Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory

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A vital step in the development of an equal partnership for minorities in the academic, social, and economic life of the United States involves moving away from assumptions of the linear model of cultural acquisition. In this article we review the literature on the psychological impact of being bicultural. Assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multicultural, and fusion models that have been used to describe the psychological processes, social experiences, and individual challenges and obstacles of being bicultural are reviewed and summarized for their contributions and implications for investigations of the psychological impact of biculturalism. Emphasis is given to the alternation model, which posits that an individual is able to gain competence within 2 cultures without losing his or her cultural identity or having to choose one culture over the other. Finally, a hypothetical model outlining the dimensions of bicultural competence is presented.

Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935) developed the argument that individuals who live at the juncture between two cultures and can lay a claim to belonging to both cultures, either by being of mixed racial heritage or born in one culture and raised in a second, should be considered marginal people. Park suggested that marginality leads to psychological conflict, a divided self, and disjointed person. Stonequist contended that marginality has certain social and psychological properties. The social properties include factors of migration and racial (biological) difference and situations in which two or more cultures share the same geographical area, with one culture maintaining a higher status than another. The psychological properties involve a state of what DuBois (1961) labeled double-consciousness, or the simultaneous awareness of oneself as being a member and an alien of two or more cultures. This includes a "dual pattern of identification and a divided loyalty... [leading to] an ambivalent attitude" (Stonequist, 1935, p. 96).

Words derisively used to describe the marginal person, such as "apple," "banana," or "oreo," reflect the negative stereotype often applied to people who have intimate relationships with two or more cultures. The common assumption, exemplified by the positions of Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935), is that living in two cultures is psychologically undesirable because managing the complexity of dual reference points generates ambiguity, identity confusion, and normlessness. Park also suggested, however, that the history and progress of humankind, starting with the Greeks, has depended on the interface of cultures. He claimed that migration and human movement inevitably lead to intermingling. Park described the individual who is the product of this interaction as the "cosmopile," the independent and wiser person. In other words, even though marginality is psychologically uncomfortable for the individual, it has long-term benefits for society.

Goldberg (1941) and Green (1947), in their responses to the marginal human theory, suggested that people who live within two cultures do not inevitably suffer. Both authors suggested that being a "marginal person" is disconcerting only if the individual internalizes the conflict between the two cultures in which he or she is living. In fact, Goldberg perceived advantages to living at the border between two cultures. According to him, a marginal person may (a) share his or her condition with others of the same original culture; (b) engage in institutional practices that are shared by other "marginal" people; (c) experience no major blockage or frustrations associated with personal, economic, or social expectations; and (d) perceive himself or herself to be a member of a group. Goldberg argued that a person who is part of a subculture that provides norms and a definition of the individual's situation will not suffer from the negative psychological effects of being a marginal person.

The purpose of this article is to review the literature on the psychological impact of being bicultural. We present a definition of cultural competence and discuss models that have been used to describe the psychological processes, social experiences, and individual challenges associated with being bicultural. We identify the various skills we believe are needed to successfully negotiate bicultural challenges and obstacles. Finally, we present a hypothetical model of bicultural competence.

We examined journal articles, books, technical reports, and dissertations from a two-dimensional, level-of-analysis perspective and a subject-matter perspective. Four levels of analysis from the disciplines of psychology, education, sociology, and ethnology were selected for review to support our position that the psychological impact of biculturalism is influenced by an...
individual's emotional and behavioral characteristics (psychology), relationship with human social structures (education), groups and diverse socioeconomic systems (sociology), and cultural heritage (ethnology). The subject areas reviewed were ones thought to be associated with second-culture acquisition. This included (a) synonyms associated with cultural interactions (e.g., biculturalism, dualism, pluralism, transactionalism, acculturation), (b) descriptors for ethnic group membership, and (c) psychological symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress) and outcomes (e.g., competence, achievement, health) associated with the process of bicultural adaptation. The time span of this review was unrestricted and yielded theoretical articles dating back to 1929 and empirical articles from around the mid-1960s. Articles not considered for inclusion were ones that were found to be atheoretical, not associated with the major models of dual cultural adaptation, or of questionable quality in terms of research design.

Unfortunately, little empirical research exists in this area and what there is is spread throughout the social sciences. We found that some aspects of the psychological impact of being bicultural have received a great deal of well-designed and controlled study, whereas others have been addressed only along theoretical lines. The result of these inconsistencies is that some of the ideas presented are speculative, whereas others have significant empirical support. We have used this liberal approach because our goal was not merely to report the findings of current empirical research but to provide a model for examining the psychology of biculturalism. At the least, we hope that this article can be used as a springboard for more controlled research on this topic.

Cultural Competence

There is no single definition of culture on which all scholars can agree (Segall, 1986). Attempts to create a satisfactory definition of culture tend to either omit a salient aspect of it or to generalize beyond any real meaning. Despite these problems, there is an abundance of theories available regarding the meaning of the word culture. For the purpose of this article, we use a behaviorally focused definition. Like Levine (1982), we believe that human behavior is not just the product of cultural structure, individual cognitive and affective processes, biology, and social environment. Instead, we believe that behavior is a result of the continuous interaction among all of these components. We also ascribe to Bandura's (1978, 1986) concept of reciprocal determinism, which suggests that behavior is influenced by and influences a person's cognition and social environment.

This behavioral model of culture suggests that in order to be culturally competent, an individual would have to (a) possess a strong personal identity, (b) have knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture, (c) display sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture, (d) communicate clearly in the language of the given cultural group, (e) perform socially sanctioned behavior, (f) maintain active social relations within the cultural group, and (g) negotiate the institutional structures of that culture.

It is important to note that the length of this list reflects the difficulty involved in developing cultural competence, particularly if one is not raised within a given culture. We do not, however, perceive cultural competence to be a dichotomous construct whereby one is either fully competent or not at all competent. We view cultural competence within a multilevel continuum of social skill and personality development. For example, an individual may be able to perform socially sanctioned behavior in two cultures with great ease but have difficulty negotiating diverse institutional structures. We also recognize that members of groups within different social strata may have differential access to social, occupational, and political roles associated with cultural competence (Ogbu, 1979). We do assume, however, that the more levels in which one is competent, the fewer problems an individual will have functioning effectively within two cultures.

Models of Second-Culture Acquisition

Five models that have been used to understand the process of change that occurs in transitions within, between, and among cultures are assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multiculturalism, and fusion. Although each was created to address group phenomena, they can be used to describe the processes by which an individual from one culture, the culture of origin, develops competence in another culture, often the dominant majority culture. Each model has a slightly different emphasis and set of assumptions and focuses on different outcomes for the individual. We describe each one, identify its underlying assumptions, and review a number of hypotheses about the psychological impact of biculturalism that each appears to generate. We present, when available, examples from research literature that clarify the hypotheses implicit within each model.

Assimilation Model

One model for explaining the psychological state of a person living within two cultures assumes an ongoing process of absorption into the culture that is perceived as dominant or more desirable. Gordon (1964, 1978) outlined a number of subprocesses constituting various stages of the assimilation process: (a) cultural or behavioral assimilation, (b) structural assimilation, (c) marital assimilation, (d) identificational assimilation, (e) attitudinal receptinal assimilation, (f) behavioral receptinal assimilation, and (g) civic assimilation. Ruiz (1981) emphasized that the goal of the assimilation process is to become socially accepted by members of the target culture as a person moves through these stages. The underlying assumption of all assimilation models is that a member of one culture loses his or her original cultural identity as he or she acquires a new identity in a second culture.

This model leads to the hypothesis that an individual will suffer from a sense of alienation and isolation until he or she has been accepted and perceives that acceptance within the new culture (Johnston, 1976; Sung, 1985). This person will experience more stress, be more anxious, and suffer more acutely from social problems such as school failure or substance abuse than someone who is fully assimilated into that culture (Burnham, Telles, Karon, Hough, & Escobar, 1987; Pasquale, 1985). The gradual loss of support derived from the original culture, combined with the initial inability to use the assets of the newly acquired culture, will cause stress and anxiety.
Kerchoff and McCormick (1955) found that the greatest incidence of marginal personality characteristics (e.g., low self-esteem, impoverished social relationships, negative emotional states) among Ojibwa Indians occurred in individuals who were inclined to identify with the dominant group but encountered a relatively impermeable barrier to assimilation with that group. Chance (1965) found an overall lack of serious psychological impairment in most subjects of either sex during a period of rapidly increasing bicultural contact. However, subjects having relatively little contact with Western society, but who strongly identified with that society, showed more symptoms of personality maladjustment. Neither the contact index nor the identification index alone revealed significant differences with respect to emotional disturbance. Only the combination of the lower contact rank and high identification rank produced a situation conducive to emotional difficulties in the individual. Demographic factors such as age or education failed to delineate consistent differences in emotional disturbance.

Chadwick and Strauss (1975) found that American Indians living in Seattle maintained a strong sense of Indian identity during periods of economic and interpersonal rejection by the majority group. Even though they were able to achieve marital assimilation and perceived an absence of prejudice against them, they experienced value and power conflicts with the dominant power structure over public or civic issues. A substantial number of American Indians living their entire life in the city were perceived by the researchers to be as traditional as those who had recently left the reservation.

By contrast, Fordham's (1988) study of academically successful African-American students identified many of the problems associated with the process of assimilation. According to her findings, successful students felt that they had to reject the values of the African-American community in order to succeed in school. This seemed to be a less psychologically complicated task for women, but both sexes found that they had substantial conflict in their social and academic roles. Those choosing to become "raceless" suffered more stress and personal confusion than did those who maintained their African-American identification. On the other hand, those who did not become raceless failed to meet the standards imposed by the majority group. In this case, social success in the African-American community was associated with school failure, followed by economic failure. According to Fordham, as long as the choice is between one's ethnicity and school success, the latter will be a Pyrrhic victory.

Assimilation is the process by which an individual develops a new cultural identity. Acquiring this new identity, however, involves some loss of awareness and loyalty to one's culture of origin. Three major dangers are associated with assimilation. The first is the possibility of being rejected by members of the majority culture. The second is the likelihood of being rejected by members of the culture of origin. The third is the likelihood of experiencing excessive stress as one attempts to learn the new behaviors associated with the assimilative culture and to shed the inoperable behaviors associated with the culture of origin.

**Acculturation Model**

The acculturation\(^1\) model of bicultural contact is similar to the assimilation model in three ways. They both (a) focus on the acquisition of the majority group's culture by members of the minority group, (b) emphasize a unidirectional relationship between the two cultures, and (c) assume a hierarchical relationship between the two cultures. What differentiates the two models is that the assimilation approach emphasizes that individuals, their offspring, or their cultural group will eventually become full members of the majority group's culture and lose identification with their culture of origin. By contrast, the acculturation model implies that the individual, while becoming a competent participant in the majority culture, will always be identified as a member of the minority culture.

Smither (1982) stated that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the acculturation process is its involuntary nature. Most often, the member of the minority group is forced to learn the new culture in order to survive economically. Smither presented five models for understanding the process of acculturation. The first is the multivariate model, in which a quantitative approach is used to understand the factors that influence successful acculturation. The focus of this method is on measuring the interactions among premigration characteristics; conditions, such as income; class status; and various situational determinants in the majority society, such as length of stay, education, or occupation. Supposedly, an understanding of new social, political, cultural, and economic patterns, as well as of personal experience such as identification, internalization, and satisfaction, will emerge from this interaction (Pierce, Clark, & Kaufman, 1978).

Using the multivariate model, Prigoff's (1984) study of the self-esteem, ethnic identity, job aspirations, and school stress of Mexican-American youth in a Midwest urban barrio indicated that subjects' use of the Spanish language and ethnic life-style varied inversely with the length of time spent in the United States. He found a significant relationship between ethnic pride and length of stay. In a multivariate study of ethnic migration and adjustment in Toronto, Goldlust and Richmond (1974) concluded that the influence of ethnicity on acculturation was small compared with length of stay and that level of education had a positive influence on acculturation but was negatively associated with an immigrant's primary cultural identification.

When Richman, Gaviria, Flaherty, Birz, and Wintrob (1987) explored the relationship between acculturation and perceptions of discrimination among migrants in Peru, they found that age at the time of migration was closely associated with both level of acculturation and perceptions of discrimination. The advantage of the multivariate model used in these studies is its flexibility in addressing varying situational and other conditions involved in adapting to a new culture.

The second model of cultural acquisition is the communicative model of cultural contact. It differs from the multivariate model in that it emphasizes the interactive aspects of cultural contact. According to this model, cultural contact is not simply a matter of learning new behaviors but is an ongoing process of negotiation and adaptation. The individual is seen as actively constructing a new cultural identity through the process of communication with others who share different cultural backgrounds. This model highlights the dynamic nature of cultural contact and the role of communication in the acculturation process. The advantage of this model is that it emphasizes the active role of the individual in the acculturation process and the importance of communication in shaping cultural identity. However, the disadvantages of this model are that it may oversimplify the complexity of cultural contact and neglect the role of social structures and institutions in the acculturation process.

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\(^1\) We realize that many individuals will disagree with our use of the term *acculturation*. Many have used the term to refer to the multidimensional phenomena that an individual experiences when he or she lives within or between two or more cultures. This term, when used to describe that phenomena, is not meant to imply a directional relationship. We believe, however, that the term *acculturation* is often used in a manner that does imply a directional relationship. In this work we have labeled the general phenomena of developing competence in another culture second-culture acquisition and use the term *acculturation* to identify a particular model of second-culture acquisition.
tions theory model developed by Kim (1979), which focuses on four areas of communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass media behavior, and the communication environment. In this model, level of acculturation is determined by the degree of facility one has in these various methods of communication in the language of the majority culture.

The third model, put forth by Szapocznik and his colleagues (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Arandale, 1978; Szapocznik, Santisteaban, Kurtines, Perez-Vidal, & Hervis, 1984; Szapocznik et al., 1986), focuses on the behavior and values of the individual to assess his or her level of acculturation. This model suggests that individuals will learn the behaviors needed to survive in a new culture before they acquire the values of the majority group. Like the multivariate model, this one views acculturation as being a function of the time an individual is exposed to the majority culture. Sex and age are other factors. It also assumes that exposure to the majority culture will produce cultural competence.

The fourth model, articulated by Padilla and his colleagues, focuses on the cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty of the individual to determine his or her status of acculturation (Olmedo & Padilla, 1978; Padilla, 1980). This model suggests that an individual's preference for the minority, versus the majority, culture provides a measure of acculturation. It posits that the acculturation process exists in five dimensions: language familiarity, cultural heritage, ethnic pride and identity, interethnic interaction, and interethnic distance. This model argues for a multidimensional understanding of the cultural acquisition process.

Many authors combine these dimensions of the cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty model in their conceptual frameworks for studying acculturation. An example is Thompson's (1948) review of the Dakota Sioux, Northern Ojibwa, Navajo, Tohono O’odham (Papago), and Hopi beliefs in immanent justice. According to this belief, the universe is inherently just and sickness arises in retribution for one's failure to fulfill proper tribal roles or adhere to sacred proscriptions. Notably, regardless of the various kinds of social organization or levels of acculturation, tribal members did not display a significant decrease in the belief in immanent justice. This review did not substantiate the deleterious impact of acculturation on cultural beliefs or values. Spindler's (1952) study of belief in witchcraft among Menomini Indians showed that this belief prevailed among subjects of differing acculturation levels. She described the function of this belief as one supporting a social system invested in retaining traditional culture and providing an adaptive response to the hostilities encountered when interacting with members of the encroaching culture.

In her study of interethnic interaction among American Indians relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area, Ablon (1964) found that most Indian relationships with Anglo-Americans were relatively superficial, consisting of necessary communication with workmates and neighbors. Rather than strive for reciprocal relationships with Anglo-Americans, or positions within Anglo-American organizations, relocated Indians continuously strove to reaffirm their tribal orientation and maintain their identification with other Indians through Pan-Indian organizations. The control these subjects exerted in selecting Anglo-Americans with whom to associate offset the tension surrounding the need to interact with them.

Barger's (1977) comparative study of Inuit (Eskimo) and Cree Indians in Great Whale River, Quebec, Canada, demonstrates the need to consider case-specific factors in the statistical approach to studying the acculturative process. Inuits and Crees who resided in the same town in which Anglos were in the minority for 14 years were compared on a number of behavioral and material integration indexes. It was found that the Inuit demonstrated greater levels of acculturation and became more fully integrated into the town life than did the Crees, who were more selective in their participation in town activities. The association between culture change and presumed deviance among Cree subjects occurred with certain individuals or families rather than with the tribe as a whole. There were, however, no differences between the two groups in overall psychosocial adjustment.

Similarly, when Boyce and Boyce (1983) studied the relationship between cultural background and the report of illness among Navajo students during their first year at a reservation boarding school (the primary mechanism for acculturating Indian people until the 1970s), they found a significant positive association between the number of clinic visits, referrals for health or psychosocial problems, and the degree of cultural incongruity (dissonance between family and community cultural identities). This finding suggests that externally imposed acculturation does have a deleterious impact on one's health.

Smithier (1982) argued that the four models reviewed earlier provide insight into the processes of acculturation at the group level but cannot explain or predict individual differences in acculturation. He supported yet another multidimensional framework, a socioanalytic approach to the study of "the personality processes of the individual which facilitate or retard acculturation" (Smithier, 1982, p. 62) to explain individual variation in acculturation. He asserted that an individual must expand his or her role repertoire to meet the demands of the majority culture. In the socioanalytic model, acculturation "is a function of the size of the difference between those qualities of character structure which affect role structure in the majority culture and the same qualities of character structure in the minority compared to the major role structure" (Smithier, 1982, p. 64).

Burnam et al. (1987), in a study of the prevalence of eight psychiatric disorders among Los Angeles adults of Mexican ethnicity, used socioanalytic assumptions to help explain the finding that immigrant Mexican Americans had a lower risk factor for these disorders than their native-born peers. They hypothesized that one of the reasons for the difference between the groups was that the individual who chooses to migrate may have a stronger sense of self (e.g., be more ambitious or capable) and may therefore be better equipped to cope with acculturative stress (defined by Williams & Berry, 1991, as anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion).

Berry and Annis (1974) applied the socioanalytic approach in their investigation of psychological adaptation to culture change among individuals from the James Bay, Carrier, and Tsimshian communities. They found that the greater the cultural discontinuities between the Indian community and the Anglo communities surrounding them, the greater the acculturation
stress on the individual. Individuals attaining a degree of separateness from their fellow tribal members and acquiring an independent cognitive style in interactions with their environment were less susceptible to the stresses of sociocultural change. These studies emphasize the importance of examining the role of individual development when studying the process of second-culture acquisition. However, they do not address the stress associated with any sense of isolation or loss of community ties and approval.

A series of studies by Ekstrand (1978) revealed evidence for the importance of personality factors in the acquisition of bicultural competence. The studies were designed to determine the optimal age for acquisition of a second language. Ekstrand found that personal factors (e.g., motivation, or personal circumstances) were more salient in the acquisition of language than were social factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, immigrant status, teaching method). This supports the assertion that personality factors must be considered in explaining the variation by which individuals develop competence in a new culture.

According to the socioanalytic approach, role structure, character structure, and psychological differentiation need to be understood in relation to constant variables such as age, race, level of education, or degree of cultural discontinuity because they serve to modify expression of personality and role performance. The socioanalytic model of acculturation concentrates on the individual’s personality and how it constrains or facilitates learning and the expression of culturally and situationally appropriate behavior.

These studies lend credence to the conclusion that minority individuals attempting to acculturate will often do so antagonistically (Vogt, 1957) or resign themselves to accepting second-class citizenship within the majority group. Most studies of minority groups do seem to indicate that minorities are often relegated to lower status positions within the majority group. This phenomenon seems to hold true for divergent groups such as ethnic minorities in the United States, Finns in Sweden, Turks in Germany, and Koreans in Japan. These studies also suggest that the most active agent in this process may be the discriminatory behavior of the majority culture. However, the role of minority group members’ economic resources has been relatively unexplored in acculturation studies, prohibiting conclusions about the role of socioeconomic status in second-culture acquisition.

Collectively, these studies indicate that acculturation can be a stressful experience, reinforcing the second-class citizenship and alienation of the individual acclimating to a new culture. These studies do support the conjecture that the primary feature of the acculturation model rests on the notion that the individual will never be allowed to lose identification with the culture of origin. Furthermore, this can have negative economic and psychological effects on the individual. This observation led Taft (1977) to argue that the detrimental effects of acculturation can be ameliorated by encouraging biculturalism. Taft (1977) suggested that “the mature bicultural individual may rise above both cultures by following superordinate social procriptions that serve to integrate the individual’s behavior relative to each culture” (p. 146). Several of the studies cited support the hypothesis that the more control people have over their relationship with the majority culture, the less likely they are to experience the negative effects of acculturation stress.

**Alternation Model**

The alternation model of second-culture acquisition assumes that it is possible for an individual to know and understand two different cultures. It also supposes that an individual can alter his or her behavior to fit a particular social context. As Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) have argued, “it is possible and acceptable to participate in two different cultures or to use two different languages, perhaps for different purposes, by alternating one’s behavior according to the situation” (p. 89). Ramirez (1984) also alluded to the use of different problem-solving, coping, human relational, communication, and incentive motivational styles, depending on the demands of the social context. Furthermore, the alternation model assumes that it is possible for an individual to have a sense of belonging in two cultures without compromising his or her sense of cultural identity.

Rashid (1984) defined this type of biculturalism for African Americans as the ability to function effectively and productively within the context of America’s core institutions while retaining a sense of self and African ethnic identity. LaFromboise and Rowe (1983) defined this type of biculturalism for American Indians as involving dual modes of social behavior that are appropriately used in different situations.

The alternation model is an additive model of cultural acquisition parallel to the code-switching theories found in the research on bilingualism. Saville-Troike (1981) called this code switching the “sensitive process of signalling different social and contextual relations through language” (p. 3). This hypothesis implies that individuals who can alternate their behavior appropriate to two targeted cultures will be less anxious than a person who is assimilating or undergoing the process of acculturation. Furthermore, some authors (Garcia, 1983; Rashid, 1984; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991) have speculated that individuals who have the ability to effectively alternate their use of culturally appropriate behavior may well exhibit higher cognitive functioning and mental health status than people who are monocultural, assimilated, or acculturated. This complements other research (Lambert, 1977; McClure, 1977; Peal & Lambert, 1962) on the positive effects of bilingualism. In similar fashion, Martinez (1987) found that bicultural involvement was the best predictor of esteem and well-being when studying the effects of acculturation and racial identity on self-esteem and psychological well-being among Puerto Rican college students living on the mainland. Although this theoretical perspective still needs to be explored systematically, it may point to the affective or cognitive mechanism that facilitates a bicultural individual’s ability to manage the process of alternation.

The alternation model differs from the assimilation and acculturation models in two significant ways. First, it posits a bi-directional and orthogonal relationship between the individual’s culture of origin and the second culture in which he or she may be living rather than the linear and unidirectional relationship of the other two models. In fact, the alternation model suggests that it is possible to maintain a positive relationship with both cultures without having to choose between them. Second, this model does not assume a hierarchical relationship between
two cultures. Within this framework, it is possible for the individual to assign equal status to the two cultures, even if he or she does not value or prefer them equally.

The alternation model postulates that an individual can choose the degree and manner to which he or she will affiliate with either the second culture or his or her culture of origin. Sodowsky and Carey (1988) described certain dual characteristics of first-generation Asian Indians that appear paradoxical yet support this assumption. Although the groups as a whole reported a high level of proficiency in reading and speaking English, they preferred thinking in an Indian language (e.g., Hindi, Tamil). Many preferred Indian food and dress at home but American food and dress outside of the home.

Early attempts to define American Indian biculturalism, although nonempirical, adhered to the suppositions of the alternation model. Polgar (1960) studied the behavior of gangs of Mesquakie boys in Iowa as they interacted within their own community and the surrounding Anglo-American community. Polgar found that biculturation was most prominent in the area of recreational activities, in which there was a persistent dualism conditioned by geographical location. Subjects were more active when they were in town than when within the Mesquakie community. Bilingual by the age of 7, they had alternative modes of expression available to them to be used as the situation demanded. They also exerted choice in the gangs with which they chose to affiliate. Of the three gangs profiled in Polgar’s study, one in particular illustrated the alternation model of biculturalism. When in town, members of this gang adapted to Anglo-American norms, but while they were in the Mesquakie community they adapted to roles expected by the traditional, political, and religious leaders of the community. Polgar found it convenient, and effective, when analyzing the results of biculturation to view the gangs formed by the boys as transitional patterns in a multilinear scheme of cultural change.

McFee (1968), in studying the selective use of roles and situations by tribal members on the Blackfeet reservation, presented two prototypes of bicultural individuals. One type was Indian in psychological orientation and often included full-blood members of the tribe. Subjects in this category knew Blackfeet culture well, having learned it in their childhood homes and practiced it as adults. They were also educated in Anglo-American schools, had a wide range of experiences in various aspects of Anglo culture, and displayed many characteristics required for effective interactions with Anglo-Americans. Their ambition was to remain Indian but to do so by combining the best of the Indian way with the best of the Anglo way. The second type included subjects raised in Anglo-American families but knowledgeable of Blackfeet culture through early experience prior to removal from the home. Subjects in this latter category were situational Indian oriented, having maintained enough contact with the Blackfeet community to learn and speak the language, know the beliefs and rituals, and appropriately use these skills during Blackfeet events. Even though these individuals retained their involvement with the Anglo-American culture, they also did things with and for the Blackfeet community that gained them respect and acceptance by that community.

As Pertusali (1988) discussed in his study of the Akwasasne Mohawk in both segregated and desegregated schools, the alternation model is nonlinear in its emphasis. The Akwasasne Mohawk reported their attempt to develop bicultural competence in their children through an educational program involving academic segregation in the reservation school up to the fourth grade, then a transfer to a desegregated school that delivered a bicultural academic program. This transition sequence would ideally help Mohawk children to develop a positive sense of cultural identity and build a strong academic foundation prior to attending Anglo-American schools. Data obtained from in-depth interviews with administrators and faculty members at both the segregated and desegregated schools and an analysis of the retention rates indicated that the bicultural curriculum was beneficial for both the Mohawk and non-Indian students. Results revealed that the non-Indian students were differentially and more positively influenced by the bicultural curriculum than the Indian students. Cantrall and Pete (1990) also described a curriculum that was based on the alternation model at Greasewood School entitled “Navajo culture: A bridge to the rest of the world” that emphasized decision-making, problem-solving, reflective and critical thinking, valuing, concept formation, and information-processing skills needed to deal with the social order change occurring on the Navajo reservation and internationally. The focus of both of these programs was not on movement from competence in the minority group to competence in the majority group but on ways students maintain competence in their culture of origin while simultaneously acquiring competence in the majority (or more global) culture.

A study of biculturalism and adjustment of Ramallah-American adolescents by Kazaleh (1986) showed that although identity conflict was indeed present, many of the adolescents had acquired an array of mechanisms for dealing with the dissonance and were adept at alternating between both cultural orientations with minimal anxiety. Those who had more difficulty adjusting were the youth whose parents and clan members reacted with greater anxiety to rapid change and resisted mainstream influences.

The alternation model implies that individuals learning to alternately their behavior to fit into the cultures in which they are involved will be less stressed and less anxious than those who are undergoing the process of acculturation or assimilation. Guzman (1986) emphasized the importance of maintaining a behavior-preference distinction in the assessment of Mexican-American adolescents from a bicultural-model-of-acculturation perspective. Furthermore, Adler (1975) suggested that one outcome of the alternation model may well be an enhanced intuitive, emotional, and cognitive experience. The views are again similar to assertions about the positive effects of bilingualism.

What we see as the essential strength of the alternation model is that it focuses on the cognitive and affective processes that allow an individual to withstand the negative impact of acculturative stress. It also looks at the role the individual has in choosing how he or she will interact with the second culture and the person’s culture of origin. This model forces us to consider the bidirectional impact of cultural contact. In other words, it allows us to consider the impact that individuals from both cultures have on each other.
Multicultural Model

The multicultural model promotes a pluralistic approach to understanding the relationship between two or more cultures. This model addresses the feasibility of cultures maintaining distinct identities while individuals from one culture work with those of other cultures to serve common national or economic needs. In this model it is recognized that it may not be geographic or social isolation per se that is the critical factor in sustaining cultural diversity but the manner of multifaceted and multidimensional institutional sharing between cultures. Berry (1986) claimed that a multicultural society encourages all groups to (a) maintain and develop their own identities, (b) develop other-group acceptance and tolerance, (c) engage in intergroup contact and sharing, and (d) learn each other's language.

The multicultural model generates the hypothesis that an individual can maintain a positive identity as a member of his or her culture of origin while simultaneously developing a positive identity by engaging in complex institutional sharing with the larger political entity comprised of other cultural groups. In this model it is assumed that public and private identities need not become fused and that the tension of solving internal conflicts caused by bicultural stress need not have a negative psychological impact but could instead lead to personal and emotional growth. Kelly's (1971) finding, that with little difficulty the Tohono O'odham (Papago) in Tucson could occupy roles in the urban Tohono O'odham community parallel to their status in the wider Tucson social structure, supports the feasibility of this hypothesis.

Berry and his colleagues (Berry, 1984; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992), in their consideration of the acculturization literature, have developed a model that focuses on the process of group and individual adaptation within plural societies. They argued that there are four choices that the group or individual can make in such a situation: assimilate, integrate, separate, and marginalize. Berry and his colleagues argued that individuals and groups in plural societies have to manage two issues. One involves the decision to maintain one's culture of origin and the other is to engage in intergroup contact. Like Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986), Berry and his colleagues proposed a strategy—the integration approach—that allows the individual or ethnic group to both engage in the activities of one culture while maintaining identity and relationships in another. Where the integration model differs from the alternation model is the former's emphasis on the relationship between the two cultural groups and its implicit assumption that they are tied together within a single social structure. The alternation model addresses this relationship and includes relationships that do not necessarily evolve within a larger multicultural framework.

It is questionable, however, as to whether such a multicultural society can be maintained. As Fishman (1989) suggested, cultural separation of groups demands institutional protection and ethnocultural compartmentalization. He suggested that there is little evidence for such structures surviving more than three generations of cross-cultural contact. Examples of this separation being maintained include groups making that choice for ideological reasons, such as the Old Amish and the Hasidim, or groups actively discriminated against by the majority group, such as American Indians, African Americans, or Australian aborigines. In lieu of active discrimination or self-selected separation, it may be difficult to maintain a truly multicultural society over time (Mallea, 1988). Instead, it is more likely that the various groups will intermingle, leading to the evolution of a new culture.

Fusion Model

The fusion model of second-culture acquisition represents the assumptions behind the melting pot theory. This model suggests that cultures sharing an economic, political, or geographic space will fuse together until they are indistinguishable to form a new culture. The respectful sharing of institutional structures will produce a new common culture. Each culture brings to the melting pot strengths and weaknesses that take on new forms through the interaction of cultures as equal partners. Gleason (1979) argued that cultural pluralism inevitably produces this type of fusion if the various cultures share a common political unit. The fusion model is different from the assimilation or acculturation model in that there is no necessary assumption of cultural superiority. The psychological impact of this model is unclear because there are few successful examples of such a new culture. It seems that minority groups become assimilated into the majority group at the price of their ethnic identity. This would suggest that an individual who is a member of a minority group undergoing fusion would have experiences similar to one undergoing assimilation. Once fused, however, the individual's psychological reality would be indistinguishable from a member of the majority group.

On the other hand, the psychological impact that contact with members of the minority group has on those of the majority group has been rarely discussed. Jung (cited in Hallowell, 1957) alluded to the American Indian influence on the U.S. majority group when he described the American Indian component in the character of some of his American clients. Hallowell also pointed out the need to explore the psychological effects of frontier contacts with American Indians in studying the historical development of the American national character. Weatherford (1988) chronicled how the cultural, social, and political practices of American Indians have influenced the way life is lived throughout the world. The idea that minority groups may have a positive impact on the majority culture also has been discussed in the popular press. For instance, a recent issue of Ebony (Bennett, 1991) focused on the African-American contributions to American culture in style, politics, entertainment, sports, gender relations, and religion. This view needs to be explored in greater detail by social scientists.

Summary

Each of these models has its own assumptions concerning what happens to a person as he or she undergoes the process of second-culture acquisition. This does not mean, however, that the models are mutually exclusive. Depending on the situation and person, any one of these models may represent an adequate explanation for a person's experience as he or she acquires competency in a new culture. An example would be of an Afri-
Acquisitions. We assume that there are seven process variables related to second-culture acquisition. We believe that some of the models described earlier is rated on the emphasis it places on variables of contact, loyalty, and involvement with one's culture of origin; 5 = contact with the second culture; 6 = affiliation with the second culture; 7 = acceptance by members of the second culture.

What separates these models are the aspects of the process that they emphasize in their description of second-culture acquisitions. We assume that there are seven process variables related to second-culture acquisition. We believe that some models more readily facilitate the effective functioning of individuals operating in dual cultures. In Table 1, each of the models described earlier is rated on the emphasis it places on the variables of contact, loyalty, and involvement with one's culture of origin and with the second culture. This table demonstrates that most of the models assume that an individual will lose identification with his or her culture of origin, a process that can be stressful and disorienting. What seems clear from the literature we have reviewed, however, is that the more an individual is able to maintain active and effective relationships through alternation between both cultures, the less difficulty he or she will have in acquiring and maintaining competency in both cultures.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
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<th>5</th>
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</table>

Note. 1 = Contact with culture of origin; 2 = loyalty to culture of origin; 3 = involvement with culture of origin; 4 = acceptance by members of culture of origin; 5 = contact with the second culture; 6 = affiliation with the second culture; 7 = acceptance by members of the second culture.

American family that has moved from the rural South to an urban area. One member of the family may assimilate into the dominant Anglo-oriented culture, whereas another's attempt to acquire competence in that culture may better be described using the acculturation model. Yet a third member of the same family may choose to actively alternate between the two cultures, and a fourth may seek to live in an environment in which the two cultures exist side by side as described by the multicultural model or have amalgamated as described in the fusion model.

What separates these models are the aspects of the process that they emphasize in their description of second-culture acquisitions. We assume that there are seven process variables related to second-culture acquisition. We believe that some models more readily facilitate the effective functioning of individuals operating in dual cultures. In Table 1, each of the models described earlier is rated on the emphasis it places on the variables of contact, loyalty, and involvement with one's culture of origin and with the second culture. This table demonstrates that most of the models assume that an individual will lose identification with his or her culture of origin, a process that can be stressful and disorienting. What seems clear from the literature we have reviewed, however, is that the more an individual is able to maintain active and effective relationships through alternation between both cultures, the less difficulty he or she will have in acquiring and maintaining competency in both cultures.

**Bicultural Competence**

The construct of bicultural competence as a result of living in two cultures grows out of the alternation model. Although there are a number of behaviors involved in the acquisition of bicultural competence (e.g., shifts in cognitive and perceptual processes, acquisition of a new language) the literature on biculturalism consistently assumes that an individual living within two cultures will suffer from various forms of psychological distress. Although it is clear that ethnic minorities in the United States and elsewhere experience high levels of economic and social discrimination as well as other disadvantages, it is inappropriate to assume that this sociological reality produces a predictable negative psychological outcome. Research suggests that individuals living in two cultures may find the experience to be more beneficial than living a monocultural life-style. The key to psychological well-being may well be the ability to develop and maintain competence in both cultures.

Like Schlossberg's (1981) model for analyzing human adaptation to transition, we recognize that there are a number of individual characteristics that may be considered significant in the development of bicultural competence. These include personal and cultural identity, age and life stage, gender and gender role identification, and socioeconomic status, among others. Not all of these characteristics have an equal impact on an individual's ability to develop and refine the necessary skills. The relative influence of each has yet to be determined.

Sameroff (1982) suggested that personal identity is organized around an individual's concept of self and his or her estimates of his or her personal impact in a given social role within particular cultural relationships. He referred to the degree to which an individual has developed a well-formed sense of his or her own identity as distinct from his or her social organization. The potential criticism of this position is that it reflects the individualistic ideology of Anglo-American society. Without promoting this ideology, we suggest that the ability to develop bicultural competence is affected by one's ability to operate with a certain degree of individuation. Furthermore, we suggest that bicultural competence requires a substantial degree of personal integration for one to avoid the negative consequences of a bicultural living situation (Burnam et al., 1987). Triandis (1980) suggested that two factors determining one's effective adjustment to the majority culture are self-awareness and the ability to analyze social behavior. This points to the importance of individual personality in the development of bicultural competence.

In relation to bicultural competence, it is important to focus on two facets of identity development. The first involves the evolution of an individual's sense of self-sufficiency and ego strength. This identity is the subject of concern for developmentalists such as Erickson (1950, 1968), Spencer, Brookins, and Allen (1985). Except for radical behaviorists, most psychologists theorize an internal sense of self that is separate from a person's environment. This sense develops, in relationship to the individual's psychosocial experience, to the point where a psychologically healthy individual has a secure sense of who he or she is or is not (De La Torre, 1977). This sense of self interacts with the individual's cultural context in a reciprocally determininistic manner to develop an ethnic identity (Mego, 1988). We hypothesize that the strength or weakness of this identity will affect the development of a person's ability to acquire bicultural competence.

The other facet of identity development involves the development of cultural identity. This refers to the evolution of a sense of self in relation to a culture of origin and who one is within and without that cultural context. This type of identity involves the manner in which an individual interprets and internalizes...
his or her sociological reality. One's cultural identity and the individual's relative commitment to that identity is the focus of the acculturulation studies discussed earlier and of those authors (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1989; Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990) who have developed models of ethnic identity development. With some variation, all of these models emphasize a similar process through which a minority individual proceeds in order to develop a coherent and healthy sense of self within a bicultural context.

These models imply that one's stage of ethnic identity development will affect the manner in which the individual will cope with the psychological impact of biculturalism. The more integrated the individual's identity, the better he or she will be able to exhibit healthy coping patterns (Gonzalez, 1986; Murphy, 1977; Rosenthal, 1987). These stage models seem to indicate that the highest level of development includes the ability to be biculturally competent (Gutierrez, 1981). Furthermore, these models generate the hypothesis that a minority individual who is monocultural, either in the minority or majority groups, will experience the negative psychological effects of bicultural contact. However, as that person develops a stronger personal identity, he or she can become biculturally competent, thereby reducing the negative psychological impact of biculturalism (Zuniga, 1988).

Oetting and Beauvais (1990–1991) have recently identified an orthogonal model of cultural identification that includes these four categories: (a) high bicultural identification, (b) high identification with one culture and medium identification with another, (c) low identification with either culture, and (d) monocultural identification. They advocated the independent assessment of identification with multiple cultures (e.g., culture of origin and American Indian, Mexican American, Asian American, African American or Anglo-American). A series of studies with American Indian youth (Beauvais, 1992; Oetting, Edwards, & Beauvais, 1989) indicated that most children and adolescents on reservations showed medium identification with both Anglo and Indian cultures. Their research with Mexican-American youth living in Southwestern towns and cities containing substantial Hispanic populations, however, showed a different pattern of high Hispanic identification and moderate Anglo identification. This line of research in minority adolescent drug use supports the contention that identification with any culture may serve as an individual's source of personal and social strength and that such an identification will correlate with one's general well-being and positive personal adjustment. Oetting and Beauvais concluded that it is not mixed but weak cultural identification that creates problems.

This component of bicultural competence suggests the need to maintain a distinction between social variables, such as class and ethnicity, and psychological variables, such as identity development and affective processes. It is important to remember that individuals, not groups, become biculturally competent. This suggests that each person will proceed in the process of cultural acquisition at his or her own rate. Researchers can, and should, make group predictions concerning the process, but they must be cautious when applying these findings to individuals (Murphy, 1977; Zuniga, 1988). As such, to understand the psychological impact of becoming or being competent in two cultures, researchers must look at both individual psychological development and the context in which that development occurs (Baker, 1987; LaFromboise, Berman, & Sohi, 1993).

From our reading of the literature, we suggest the following dimensions in which an individual may need to develop competence so as to effectively manage the process of living in two cultures: (a) knowledge of cultural beliefs and values, (b) positive attitudes toward both majority and minority groups, (c) bicultural efficacy, (d) communication ability, (e) role repertoire, and (f) a sense of being grounded.

Knowledge of Cultural Beliefs and Values

Cultural awareness and knowledge involves the degree to which an individual is aware of and knowledgeable about the history, institutions, rituals, and everyday practices of a given culture. This would include an understanding of the basic perspectives a culture has on gender roles, religious practices, and political issues, as well as the rules that govern daily interactions among members of the culture.

A culturally competent person is presumed to be one who knows, appreciates, and internalizes the basic beliefs of a given culture. This would require an acceptance of a particular culture's basic worldview and the ability to act within the constraints of that worldview when interacting with members of that culture. For example, a study of elementary-age Sioux children living on reservations and in a neighboring boarding school (Plas & Bellet, 1983) showed that the older the children were, the more they differed culturally from younger respondents. More pointedly, on the Native American Value-Attitude Scale (NAVAS; Trimble, 1981), younger children tended to provide the expected Indian response, whereas the older children both maintained a preference for the Indian values of community importance and deference to an indirect style of relating yet adopted a more Angloicized attitude toward school achievement and interpersonal involvement. This finding suggests that differences in worldview and value conflicts may be primary sources of stress for bicultural individuals. If the values and beliefs of the two cultures are in conflict, the individual may internalize that conflict in an attempt to find an integrated resolution, but the difficulty in finding this resolution may well be what motivates the individual to fuse the two cultures as a stress-reducing solution. Future research on bicultural competence must continue to examine these phenomena as being central to identifying an individual's psychological well-being.

Schiller's (1987) study lends support to considering cultural awareness and knowledge as an important component of cultural competence. In a survey study investigating the impact of biculturalism, she examined the academic, social, psychological, and cultural adjustment of American Indian college students. Schiller found that bicultural Indian students were better adjusted, particularly in the academic and cultural domains, than were their nonbicultural counterparts. They had higher grade point averages (GPAs), more effective study habits, and demonstrated a stronger commitment to using resources for academic success. Participation in cultural activities and enroll-
ment in American-Indian-oriented courses was significantly higher for bicultural students. Finally, these students perceived their Indian heritage to be an advantage, more so than did non-bicultural students. A number of recent studies on the relationship between acculturation and the counseling process (Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Curtis, 1990; Gim, Atkinson, & Whiteley, 1990; Hess & Street, 1991; Hardle, 1991; Ponce & Atkinson, 1989) support the hypothesis that knowledge of the second culture's values and practices facilitates an ethnic minority's willingness to use available psychological services.

Positive Attitudes Toward Both Groups

This aspect of the construct assumes that the individual recognizes bicultural competence as a desirable goal in its own right, holds each cultural group in positive but not necessarily equal regard, and does not endorse positions that promulgate hierarchical relations between two cultural groups.

The inclusion of this component is based on certain theoretical assumptions. Without positive attitudes toward both groups, an individual will be limited in his or her ability to feel good about interacting with a group that is the target of negative feelings. Arguably, the process of interacting with individuals from a culture one does not respect will result in negative psychological and behavioral outcomes. We hypothesize that one reason for the tremendous rate of conduct disorders among ethnic minority adolescents is a result of the negative attitudes those adolescents have toward the dominant Anglo group. This hypothesis is supported by Palleja's (1987) finding that monocultural-affiliated Hispanic young men exhibited more rebellious behavior than did bicultural or Anglo-affiliated monocultural peers and Golden's (1987) finding that Korean-American high school students practicing biculturalism displayed more positive educational outcomes and self-concepts than monoculturally affiliated Korean-American students. Mullender and Miller (1985) initiated a group for Afro-Caribbean children living in White families who were experiencing discomfort or limited support to help them deal with negative feelings associated with racism from the dominant group. Both the White caregivers and the Afro-Caribbean youth benefited from increased knowledge of Caribbean culture and recognition of the importance of the youth having more involvement with the Black community.

One study of Navajo children from five elementary schools in northeastern Arizona by Beuke (1978) did reveal that students in the high Indian–high Anglo cultural identification category had significantly higher self-esteem scores than did those in the low Indian–low Anglo category, regardless of which school they attended. This study on cultural identification initially supports the hypothesis that positive attitudes toward both groups may be an important component in reducing the stress of bicultural contact.

Contact itself is an essential element in one's ability to develop a positive attitude toward both groups. For example, some American Indians come from tribes that maintained considerable autonomy from the encroaching majority culture but then experienced contact at a later point. Individuals from these tribes were less often faced with the contradictions that can result from ongoing contact between different cultures. Of course, there is considerable variation between and within tribal groups regarding the amount and nature of contact with the U.S. majority and other surrounding cultures. Even today, an individual's proximity to a reservation or city influences the bicultural experiences that person has (Little Soldier, 1985). As Berry, Padilla, and Szapocznik and their colleagues have suggested, the length and type of contact individuals from one culture have with the other cultures have a significant impact on their attitudes toward the majority and their own culture.

Information is also an essential element in developing a positive attitude toward both groups. Cultural translators, individuals from a person's own ethnic or cultural group who have successfully undergone the dual socialization experience, can help others in the personal integration process (Brown, 1990). He or she can interpret the values and perceptions of the majority culture in ways that do not compromise the individual's own ethnic values or norms.

Bicultural Efficacy

Rashid (1984) asserted that "biculturalism is an attribute that all Americans should possess because it creates a sense of efficacy within the institutional structure of society along with a sense of pride and identification with one's ethnic roots" (p. 15). As Bandura (1978) has demonstrated, the belief, or confidence, that an individual can perform an action has a hierarchical relationship to the actual performance of that action. In this article, we posit that bicultural efficacy, or the belief that one can develop and maintain effective interpersonal relationships in two cultures, is directly related to one's ability to develop bicultural competence.

We define bicultural efficacy as the belief, or confidence, that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups without compromising one's sense of cultural identity. This belief will support an individual through the highly difficult tasks of developing and maintaining effective support groups in both the minority and the majority culture. It will also enable the person to persist through periods when he or she may experience rejection from one or both of the cultures in which he or she is working to develop or maintain competence (Rozek, 1980).

A study by Kazaleh (1986) showed that the Ramallah-American youth who were afforded more outlets for social expression, whether in the ethnic community or outside of it, presented the image of being more confident in their abilities and tolerant of the ethnic life-style than did those who were overprotected by their families and restricted in their activities with peer groups. In a study of French Canadian adolescent boys learning English, Clement, Gardner, and Smythe (1977) found two factors that were associated with the motivation to learn English. One involved a positive attitude toward the Anglophone community and the other involved the awareness that learning English had an instrumental function in terms of academic achievement and future job performance. These factors, however, were not as predictive of actual competence in English as a student's confidence in his ability to learn the second language. In a study of Asian-American assertion, Zane, Sue, Hu, and Kwon (1991) found that self-efficacy predicted the ability of Asian Americans to be as assertive, in a situationally appropriate manner, as their Anglo-American peers. These findings


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support the thesis that efficacy is an important factor in the development of bicultural skills.

We hypothesize that an individual's level of bicultural efficacy will determine his or her ability to (a) develop an effective role repertoire in a second culture, (b) perform effectively within his or her role, (c) acquire adequate communication skills, (d) maintain roles and affiliations within his or her culture of origin, and (e) cope with acculturation stress. Furthermore, encouraging the development of an individual's bicultural efficacy is a vital goal of any program (e.g., therapy or skills training) that is designed to enhance his or her performance in a bicultural or multicultural environment. We believe that this statement is as true for ethnic minority people developing competence in a majority culture institution as it is for the majority person developing competence in a bicultural or multicultural environment.

Communication Ability

Communication ability refers to an individual's effectiveness in communicating ideas and feelings to members of a given culture, both verbally and nonverbally. Language competency, in fact, may be a major building block of bicultural competence. As Northover (1988) suggested, "each of a bilingual's languages is the mediator between differing cultural identities within one and the same person" (p. 207). It is vital, however, to distinguish between the language-acquisition processes, which have the goal of transferring competency from the minority group's language to the majority group's language, and processes oriented toward an individual maintaining the language of origin as well as the acquisition of a second language. Bilingual programs that encourage the maintenance, rather than the transfer, of language skills promote bicultural competence rather than assimilation or acculturation (Edwards, 1981; Fishman, 1989; Thomas, 1983).

Fisher's (1974) study is a good example of the potentially positive impact of a maintenance-oriented program. He examined the effects of a bilingual-bicultural program on the self-concepts, self-descriptions, and stimulus-seeking activities of first graders. He found a highly positive effect for the Mexican-American girls on all three measures, no effect on the Mexican-American boys, no effect on the Anglo girls, and a negative effect on the Anglo boys. The drop in self-concept scores among Anglo boys during the school year was attributed to anxiety from having to learn new cultural competencies in addition to their school work. Fisher did not attempt to explain the sex difference among Anglo students in the change of their self-concept scores. The results of this study suggest that communication competency may have a direct effect on self-concept and other nonintellectual attributes. In a comparative study of Hispanic public community college students in a bilingual program and those who received only English as a second language, Tormes (1985) found that those in the bilingual program consistently performed better on most of the criterion measures (e.g., number of credits attempted and earned, GPAs, and progress toward a degree). Therefore, if a program is designed to maintain one's cultural competence, as well as one's language, it will most likely have a positive impact. If the program does not serve in this capacity, it may have a negative effect, as it did for the Anglo boys in the Fisher study and most minority children in mainstream schools or transfer language programs.

Young and Gardner (1990) found that ethnic identification and second-language proficiency were closely related. Their study of ethnic identification, perceptions of language competence, and attitudes toward mainstream and minority cultures among Chinese Canadians highlights the role of attitude in the development of communication competence. They found that the greater a participant's fear of losing his or her cultural identification, the weaker his or her language proficiency. Participants who had that fear also had more negative attitudes toward language study. These attitudes were bidirectional, meaning that those Chinese who were identified with Canadian culture thought their Chinese language skills were weak and that their desire to improve these skills was also weak. Those who were proficient in Chinese and fearful of assimilation in Canadian culture were not eager to improve their English-language skills. Participants who had a positive attitude toward both cultures or identified with both cultures were proficient in both languages or were eager to improve their skills in the second language. These studies suggest that both attitude and ethnic identification have an impact on the development of communication competence.

McKinnon and Hamayan (1984), in a study of the ways speech norms are used to identify in-group and out-group membership, confirmed the importance of communication ability as a factor in bicultural competence. They found that Anglo in-group members in a Spanish bilingual program ascribed negative characteristics to Hispanic students on the basis of variations in their style of speech. Although the amount of intergroup contact also contributed to the in-group members' attitudes, the Anglo in-group often used the speech pattern as a trigger for making judgments about the Hispanic speaker. This suggests that communication skills are a cue for the majority group in accepting a member of the minority group. Dornic (1985) pointed out that the stress of using the second language inhibits the performance, in a wide variety of roles, of individuals who are recent immigrants to a new culture. The work of McKinnon and Hamayan and of Dornic, although reinforcing the notion that communication ability is an essential building block of bicultural competence, underscores the important function of various contact situations during formative years on acquiring that ability.

In a study of bicultural communication, Simard and Taylor (1973) found that cross-cultural dyads were able to communicate as effectively as were homogeneous dyads. If there was a difference in the effectiveness of communication, it was determined by the nature of the task rather than the cultural composition of the dyad. Those authors used their findings to suggest that cross-cultural communication is a function of both motivation and capability.

LaFromboise and Rowe (1983) evaluated an assertion training program for bicultural competence with urban Indians in Lincoln, Nebraska. The key instructional focus of this program was on the situation-specific nature of assertiveness and lan-

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*4 We are not necessarily referring to an individual's ability to communicate in written form. It is certainly possible to be fluent in a language and not be literate.
guage style differences in the assessment of Indian and non-In-Indian target people prior to delivery of assertive messages. Feedback during training involved the appropriateness of American Indians being assertive with one another and ways for Indians to be succinct and more forceful when being assertive with Anglo-Americans. Behavioral measures of assertiveness, rated by both Indian and Anglo peer observers, revealed a positive training effect. The actual language form (e.g., conventional English, Indian-style English, and bilingual English and Omaha) was not evaluated here; instead, the perceptions of communicative competence derived from message content and sociolinguistic cues were examined. The results of this study reinforce the importance of defining communication competency within the context of specific situations. As such, bicultural communication competency involves one's ability to communicate in a situationally appropriate and effective manner as one interacts in each culture.

In a 1985 study of acculturative stress among 397 high school students in an urban and multiethnic school, Schwarzer, Bowler, and Rauch found that the more acculturated students who spoke English at home had higher levels of self-esteem and less experience with racial tension and interethnic conflict. Other variables (i.e., length of stay in the United States and ethnic group membership) were related to the findings, but the families' facility with the majority group's language appeared to be the primary factor that ameliorated the stress of living in a bicultural environment (see also Bettes, Dusenbury, Kerner, James-Ortiz, & Botvin, 1990).

When Robinson (1985) analyzed census data to determine background characteristics associated with language retention among Canadian Indians, she found that educational advancement reduced the probability of native-language retention but increased the probability of participation in the labor force. This suggests that attempts to improve the economic conditions of Indians by increasing their education may have a detrimental effect on the maintenance of their native-language skills. However, economic and linguistic acculturation, as described by Robinson, does not necessarily imply complete acculturation of Canadian Indian people. It does suggest that gaining majority group language competency may increase majority culture competency, but it does not suggest that majority group language competency ameliorates acculturative stress. In other words, as important as communication competency is in developing cultural competency, it is not the only skill that relieves the stress of becoming biculturally competent.

**Role Repertoire**

Role repertoire refers to the range of culturally or situationally appropriate behaviors or roles an individual has developed. The greater the range of behaviors or roles, the higher the level of cultural competence.

In a study of individuals who were working and living in Kenya for 2 years, Ruben and Kealey (1979) found that particular interpersonal and social behaviors led to greater effectiveness at role performance and ease in adjustment. The authors looked at (a) displays of respect, (b) interaction posture (e.g., judgmental or not), (c) orientation to knowledge or worldview, (d) empathy, and (e) role behavior. Coinciding with Smither's (1982) assertions, they found that individuals who had the personal resources to use their social skills in a situationally appropriate manner suffered less cultural shock and were more effective in their vocational duties and social interactions than were those whose behavioral repertoire within the second culture was more limited.

In McFee's (1968) study of acculturation among the Blackfeet tribe, he found that individuals knowledgeable about both Blackfeet and Anglo-American cultures and able to interact easily with members of each by applying this knowledge in a situationally appropriate manner had an important role in both cultures. McFee suggested that such individuals perform an important and valued role for both communities as cultural translators, or mediators, as long as they are not perceived by the minority group as being overidentified with the majority group.

In a study of the complexity of parental reasoning about child development in mothers who varied in ethnic background and biculturalism, Gutierrez and Sameroff (1990) found that the bicultural Mexican-American mothers were better skilled at developing an objective understanding of their child's behavior than were monocultural Mexican-American or Anglo-American mothers. Their ability to interpret child development as the result of the dynamic interplay between the child's temperament and his or her environment over time and to see that developmental outcomes could have multiple determinants enhanced their parenting role. Those researchers did not, however, examine how bicultural competence originates or elaborate on the psychological results of this form of biculturalism. Determining the psychological impact of this balancing act is an important area of concern for future research. The processes by which these bicultural skills are developed needs to be delineated, and a close look needs to be taken at the individual psychology of those who have developed these skills.

Cuellar, Harris, and Naron (1981), in a study of Mexican-American psychiatric patients, found that the patient's level of acculturation was highly correlated with diagnosis and treatment outcome. The more acculturated individuals received less severe diagnostic labels than less acculturated individuals. In that study, they were looking at the impact of providing bilingual staff and culturally appropriate decor on treatment outcome. They found that the less acculturated patients in the experimental groups were positively affected by the treatment. The treatment had little effect on more highly acculturated patients. The results of this study support the hypothesis that the minority individual who does not have a sufficient role repertoire in either the majority or minority culture receives differential treatment. It also suggests that treatment keyed to the individual's level of cultural identification is more effective than interventions using a monocultural approach.

Further support for the importance of role repertoire comes from Szapocznik, Kurtines, et al. (1980) and Szapocznik et al. (1984), who determined that the development of bicultural social skills facilitated the adjustment of Hispanic youth. The intervention used with Hispanic families in conflict—bicultural effectiveness training—consisted of the analysis of Hispanic and Anglo cultural conflicts and the presentation of information concerning biculturalism. They found that those who could develop a bicultural repertoire were less likely to experience fam-
ily or school conflict or become involved in illegal drug use. This
line of work reinforces the importance of focusing on bicultural
social skills when delivering services to members of the minor-
ity group experiencing problems within the majority culture
(see also Comer, 1980, 1985; LaFromboise, 1983).

In a study of the psychocultural characteristics of college-
bound and non-college-bound Chicanas, Buriel and Saenz
(1980) found that the family income and ability to perform
masculine behaviors, as measured by the Bern Sex Role Inven-
tory, were the major distinctions between the two groups. The
results of this study suggest that knowing the behaviors that
have traditionally led to economic success within the American
culture, and the ability to be assertive in the majority culture,
are aspects of the role repertoire that determine college attend-
dance among Chicanas. Buriel and Saenz also found that family
income and sex role identification were positively correlated
with biculturalism, defined in their study as "an integration of
the competencies and sensitivities associated with two cultures
within a single individual" (p. 246). They did not find a causal
relation between biculturalism and college attendance; however,
they concluded that biculturalism may be an associated factor,
particularly as it relates to behavior that leads to college atten-
dance.

When developing programs to facilitate the introduction of
ethnic minorities into institutions that are dominated by the
majority culture (e.g., universities or corporations), it is vitally
important to take the minority individual's dual focus into ac-
count (Akao, 1983). Failure to facilitate the maintenance of the
minority person's role within his or her culture of origin will
lead to either poor retention within the program or aggravate
his or her acculturative stress (Fernandez-Barrillas & Morrison,
1984; Lang, Munoz, Bernal, & Sorensen, 1982; Mendoza, 1981;
Van Den Bergh, 1991; Vasquez & McKinley, 1982).

**Groundedness**

"Every culture provides the individual some sense of identity,
some regulation or belonging and some sense of personal place
in the school of things" (Adler, 1975, p. 20). The literature indi-
cates that the person most successful at managing a bicultural
existence has established some form of stable social networks in
both cultures. This suggests that the positive resolution of stress
engendered by bicultural living cannot be done on one's own
(Hernandez, 1981). One must have the skill to recruit and use
external support systems. We have labeled the experience of
having a well-developed social support system "a sense of being
grounded."

Baker (1987) supported this position when she argued that
African Americans are best able to avoid the major problems
that affect mental health facing their communities (e.g., Black-
on-Black homicide, teenage pregnancy, attempted suicide, sub-
stance abuse, postincarceration adjustment) when they can call
on the resources of the African-American extended family.
Both nuclear and extended family models in American Indian
communities facilitate this sense of being grounded (Red Horse,
1980). We argue that it is the sense of being grounded in an
extensive social network in both cultures that enhances an in-
dividual's ability to cope with the pressures of living in a bicultural
environment and that acquiring that sense in the second
culture is an important outcome of second-culture acquisition
(Lewis & Ford, 1991). Murphy (1977) suggested that the ability
to become grounded inoculates against the development of psy-
chopathology among immigrants.

Beiser's (1987) study of depression in Southeast Asian refu-
gees underscores the importance of being grounded within one's
culture as a coping mechanism for dealing with the psychologi-
cal impact of entering a new culture. He found that immigrants
who either came with other family members, or entered cities
with a sizable population of individuals from their home cul-
ture, were less depressed after a year's time than were those who
came alone or were not involved with people from the home
culture. Fraser and Pecora (1985-1986) echoed this finding,
discovering that refugees who coped best with the natural reac-
tions to dislocation were those who had "weak ties" in a com-
unity. These weak ties are extended family acquaintances,
such as an uncle's best friend, who can play an important role
in the fabric of daily living by providing support such as child-
care or employment information. These networks serve to in-
crease an individual's sense of being grounded in time and

Porte and Torney-Purta (1987) demonstrated the positive im-
 pact that maintaining a bicultural environment had on the aca-
demic achievement and level of depression among Indochinese
refugee children entering the United States as unaccompanied
minors. They found that children placed in foster care with In-
dochinese families performed better in school and were less
depressed than children placed in foster care situations with
non-Indochinese families. The results of this study highlight the
importance of providing a culturally relevant environment for
individuals learning a second culture.

In a study of the impact of the Chinese church on the identity
and mental health of Chinese immigrants, Palinkas (1982) re-
inforced the perspective that a solid social network, one that
simultaneously grounds an individual in parts of his or her
home culture while facilitating the acquisition of a new culture,
sharply reduces the negative impact of acculturation. Topper
and Johnson's (1980) study of the effects of relocation on mem-
ers of the Navajo tribe provides a graphic example of the psy-
chological impact of losing one's groundedness. They found
that relocated individuals were eight times more likely to seek
mental health services than were Navajos who had not been
forced to relocate. They also reported that 70% of the relocatees
were found to be suffering from depression or related disorders.

Rodriguez (1975), in a study of the subjective factors affecting
assimilation among Puerto Ricans in New York City, found that
Puerto Ricans living in the ghetto had more positive attitudes
about succeeding in the mainstream economic system than did
Puerto Ricans living in Anglo-dominated suburbs. Those living
in the ghetto also claimed to experience less discrimination. As
Rodriguez (1975) suggested, "the ghetto ... provides a psy-
chologically more supportive environment than does the mid-
dle class area" (p. 77). These findings highlight the role that
being grounded plays for the individual living in two cultures.
We believe that groundedness joins behavioral effectiveness and
personal well-being as key characteristics of mental health.

**Summary**

Research suggests that there is a way of being bicultural with-
out suffering negative psychological outcomes, assimilating, or
retreating from contact with the majority culture. We recognize that bicultural competence requires a difficult set of skills to achieve and maintain. We do not doubt that there will be stress involved in the process of acquiring competence in a second culture while maintaining affiliation with one's culture of origin. The question we have for future research is whether these difficulties lead to personal growth and greater psychological well-being, or inevitably lead to the type of psychological problems posited by Stonerquist (1935) and Park (1928).

Model of Bicultural Competence

The goal of this article was to develop an understanding, on the basis of social science research, of the psychological impact of biculturalism. We wanted to understand which factors facilitate a bicultural role and which ones impede the development of that role. We were particularly interested in identifying the skills that would make it possible for an individual to become a socially competent person in a second culture without losing that same competence in the culture of origin. To focus our exploration, we organized our search around a behavioral model of culture that would allow us to better identify the skills of bicultural competence. We also felt that it was important to describe the different models of second-culture acquisition so that our use of the alternation model could be understood in relation to other theories of biculturalism.

Our exploration of the psychological impact of biculturalism was seriously constrained by the fact that research in this area is spread across several disciplines and represents a wide range of methodologies. This fact made it difficult to derive a composite statement about the results of different studies that appeared to be examining similar aspects of biculturalism. The lack of controlled or longitudinal research compounded this difficulty. As a result, our discussion of biculturalism is speculative in nature. We have, however, been able to identify skills that we hypothesize are central to being a socially competent person in two cultures.

At this point, we want to emphasize that we do not know whether these are the only skills of biculturalism, or whether a person needs to be equally competent in all or a particular subset, in order to be biculturally competent. We do think, however, that the dimensions outlined in this article provide a much needed focus to the research on this phenomenon. We believe that identifying these acquirable skills will allow researchers to focus on the relationship between these skills and an individual's sense of psychological well-being, as well as his or her effectiveness in his or her social and work environments. We also believe that these dimensions can be used as the framework for developing programs designed to facilitate the involvement of minority people in majority institutions such as colleges and corporations (Van Den Bergh, 1991).

Initially, each of the skills needs to be subjected to empirical examination. Reliable methods of assessment need to be developed, and construct validity needs to be established (Sundberg, Snowden, & Reynolds, 1978). Subsequently, the relationship between possessing each skill and school and work performance will have to be identified. Finally, the question as to which skills, or set of skills, are necessary in order to be functionally biculturally competent will have to be answered. In other words, these dimensions appear to describe the skills of a biculturally competent individual. Further research using this framework needs to be conducted to determine the degree to which they are normative or optimal for a person involved in two cultures.

To facilitate that process, we have developed a hypothetical model of the relationships among these skills of bicultural competence. After lengthy consideration, we have come to speculate that these skills may have a rational relationship to each other. We believe that some may be more important than others or that some may have to be developed before others. Furthermore, we developed the assumption that one or more of these skills may be the linchpin between monocultural and bicultural competence. In response to these speculations, in the model we have developed it is assumed that there are hierarchical relations among these skills, not linear ones. By this we mean that some of these skills may be developed before others but that the process of skill acquisition does not have an invariant order. Only empirical study can resolve this issue.

The primary emphasis of the model is on the reciprocal relationship between a person and his or her environment. The model becomes complex when considering the acquisition of second-culture competence because one must include two environments, both the culture of origin and the second culture. An individual's personal and cultural identities are primarily developed through the early biosocial learning experiences that an individual has within his or her culture of origin. These identities will also be influenced by the nature and amount of contact the person has with the second culture. For example, if a person lived in rural El Salvador and had no contact with American culture until forced to emigrate in early adulthood, that person's sense of personal and cultural identity would be much different from his or her U.S.-born child, who has attended public schools since kindergarten. It is our contention that in addition to having a strong and stable sense of personal identity, another affective element of bicultural competence is the ability to develop and maintain positive attitudes toward one's culture of origin and the second culture in which he or she is attempting to acquire competence. In addition, we speculate that an individual will also need to acquire knowledge of both cultures in order to develop the belief that he or she can be biculturally competent, which we have labeled bicultural efficacy.

We speculate that these attitudes and beliefs about self, what we think of as the affective and cognitive dimension of the model, will facilitate the individual's acquisition of both communication skills and role repertoire, which are the two facets that make up the behavioral aspect of the model. We hypothesize that the individual who has acquired the attitudes and beliefs in the affective and cognitive dimension and the skills of the behavioral aspect of this model will also be able to develop the effective support systems in both cultures that will allow him or her to feel grounded. Being grounded in both cultures will allow the individual to both maintain and enhance his or her personal and cultural identities in a manner that will enable him or her to effectively manage the challenges of a bicultural existence.

This model represents a departure from previous models in that it focuses on the skills that a person needs to acquire in order to be successful at both becoming effective in the new culture and remaining competent in his or her culture of origin. This difference is represented in Table 2, which rates the five...
models of second-culture acquisition discussed earlier, on the degree to which the assumptions of each model facilitate the acquisition of these skills.

Table 2 shows that the alternation model, on which our model of bicultural competence is based, is the one that best facilitates the acquisition of these skills. It appears that the multicultural model would also be useful in this area, but as mentioned before, there is little evidence of a multicultural perspective being maintained over more than three generations.

Conclusion

We suggest that the ethnic minority people who develop these skills will have better physical and psychological health than those who do not. We also think that they will outperform their monoculturally competent peers in vocational and academic endeavors.

There is widespread agreement that failure to achieve equal partnership for minorities in the academic, social, and economic life of the United States will have disastrous effects for this society. A vital step in the development of an effective partnership involves moving away from the assumptions of the linear model of cultural acquisition, which has a negative impact on the minority individual, to a clearer understanding of the process of developing cultural competence as a two-way street. This will require that members of both the minority and majority cultures better understand, appreciate, and become skilled in one another’s cultures. We hope that the ideas expressed here will serve to facilitate that process.

References


Table 2

Degree to Which Models of Second-Culture Acquisition Facilitate Acquisition of the Skills Related to Bicultural Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternation</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusion</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 = Knowledge of cultural beliefs and values; 2 = positive attitude toward both groups; 3 = bicultural efficacy; 4 = communication competency; 5 = role repertoire; 6 = groundedness.
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