



THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND, AGE, AND ACCULTURATION ON IN-GROUP ADVANTAGE IN EMOTION PERCEPTION AND IDENTITY IN CHINA

Xuanyu Wu, Cindy Liu
monawuxy@outlook.com/liucindy@gmail.com

Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Zhejiang University

INTRODUCTION (RESEARCH OBJECTIVES)

Research Question

How do one's cultural background and age group influence in-group advantage in emotion perception and in-group identity, and how does acculturation affect?

Research Objectives

Investigate whether there is an in-group advantage in emotion perception among children and adults when viewing drawings from different cultural groups. Further, explore how acculturation affects an individual's in-group identity and whether this influences their ability to perceive emotions in culturally diverse contexts.

BACKGROUND

- **Acculturation** is the dual process of cultural and psychological changes that occurs as a consequence of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2005).
- Graves et. al., (1967), proposed that people behaviour is interacting with the cultures.
- Berry et. al., (2002, as cited in Berry, 2005) show the five aspects of cultural contexts: the original cultures (A and B), the changing cultures (A' and B'), and the nature of their contact and interations. The graph can be seen in Fig. 1 (Berry, 2005).
- Acculturation strategies proposed by Berry (1980, as cited in Bhatia & Ram, 2009), includes assimilation (individual influenced by host culture), seperation (individual keep home culture), integration (individual influenced by both host and home cultures), and marginalization (individual lose contact with both cultures).
- For the Mexican migration in USA in peace, they show assimilation in their life. For instance, the roles of couples play in family life (Bhatia & Ram, 2009).
- Indian-American show the mix attitude of assimilation and seperation when they face to threat, such as 9/11(Bhatia & Ram, 2009).

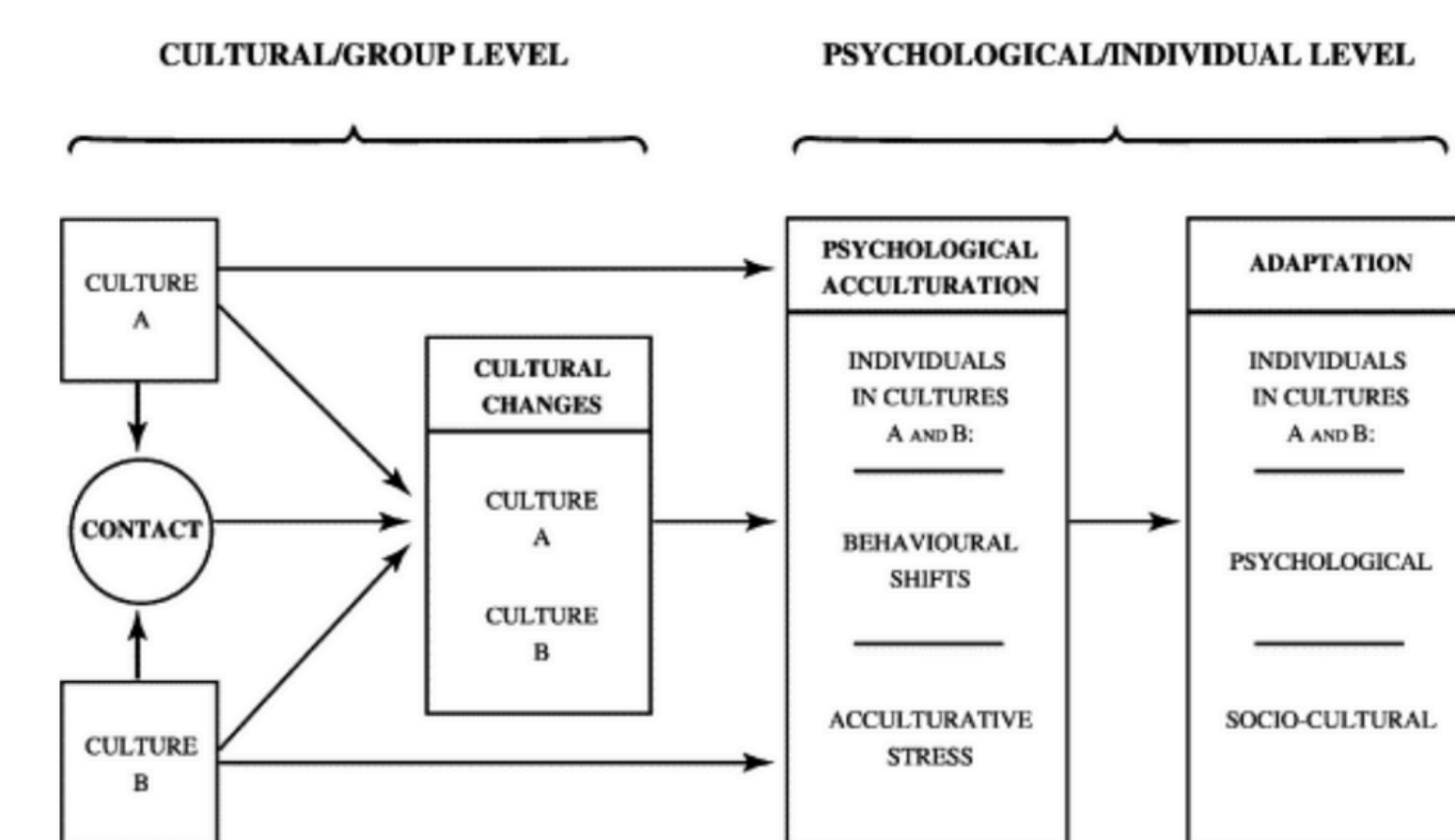


Fig. 1 The graph of the five aspects of cultural contexts (Berry, 2005).

- **In-group** refers to the categorisation of people into groups where the group with which an individual identifies better as a member in is called an in-group, and the group to which they do not identify as well is called an out-group.
- Within the in-group, an **in-group advantage** is when individuals are better at recognising and understanding emotions expressed by members of their own cultural group or in-group, as compared to out-group members (Laukka and Elfenbein, 2021). In-group advantage exists because of shared experiences, norms, and culturally-specific elements of emotional expressions shared within the group, leading to better emotion perception (Elfenbein, 2014).

PROPOSED METHODS

1. Participants

- Children: Aged 6-12 years with balanced gender ratio
- Adults: Aged 18-40 years with balanced gender ratio
- Cultural Backgrounds: Include participants from Western countries living in China who with diverse cultural exposure (e.g., foreign-born Chinese, international students as least 3 years).

2. Materials and Stimuli

A. Emotion Perception Stimuli:

- Drawings: Participants to draw facial expressions showing basic emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust).

B. Questionnaires:

In-Group Identity Scale:

- Questions assessing the participant's sense of belonging to their cultural group and identification with in-group members.

Acculturation Scale:

- Use a validated scale, such as the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA), to measure participants' level of acculturation, including dimensions like cultural maintenance and participation in the host culture.

3. Experimental Procedure

1. Introduction and Instructions:

- Explain the task to participants without revealing the hypotheses and check that participants indeed possess the capabilities to identify the emotions before starting the experiment, whereby participants will be shown drawings drawn from members within their in-group and out-group (as well as drawings from different age groups), and asked to identify the specific emotions portrayed in the drawings. Order of drawings will be randomised to control for order effects.

2. Questionnaires:

- Administer the in-group identity and acculturation questionnaires before the emotion perception task.
- Ensure that the questionnaires are translated accurately and culturally adapted.

4. Ethical Considerations

- Only start the experiment when obtaining informed consent from participants. Showing respects to participants who have no willingness to agree the consent.
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participant data.
- Provide mental support to participants who have some problems led by this experiment after participation.

5. Pilot Testing

- Conduct a pilot study with a small sample to test the clarity of instructions, appropriateness of stimuli, and functionality of the data collection process.
- Refine the study design based on feedback from the pilot participants.

6. Implementation and Data Collection

- Implement the full study following the refined procedures.
- Ensure consistent administration of tasks and questionnaires across all participants.

HYPOTHESISED RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesised Results

1. Impact of Cultural Background, Age Group and In-Group Identity on In-Group Advantage in Emotion Perception

- **Hypothesis 1:** Age Group and Emotion Perception
 - Adults might demonstrate stronger in-group advantage in terms of both age and culture, compared to children for emotion perception, as adults are exposed to cultural norms and experiences more.
 - Children might be able to exhibit an in-group advantage in terms of age, but it might be less prominent due to developmental trends; and perhaps because of lesser exposure to cultural norms at their young age, in-group advantage in terms of culture might not be as pronounced.
- **Hypothesis 2:** In-Group Identity and Emotion Perception
 - Participants who feel stronger about their in-group identity might show a greater in-group advantage in emotion perception as they identify more with their cultural group, and that could possibly enhance their awareness sensitivity to emotional expressions that could be specific or familiar to their in-group

2. Impact of Acculturation on In-Group Advantage and In-Group Identity

- **Hypothesis 1:** Acculturation and In-Group Identity
 - The level of acculturation in an individual could possibly moderate the relationship between cultural background and in-group identity, which means that different acculturation strategies that one adopts (assimilation, separation, integration, marginalisation) can influence the strength of an individual's in-group identity and the subsequent in-group advantage in emotion perception.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Acculturation and In-Group Advantage
 - Participants who integrated, instead of assimilated into the society, might demonstrate flexibility in perceiving emotions from both in-group and out-group members, which could mean less pronounced in-group advantage but greater accuracy in emotion perception.
 - Participants with higher levels of assimilation might show reduced in-group advantage in emotion perception compared to those with lower assimilation levels, as their exposure and identification with multiple cultural norms may dilute their abilities and sensitivity to emotional recognition within the group.

Discussion

If the hypotheses are supported, it can illustrate that the Chinese data has no difference with the Western data. The culture differences do not exist in the acculturation of people, emotion perception and in-group identity in different age groups.

From the potential results that could be gathered from the experiment, if it can be proven that cultural in-group advantage exists, regardless of whether or not acculturation has an effect on it, it could be possible to look at the results and determine if age-group level in-group advantage also exists if we look at non-verbal cues like drawing, of which this is not readily and widely researched about.

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