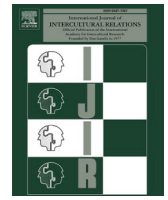




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Acculturation gaps among Afghan refugee families in Canada: Implications for family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing of emerging adults

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ABSTRACT

The present study applied and extended the Acculturation Gap-Distress Model to a sample of Afghan emerging adults and their parents living in Canada. Using two different methods to operationalize the “gap”, the impact of acculturation gaps on family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing of Afghan emerging adults was examined. Acculturation was evaluated concerning both Canadian and Afghan cultures, and independently for the language, identity, and behavioural domains of acculturation. The following three themes emerged in the results: a) Emerging adults’ proficiency in the Farsi language and higher identification with Afghan culture are important factors behind their family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing. b) Parents’ identification with the Canadian culture is an important factor behind emerging adults’ psychological adaptation and subjective wellbeing. c) The parent-emerging adult gap in Canadian identity acculturation was the only consequential gap associated with emerging adults’ lower reports of family cohesion.

Afghanistan has been exposed to continuous political upheaval and warfare since the late 1970s (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021). Three significant conflicts of the Soviet invasion in 1979, the civil war from 1994 to 2001, and the United States’ invasion in 2001 have contributed to the mass migration of Afghans in the past four decades (Mahdavi, 2014). Today, over 5.7 million Afghan refugees represent the third-largest displaced population in the world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023). In August 2021, a revitalized group of Taliban seized most major cities of Afghanistan including the capital city of Kabul. This situation has introduced a new wave of refugees fleeing Afghanistan (UNHCR, 2021). In response to this recent crisis, Canada’s immigration program has welcomed many Afghan refugees. By 2023, Canada will resettle 40,000 vulnerable Afghans threatened by the current political situation (Government of Canada, 2021).

Despite the increasing number of Afghan refugees resettling in Canada, only a few studies have investigated the acculturation experience among this population (Ahmad et al., 2020; Khanlou et al., 2008; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009). This gap in the literature is particularly evident for Afghan youth and young adults. Youth and young adults are arguably the most vulnerable population of all refugees (Buchanan et al., 2018). Children of refugees directly involved in the displacement process experience many challenges in their adaptation to a new society including social alienation (Davies, 2008), difficulty accessing education (Women’s Refugee Commission, 2011), lack of support from adults (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010), and marginalization (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

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Acculturation

In 1936, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits proposed an early definition of acculturation as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). Subsequent acculturation research resulted in two models of acculturation. A one-dimensional model proposes that as immigrants accept cultural aspects of the host society, they lose aspects of their heritage culture. According to this model, migrants may be situated on a continuum anywhere from un-acculturated to fully acculturated (c.f., [Ryder et al., 2000](#)). The unidimensional model of acculturation was questioned by researchers who maintained that orientation to more than one culture is indeed possible ([Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006](#)).

A bidimensional (also known as a bidirectional) model of acculturation was first introduced by John [Berry \(1970\)](#). As a broad conceptual framework, Berry proposed that acculturation to a new culture is independent of the maintenance of one's heritage culture and the two can coexist ([Berry, 2006](#)). Based on their orientation towards heritage and host cultures, migrants may adopt different approaches to acculturation, originally labelled as acculturation strategies. Integration represents a connection to both the dominant and heritage group; assimilation refers to an exclusive orientation towards the dominant group; separation entails an exclusive orientation towards the heritage culture; and marginalization refers to an orientation towards neither group ([Berry, 2006](#)).

Acculturation gap

When considered within a family context, it has been argued that immigrant parents and their children undergo a different rate of acculturation (e.g., [Aumann et al., 2022](#); [Costigan & Dokis, 2006](#); [Phinney et al., 2000](#)). Children of immigrants often have more exposure to the destination culture through attending school and spending time with peers from different backgrounds than their parents. Thus, children may be more positioned to adopt the lifestyles and common norms of the new culture than their parents are ([Birman, 2006a](#)). In a similar vein, children's heritage identification may be lower than that of their parents without the formal education and exposure to cultural norms of their heritage culture ([Birman, 2006a](#)).

According to the Acculturation Gap Distress model ([Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993](#)), the different pace and levels of acculturation between parents and children compound the normative intergenerational gap that exists in families, leading to family stress, conflict, and youth maladjustment ([Portes & Rumbaut, 1996](#); [Szapocznik et al., 1984](#)). To date, support for this model has been inconsistent. Some researchers (e.g., [Lau et al., 2005](#)) have found no relationship between intergenerational differences in acculturation and measures of family conflict, whereas others have found that acculturation gaps lead to potential conflict in parent-child relationships as well as youth maladjustment ([Portes & Rumbaut, 1996](#)). For example, a longitudinal study of Hispanic immigrant families found that the results indicated that discrepancies in Hispanic culture retention at the initial time point (Time 1), as well as the linear trajectories of these discrepancies over time, were associated with lower levels of positive youth development and higher levels of depressive symptoms and binge drinking among adolescents ([Schwartz et al., 2016](#)). It has been argued that conceptual and methodological discrepancies may account for the disparate outcomes across studies (e.g., [Costigan, 2010](#); [Telzer, 2010](#)). For this reason, an increasing number of researchers have cast doubt on the generalizability of the Acculturation Gap Distress model and recommended that researchers develop consensus on the best methods for assessing acculturation (e.g., [Birman, 2006b](#); [Costigan, 2010](#); [Sun et al., 2020](#); [Telzer, 2010](#)).

Domains of acculturation

Acculturation theorists have emphasized the importance of considering many domains of acculturation, such as language, customs, and identification with heritage and destination cultures (e.g., [Navas et al., 2007](#); [Safdar et al., 2003](#)). An important conceptual difference between studies of acculturation gap relates to the domains of acculturation. Some studies have focused on only one domain of acculturation, such as language proficiency (e.g., [Juang et al., 2007](#); [Pasch et al., 2006](#)), whereas others examined different domains of acculturation. Many of these latter studies have summed across domains of acculturation to create a single global index. However, studies using a single global index may have overlooked how acculturation gaps can be associated with outcomes in some domains and not others. For example, [Birman \(2006b\)](#) measured acculturation gaps in the three domains of language, identity, and behavioural engagement among Soviet Jewish refugees in the United States. Results suggested that acculturation gap only in the American identity domain was significantly related to family maladjustment. Similarly, among Vietnamese refugees, disparities only in Vietnamese identity acculturation were significantly related to lower family functioning ([Ho & Birman, 2010](#)). In both studies, the separate investigation of different domains showed that acculturation gaps in the language and behavioural domains may not be relevant to negative family outcomes ([Schwartz et al., 2016](#)).

Operationalization of acculturation gaps

Aside from conceptual discrepancies, one possible explanation behind the inconsistent results in previous studies may lie in the heterogeneous approaches used to operationalize the acculturation gap. Based on the current literature, the acculturation gap has typically been measured in one of four ways.

Several studies have investigated the acculturation gap as the perceived gap from either the child's or parent's, perspective (e.g., [Lui, 2019](#); [Nair et al., 2018](#)). One obvious limitation of this approach is that children and parents may overestimate or underestimate each other's level of acculturation. In response to this issue, many researchers have turned to calculating the acculturation gap based

on empirical and objective measures, often termed the "actual acculturation gap," as opposed to "perception of the gap" (Telzer, 2011).

Match/Mismatch index assesses the actual acculturation gap by categorizing children's and parents' acculturation into either "matched" or "mismatched" groups. This measurement is based on Berry's four categorizations of acculturation. Parents and children with the same endorsement are considered matched, whereas those with different endorsements are considered mismatched. Although this approach has been used to address the limitation of perceived acculturation measurement (Nieri et al., 2016; Pasch et al., 2006; Yan et al., 2022), it fails to assess both individual levels of acculturation and the magnitude or size of the gap (Costigan, 2010).

Using a difference score method involves researchers subtracting the parent's acculturation score from that of their child. Although this approach allows for measuring the size of the gap (Atzaba-Poria & Pike, 2007; Cox et al., 2013; Marsiglia et al., 2014), it is unclear whether the subsequent results are related to acculturation gaps or individual levels of acculturation in parents or youth (Birman, 2006b; Telzer, 2010; Telzer et al., 2016).

The interaction method examines individual levels as main effects and the gap as the interaction between the two. Birman (2006a), Costigan (2010) and Telzer (2010) have all argued that this method represents an ideal approach to operationalization of acculturation gaps, as it considers both the main effect of the individual and the interplay between, parent-child acculturation levels.

Emerging adulthood

Emerging adulthood, spanning from ages 18–29, is recognized as a distinct phase, separate from both adolescence and full-fledged adulthood (Tanner et al., 2009). This stage is marked by heightened identity exploration, making it a somewhat ambiguous and unstructured period of life (Arnett, 2011). The lines distinguishing adolescents from adults can greatly vary across different cultural contexts (Arnett, 2003). In North American settings, the transition to adulthood is often demarcated by achieving self-responsibility, financial independence, and the capacity for independent decision-making (Arnett, 2000). Yet, these milestones may not be reached until later in the emerging adult phase, especially in certain cultures (Fazio & Micocci, 2003).

Compounding this, in numerous ethno-cultural groups, children customarily reside with their families up until marriage, a practice that might extend well into the emerging adult years (Rasmi et al., 2015). As a result, issues traditionally linked with adolescence, such as acculturation gaps and intergenerational conflict, continue to remain relevant for emerging adults, especially those hailing from specific immigrant backgrounds (Ahn et al., 2009). Despite the significance of these challenges and the notable prevalence of mental health concerns within the 18–29 age bracket, there is a conspicuous void in literature that critically addresses this transitional period (Arnett, 2004).

Psychological and sociocultural adaptation

Ward and colleagues introduced the terms psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Psychological adaptation pertains to feelings of wellbeing or happiness after migration to a new society. In other words, psychological adaptation, is related to affect and refers to how comfortable and happy a person feels with regard to being in the new culture, or how anxious and out of place they feel as a result of acculturation stress (Matsumoto, 2001). Sociocultural adaptation is related to one's ability to "fit in", do well and behave according to the social expectations present within a new culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). For example, interethnic friendships among young migrants can be interpreted as a sign of sociocultural adaptation, as interethnic friendships require a certain level of language proficiency and culturally appropriate behaviour (Titzmann et al., 2012). Prior research has demonstrated that psychological and sociocultural adaptations are conceptually connected to one another and have been used as a measure of overall wellbeing of immigrants and newcomers (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). The psychological and sociocultural adaptation of immigrant adolescents and young adults have been the subject of much research (e.g., Frankenberg et al., 2013). However, an extensive search did not identify any studies investigating the link between acculturation gaps and these two indices of wellbeing among migrants.

Overview of the present research

The present study applied the Acculturation Gap-Distress Model to a sample of Afghan emerging adults and their parents living in Canada. Studies of Afghan families suggest that Afghan households could involve three or even four generations living in the same households (Evason, 2019). Cultural orientations of Afghan parents and their emerging adults were measured separately across multiple domains (i.e., behavioural practices, language proficiency, and identification) and across both Canadian and Afghan cultures. The size and direction of acculturation gaps between parents and emerging adults in all domains and across both cultures were also measured. Subsequently, the impact of acculturation gaps on family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing of Afghan emerging adults were examined. To demonstrate the benefits of operationalizing the gaps as an interaction between emerging adult and parent acculturations, both the difference score and interaction techniques were employed.

Research questions and hypotheses

Research Question 1. What are the size and direction of acculturation gaps? Group differences in acculturation levels of parents and emerging adults on each of the three domains of language, identity and behavioural acculturation and with respect to both Canadian and Afghan cultures were examined. Based on findings in this body of research (Birman, 2006b; Birman et al., 2002; Birman & Trickett,

2001, Ho & Birman, 2010), the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1a). As a group, emerging adults will be more proficient in English, report higher identification with the Canadian culture and have higher engagement in behavioural practices related to Canadian culture.

Hypothesis 1b). As a group, parents will be more proficient in Farsi, report higher identification with the Afghan culture and higher levels of engagement in behavioural practices related to Afghan culture.

Next, the study examined whether the gaps within each parent-emerging adult dyad would follow a similar pattern as the ones observed at the group level.

Hypothesis 2). It is expected that in several families, emerging adults will be more oriented towards Afghan culture and less oriented towards Canadian culture than their parents. Contrary to the conventional belief posited by acculturation gap theories—that the older generation would consistently lag behind the younger in adapting to a new culture—prior studies among Vietnamese and former Soviet Union refugees reveal that many families exhibit the opposite trend (Birman, 2006b; Ho & Birman, 2010).

Research Question 2. What would be the relationship of acculturation gaps to emerging adults' reports of family adjustment, adaptation outcomes and subjective wellbeing? This question was explored in two ways. In the first approach, acculturation gaps were determined by calculating the absolute value of the difference between each emerging adult and the parent in each domain and with respect to both cultures. In the second approach, the acculturation gaps were measured as the interaction of parents and emerging adults' acculturation levels. Previous studies have predominantly examined the influence of acculturation gaps on three distinct categories of outcome variables. The first category pertains to the quality of family relationships, typically assessed through indicators such as family cohesion (e.g., Ho & Birman, 2010), family conflict and disagreements (e.g., Birman, 2006), or overall family functioning (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2016). The second category of outcome variables focuses on wellbeing, encompassing measures such as physical health (e.g., Leite et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2023), subjective wellbeing (e.g., Lui, 2019; Sun et al., 2020), and self-esteem (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2016).

A third category of outcome variables explored in studies on acculturation gaps involves indicators of diminished wellbeing, manifested through measures of distress (Rahman et al., 2022) or impaired functioning, including conduct problems, problem behaviour, and delinquency (e.g., Cano et al., 2016). Based on previous findings, the following 2 hypotheses were developed for Research Question 2:

Hypothesis 3). It is expected that the patterns of disparities between parents and emerging adults in three domains specifically related to Afghan culture, would have adverse effects on the emerging adults' perceptions of family cohesion (H3a), family adaptability (H3b), and subjective wellbeing (H3c). Previous studies have suggested that parent-adolescent discrepancies in heritage-culture retention predicted compromised family functioning and adolescent problems (Cano et al., 2016; Ho & Birman, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2016; Telzer, 2010).

Hypothesis 4). Identification with the host society's culture has been associated with lower reports of family functioning among refugees from the former Soviet Union (Birman, 2006b) as well as Hispanic immigrants (Schwartz et al., 2016). Accordingly, it was hypothesized that the acculturation gap in the domain of Canadian identity would be associated with lower reports of family cohesion (H4a), family adaptability (H4b), and subjective wellbeing (H4c).

This study represents a pioneering exploration of the association between acculturation gaps and outcome variables pertaining to adaptation outcomes. As a result, no specific hypotheses were formulated regarding these outcome variables.

Method

Participants and procedures

A total of 148 participants (77 emerging adults, 68 parents and three caregivers) participated. All participants were originally from Afghanistan who at the time of the study lived in Canada. Participants were recruited through settlement agencies, service providers and community organizations in Vancouver British Columbia.¹ Participants gave informed consent before participating in the study. Questionnaires were completed online through Qualtrics. A translated version of the questionnaire was made available. Thirty-six participants completed the survey in the Farsi language. To ensure the maximum accuracy of the survey translation from English to Farsi, a native bilingual speaker proficient in both English and Farsi performed the initial translation. Additionally, to further enhance the quality of the translation, the Farsi version was subsequently back translated by two judges from Afghanistan. These judges are native Farsi speakers and possess fluency in English. All procedures performed in the study were reviewed by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Guelph. To ensure the accurate pairing of emerging adult and parent responses within the same

¹ As the data collection process coincided with the prevalence of COVID 19 pandemic (March 2022 to September 2022), the primary platform utilised by the community organisations was online and via social media platforms such as Facebook. Individuals could share the link to the study with their networks. Therefore, the study's sample was comprised of more than just the organisations' clientele.

family, a unique identification procedure was implemented at the commencement of the survey. Both the emerging adult and the parent from each participating family were instructed to enter a shared, pre-determined code into a designated answer box. This code served as a familial identifier, allowing for a precise matching of responses between the emerging adult and parent in each dyad.

Eight parents' responses to the survey were omitted from the final analysis because their emerging adult children did not participate. Similarly, six emerging adults' responses were excluded because their parents did not participate in the study. Consequently, data from a total of 63 parent-emerging adult dyads were used for the final analyses. Of the 126 participants (63 children and 63 parents), seven participants had at least one item response missing. For these individuals, a score was calculated using the mean of the available responses on the scale.

Emerging adults

were between the ages of 18 and 29. Of the 63 emerging adults in the sample, 27 identified as male, 32 as female, two as 'intersex,' and two chose 'prefer not to say.' Their period of residency in Canada varied from less than a year to 28 years, with a mean of 12.87 years ($SD = 8.42$). The average age of arrival in Canada was 10.26 ($SD = 7.37$). At the time of data collection, the emerging adults were, on average, 22.89 years old ($SD = 3.51$).

Parents and caregivers

Of the 60 parents and three caregivers, the majority were mothers ($n = 41$). The mean age of the parents/caregivers was 51.02 ($SD = 7.21$), ranging from 36 to 66. The average age at which parents and caregivers arrived in Canada was 37.57 years. Their period of residency in Canada varied from less than a year to 34 years, with a mean of 12.89 years ($SD = 9.03$). Reports on levels of education among parents and caregivers included no education ($n = 5$), elementary school ($n = 10$), secondary school ($n = 6$), high school ($n = 21$), undergraduate degree ($n = 15$), graduate degree ($n = 5$), and 'prefer not to say' ($n = 1$).

Measures

Demographic information

Demographic data were gathered from both parents and emerging adults. The questions included age, gender, age at arrival in Canada, and length of residence in Canada. In addition, parents were asked about their level of education and could select from no education, elementary school, secondary school, high school diploma, undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or prefer not to say.²

Acculturation

Acculturation was measured using the Language, Identity, and Behaviour Acculturation Scale (LIB; Birman & Trickett, 2001). The LIB consists of 50 items and was originally designed to measure acculturation to Russian and American cultures independently. The scale is divided into subscales, which measure language competency, identification with, and degree of behavioural engagement in host and heritage cultures. The instrument yields a total acculturation score and separate subscale scores for each dimension of language, identity, and behavioural acculturation. The LIB was chosen for this research because it has good overall validity and reliability. This scale has been utilized by other acculturation gap researchers (e.g., Birman, 2006b). Importantly, the language and behavioural subscales of the LIB scale may pose similar questions. Yet, whereas the language subscale measures one's ability to speak their host and heritage language, the behavioural subscale measures their preference for participation in cultural engagements (Birman & Trickett, 2001). For this study, the LIB scale was used to measure Afghan and Canadian acculturation separately.

Language competence

This subscale consists of nine parallel items asking participants to rate their ability to speak and understand Farsi and English. Ratings were made on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "not at all" to 4 "very well, like a native." An example of an item is "How would you rate your ability to speak English at home/work?" Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the emerging adults in this sample were .96 for Farsi and .93 for English language acculturations. For parents, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were .90 for Farsi and .97 for English language acculturations.

Identity acculturation

This subscale from the LIB was first adapted by Birman and Trickett (2001) from the Multidimensional Scale for Latinos (Birman & Zea, 1996) and the American Identity Questionnaire (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "not at all" to 4 "very much". Example items on heritage and host cultural identity are, "I think of myself as being a Canadian," versus, "I think of myself as being an Afghan." Alpha reliability coefficients were .89 and .90 for Canadian identity, and .88 and .93 for Afghan identity for emerging adults and parents, respectively.

² Upon completion of data collection, it became evident that the question about parents' level of education was limited, as a broad terminology of "undergraduate degree" was used and the question did not differentiate between a college certificate, diploma, and bachelor's degree.

Behavioural acculturation

This subscale represents a revision of a measure used by Birman and Tyler (1994), and the Behavioural Acculturation Scale (Szapocznik et al., 1978), both of which were adapted by Birman and Trickett (2001). Nine parallel items measure participants' behavioural acculturation to the heritage and host culture. Behavioural acculturation is defined as "the extent to which an individual engages in behaviours associated with each culture (e.g., language, media, music, entertainment, and food)" (Birman et al., 2002, p. 593). Participants were rated on each item with a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "not at all" to 4 "very much". Examples of an item on both heritage and host behavioural acculturation are, "How much do you socialize with Canadian friends?" versus, "How much do you socialize with friends from Afghanistan?" Alpha reliability coefficients were .89 and .90 for Canadian, and .88 and .93 for Afghan behavioural acculturation for emerging adults and parents, respectively.

Family relationships

Family Cohesion and Adaptation Evaluation Scale III, a 20-item questionnaire, was chosen to measure the quality of family relationships (Olson et al., 1985). The scale assesses the degree of family cohesion and adaptability perceived by emerging adults in the study. Ten odd-numbered items measured cohesion, and 10 even-numbered items measured adaptability. The measure asks respondents to identify on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 ("almost never") to 5 ("almost always") how frequently the mentioned behaviour happens in their family. For the cohesion subscale, items represented five concepts in a family context: emotional bonding, supportiveness, family boundaries, time together, approval of friends, and interest in recreation. A sample item includes: "We approve of each other's friends." Alpha reliability coefficient was .88 for emerging adults. The family adaptability items measure the degree of decision making by emerging adults, discipline, leadership roles, and rules in the family. A sample item for this measure included: "In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed." Alpha reliability coefficient was .88 for emerging adults.

Psychological adaptation

This scale (Demes & Geeraert, 2014; 10-items) measures emerging adults' adaptation through their feelings about being in Canada (e.g., "I am excited about being in Canada"); and being away from Afghanistan, or another original country (e.g., "Sad to be away from Afghanistan"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Alpha reliability coefficient was .74 for emerging adults.

Sociocultural adaptation

This scale (Demes & Geeraert, 2014; 12-items) assesses the adaptation of emerging adults by examining the ease or difficulty of life in Canada across twelve different aspects (e.g., climate, family life, food, etc.). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree". Alpha reliability coefficient for emerging adults was .67.³

Subjective wellbeing

To measure subjective wellbeing, the Satisfaction with Life Scale developed by Diener et al. (1985) was used. This scale is made up of 5 items. Emerging adults were asked to indicate their agreement with each item on a scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). A sample item included, "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal." The alpha coefficient was .78 among emerging adults.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Descriptive analyses

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for both emerging adults and their parents across various variables.

Dimensionality

The LIB scale is designed to measure acculturation across multiple domains. To validate the multi-domain aspect of the model, Pearson correlations were conducted, comparing acculturation between different domains first among emerging adults as a group, and subsequently among parents as a group. As shown in Table 2, correlations between the Afghan language, identity, and behavioural dimensions ranged from .11 to .50 for emerging adults, and from .34 to .69 for parents. For Canadian acculturation, the correlations ranged from .40 to .67 for emerging adults, and from .21 to .52 for parents.

In general, for both cultures, and for both parents and emerging adults, language and identity acculturation appeared to be mostly

³ Alpha reliability did not improve by removal of any items from the scale.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for all Variables.

Variable	Emerging Adults		Parents	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	N = 27 M (SD)	N = 32 M (SD)	N = 22 M (SD)	N = 41 M (SD)
<i>Canadian Acculturation</i>				
English Language	3.28 (0.47)	3.09 (0.67)	2.41 (0.64)	2.08 (0.78)
Identity	2.60 (0.56)	2.58 (0.70)	2.57 (0.62)	2.42 (0.69)
Behavioural	2.66 (0.61)	2.55 (0.69)	2.19 (0.67)	2.04 (0.74)
<i>Afghan Acculturation</i>				
Farsi Language	2.35 (0.73)	2.65 (0.85)	3.37 (0.48)	3.61 (0.45)
Identity	2.31 (0.66)	2.35 (0.66)	2.92 (0.73)	3.19 (0.75)
Behavioural	2.18 (0.54)	2.30 (0.66)	2.63 (0.66)	2.93 (0.58)
Family Cohesion	2.95 (0.62)	3.32 (0.77)		
Family Adaptability	2.67 (0.62)	2.86 (0.91)		
Psychological Adaptation	4.87 (0.52)	4.82 (0.72)		
Sociocultural Adaptation	5.29 (0.69)	5.20 (0.88)		
Subjective Wellbeing	4.19 (0.80)	4.28 (1.17)		

Table 2
Correlations of Acculturation Dimensions Reported by Parents and Emerging Adults.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Parents' Reports of Acculturation</i>							
1. English Language	2.20	0.74					
2. Canadian Identity	2.48	0.66	.35 **				
3. Canadian Behavioural	2.09	0.71	.52 **	.21			
4. Farsi Language	3.52	0.47	-.27 *	.02	-.08		
5. Afghan Identity	3.09	0.75	-.31 *	-.11	-.45 **	.34 **	
6. Afghan Behavioural	2.82	0.62	-.37 **	-.20	-.57 **	.42 **	.69 **
Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Emerging Adults' Reports of Acculturation</i>							
1. English Language	3.19	0.59					
2. Canadian Identity	2.64	0.68	.40 **				
3. Canadian Behavioural	2.63	0.70	.50 **	.67 **			
4. Farsi Language	2.50	0.78	-.36 **	-.06	-.17		
5. Afghan Identity	2.29	0.68	.22	-.22	-.26 *	.11	
6. Afghan Behavioural	2.25	0.63	-.11	-.41 **	-.62 **	.38 **	.50 **

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

independent of one another (see Table 2). However, relatively stronger correlations were observed between Canadian behavioural and language acculturations for both parents ($r = .52, p < .01$) and emerging adults ($r = .50, p < .01$). There were also correlations between Canadian identity and behavioural acculturation for emerging adults ($r = .67, p < .01$), and between Afghan identity and behavioural acculturation for both parents ($r = .69, p < .01$) and emerging adults ($r = .50, p < .01$).⁴ These higher correlations are consistent with the acculturation paradigm underlying the LIB scale, which suggests that behavioural acculturation is a reflection of both cultural identity and language proficiency (Birman, 2006b; Birman & Trickett, 2001).

For parents, Canadian behavioural and identity acculturations were not significantly correlated ($r = .21, p = .10$). In other words, lack of engagement in Canadian behavioural practices did not indicate lower degrees of identification with Canadian culture among parents. Similarly, for emerging adults, Afghan language and Afghan identity were not significantly correlated ($r = .11, p = .84$). In other words, lack of proficiency in Farsi did not indicate lower degrees of identification with Afghan culture among emerging adults.

Correlations of acculturation variables, demographic factors, and outcome variables among emerging adults

Table 3 illustrates notable correlations between the number of years spent in Canada and various acculturation indicators. Specifically, there were positive correlations with English proficiency ($r = .58, p < .01$), Canadian Identity ($r = .33, p < .01$), and Canadian Behavioural acculturation ($r = .42, p < .01$). In contrast, there was a significant negative correlation with Farsi language proficiency ($r = -.43, p < .01$). However, there was no observed correlation between the duration of residence in Canada and either Afghan Identity or Afghan Behavioural acculturation (see Table 3). Significant correlations (all at $p < .01$ level) were observed among the five outcome variables reported by emerging adults (see Table 3). These significant correlations suggest that family environment, adaptation, and subjective wellbeing represent distinct yet related concepts.

⁴ In prior studies using LIB scale (e.g., Birman, 2006b; Birman & Trickett, 2001) correlations above $r = .50$ have been considered as relatively stronger correlations. The same logic was followed in this study.

Table 3

Correlations of acculturation variables, demographic factors, and outcome variables among emerging adults.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<i>Acculturation Dimensions</i>																
1. English Language	3.19	0.59														
2. Canadian Identity	2.64	0.68	.40 **													
3. Canadian Behavioural	2.63	0.70	.50 **	.67 **												
4. Farsi Language	2.50	0.78	-.36 **	-.06	-.17											
5. Afghan Identity	2.29	0.68	.22	-.22	-.26 *	.11										
6. Afghan Behavioural	2.25	0.63	-.11	-.41 **	-.62 **	.38 **	.50 **									
<i>Demographic Factors</i>																
7. Gender	1.54	0.50	-.16	-.02	-.08	.19	.04	.10								
8. Age	22.89	3.51	.18	.20	.22	-.02	.01	-.17	-.25							
9. Years Lived in Canada	12.87	8.42	.58 **	.33 **	.42 **	-.43 **	.11	-.24	-.24	.48 **						
10. Parent's Education Level	3.74	1.41	-.12	-.17	-.02	-.12	.12	-.08	-.04	-.18	.05					
<i>Outcome Variables</i>																
11. Family Cohesion	3.12	0.76	-.26 *	-.10	-.07	.51 **	.33 **	.28 *	.26 *	-.01	-.04	.32 *				
12. Family Adaptability	2.76	0.80	-.25 *	-.24	-.22	.43 **	.43 **	.46 **	.12	-.01	-.05	.31 *	.75 **			
13. Psychological Adaptation	4.84	0.68	.20	.11	.14	.18	.36 **	.14	-.04	-.01	.23	.27 *	.55 **	.44 **		
14. Sociocultural Adaptation	5.21	0.87	.05	-.06	.04	.14	.30 *	.13	-.06	.05	.16	.24	.63 **	.44 **	.57 **	
15. Subjective Wellbeing	4.20	1.04	.04	.15	.13	.38 **	.35 **	.05	.04	.23	.17	.18	.68 **	.56 **	.61 **	.55 **

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Primary study questions

Research Question 1. What are the size and direction of acculturation gaps? At the group level, differences between parents and emerging adults on each of the six acculturation dimensions were tested using a mixed model. As can be seen in [Table 4](#), emerging adults as a group scored significantly higher than parents on both Canadian language and Canadian behavioural acculturation dimensions. The mean score for emerging adults' Canadian language (3.19) was significantly higher than that of the parents (2.20). Similarly, the overall mean score for emerging adults' Canadian behavioural acculturation (2.63) also significantly exceeded the overall mean score for the parents (2.09). However, although the overall mean on the Canadian identity dimension was higher for emerging adults than parents, this difference was not statistically significant (refer to [Table 4](#)).

In accordance with Hypothesis 1b, the parents, as a group, scored significantly higher than emerging adults in all three Afghan acculturation domains. Specifically, compared to emerging adults, parents on average reported a higher degree of competency in the Farsi language (3.52 vs. 2.50), endorsed a stronger identification with Afghan culture (3.09 vs. 2.29), and engaged more in behavioural practices related to Afghan culture (2.82 vs. 2.25); all differences were significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.⁵

Differences in acculturation at the dyad level

Acculturation gaps were computed for each parent-emerging adult dyad with respect to each of the six acculturation dimensions by subtracting the parent's scores from those of the emerging adult. In line with Hypotheses 2a and 2b, several families displayed a reverse gap direction in each of the six dimensions, contrary to what acculturation gap theories predicted. These gaps are listed in [Table 5](#).

Although as a group, emerging adults scored higher than their parents on English competence and Canadian behavioural acculturation, examining differences in acculturation scores at the dyad level suggested notable exceptions. There were five families in which parents reported a higher level of proficiency in English than their emerging adults. In twenty-three families, parents reported stronger identification with Canadian culture than their emerging adults, and in sixteen families, parents reported higher levels of engagement in Canadian behavioural practices.

Regarding Afghan acculturation, in five families, emerging adults reported higher proficiency in the Farsi language than their parents. In seven families, emerging adults reported greater identification with Afghan culture. Lastly, in eleven families, emerging adults reported higher engagement in Afghan behavioural practices than their parents.

Research Question 2. What would be the relationship of acculturation gaps to emerging adults' reports of family adjustment, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing?

Difference scores

In the first approach, acculturation gaps were determined by calculating the absolute value of the difference between the acculturation levels of each emerging adult and parent. For each outcome variable, two separate linear regression models were conducted. In the first model, the three Afghan acculturation dimensions (Language, Identity, and Behavioural) were entered together. In the second model, the three Canadian acculturation dimensions were entered together. Upon employing this initial approach, [Hypothesis 3](#) received only partial support. As presented in [Table 6](#), among the Afghan acculturation dimensions, gaps in Farsi proficiency were significantly associated with emerging adults' reports of family cohesion ($\beta = -.41$, $SE = .12$, $p = .001$, 95% CI $[-.66, -.17]$), family adaptability ($\beta = -.36$, $SE = .11$, $p = .003$, 95% CI $[-.59, -.13]$), and subjective wellbeing ($\beta = -.37$, $SE = .16$, $p = .004$, 95% CI $[-.61, -.12]$). Larger gaps were significantly associated with lower reports of family cohesion, family adaptability, and subjective wellbeing. Larger gaps in Afghan behavioural acculturation were associated with emerging adults' higher reports of subjective wellbeing ($\beta = .34$, $SE = .20$, $p = .038$, 95% CI $[-.02, .66]$).⁶ No significant associations were found between any of the outcome variables and gaps in any domains of Canadian acculturation. As a result, [Hypothesis 4](#) was not corroborated by this first approach.

Main and interaction effects

The second approach framed the gap as the interaction between parent and emerging adult acculturation levels. For each outcome variable, two separate hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. In the first regression model, the main effects of Afghan acculturation dimensions (Language, Identity, and Behaviour) were entered in Step 1, followed by their interaction terms in Step 2. In the second model, the main effects of Canadian acculturation dimensions (Language, Identity, and Behaviour) were entered in Step 1, followed by their interaction terms in Step 2. The significant results for each outcome variable are explained in detail and summarized in [Table 7](#).

⁵ Post hoc power was simulated with participant samples of 60 and 70, successfully achieving 100% power. An exception was found in the Canadian Identity acculturation model, which exhibited a lower power result.

⁶ Employing Cohen's f^2 as a metric, the effect sizes for the linear models within this methodology ranged between .17 and .38, indicating a spectrum from medium to large effects.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Acculturation for Afghan Immigrant Emerging Adults and Their Parents (n = 63).

Variable	Parents group mean	Emerging adults group mean	t value (df)	Mean absolute value of acculturation gap (SE)
<i>Canadian Acculturation</i>				
English Language	2.20	3.19	8.45 (61.90) ***	0.99 (0.12)
Identity	2.48	2.64	1.50 (61.28)	0.16 (0.11)
Behavioural	2.09	2.63	4.28 (123) ***	0.54 (0.13)
<i>Afghan Acculturation</i>				
Farsi Language	3.52	2.50	10.02 (61.48) ***	1.02 (0.10)
Identity	3.09	2.29	6.37 (62.22) ***	0.80 (0.13)
Behavioural	2.82	2.25	5.46 (62.10) ***	0.58 (0.11)

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 5

Frequency of Unexpected Gaps, Computed as Difference Scores Between Parents and Emerging Adults.

	Unexpected Gaps	
	Numbers of Families	Percentage of the Sample
<i>Parents were higher than emerging adults on:</i>		
English Language	5	7%
Canadian Identity	23	36%
Canadian Behavioural	16	25%
<i>Emerging adults were higher than parents on:</i>		
Farsi Language	5	7%
Afghan Identity	7	11%
Afghan Behavioural	11	17%

Table 6

Regression Findings with Acculturation Gaps Operationalized as Absolute Value of Parent-Emerging Adult Difference Scores.

Acculturation Gaps as Difference Score												
Outcome Variables	English Language				Canadian Identity				Canadian Behavioural			
	Estimates	95% CI			Estimates	95% CI			Estimates	95% CI		
	b	SE	Lower	Upper	b	SE	Lower	Upper	b	SE	Lower	Upper
Family Cohesion	-.24†	.12	-.49	.01	-.05	.12	-.29	.20	.05	.11	-.17	.27
Family Adaptability	-.27	.13	-.52	-.01	-.05	.13	-.23	.20	-.06	.11	-.29	.16
Psychological Adaptation	-.05	.11	-.27	.17	.22	.11	-.44	-.00	.11	.10	-.08	.31
Sociological Adaptation	-.12	.14	-.41	.16	-.19	.14	-.47	.09	-.01	.13	-.25	.26
Subjective Wellbeing	-.23	.17	-.57	.11	-.23	.17	-.57	.11	.31	.15	.01	.62
	Farsi Language				Afghan Identity				Afghan Behavioural			
	b	SE	Lower	Upper	b	SE	Lower	Upper	b	SE	Lower	Upper
Family Cohesion	-.39 **	.12	-.62	-.16	-.10	.12	-.35	.14	.06	.15	-.22	.36
Family Adaptability	-.36 **	.11	-.59	-.13	-.23†	.12	-.47	.00	-.09	.14	-.38	.20
Psychological Adaptation	-.07	.11	-.29	.15	-.23	.11	-.46	-.00	.19	.14	-.09	.47
Sociological Adaptation	.25†	.14	-.04	.53	-.16	.15	-.46	.13	-.03	.18	-.39	.33
Subjective Wellbeing	-.48 **	.16	-.80	-.15	-.24	.17	-.58	.09	.43 *	.20	.03	.83

†p < .10 *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Family cohesion

The main effects of emerging adult Afghan language ($\beta = .49$, $SE = .12$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.24, .74]), and Afghan identity ($\beta = .28$, $SE = .14$, $p = .033$, 95% CI [.02, .53]) acculturations were positively associated with emerging adults' reports of family cohesion. In accordance with H4a, significant parent-emerging adult interaction was found for Canadian identity acculturation. The regression coefficient representing the interaction of emerging adult and parent Canadian identity acculturation was statistically significant ($\beta = .45$, $SE = .21$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [.13, .75]). As seen in Fig. 1, family cohesion was especially lower among emerging adults with higher reports of Canadian identity whose parents reported lower levels of Canadian identity (-1 SD) ($b = -.47$, $SE = .23$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [-.92, -.02]). However, when parents reported higher levels of Canadian identity acculturation ($+1$ SD), emerging adults' Canadian identity acculturation may not have been associated with reports of family cohesion ($b = -.31$, $SE = .22$, $p = .168$, 95% CI [-.12, .74]).

Family adaptability

The main effects of emerging adult Afghan language acculturation ($\beta = .40$, $SE = .12$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [.16, .64]) and emerging adult Afghan identity acculturation ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .14$, $p = .014$, 95% CI [.06, .54]) were significantly associated with emerging adults'

Table 7

Regression Findings with Acculturation Gaps Operationalized as Main Effects and Interactions of Parent and Emerging Adult Acculturation.

Outcome Variables	Acculturation Dimensions		Gap as Main Effects and Interactions							
			Main				Interaction			
			Estimates	SE	95% CI		Estimates	SE	95% CI	
<i>Family Cohesion</i>	English Language	Family Member	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>				
		Emerging Adult	.06	.16	-.27	.39	-.17	.23	-.64	.30
	Canadian Identity	Parent	.08	.16	-.24	.41				
		Emerging Adult	.06	.19	-.34	.46	.60 **	.21	.18	1.01
	Canadian Behavioural	Parent	.32	.19	-.07	.70				
		Emerging Adult	-.03	.20	-.44	.38	.43†	.22	-.02	.88
	Farsi Language	Parent	-.10	.16	-.43	.23				
		Emerging Adult	.48 ***	.12	.23	.72	-.23	.24	-.70	.25
	Afghan Identity	Parent	.11	.20	-.29	.50				
		Emerging Adult	.31 *	.14	.03	.59	.17	.15	-.12	.47
	Afghan Behavioural	Parent	.04	.16	-.28	.35				
		Emerging Adult	-.00	.17	-.33	.33	.02	.21	-.39	.44
<i>Family Adaptability</i>	English Language	Parent	-.03	.20	-.43	.36				
		Emerging Adult	-.37	.22	-.82	.07	-.05	.27	-.59	.48
	Canadian Identity	Parent	.25	.17	-.09	.59				
		Emerging Adult	.02	.21	-.40	.43	.39	.23	-.09	.86
	Canadian Behavioural	Parent	.15	.20	-.25	0.55				
		Emerging Adult	-.22	.21	-.64	.21	.36	.25	-.15	.87
	Afghan Language	Parent	-.07	.17	-.41	.28				
		Emerging Adult	.41 **	.12	.17	.66	-.17	.23	-.64	.29
	Afghan Identity	Parent	.11	.19	-.28	.50				
		Emerging Adult	.36 *	.14	.08	.64	.07	.14	-.22	.36
	Afghan Behavioural	Parent	-.19	.16	-.50	.12				
		Emerging Adult	.24	.16	-.09	.58	.30	.20	-.11	.71
<i>Psychological Adaptation</i>	Canadian Language	Parent	-.05	.20	-.44	.35				
		Emerging Adult	-.07	.19	-.44	.30	-.10	.23	-.56	.35
	Canadian Identity	Parent	.13	.14	-.16	.41				
		Emerging Adult	.10	.17	-.25	.45	.33	.20	-.08	.73
	Canadian Behavioural	Parent	.41 *	.17	.08	.75				
		Emerging Adult	-.03	.18	-.39	.32	.23	.22	-.20	.66
	Farsi Language	Parent	-.06	.14	-.35	.23				
		Emerging Adult	.11	.12	-.14	.36	-.17	.24	-.66	.32
	Afghan Identity	Parent	.21	.20	-.19	.61				
		Emerging Adult	.40 **	.14	.11	.69	.11	.15	-.19	.42
	Afghan Behavioural	Parent	-.09	.16	-.41	.23				
		Emerging Adult	-.14	.17	-.48	.20	-.15	.21	-.58	.27
<i>Sociocultural Adaptation</i>	English Language	Parent	.11	.20	-.29	.51				
		Emerging Adult	-.11	.25	-.60	.39	.45	.30	-.16	1.06
	Canadian Identity	Parent	.15	.19	-.23	.53				
		Emerging Adult	-.05	.23	-.52	.42	.12	.27	-.42	.65
	Canadian Behavioural	Parent	.26	.22	-.19	.70				
		Emerging Adult	.05	.24	-.43	.52	.32	.29	-.26	.89
	Farsi Language	Parent	.13	.19	-.25	.51				
		Emerging Adult	.16	.16	-.17	.49	-.02	.32	-.66	.63
	Afghan Identity	Parent	.06	.26	-.47	.59				
		Emerging Adult	.39 *	.19	.01	.77	.13	.20	-.27	.53
	Afghan Behavioural	Parent	.16	.21	-.26	.58				
		Emerging Adult	-.03	.22	-.48	.41	-.25	.28	-.81	.32
<i>Subjective Wellbeing</i>	English Language	Parent	-.23	.26	-.76	.30				
		Emerging Adult	-.55	.28	-1.11	.01	-.54†	.34	-1.22	.14
	Canadian Identity	Parent	.26	.21	-.17	.70				
		Emerging Adult	.37	.26	-.16	.90	.42	.30	-.19	1.02
	Canadian Behavioural	Parent	.75 **	.25	.24	1.25				
		Emerging Adult	-.15	.27	-.69	.39	.48	.32	-.16	1.13
	Farsi Language	Parent	-.43	.22	-.87	-.00				
		Emerging Adult	.56 **	.17	.21	.90	-.24	.34	-.91	.44
	Afghan Identity	Parent	-.13	.27	-.69	.42				
		Emerging Adult	.69 ***	.20	.30	1.09	.10	.21	-.32	.52
	Afghan Behavioural	Parent	.24	.22	-.20	.68				
		Emerging Adult	-.50 *	.23	-.96	-.03	-.08	.29	-.68	.51
		Parent	.02	.28	-.53	.58				

†*p* < .10 **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001

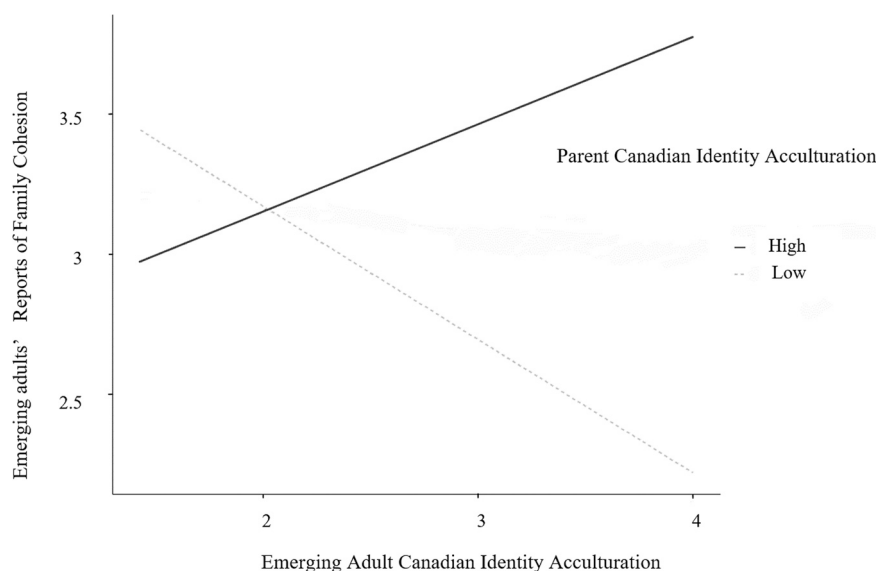


Fig. 1. Interaction between Parents' and Emerging Adults' Canadian Identity and Association with Family Cohesion.

higher reports of family adaptability. No interaction effects were found.

Psychological adaptation

The main effect of parent Canadian identity acculturation ($\beta = .41$, $SE = .17$, $p = .017$, 95% CI [.07,.72]) as well as emerging adult Afghan identity ($\beta = .40$, $SE = .14$, $p = .008$, 95% CI [.11,.69]) were significantly associated with higher reports of psychological adaptation. No interaction effects were found.

Sociocultural adaptation

The main effect of emerging adult Afghan identity acculturation ($\beta = .30$, $SE = .19$, $p = .045$, 95% CI [.01,.60]) was significantly associated with higher reports of sociocultural adaptation. No interaction effects were found.

Subjective wellbeing

Emerging adults' reports of subjective wellbeing were positively associated with emerging adult Afghan language acculturation ($\beta = .42$, $SE = .17$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.16, .67]), emerging adult Afghan identity acculturation ($\beta = .45$, $SE = .20$, $p = .000$, 95% CI [.19,.71]), and parent Canadian identity acculturation ($\beta = .47$, $SE = .25$, $p = .004$, 95% CI [.15, .79]). A significant negative association was found between emerging adults Afghan behavioural acculturation and their reports of subjective wellbeing ($\beta = -.30$, $SE = .23$, $p = .037$, 95% CI [-.58, -.02]). No interaction effects were found.⁷

Discussion

The current study represents the first exploration of acculturation gaps among Afghan families in Canada. The objectives of the study were manifold. It independently measured acculturation to both the Canadian and Afghan cultures, gathered reports from parents and emerging adults, and compared participants' self-reported acculturation levels to their perceived levels. It further examined acculturation across three domains: language, identity, and behavioural practices. In addition, two separate statistical methods (difference score vs. interaction) were used to operationalize the gaps in acculturation. The links between acculturation gaps (in each domain and with respect to both host and heritage cultures) and emerging adults' experience of family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing were examined. The findings confirmed that acculturation patterns are more complex than previously understood, underscoring the importance of factors such as cultural background and context in studying acculturation gaps.

⁷ Employing Cohen's f^2 as a metric, the effect sizes for the linear models within this methodology ranged between .17 and .90, indicating a spectrum spanning from medium to very large effects.

Intercorrelations among acculturation domains

Compared to prior studies using the LIB acculturation scale, the correlation between Canadian identity and behavioural acculturation was much lower among Afghan parents than what was observed among parents from the former Soviet Union (Birman, 2006b), as well as Hispanic migrants (Schwartz et al., 2014) living in the US. On the other hand, this non-significant correlation was consistent with the findings among Vietnamese parents (Ho & Birman, 2010). The differing findings may be attributable to sample characteristics, such as the parents' level of education. For instance, a characteristic of former Soviet refugee adults is their high level of education, with the majority holding a college degree and having worked in professional fields before migration (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Consequently, among refugees from the former Soviet Union, identification with the host society may have been highly correlated with active participation in cultural activities related to American culture due to their higher education levels. In stark contrast to this are parents from Afghanistan. In this study, 66% of parents had a level of education equal to or below a high school diploma. Afghan parents in this sample may have found alternative ways to identify as Canadians, regardless of their engagement in cultural activities related to Canadian culture—a phenomenon that may be more prominent in Canadian society. Canada's multiculturalism policy, an intergroup ideology that robustly supports cultural diversity and encourages the protection of immigrants' heritage culture without imposing restrictions on migrants to adopt the culture of the dominant group (Berry, 2013), may contribute to this. In this sense, Afghan parents may have developed a Canadian identity without perceiving engagement in Canadian culture as a prerequisite for identification with Canadian society.

The correlation between Afghan language and Afghan identity acculturation among emerging adults was also non-significant. In contrast, for adolescents from the former Soviet Union, Russian language competence was significantly correlated with Russian identity (Birman, 2006b). The findings are also contrary to the significant correlation between Vietnamese language and Vietnamese identity acculturation observed among Vietnamese adolescents (Ho & Birman, 2010). It is possible that, compared to adolescents from the former Soviet Union and Vietnam (11–19 years old), the older emerging adults from Afghanistan (18–29 years old) have achieved higher cultural maturity due to extended exposure to their heritage culture. Therefore, Afghan emerging adults may have identified more strongly with their heritage culture, regardless of their proficiency in the Farsi language.⁸

Direction of the gap

On each of the three acculturation domains, results indicated that parents were more oriented towards Afghan culture and less oriented towards Canadian culture. However, unexpected patterns emerged at the dyad level. A considerable number of parents reported higher Canadian identity than their children, and a considerable number of emerging adults reported higher engagement in behavioural practices related to Afghan culture. The findings are in line with prior studies using the LIB scale (e.g., Birman, 2006b; Birman & Trickett, 2001; Ho & Birman, 2010), and studies using other acculturation scales investigating acculturation gap among Chinese-American (Lim et al., 2008), Arab-Canadian families (Rasmi et al., 2015), and Hispanic-American migrants (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016). These unexpected patterns reveal that contrary to acculturation gap theories, immigrant parents are not always more oriented towards their ethnic culture, or less oriented to the culture of the larger society—at least insofar as identity is concerned—. Being from different generations and age groups, especially at the time of migration, immigrant parents and children may have a different understanding of the significance of ethnic and national identity (Birman & Trickett, 2001; Tsai et al., 2000). As an example, due to the significance of forming a sense of self throughout adolescence, it may be more vital for immigrant children to emphasize their ethnic identity more than their parents (Phinney, 1990). For adolescents, involvement in a peer group that sets them apart as "ethnic" may initially make it difficult to take pride in their heritage identity (Tsai et al., 2000). However, exploring and accepting their ethnic identity may be essential and valuable for older emerging adults. This is particularly relevant for those who may have grappled with identity difficulties in their youth and now possess a broader understanding of its importance in their new society.⁹

In addition, it is possible that, compared to their parents, emerging adults may not be as enthusiastic about the process of migration because they may not have participated in the decision-making process. Being removed from their homeland may make immigrant children less excited and less inclined to embrace the host culture than their parents (Birman, 2006b). Overall, the findings at the dyad level call into question the long-held belief that, in comparison to their parents, immigrant children will inevitably be more acculturated to the host culture and less acculturated to their ethnic culture.

General findings

Investigation of the main research questions provided a nuanced view of acculturation gaps. Using a multidomain and

⁸ The observed negative correlations ($-.62$ for young adults and $-.57$ for parents) between Afghan and Canadian behavioural acculturation raise the possibility that as individuals become more acculturated to the Canadian behavioural norms, there may be a corresponding decrease in adherence to Afghan cultural practices. This could reflect the challenges faced by Afghan immigrants in navigating the cultural expectations and values of both their heritage culture and the host society.

⁹ The observed lower/moderate levels of Canadian behavioural acculturation (slightly above the midpoint of the scale) among emerging adults who have spent approximately 13 years in Canada suggest that factors such as close-knit ethnic communities, cultural preservation efforts, and the influence of family and community networks may contribute to the retention of Afghan behavioural practices despite the length of time spent in Canada.

bidimensional acculturation model, the study was able to identify what type/s of acculturation gap across multiple domains, and with respect to the Canadian and Afghan cultures, were more consequential. Overall, three themes emerged in the results: a) emerging adults' proficiency in Farsi language and higher identification with Afghan culture are important factors for their family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing; b) parents' identification with the Canadian culture is an important factor behind emerging adults' psychological adaptation and subjective wellbeing; c) the only consequential parent-emerging adult gap existed in identification with the Canadian culture. These themes are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Emerging adults' orientation to Afghan culture - associations with family relationships, adaptation outcomes, and subjective wellbeing

Afghan language

When computed as a difference score, lower gaps in Farsi language proficiency were significantly associated with higher reports of family cohesion and family adaptability. However, when testing for main and interaction effects, it became evident that it was the main effect of emerging adults' proficiency in Farsi (and not the gap) that was positively linked to reports of family cohesion, family adaptability, and subjective wellbeing. These findings are consistent with previous research among samples of Chinese, Vietnamese, and former Soviet refugee families, which suggested a link between children's proficiency in their ethnic language and family adjustment (Birman, 2006b; Ho & Birman, 2010; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Portes & Hao, 2002). For children whose parents immigrated when they were adults, proficiency in their heritage language may contribute to better child-parent communication, which may, in turn, strengthen family connections. This logic is consistent with the theory of Acculturation Family Distancing (AFD) (Hwang, 2006). AFD claims that the distance between immigrant parents and children is primarily due to a) communication problems and b) cultural values that are incompatible. AFD and its core components are expected to worsen with time if not managed, resulting in a higher likelihood of conflict and deterioration of children's overall adjustment. In this study, the parents' scores on Farsi language proficiency were very high (see Table 4), possibly because adults are unlikely to lose their ability to speak and comprehend their ethnic language (Birman, 2006b). Without variation in parents' degrees of proficiency in Farsi, the prevalence of the gap is solely attributable to emerging adults' degrees of proficiency in Farsi.

Afghan identity

When computed as a difference score, gaps in Afghan identity acculturation were not significantly associated with any outcome variables. However, testing for main and interaction effects revealed significant associations between emerging adults' Afghan identity and all of the outcome variables. Prior studies have highlighted the importance of ethnic identity for the wellbeing of adolescents (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2007; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor, 2004; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014) and emerging adults (e.g., Sun et al., 2020). Phinney (1990) argued that favorable views regarding one's ethnicity are crucial to psychological functioning of children from minority groups. Ethnic identity has been considered an important aspect of one's development, leading to higher self-esteem, higher life satisfaction (Phinney, 1990), higher academic achievement, and fewer mental health issues (Huang & Stormshak, 2011).

Afghan behavioural

When computed as a difference score, larger gaps in Afghan behavioural acculturation were significantly linked to higher reports of subjective wellbeing. However, when testing for main and interaction effects, it became evident that it was the main effect of emerging adults' Afghan behavioural acculturation (and not the gap) that was linked to lower levels of subjective wellbeing. In other words, emerging adults who had higher engagement in cultural activities associated with Afghan culture reported lower levels of subjective wellbeing. On the one hand, this finding is in contrast with studies suggesting that higher ethnic engagement exerts a positive impact on immigrants' overall wellbeing (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008; Stuart & Jose, 2014). On the other hand, this finding is in line with literature suggesting that ethnic orientation of young people from minority groups can be linked to very diverse outcome patterns. As an example, among Mexican American students, those with more positive views of their ethnic culture exhibited significantly lower levels of academic aspirations (Gonzalez et al., 2013). In contrast, other studies found that acculturation to Mexican culture did not have any significant influence on educational aspirations (Flores et al., 2008) or academic accomplishments (Neseth et al., 2009). The results of this study may also be related to research findings suggesting that subjective wellbeing may be negatively impacted when children are burdened by their family commitments, such as providing a financial contribution to the family or being highly involved in language brokering (Gaytán et al., 2007; Martinez et al., 2009). Overall, the mixed findings of this study confirm that acculturation in different domains can be associated with different outcomes.

Parents' Identification with the Canadian society: associations with psychological adaptation and subjective wellbeing

No acculturation gaps in any of the Canadian acculturation domains (computed as difference score) were significantly associated with this study's outcome variables. However, when testing for main and interaction effects, it was revealed that parents' higher reports of Canadian identity were significantly associated with emerging adults' higher reports of psychological adaptation and subjective wellbeing. In line with this finding, Sabatier and Berry (2008) observed that among immigrants from different backgrounds living in France, an orientation towards French culture by immigrant fathers led to increased familial self-esteem and reduced delinquency among their children. In a similar vein, Sun et al. (2020) found that among emerging adults from diverse backgrounds living in the UK, subjective wellbeing was positively associated with parents' orientation to the larger society and negatively associated with parents' orientation toward their heritage culture.

Parents' orientation to the host society has also been linked to better parenting outcomes. For example, among Chinese Canadian families, parents' orientation toward Canadian society was associated with higher feelings of parental efficacy, which resulted in parents' better psychological adjustment (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011). According to Vu et al. (2019), Chinese American immigrant mothers' involvement in the American culture was also connected with higher reports of psychological wellbeing. In turn, higher psychological health was related to less perceived authoritarian and greater authoritative parenting.¹⁰ According to the findings of this study, when parents identify more with the Canadian culture and emerging adults identify more with the Afghan culture, emerging adults report greater psychological adaptation and subjective wellbeing. Overall, the main effect findings above confirm the notion that families, characterized by a dynamic interplay between the acceptance of larger societal values by parents and the retention of cultural values from their heritage, can provide a supportive environment for children's overall wellbeing (Sabatier & Berry, 2008). It is important to recognize that various factors, including the individual circumstances of families, the stage of acculturation, and the resources available to parents, can shape the parenting dynamics and their ability to balance cultural values. It is crucial to consider the diverse experiences and challenges faced by families, especially those who have recently arrived or have limited educational opportunities.

It is noteworthy to compare the findings of this study with those of Telzer et al. (2016), who found no evidence of parental acculturation, whether to the host or heritage culture, impacting the wellbeing of children in Mexican American families. Conversely, Costigan and Dokis (2006) suggested that higher levels of heritage acculturation among parents contribute to the wellbeing of children in Chinese families residing in Canada. These divergent findings can be interpreted within the framework of acculturation theory and are consistent with the ecocultural and interactive models of acculturation, which emphasize the influence of contextual factors on the acculturation processes within families (Sabatier & Berry, 2008). To further comprehend these inconsistencies, it is crucial to consider various factors that may contribute to the differential effects of parental acculturation on child wellbeing. These factors may include the specific cultural contexts in which families are situated, variations in family dynamics, socioeconomic factors, length of residence in the host country, and the availability of support systems. Additionally, methodological differences, such as sample characteristics, measurement tools, and statistical approaches, may also contribute to the divergent findings across studies.

Gaps in Canadian identity: association with family cohesion

A primary finding from this study was that only one type of acculturation gap was consequential for Afghan emerging adults' reports of family cohesion. Discrepancies in Canadian identity were associated with lower reports of family cohesion. Investigation of the interaction plot indicated that, when emerging adults reported high and parents reported lower Canadian identity acculturation, significantly lower levels of family cohesion were reported by emerging adults. It is argued that in immigrant families, children acculturate faster than their parents to the host society's culture (e.g., Aumann et al., 2022; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Phinney et al., 2000). As a result, children's linguistic and cultural skills raise the possibility that they will serve as informational conduits for their parents regarding the new society. Consequently, children are more likely to act as language brokers (Jones & Trickett, 2005; Titzmann & Gniewosz, 2018) or engage in higher levels of "parentification" (Titzmann, 2012). Language brokering refers to the role that children from immigrant families often assume as intermediaries or translators in communication between their parents and the majority culture (Jones & Trickett, 2005).¹¹ Parentification is the process through which children are allocated or undertake adult duties, such as providing instrumental and emotional care for their parents (Titzmann & Gniewosz, 2018). It is argued that shifts in the behaviours of one individual within the family system, as a result of faster acculturation, have the potential to destabilize other members of the system, which may ultimately lead to a rearrangement of the system (Titzmann & Lee, 2022). In line with the present findings, some researchers have concluded that the imbalance where children acculturate faster than their parents to the host society's culture carries negative consequences for children's adjustment in areas of academic performance, socioemotional health, and substance use (Gaytán et al., 2007; Martinez et al., 2009).

It is important to recognize that this finding contradicts several prior studies, such as Telzer (2010), who proposed the existence of multiple types of acculturation discrepancies and suggested that discrepancies in heritage-culture retention would have the most detrimental effects on family connectedness and adolescent functioning. The present results also contradict previous empirical work, including studies by Bámaca-Colbert and Gayles (2010) and Céspedes and Huey (2008), which indicated that parent-adolescent discrepancies in heritage-culture retention predicted compromised family functioning and adolescent problems (c.f., Schwartz et al., 2016). In contrast to the interaction pattern observed in this study, findings from a longitudinal study conducted by Schwartz et al. (2016) revealed that among American Hispanic families, lower levels of family functioning may not be linked to adolescents becoming more Americanized. Instead, the study found that the issue lies in the increasing positive discrepancies in the retention of Hispanic culture. Specifically, regarding ethnic identity, the authors noted a general trend where Hispanic parents tend to report a decrease in their ethnic identification over time, while adolescents maintain a stable level of identification. The authors suggest that challenges may arise in families where adolescents decrease their identification or when parents fail to do so.

¹⁰ Parents who support their children's freedom but at the same time impose rules and regulations on how they should behave are known as authoritative parents. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting is characterized by a restrictive and punitive approach, in which parents encourage their children to obey their orders (Watabe & Hibbard, 2014).

¹¹ It is important to highlight the potential positive outcomes associated with language brokering in children. Language brokering can serve as a valuable opportunity for children to develop and enhance their language skills, gain cultural knowledge, and deepen their understanding of societal systems. Nonetheless, research has shown that language brokering is often not associated with adverse outcomes for youth (Weiskirch, 2017).

These contradictory findings highlight the importance of considering various factors that may influence the relationship between acculturation discrepancies and family functioning. Factors such as cultural context, individual differences, and family dynamics may play a role in shaping the impact of identification discrepancies on family outcomes. Additionally, methodological differences and sample characteristics across studies may contribute to the inconsistent findings.

Implications

Given the small sample size of this study, it is important to approach the development of implications with caution and emphasize the need for replication with a larger sample size. Nonetheless, the findings hold noteworthy implications. One key finding highlights the significance of emerging adults' proficiency in the Farsi language and higher identification with Afghan culture for their wellbeing and the quality of family relationships. The accessibility of resources and the size of ethnic communities in Canada play a crucial role in facilitating the maintenance of heritage ties and the development of healthy ethnic identities. This finding serves as evidence supporting policy changes, such as the inclusion of ethnic language classes in school curricula, which can provide valuable support for immigrant communities.

The present findings may also have important implications for fostering diversity and equity in host countries. In certain host countries, the idea that national identity can encompass and embrace diversity has gained acceptance. In these societies, holding a positive ethnic identity alongside a positive national identity is seen as compatible and harmonious, which has been associated with an easier process for developing positive identification with the host culture (Berry, 2016). Conversely, in other societies that are relatively new to the experience of immigration and diversity, there may be a negative correlation between national and ethnic identities (Berry, 2016). The adoption of an integrated multicultural strategy, which allows for the coexistence of multiple identities, has been associated with higher levels of personal wellbeing (Berry, 2016; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). A potential explanation for the correlation between integration and positive outcomes lies in the concept of being "doubly engaged" with both cultures. Individuals who are actively involved and connected to both their heritage culture and the host culture often benefit from support and resources available in both contexts. This dual engagement enables them to navigate and interact competently with both cultures, while also experiencing lower levels of discrimination (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008), which has been identified as a significant contributor to mutual hostility and poor psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006).

Study strengths and limitations

Using a multi-domain and a bi-dimensional acculturation model enabled the current study to identify nuanced patterns in the findings. A gap between parents and emerging adults in all acculturation domains did exist. However, in many cases, it was either the parent's or the emerging adult's acculturation that was linked to the outcome variable of interest. These results would have been obscured if only the difference score method was used (Sun et al., 2020).

Given the complexity of acculturation processes, Costigan (2010) recommended that researchers move beyond the question of whether acculturation gaps are problematic or not. Instead, this complexity can be navigated by researching (a) what types of acculturation gaps are most detrimental to family life or child development, (b) what factors exacerbate or mitigate the consequences of acculturation gaps, and (c) what are the mechanisms through which acculturation gaps impact adjustment? The present study represents a step towards understanding what types of acculturation gaps may be most detrimental to family life and the adjustment of Afghan emerging adults. However, these findings need to be confirmed by future research, particularly among Afghan immigrants. Such differential findings are noteworthy and may have distinct implications for intervention programs aimed at decreasing the repercussions of acculturation gaps.

Although a strength of this study was the utilization of dyadic data, data from only one of the parents were collected. For this reason, it was not possible to investigate the degree to which acculturation gaps differed by gender matching in emerging adult-parent pairs. The study was also limited in its comparison of first (foreign-born) and second-generation (Canadian-born) participants. First-generation and second-generation immigrants differ in their exposure to the cultures and languages of their home countries as well as the larger society. Perhaps, second-generation emerging adults, whose parents are foreign-born, may be more susceptible to experiencing an acculturation gap. In fact, research indicates that second-generation adolescents from immigrant families from diverse backgrounds residing in the United States experience less consonance and more dissonance in their families than do those of the first generation (Harris & Chen, 2022).

While this study has explored an understudied population, it is important to acknowledge the limitation inherent in its cross-sectional design. Future research could benefit from adopting longitudinal designs, similar to previous studies (Schwartz et al., 2016; Unger et al., 2009), which have provided more comprehensive insights into the research questions at hand.

An additional limitation of the study was the moderate internal reliability of the Sociocultural Adaptation scale ($\alpha = .67$). George and Mallery (2003), and Hulin et al. (2001), deemed Cronbach's alpha of .6 – .7 as acceptable. Nevertheless, given that some of the significant findings were related to sociocultural adaptation, the results should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, the post hoc power analyses of the models utilized for Research Question 2 yielded lower power estimates when sociocultural adaptation was considered as an outcome variable. As such, interpretations related to this specific variable should be drawn with caution.

The study was limited as it did not explore potential mechanisms, such as children's psychological resilience and parenting style, through which acculturation gaps might impact adjustment. Family interactions are inherently complex due to the involvement of multiple individuals, including parents, siblings, and grandparents. This complexity is particularly pronounced among Afghans with extended families living together (Muller, 2010). However, it is important to note that addressing the entirety of this complexity within

a single study was challenging, especially given the constraints of a small sample size.

Investigating wider contextual variables was also outside the scope of this paper. Little is known about how regional and national factors interact with acculturation gaps at the family level. Locally, the size and resources associated with one's ethnic community can affect the ease to maintain heritage ties and develop healthy ethnic identities. On a national scale, different receiving societies maintain different policies regarding immigrants' ethnic cultural maintenance and assimilation of the new culture (Bornstein, 2017). To enhance the ecological validity of findings, future studies may consider employing mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the role of contextual factors, such as community resources, institutional support, and societal attitudes, in shaping acculturation outcomes and inform the development of culturally sensitive interventions and policies.

Finally, even though this study contributes to the scant literature on acculturation of Afghan migrants, the small sample size and the large number of analyses necessitate cautionary interpretations and replication of the study questions. Moreover, a small sample size can limit the generalizability of the findings to larger populations or other contexts. The characteristics and experiences of the participants in this study may not be fully representative of the broader target population, which may restrict the external validity of the results. To address this limitation, future research should aim to include larger sample sizes to enhance statistical power and increase the generalizability of findings.

Conclusion

Families often embark on migration to new lands with the aim of enhancing their overall quality of life. However, the intricacies of the acculturation process within families can sometimes have unintended consequences, impacting relationships and individual wellbeing. Determining which acculturation gaps are beneficial or detrimental to family wellbeing remains an ongoing area of research. The heterogeneous and multifaceted findings highlight that each immigrant's background and the contextual factors surrounding their migration journey contribute to a distinct foundation for family growth after migration, leading to a multitude of acculturation outcomes at the family level. Ultimately, gaining a deeper understanding of these complexities will inform the development of interventions and support systems tailored to the distinct needs of migrant communities.

Competing interests

The authors declare there are no competing interests.

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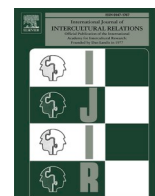
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Corrigendum

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The initial submission of the above-referenced article was made under the impression that it was the proper protocol for dissertation submissions, to list only the student as the author.

The first author wishes to formally recognize Dr. Saba Safdar and Dr. Benjamin Giguere as co-authors.

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