

Abstract

Acculturation is the social and psychological adaptations a person makes due to continuous interaction with individuals from different cultures. Acculturation is important because it has been linked to several psychological disorders. To compare cultures in terms of the effect of acculturation on psychological health, researchers need a measure that can be used across cultures. The General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ; Levenson, 1994) was developed to assess several domains (e.g., language and food) within the context of acculturation and can be used across cultures. A previous study conducted determined acceptable, however, the validity results were mixed. Some groups had moderate positive correlations between the GEQ and other acculturation measures, but for some groups, the correlations were low. These mixed results may be because different measures focus on different domains. The current study examined the factor structures of each of the measures used in this study to determine if this could explain the results. This study did confirm that various domains are used in measures of acculturation. Furthermore, domains that appear to be similar are not always related. Future research needs to determine the validity of the domains within the acculturation scales in order to provide an accurate depiction of acculturation levels and their relationship to other factors of well-being.

INTRODUCTION

•Acculturation is the social and psychological adaptations a person makes due to continuous interaction with individuals from different cultures. Changes may include several domains (Cabassa, 2003), such as:

- ethnic identity,
- attitudes,
- values,
- behaviors
- shifts in cultural identification

•These changes are most commonly found when ethnic minorities participate in traditions of the dominant society. Some people will remain immersed in their own culture, while other individuals will become bicultural, adapting traditions from the host culture while continuing to practice traditions from their original culture. Many highly acculturated individuals who have become completely immersed in the host culture have tended to reject traditions and beliefs from their culture of origin (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996).

•Mental health problems such as stress, depression, substance abuse, and self-esteem issues have been associated with acculturation (Organista, et al., 2003). By identifying acculturation risk factor in mental health problems, appropriate prevention efforts can be implemented.

•As research is beginning to compare acculturation across cultures, a better method of measuring acculturation across cultures must be established. One problem with current measures of acculturation is the inconsistent use of indicators to assess acculturation such as language, age of immigration, food preferences, values, and/or beliefs. This inconsistency makes comparing acculturation across cultures challenging.

•To address this problem, a new measure was developed to address several domains within the context of acculturation, which can be used with many different cultural groups without modification (not including translation needs). The General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ; Levenson, 1994) is a 37-item scale that measures a person's degree of acculturation into American culture. This measure can be adapted for use with groups from any culture by substituting the word American with the name of the specific cultural group.

•Results from a previous study conducted with a college population indicated that the GEQ had poor internal reliability compared to other specific measure of acculturation as well as had poor correlations with other culture specific measures.

•The purpose of the current study is to compare the factor structures of the GEQ and specific measures of acculturation for Hispanic, African American, and Asian/Pacific Islander populations to further explore the results obtained in the previous study.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited from a large university in the Western United States Psychology Subject Pool. A total 231 participants completed the protocol, 50 Africa American, 71 Hispanic, and 110 Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 75% of the sample consisted of female participants and the average age of participants was 20.19 years (SD=4.28).

Measures

General Ethnicity Questionnaire

The General Ethnicity Questionnaire (GEQ; Levenson, 1994), described in the introduction, is referred to as the GEQA for the American version and the GEQC for the general culture version. A reliability and validity study conducted on a Chinese American college population (Tsai, et al., 2000) demonstrated high internal consistency reliabilities for both versions (Cronbach's alpha =.92 for both measures) and demonstrated high validity by significantly correlating in predicted directions with standard indices of acculturation including age of arrival ($r_{GEQC}=.56$, $r_{GEQA}=-.63$), generational status ($r_{GEQC}=-.50$, $r_{GEQA}=-.58$) and length of residence in the United States ($r_{GEQC}=-.60$, $r_{GEQA}=.64$). For the current study, both versions of the General Ethnicity Questionnaire were utilized. In the GEQC version, the word "American" was replaced by the words "native culture" and at the beginning of the form the questionnaire asks participants to indicate the cultural group that they identify with.

African American Acculturation Scale

The African American Acculturation Scale-revised (AAAS; Klonoff & Landrine, 2000) is a 74- item assessment of knowledge and participation in various beliefs in the African American Culture. High total scores indicate that a person is more oriented toward African American culture versus the dominant White culture. The was found to have high reliability and both concurrent and group difference validity.

Asian Values Scale-Revised

The Asians Values Scale Revised (AVS-R; Kim & Hong, 2004) will be used to assess adherence to Asian cultural values that endorsed more highly by Asian Americans than by European Americans. The AVS-R contains 25 statements that are rated on a four-point scale (i.e. 1=Strongly Agree, 4=Strongly Disagree). Statements include, "One need not control one's expression of emotions" and "Younger persons should be able to confront their elders." On this scale, score indicate stronger adherence to Asian cultural values. The AVS-R has been demonstrated to be a valid and reliable measure for a college sample.

Bi-Dimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics

The Bi-Dimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS; Marin & Gamba, 1996) is a 24 item scale that attempts to assess acculturation for two major cultural dimensions (Hispanic and non-Hispanic domains). The BAS is rated on a 4-point scale and contains items such as "How often do you speak Spanish?" and "How well do you write in English?" The BAS has been shown to have high levels of internal consistency and high validity with the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics.

Procedures

Each participant was administered a packet containing a variety of measures regarding acculturation, body image, media exposure, and attitudes toward aging and older adults. The packet included instructions requesting that upon completion of the questionnaires they bring the packet to the researcher. Subsets of the total measures administered were used in the current analysis. To account for the possibility of order effects of the measures, the instruments were counter-balanced. All participants were asked to complete the General Ethnicity Questionnaire American Version and the General Culture Version. Only participants who self identified as African American, Asian/Asian Pacific Islander, and Hispanic were asked to complete the measure that was specific to their cultural group.

RESULTS

Currently there is not enough data to perform a reliable factor analysis per cultural group. More data is being collected and factor analyses will be redone once the desired sample size has been obtained. Factor structures for the current study was determined by theory (Hispanic and Asian measures) and previous factor analyses provided in the literature (African American and General measures).

The data in Table 2 and Table 3 represent correlations for the Factors in the GEQ with factors of each of the specific acculturation measures.

Table 1. Correlations of GEQ-C with culture-specific measures

Culture-specific measures	General Ethnicity Questionnaire-Culture	
		p
African American Acculturation Scale	-.07	.66
Asian Value Scale-Revised	-.00	.99
Bi-Directional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics	.27	.03*

Table 2. Factor Correlations of General Questionnaire to African American Questionnaire

GEQ Factors	African American Acculturation Factors							
	Preferences for African American Things	Traditional Family Practices and Values	Health Beliefs, Practices and Disorders	Traditional Socialization	Food	Religion	Interracial Attitudes	Superstition
Language	0.066	-0.042	-0.124	-0.079	-0.151	0.00	-0.212	-0.145
Affiliation w/other in Same Culture	.613**	.428**	.432**	.371*	.460**	0.17	.335*	.367*
Participation in Cultural Activities	.529**	.424**	.333*	.367*	0.182	0.175	0.178	0.087
Pride of Culture	.465**	0.102	.426**	0.294	.474**	.491**	.389*	.372*
Exposure to Culture	.309*	0.118	0.255	0.156	0.203	-0.007	.461**	0.161
Food	.540**	.415**	0.166	.356*	.460**	.381*	-0.055	0.27

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

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

Table 3. Factor Correlations of General Questionnaire to Asian & Hispanic Questionnaires

GEQ Factors	Asain Factors	Hispanic Factors
	Asian Values and Beliefs	Language
Language	-0.061	0.223
Affiliation w/other in Same Culture	.278**	.299*
Participation in Cultural Activities	.380**	.474**
Pride of Culture	.332**	.503**
Exposure to Culture	.278**	.406**
Food	.291**	.286*

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

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

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to determine if inconsistent results in reliability and validity of the General Ethnicity Questionnaire were due to differences in specific domains used in different measures of acculturation.

Results indicate that separate domains are used in the measures of acculturation. Some measures such as the Bi-Dimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics rely on language as a sole measure and others such as the Asian Value Scale Revised rely on attitudes and shared values. Both the General Ethnicity Questionnaire and the African American Acculturation Scale used several different domains to determine level of acculturation such as social upbringing, food preferences, and cultural practices.

When examining relationships between domains, results are very inconsistent and un predictable. For example, food preference in the African American Acculturation scale is not significantly related to Food preference on the General Ethnicity Questionnaire. Even more disturbing, the language portion of the General Ethnicity Questionnaire does not correlate with the Bi-Dimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics which is based solely on language.

It is possible that the results will be very different once adequate data is collected in order to run a factor and correlation analysis from one data set. It is also possible that qualitative research should be conducted to determine the mental processes of individuals completing these measures to determine how they are interpreting the questions.

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