

Jun 28, 2006

RE: NRES-D-06-00002, entitled "Self-reported integration as a proxy for measuring acculturation: A qualitative study."

Dear Mrs. Blomstedt,

I am pleased to inform you that your paper has been found acceptable for publication pending minor revision. I anticipate that you will easily be able to answer the criticisms of the reviewers in a satisfactory manner. I will verify that this has been done upon receipt of the revised manuscript. Please find the comments of the reviewers listed below. You will find the initial checklist at the end of your returned manuscript where you will find items checked.

While the reviews on your manuscript were positive, 15 participants is too few to support a regular research article on this topic in Nursing Research. We would like to consider your manuscript as a brief report, which will require that you reduce the manuscript to no more than 10 pages. You may use a table to display the categories related to integration and to display statements from your participants that exemplify the category.

Please include with your revised submission an itemized, point-by-point response to the comments of the reviewers. The revisions should be completed by Sep 26, 2006 to avoid being considered as a new submission.

With Kind Regards,

Sherry Handfinger
Editorial Assistant
Nursing Research

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer #1: Nursing Research
Manuscript: #NRES-D-06-00002

The purpose of the study was to explore whether immigrants' own rating of the extent of their acculturation (self-reported integration) was a reliable source of information in comparison with the bidimensional rating produced by the researchers. The authors argued that questions relating to immigration and health are of great importance in this age of globalization. It is therefore significant to examine acculturation as it relates to the health of immigrants. The authors explored two approaches used in measuring acculturation including unidimensional and bi-dimensional approaches.

The methods included strategic sampling of immigrants (n=15; criteria provided) from the former Soviet Union in Sweden and conducting in-depth personal interviews (about 1.5 hours) with participants in their homes or at other chosen places. The interviews were held in Russian by a Russian-speaking researcher and the content was tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English. The data were analyzed using a content analysis technique "Framework" developed by the Qualitative Research Unit of the National Center for Social Research in Great Britain, also widely used in the qualitative research community. Details of the technique were described.

Measures: Acculturation was derived from the interaction of occupation, language skills, and communication. One could achieve high-level acculturation or low-level acculturation. Identity was described as high-level identity and low-level identity. Self-reported and general integration information was gathered by asking two questions. Findings from the in-depth interviews were validated with those from mini telephone interviews of new respondents (n=15). The same strategic sampling criteria applied to the telephone interviews as well.

Results showed that immigrants' self-reported integration corresponded with the researchers' bi-dimensional rating of the extent of acculturation. Acculturation accounted for the mastery of resettlement, resolving of the grief associated with home-country and fulfilling the internal criteria for integration. Levels of integration included: High-level integration, assimilation, separated, and marginalized; details were provided on these. The results section is strengthened by the inclusion of direct quotations from the transcripts.

The discussions were pertinent to the results. Although self-reported integration did not yield detail picture of the extent of acculturation as the bi-dimensional approach, the authors concluded that self-reported integration be used as a proxy for acculturation.

Problem statement: Rationale for the study is adequate.

Literature review: adequate

Theoretical framework: None provided but it is appropriate for the type of study.

Style of presentation: appropriate.

Research design: adequate

Data analysis: adequate

Organization: adequate

On the whole, a well written paper but this reviewer has a few comments:

? It would be helpful for the reader to list all the questions or statements (interview guide) the researcher used to stimulate discussion during the in-depth interview in one place. For instance, they provided such information for the mini phone survey on page 9.

? Is it possible to include the number of people who responded to the items on Table 1 in the table? They could be in brackets accompanied by a footnote.

? In the limitation section, please comment about advantage(s) and disadvantage(s) of snow-ball sampling.

? This reader assumes that back-translation was not done in this study. Please comment about it in relation to your study.

With the uni-dimensional approach to measuring acculturation, one adapts to the mainstream culture and 'abandons' the old ways. The old ways may become dormant but would surface during stressful times like illness situations. For instance, a presumably assimilated individual may start to ask for methods that worked in the past (in the old country) or longs for some food that is specific for those in the old country. In this line of thought, this reviewer believes that there can never be true assimilation or relinquishing of many attitudes, values, and behavior of the original culture. That would be a complete loss of one's identity. It is time to start seeing immigrants' attitudes, values, and behaviors as assets for their survival in the new country rather than variables that need to be thrown away. My last comment may not relate to your study but it is an important thought to consider in cross-cultural research.

Reviewer #2: This is a well written manuscript focused on a unique population.

Concerns regard the methods used for this study. Initially 15 persons are interviewed by the author in an indepth manner for 1.5 hours in their home or other place of convenience. The authors indicate that after the initial analyses were completed, 15 telephone interviews were conducted to validate the findings. These interviews were conducted with participants who had previously contacted the authors about the study and who were not included in the initial qualitative interviews. Additional information is needed regarding the rationale for inclusion of participants who were initially not included (i.e. why were they excluded) and for the difference in qualitative methods (i.e. telephone interview versus face-to-face) for validation of findings. This variation in methods may have effected results. Another concern regards the heterogeneity of the group that is listed as a strength of the study. Perhaps this would have been a strength if the sample had been larger than 15 participants however with inclusion of males, females, age ranges including young and older adults and persons who had lived in Sweden for varying amounts of time it seems this is more of a limitation. Perhaps the authors would consider discussion of findings by gender, age and length of residence in Sweden to facilitate a more indepth discussion of findings.