

SL IB Psychology

Cultural Influences on Individual Behaviour

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Enculturation

Enculturation

What is enculturation?

- **Enculturation** is a type of **socialisation**: it is the process by which an individual absorbs and learns the **norms, traditions, rituals, attitudes** and **practices** of the culture into which they are born and raised (i.e. as opposed to **acculturation**)
- Enculturation happens almost at an **unconscious level** i.e. we are not fully aware that we are being **enculturated**, it is simply part and parcel of growing up within a specific culture
- People may begin to question or **challenge** aspects of their enculturation as they grow up, but the effects of enculturation are usually **embedded in our psyche** and are not easily shifted i.e. they may be an **intrinsic** part of who we are
- Enculturation is **transmitted vertically** e.g. by parents (the most significant figures in enculturation)
- Enculturation is also **transmitted horizontally** e.g. by siblings, friends
- Enculturation may also occur via oblique transmission e.g. by other adults, celebrities, media and social organisations
- Enculturation is **adaptive** as it helps people to survive and thrive within their culture, preserving cultural practices from one generation to the next

How does enculturation affect parenting?

- As enculturation is a socialisation process it affects and influences all aspects of a person's life, for example the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours involved in parenting
- Parents generally try to raise their children using the best practices and traditions that they themselves have experienced and these are largely dependent on the culture in which they have been raised
- One aspect of parenting that is affected by enculturation is the attitude of parents towards **gender roles** i.e. the ways in which girls and boys should each behave; what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl
- Research tends to suggest that parents from **collectivist** cultures are more **rigid** and inflexible in their attitudes towards **gendered behaviour**, upholding traditional views of gender roles as compared to more the **progressive, liberal** attitudes of **individualistic** cultures

Which research studies investigate enculturation and parenting?

- **Basu et al. (2017)** – an investigation of enculturation and gender roles in two collectivist cultures

Basu et al. (2017) is available as a separate Key Study – just navigate the Cultural Influences on Individual Behaviour section of this topic to find it (Two Key Studies of Enculturation & Acculturation)

Worked example

SAQ (SHORT ANSWER QUESTION) – 9 marks

Explain enculturation using one relevant study. [9]

The question requires you to give a detailed account of enculturation, using examples. Here is an exemplar paragraph:

Enculturation ensures the continuity of cultural practices from one generation to another through vertical cultural transmission from parents to children, as well as horizontal cultural transmission through siblings and friends and oblique cultural transmission from other adults and social institutions. Attitudes, identity, and behaviours overlap, with attitudes shaping behaviour and being shaped by identity, and identity shaping and also being shaped by attitudes and behaviour e.g. attitudes towards the practice of parenting.

Acculturation

Acculturation

What is acculturation?

- **Acculturation** is the process by which people adapt to a **new and different culture** to the one in which they have been born and raised (i.e. the opposite to **enculturation**)
- Acculturation occurs when an individual chooses or is forced (i.e. because of war, famine or economic need) to move to and live in another country/culture
- Acculturation involves an individual **acclimatising** to the **dominant** culture into which they have moved from their **original culture**
 - e.g. a student born and raised in Inner London moves to Wales for university and has to learn the **customs** and way of life in Wales; a person who has moved from the UK to Brazil in South America will have to acclimatise to the customs, **norms**, **systems** and **procedures** of the **new cultural environment** in Brazil
- Acculturation can be a positive experience for a non-native, but it can also lead to acculturative stress (see the Revision Note on Acculturative Stress & Berry's Model - Cultural Influences on Behaviour)
- The most successful and productive **acculturative strategy** is integration (see the Revision Note on Acculturative Stress & Berry's Model - Cultural Influences on Individual Behaviour)
- Acculturation is a **bi-directional** process: the dominant culture affects the migrant and they in turn affect the dominant culture e.g. by introducing new language, foods, religion, art, music etc.

How does acculturation affect parenting?

- As acculturation is an acclimatisation process it affects and influences all aspects of a person's life, for example the **attitudes, beliefs** and **behaviours** involved in parenting
- Parents generally try to raise their children using the best practices and **traditions** that they themselves have experienced and these are largely dependent on the culture in which they have been raised – which can **counter** those of the dominant culture
- One aspect of parenting that is affected by acculturation is the attitude of parents towards **ethnic identity** i.e. the ways in which people view themselves in terms of their culture
- Research tends to suggest that the children of **first-generation** parents (i.e. the first to move to the new country) are less traditional in their behaviours and attitudes than their parents which is probably due to the influence of the dominant culture into which they have been born
- It may be difficult for first-generation non-native parents to reconcile the fact that their children may not agree with or follow the traditions, beliefs and norms of their original culture
 - e.g. because dressing, socialising and holding attitudes that are more in line with the dominant culture

Which research studies investigate acculturation and parenting?

- **Inman et al. (2007)** – investigated ethnic identity in first-generation Indian parents and children in the USA

Inman et al. (2007) is available as a separate Key Study – just navigate the Cultural Influences on Individual Behaviour section of this topic to find it (Two Key Studies of Enculturation & Acculturation)

Worked example

SAQ (SHORT ANSWER QUESTION) – 9 marks

Describe one study of acculturation. [9]

The question requires you to give a detailed account of an acculturation study, using examples. It is important to be concise, clear, and coherent when describing all aspects of the study, particularly the procedure. Here is an exemplar paragraph:

Inman et al. (2007) collected qualitative data using semi-structured interviews which are structured using some pre-prepared questions, but which also have flexibility built in. They analysed the interview transcripts using inductive content analysis in which emergent themes are categorised and analysed. The participants were 16 first-generation Indian Hindu parents who had emigrated to the USA in the late 1960s/70s when they were over 20 years old. They were selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, and all participants were fluent in English. Prior to the interview, participants were asked if they were 'very Indian, somewhat Indian, bicultural, somewhat American or very American.' They were asked to then elaborate on this in the interview.

Acculturative Stress & Berry's Model

Acculturative Stress & Berry's Model

What is acculturative stress?

- **Acculturation** is the process by which people adapt to a **new and different culture** to the one in which they have been born and raised (i.e. the opposite to **enculturation**)
- **Acculturative stress** occurs when **non-natives** settling into a new country find that the **dominant culture** (i.e. the culture into which they have moved) is one which causes them difficulties and which may be misaligned with their own **cultural values, norms, beliefs, customs and behaviours**
 - *For example, in other countries where the pace of life is slower, people moving from the UK would find a restricted amount of 24/7 access to shops and dining, have to get used to different meal times (Mediterranean cultures have siestas during the day so tend to have later dinner times, sometimes not sitting for a meal until 8–9pm onwards), or recognise that some religious holidays may be observed more often and with more significance*
- Other examples of acculturative stress might occur if non-natives cannot speak the language of the dominant culture; when they are trying to find suitable employment and/or education; searching for ingredients to cook dishes from their original culture

What is Berry's Model?

- **Berry (2008)** suggested a theory of acculturation based on **four strategies** that individuals use when acculturating to the dominant culture
- He claimed that acculturation is a **bi-directional** process, with both the original culture and the dominant culture being affected by it
- Berry's four acculturation strategies are as follows:

STRATEGY	EXPLANATION
ASSIMILATION	When individuals do not wish to maintain their own, original culture and instead seek daily interactions with people from the dominant culture
INTEGRATION	When individuals wish to interact with the dominant culture, while maintaining their own identity as well
SEPARATION	When individuals wish to maintain their own culture and do not wish to integrate, therefore they avoid contact with the dominant culture
MARGINALISATION	When individuals have no interest in integration or assimilation into the dominant culture, even though they have lost their own

- According to Berry, the most successful and productive strategy is 'integration', as it allows the individual to explore and enjoy the dominant culture whilst still maintaining a sense of their **cultural identity**
- According to Berry, the least successful strategy (and one likely to lead to acculturative stress) is 'marginalisation', as it involves a total **negation** of culture which the individual may not always be able to control
 - *For instance, in a situation where an individual has moved to another country or culture without choice, this might result in marginalisation*

- One example of this might be a child who has relocated because of their parent's choosing to move to another country or a part of the country with a distinctly different culture
- As a result, the child may grow up not wanting to integrate with the new culture and may also lose their own cultural identity from having to move away from their original culture

Evaluation of Berry's Model

Strengths

- Berry devised the model after conducting **self-report** research with immigrants which gives it a good level of **internal validity**
- The model has good **application** and could be used to help non-native residents, particularly those in need, settle into and adapt to a new, unfamiliar culture

Weaknesses

- The model is rather vague and **generalised** with its use of broad categories: **individual differences** may mean that it does not apply to everyone
- The research does not account for people who have a **mixed cultural heritage** e.g. parents from two different cultures who have moved into a dominant culture

Two Key Studies of Enculturation & Acculturation: Basu et al. (2017) & Inman et al. (2007)

Key Study: Basu et al. (2017)

Aim: To investigate **enculturation** in **adolescents** and their **parents** towards **gender-appropriate** behaviour

Participants:

- Adolescents aged 11–13 years and their parents
- One sample was from a highly **socially and economically disadvantaged** area of Delhi, India (16 males, 15 females);
- The other sample was from a **low-income, disadvantaged area** of Shanghai, China (17 males, 17 females)
- The parents of the adolescents comprised a separate sample (24 from Delhi, 34 from Shanghai)
- Delhi parents were younger (25–44 years) than the Shanghai parents (35–54 years)
- 40% of the Delhi parents had **no formal education**, whereas 75% of the Shanghai parents had at **least some level of formal education**

Procedure:

- **Narrative interviews** (an open style of interviewing in which no pre-prepared questions are used) were conducted with the adolescents and their parents separately
- The topic being discussed was '**gender socialisation**' with discussions exploring ideas as to how each gender should dress, behave, prepare for adulthood, and so on

Results: The researchers used **thematic analysis** which generated a range of themes, some of which were:

- Girls, particularly in Delhi, should be covered up, and not wear jeans, just long skirts and should behave in a '**ladylike**' way otherwise they would be punished. Boys could wear what they liked and were encouraged to be **brave and tough**
- In Shanghai the parents put a lot of emphasis on '**proper**' **demeanour for girls** such as sitting with an upright posture, being calm, gentle, and quiet: not behaving like this would bring dishonour on her family. Although boys were not faced with such strictures, they were expected to be **polite and considerate towards girls**
- Delhi parents were more focused on girls preparing for life as a wife and mother whereas the Shanghai parents had expectations of **career success for both boys and girls**
- There were huge restrictions in both countries regarding **male-female interaction**, with most families expressly forbidding it and threatening punishment even for the mildest of interactions, such as looking at a member of the opposite sex
- Mothers emerged as the most **influential** and **dominant** figure in the gender socialisation process, with other significant adults (such as teachers and older siblings) also playing a role
- Children from both countries reported that **punishments** such as beatings and shaming in front of friends were used without hesitation for perceived or actual rule violations, particularly those regarding male-female interactions

Conclusion: Some cultures appear to enculturate traditional gendered behaviour which may have a negative impact on children e.g. the use of corporal punishment (physical punishment) for perceived rule violations

The researchers conclude that some cultures adhere to deeply entrenched gendered behaviours and rules which appear to be unequal e.g. boys being given more freedom than girls

Evaluation of Basu et al. (2017)

Strengths

- The use of narrative interviews means that this research collected a **good amount of qualitative data** which is rich, in-depth and insightful i.e. it has **good explanatory power**
- Interviewing both the adolescents and their parents enabled the researchers to compare the extent of enculturation **across generations**

Weaknesses

- Narrative interviews can sometimes be **derailed** and **veer off-topic** if the participant wishes to talk at length on some unrelated matter
- The sample is **not representative** e.g. more affluent areas of the two cities may well have reported less traditional attitudes towards gender socialisation

Key terms:

- **Acculturation**
- **Gender socialisation**
- **Narrative interviews**

Key Study: Inman et al. (2007)

Aim: To investigate **ethnic identity** in first-generation Indian Hindu parents living in the USA

Participants:

- 16 first-generation Indian Hindu parents (8 female; 8 male) who had moved to the USA in the late 1960s/early 1970s
- The parents had all been over 20 years old when they had **emigrated**
- Both **purposive** and **snowball sampling methods** were used to obtain the sample who were all fluent in English

Procedure:

- Prior to the interview, participants were asked to **classify** themselves as either 'very Indian/somewhat Indian/**bicultural**/somewhat American/very American'
- They were asked to elaborate on this description of themselves in the interview
- **Semi-structured** interviews were then conducted

Results: After analysing the **transcripts** the researchers drew up **themes** and **categories** which had **emerged** from the data:

- **Ethnic identity:** The two most common **self-categorisations** (obtained with the question used prior to the interviews) were 'very Indian' whilst also feeling 'bicultural' i.e Berry's idea that integration is the most successful acculturative strategy is supported in the data
- **Factors contributing to ethnic identity retention:** Engagement in **cultural celebrations** and activities; maintaining **traditional values** and upbringing; family ties; and the need for **social support** all emerged as typical categories for both mothers and fathers
- **Their children's bicultural experiences:** Fathers typically and mothers generally noted the bicultural influence and the difficulties of maintaining **cultural continuity**, though being bicultural was generally seen by both groups of parents as being a strength
- **Challenges:** The main challenges were seen as limited family and community guidance; obstacles presented by Western culture, such as inflexible work schedules and a lack of Indian cultural centres and schools; a lack of specific cultural knowledge; an inability to apply their own experience when raising their children; and there was a fear of **intermarriage** that might create a distance between parents and children and grandchildren

Conclusion: First-generation immigrant parents are able to acculturate successfully but this is not always without its problems and difficulties

Evaluation of Inman et al. (2007)

Strengths

- Narrative interviews allow the participants complete freedom when responding to questions which can lead to valuable ideas and information emerging which the researcher had not considered prior to the research
- The results of the interviews were cross-checked (with the question asked prior to the interview) and confirmed between researchers and by an **external auditor** which gives the research good **internal validity**

Weaknesses

- It is possible that the parents could have discussed what they were going to say in the interviews prior to them being conducted which would impact the **validity** of their responses
- A sample of 16 parents is very small and means that the results are not easily **generalised**

Key terms:

- **Acculturation**
- **Ethnic identity**
- **Narrative interviews**

