesses language proficiency in both English and the respondent's language of origin on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*very well*) to 4 (*not at all*), language usage on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*only origin*) to 3 (*origin and English equally*) to 5 (*only English*), social affiliation on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (*mostly origin*) to 3 (*mostly American*), and food preference on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*only origin*) to 3 (*origin and English equally*) to 5 (*only English*). Factor analysis of the measure yielded three factors: English proficiency; proficiency in the language of origin; and language, social, and food preferences. The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the three factors for Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese ranged from .77 to .99. For all three Southeast Asian groups, the AS-SEA was significantly and negatively related to age on entering the United States and positively related to length of residence and percentage of lifetime in the United States, with the Vietnamese respondents having somewhat lower validity coefficients than their Cambodian and Laotian counterparts (Anderson et al., 1993).

*Na Mea Hawai'i Scale.* The Na Mea Hawai'i Scale (NMHS; Rezendes, 1993) is a rationally derived measure and a 21-item questionnaire used to assess the respondent's knowledge of Hawaiian vocabulary, customs, history, and participation in cultural activities. The respondent answers the items according to a *yes*, *no*, or *don't know* or provides information to open-ended items that ask for a definition of a Hawaiian phrase (e.g. "Aloha wau ia 'oe") or cultural term (e.g., *kahuna*, *maika'i*, *ali'i*). The NMHS sig-

nificantly differentiated Hawaiian respondents from Japanese and Caucasian respondents (Rezentes, 1993; Streltzer, Rezentes, & Arakaki, 1996).

*African American Acculturation Scale.* The African American Acculturation Scale (AAAS; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994) consists of 74 items that assess the extent to which the respondent engages in African American behaviors and is knowledgeable about African American culture. Responses are elicited using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*I totally disagree, this is not at all true of me*) to 7 (*I totally agree, this is absolutely true of me*), with higher scores indicating a more African American cultural orientation. The measure can be organized into eight subscales that involve family socialization, adherence to cultural traditions, language, daily cultural activities, social affiliation, perceived discrimination, spirituality, and cultural beliefs. Internal consistency for the subscales ranged from .71 to .90, and the entire measure had a split-half reliability of .93. The AAAS was not significantly related to gender, socioeconomic status, or education, and similar mean levels of acculturation were found for college and community samples (Landrine & Klonoff, 1995). A short form (33 items) was derived from the original measure (Landrine & Klonoff, 1995).

*ARSMA-Revised.* The ARSMA-Revised (ARSMA-II; Cuellar et al., 1995) is a two-part questionnaire that attempts to capture four typologies of acculturation adaptation (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization; Berry, 1980) by using an orthogonal approach of assessing attitudes and behaviors toward the culture of origin (Hispanic culture) and the host culture (American culture). Part 1 consists of 30 items that measure the respondent's extent of involvement in the Mexican culture (17 items) and Anglo culture (13 items) by assessing a person's cultural practices, language proficiency and preferences, social affiliation, and ethnic identification. Respondents indicate the relative frequency with which they engage in certain behaviors using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely often or almost always*). Items related to involvement in the Mexican culture are summed to form the Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS), and items related to involvement with the Anglo culture are summed to form the Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS). Part 2 consists of 18 items that measure the respondent's acceptance of attitudes and behaviors in the Mexican culture (6 items), the Mexican American culture (6 items), and the Anglo culture (6 items). Three marginality subscales to the Mexican (MEXMAR), Mexican American (MAMARG), and Anglo (ANGMAR) cultures were developed based on the responses to the cultural acceptance items. The internal consistency of the various subscales ranged from .68 to .91, and their 1-week test-retest reliability ranged from .72 to .96. The difference score (MOS-AOS) of the ARSMA-II was significantly related to the original ARSMA ( $r = .89$ ). In relation to generational status, the MOS scores decreased, whereas the AOS scores increased with each generation. Although no gender differences were found on the ARSMA-II, the measure was positively correlated with socioeconomic status ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ; Cuellar et al., 1995).

*Bidimensional Acculturation Scale.* The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BIAS; Marín & Gamba, 1996) consists of 24 items that assess the respondent's adherence to Hispanic and American (English-based) cultures on three domains: language use (6 items), linguistic proficiency (12 items), and preferences for electronic media (6 items). Responses are elicited using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*almost always/very well*). The internal reliability coefficients of the six subscales ranged from .81 for the English electronic media subscale to .97 for the English linguistic proficiency subscale. The reliabilities for the combined scores of the three subscales were .90 for the Hispanic domain and .96 for the American domain. For the American domain, the language use, linguistic proficiency, and the electronic media subscales were significantly related to generational status ( $r_s = .52, .61, .40$ , respectively), length of residence in the United States ( $r_s = .44, .55, .23$ , respectively), age at arrival in the United States ( $r_s = -.65, -.75, -.55$ , respectively), proportion of life in the United States ( $r_s = .43, .54, .22$ , respectively), and ethnic self-identification ( $r_s = .46, .50, .40$ , respectively) for both Mexican American and Central American samples (Marín & Gamba, 1996).

*Brief Acculturation Scale.* The Brief Acculturation Scale (BrAS; Norris, Ford, & Bova, 1996) is a 10-item measure of acculturation that was derived from the language use subscale of the SAS (Marín et al., 1987). Language use is assessed by four items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*only Spanish*) to 3 (*both equally*) to 5 (*only English*). One item assesses the respondent's generational status. Five items assess the respondent's perceived closeness to African Americans, White Americans, and Hispanic Americans in different cultural contexts (e.g., Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other countries) on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very close*) to 4 (*not close at all*). The measure had an internal consistency of .90. For both Mexican American and Puerto Rican respondents, the BrAS was positively related to generational status ( $r = .74$  and  $r = .40$ , respectively), length of time in the United States ( $r = .59$  and  $r = .46$ , respectively), and perceived closeness to U.S. Whites ( $r = .25$  and  $r = .19$ , respectively) and African Americans ( $r = .30$  and  $r = .14$ , respectively) and negatively related to perceived closeness to their country of origin ( $r = -.43$  and  $r = -.18$ , respectively; Norris et al., 1996).

*General Ethnicity Questionnaire.* The General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ; Levenson, 1994) is a 47-item scale that measures the degree of acculturation into European American culture on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*exclusively*) to 5 (*not at all*). Its items were derived from the CLSI (Mendoza, 1989), BAS (Szapocznik et al., 1978), and ARSMA (Cuellar et al., 1980). The first half of the GEQ assesses the respondents' experience with European American culture and their attitudes toward that culture. The second half measures the respondents' preference for English and its usage in different social contexts. The GEQ can be adopted for use with any ethnic group.

*Asian Values Scale.* The Asian Values Scale (AVS; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999) consists of 36 items that examine the degree to which a respondent endorses specific value orientations that have been associated with East Asian societies. The measure samples a wide range of psychosocial domains including attitude toward educational achievement, family/relational orientation, expression of emotions, and communication style. Respondents indicate the extent of agreement with each value statement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*neither agree or disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*); 18 items are reverse coded. The overall AVS had an internal consistency of .82 and a 2-week test-retest reliability of .83. Based on exploratory factor analysis, six latent factors were derived with the following alpha coefficients: .69 for conformity to norms, .62 for family recognition through achievement, .47 for emotional self-control, .54 for collectivism, .57 for humility, and .38 for filial piety (Kim et al., 1999). In a confirmatory factor analytic study, the AVS demonstrated concurrent validity with the value-oriented collectivism subscales (vertical and horizontal collectivism) of the Individualism and Collectivism Scale (INDCOL; Triandis, 1995) and discriminant validity with behavioral acculturation as indicated by the various subscales of the SL-ASIA (Kim et al., 1999).

*African American Acculturation Scale.* The African American Acculturation Scale (AfaAS; Snowden & Hines, 1999) consists of 10 items that assess the extent to which respondents engage in behaviors and attitudes concerning (a) media preferences, (b) social interactions, and (c) race relations. Respondents rate their endorsement of African American cultural involvement for each item on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*most or all / strongly agree*) to 3 (*few / rarely / strongly disagree*). Consequently, scores range from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating greater acculturation to mainstream American culture. Factor analysis of the measure yielded a unidimensional structure for the scale. The measure had an internal consistency of .75. For African American men, acculturation was positively related to age, income, employment, likelihood of marriage, urban residence and negatively related to the belief in the importance of religion. For African American women, acculturation was positively related to divorce or separation, income, education, urban residence, and religious affiliation.

*Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale.* The Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS; Stephenson, 2000) consists of two independent dimensions that measure the degree of ethnic society immersion (ESI; 17 items) and dominant society immersion (DSI; 15 items), and the measure can be used with different ethnic groups. Respondents rate their endorsement of attitudes and behaviors related to language, social interaction, food, and the media on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*false*) to 4 (*true*). Alpha reliability coefficients were .86 for the entire scale, .97 for ESI, and .90 for DSI. In terms of construct validity, DSI was found to increase successively from first-generation to third-generation individuals, whereas there were decrements in ethnic society immersion with

each successive generation. Both subscales also correlated significantly with ethnic group affiliation. Finally, the ESI and the DSI were significantly correlated with the ethnic retention/attachment and acculturation subscales, respectively, of the ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995) and the BiAS (Marín & Gamba, 1996).

### *Content Analysis*

The content analysis of each acculturation measure was conducted in the following manner: First, the second investigator categorized each item of a particular measure into one of the domains described previously. Second, the first investigator independently categorized the items, and any disagreements were reconciled. The percentage of disagreements across all the measures was 8.9%. Finally, a percentage of the total items of a particular measure that were classified as belonging to each domain was calculated and tabled.

### *Results and Discussion*

Most scales examined the acculturation process among Hispanic Americans, with few measuring the acculturation of Asian/Pacific Islanders and African Americans. Because acculturation is related to mental and physical health and various life experiences and the U.S. population is becoming increasingly diverse, it is important to increase efforts to assess this variable for other major ethnic minority groups. As seen in Table 2.1, the content analysis showed substantial variation in the areas that the acculturation scales measure. Some measures have some content overlap, but others have little or no overlap in content. It is questionable whether the measures are assessing the same acculturation phenomena across different ethnic groups. As indicated earlier, the possibility exists that the measures are assessing acculturation in the domains most salient to a particular ethnic minority group. However, it is important to note that there is a lack of content overlap even among measures that were designed to assess the same ethnic minority group such as Hispanics or Asian Americans. Another marked pattern shown in the table is that very few measures sample more than two or three domains extensively. This raises a content validity issue because it is unclear whether any of these measures have adequately sampled the various behavioral and attitudinal domains in which acculturative change would be expected to occur.

Among all the categories represented, language was heavily used as an indicator of acculturation. Although language retention and acquisition may be an important component in the acculturation process, they do not wholly represent the acculturation process. Other important dimensions, such as attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values are believed to be important in the acculturation process. For example, as can be seen from Table 2.1, all but three instruments measure language; however, only 5 of the 21 scales assessed cultural value orientations. Numerous researchers have

**Table 2.1.** Percentage of Items From Each Acculturation Measure in a Particular Content Category

Acculturation scales	Language use/preference	Social affiliation	Daily living habits	Cultural traditions	Communication style	Cultural identity/pride	Perceived prejudice/discrimination	Generational status	Family socialization	Cultural values
BAS (B) <sup>a</sup>	38		41	13	8					86
VAS (B)					14					
BIQ Part 1 (I) <sup>b</sup>	42		58							
BIQ Part 2 (B)	11		67	22		25		10		
ARMSA (B)	25	20	20			4		11		
B/MEI (I)	17	68				10		10		
CAS (B)	30	10	10							
CHBS (B)	80		20							
MAS (B)	100									
SAS (B)	67	33								
SL-ASIA (B)	24	20	16	12		20		8		
CLSI (B)	45	21	10	10		14				
AS-SEA (B)	77	15	8							
NMHS (B)	14	5	10	32	10	5	5		5	14
AAAS (B)	1	11	30	5	1	1	11		10	30
ARMSA-II (I)	14	22	18			43		2		
BIAS (I)	75		25							
BrAS (B)	40					50		10		
GEQ (I)	39	10	20	8	2	12			6	2
AVS (I)					14					86
AFAAS (B)		70	30			3				
SMAS (I)	47	16	25	6			3			

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>(B) = Bipolar measurement of cultures; <sup>b</sup>(I) = Independent measurement of cultures. BAS = Behavioral Acculturation Scale; VAS = Value Acculturation Scale; BIQ = Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire; ARMSA = Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans; B/MEI = Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory; CAS = Children's Acculturation Scale; CHBS = Children's Hispanic Background Scale; MAS = Media-Based Acculturation Scale for Mexican Americans; SAS = Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics; SL-ASIA = Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale; CLSI = Cultural Life Styles Inventory; AS-SEA = Acculturation Scale for Southeast Asians; NMHS = Na Mea Hawaii Scale; AAAS = African American Acculturation Scale; ARMSA-II = Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-Revised; BIAS = Bidimensional Acculturation Scale; BrAS = Brief Acculturation Scale; GEQ = General Ethnicity Questionnaire; AVS = Asian Values Scale; AFAAS = African American Acculturation Scale; SMAS = Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale.

suggested that the acculturation process is multidimensional and differential. In other words, acculturation occurs along various dimensions and at different paces depending on the dimension. Thus, the preponderance of language and the underrepresentation of other dimensions in the measurement scales may result in a skewed assessment of an individual's acculturation.

In addition to their uneven representation of content areas, the large majority of the measures were bipolar. Specifically, 14 of the 21 measures were bipolar in nature. The findings support the initial general impression that most acculturation measures assume a bipolar adaptation pattern of cultural change. They measured acculturation along a continuum representing the culture of origin at one extreme and the host culture at the other extreme. This linear model precludes the possibility that individuals may retain various elements of their culture of origin while simultaneously learning about another culture.

The results of the content analysis strongly suggest that acculturation researchers who focus on ethnic minority issues face a number of challenges in their efforts to assess this construct. First, there does not appear to be a measure that adequately samples the major behavioral and attitudinal domains related to acculturative change. Second, the possibility exists that the salience of these domains may differ depending on the ethnic minority group being studied. If this is the case, no guiding framework articulates which domains may be more salient for a particular ethnic minority group. Finally, it seems that cultural values—a key domain associated with acculturative changes—have received relatively little coverage by the measures currently in use.

Indeed, cultural changes related to acculturation can be so complex and varied that efforts to comprehensively assess them may not be practical or useful. On the other hand, assessment research on acculturation has been very effective in identifying the psychosocial domains of functioning that are often associated with cultural change. Building on this work, it is proposed that an alternative approach to the study of acculturation effects is to focus assessment efforts on capturing specific psychological elements from a particular domain such as cultural values (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). This approach has several advantages. First, by examining a finite number of psychological elements that are related to acculturation, researchers can actually determine the extent to which individuals have or have not become acculturated on those dimensions. In this way the assessment of acculturation becomes more idiographic in that investigators can locate an individual on a number of acculturation dimensions. Second, the assessment of a specific psychological dimension such as a particular value orientation provides stronger explanatory models by allowing investigators to test what *specifically* about acculturation accounts for a certain effect. Third, the deconstruction of acculturation into specific psychological elements provides opportunities to examine the interactive effects of different aspects of acculturation. Recently, a number of studies have used this specific element approach to study acculturation effects involved with Asian American clients' response to psychotherapy.



### Specific Element Approach: Case Study of Research on Loss of Face

Research on the psychological treatment of Asian Americans has consistently found that less acculturated Asians are less likely to seek mental health services, tend to stay in therapy for shorter periods of time, and experience poorer treatment outcomes compared with more acculturated Asian clients (Sue, Zane, & Young, 1994). However, it is unclear which aspect of acculturation affects treatment utilization and outcomes. One hypothesis is that the strong, confessional nature of psychotherapy in which clients must disclose very personal issues to a stranger can lead to great *face loss*. *Loss of face* has been identified as a key interpersonal dynamic in East Asian cultures (Ho, 1976). Given that change in therapy is mediated through the client-therapist relationship, it is important to examine certain interpersonal constructs that may be relatively more culturally salient for different ethnic groups. Based on various accounts of face in both East Asian and Western psychology, it seems that face has certain conceptual parameters. First, "face" is not simply prestige or social reputation obtained through success and personal achievements. According to Hu (1944), face represents people's moral reputation or social integrity, integrity that is gained and maintained by the performance of specific social roles that are well recognized by others. Goffman (1955) noted, "face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes." Thus, *face* can be defined as people's social integrity; the integrity is tied to the fact that people perceive themselves to be integral members of a group with certain prescribed roles that imply the responsibility of being perceived as representatives of that group. The fact that face has esteem implications extending beyond the individual to the individual's reference groups is probably the main reason it has such psychological power in certain shame-based societies such as East Asian cultures. Less acculturated Asian clients would be expected to be more concerned with face issues. Consequently, the face-threatening nature of psychotherapy may cause less acculturated Asian clients to respond less favorably to treatment than their more acculturated counterparts.

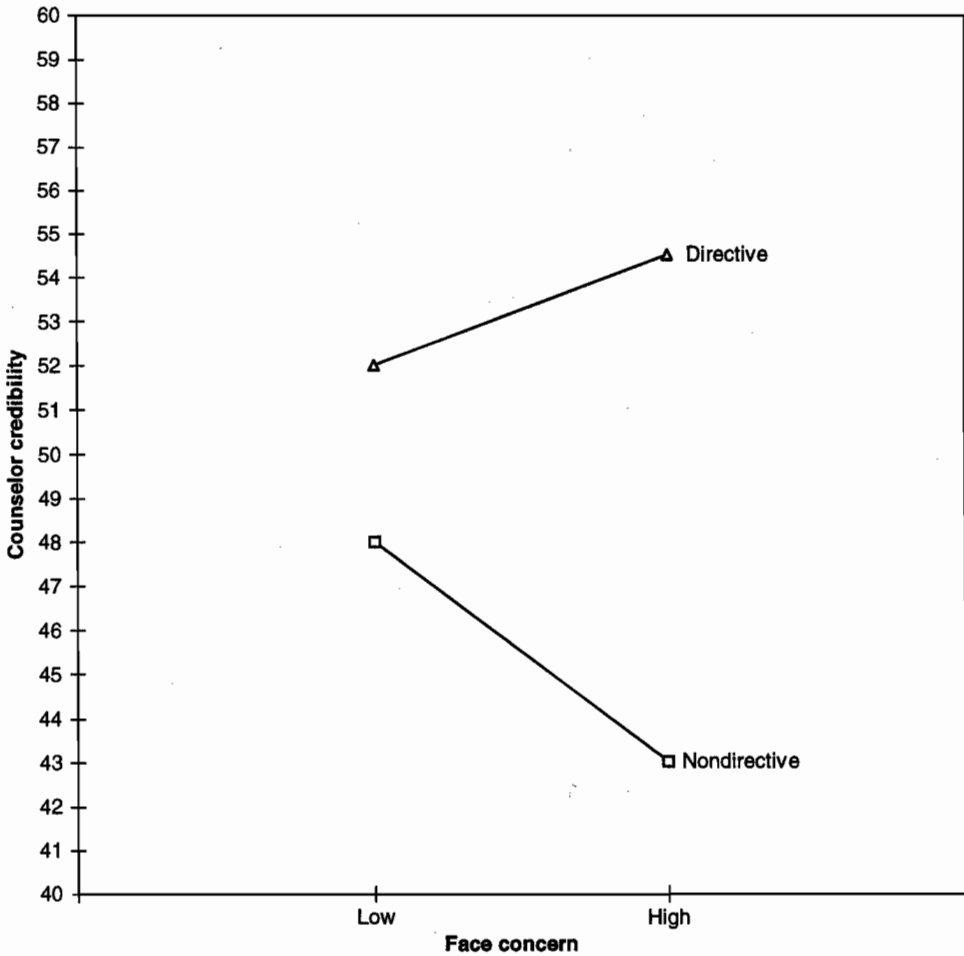
#### *Studies on Loss of Face*

*Validation study.* Using the rational approach to item development and selection, Zane and Yeh (2002) constructed a 21-item, 7-point Likert scale measure of loss of face. The selected items reflected concern about violating social norms or expectations as well as concerns about not causing any loss of face for others (e.g., not embarrassing others, not confronting others about their mistakes). The loss of face (LOF) measure was internally consistent with an alpha of .83. The measure also demonstrated concurrent and discriminant validity. As predicted, loss of face correlated positively with other-directedness, private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety, and loss of face correlated negatively

with extraversion and "acting," or the desire to perform before others. In addition, loss of face was not correlated with psychological maladjustment. Finally, loss of face was significantly correlated with a measure of acculturation (SL-ASIA):  $r = -.37, p < .001$ . Asians ( $M = 91.8, SD = 16.9$ ) scored significantly higher on loss of face than Whites ( $M = 80.4, SD = 16.3$ ), even after controlling for the effects of cultural identity, social anxiety, extraversion, acting, and other-directedness:  $F(1, 153) = 12.07, p < .01$ . These results provide support for the reliability and construct validity of the loss of face measure and indicate that the measure is sensitive to ethnic differences and acculturation variation.

*Loss of face and self-disclosure in treatment.* Another study examined how loss of face may be related to a key process in psychotherapy—self-disclosure (Zane, Umemoto, & Park, 1998). In a treatment analog study, 128 Asian American students were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (ethnic match/nonmatch)  $\times$  2 (gender match/nonmatch) experimental design. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the LOF measure and then listened to an audiotape of a counselor who introduced himself or herself and described counseling to the participant. The effects of loss of face, ethnic match, and gender match were examined on three types of self-disclosure: (a) aspects of one's personality, (b) negative experiences or aspects of self, and (c) aspects of one's intimate relationships. The findings point to the importance of the face loss issues in treatment. Face loss was negatively associated with all three types of self-disclosure: aspects about one's personality ( $r = -.21, p < .05$ ), negative aspects about self ( $r = -.22, p < .05$ ), and aspects about one's intimate relationships ( $r = -.31, p < .01$ ). Moreover, consistent with the face loss model, the greatest effect of loss of face was associated with a specific type of self-disclosure that the face model predicted would incur the greatest face loss, namely, disclosing one's problems to significant others. Such disclosure risks the greatest face loss because of the likelihood of causing face loss for someone else, especially someone in an individual's most personal network (Goffman, 1955).

*Loss of face and preference for directive treatment.* The last study examined the role of face in Asian American preferences for directive counseling (Park, 1998). A number of studies have found that Asian Americans tend to prefer the more directive counseling approach (e.g., Atkinson, Maruyama, & Matsui, 1978), but it was unclear which cultural factors associated with less acculturated Asians accounted for this effect. One possibility is that Asian Americans have different expectations when entering counseling or treatment (Zane, Enomoto, & Chun, 1994). In this case, the greater credibility for the directive approach among Asians may be simply a result of the fact that this approach tends to be aligned with the type of help they expect in treatment. However, another possibility is that directive approaches reduce ambiguity between client and therapist in the therapeutic situation, thereby minimizing threats to face. Hwang (1987) hypothesized that in situations in which roles are ambiguous, face loss issues are very salient simply because it is unclear which social behaviors are



**Figure 2.1.** Counselor credibility ratings of counselor style (directive vs. nondirective) as a function of face concern.

proper or needed. A directive counseling approach would reduce this ambiguity and consequently, threats involving face loss. Students with an interest in counseling services were randomly assigned to either a directive counseling condition or a nondirective counseling condition. To enable a test of these two explanatory models, the LOF measure and a measure of treatment expectations that had been developed for Asian American clients were administered. In replicating findings from the earlier studies, Asian Americans and White Americans preferred more directive counseling styles. Moreover, a significant interaction between face concerns and counseling approach was found, but the interaction effect involving treatment expectations and counseling approach was not significant. As Figure 2.1 shows, when people have less face loss concerns, they have little difference in credibility between the two approaches. It is only when a person has high face loss concerns that significant differences in credibility occur,

resulting in the directive approach being rated as significantly more credible than the nondirective approach.

The last two studies tend to provide evidence that for Asian American clients, face issues are quite salient in treatment. More importantly, the research has provided compelling evidence that at least some of the specific effects of acculturation in the psychological treatment of Asian American clients are mediated through effects of the cultural value dimension of face loss concerns. In other words, for Asian Americans, acculturation is associated with varying levels of face loss concerns, which in turn seem to affect important processes in psychotherapy.

Acculturation is one of the most significant psychological processes of psychosocial adaptation for many ethnic minority individuals, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds. In mental health research, it is clear that more efforts are needed to deconstruct acculturation into specific psychological elements that are proximal to psychopathology, seeking help, response to treatment, and other mental health issues. Moreover, this type of research can systematically build on previous efforts to measure acculturation. Many of the psychosocial domains sampled by these measures, such as value orientations, language use, and social affiliation, seem to be prime candidates for development using the single-element approach. For example, with respect to social affiliation, few studies have examined how social support networks change with acculturation and how such changes may affect psychological adjustment and attitudes toward treatment or mental health services. In the area of language use and preference, some research has documented that languages vary in the extent to which they use context outside of the verbal word to convey meaning (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). The differential use of context among different cultures raises the possibility that a person's communication style may change with acculturation. This change in communication style may in turn affect important interpersonal processes such as the working alliance between the client and therapist in psychotherapy (Horvath & Luborsky, 1993; Lambert, 1989). The study of acculturation continues to be one of the most important areas of research for ethnic minority populations. The research that has been presented demonstrates that the single-element approach, although not supplanting general measures of acculturation, can help provide more definitive information about which aspects of acculturation can affect particular behaviors or attitudes.

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