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Acculturation and its psychological determinants- how individual differences impact migrant adaptation

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Abstract. Migrant adaptation is a multi-faceted phenomenon, that can prove extremely challenging to the individuals involved. Acculturation in the 21st century is an established area of study which impacts individual behaviours, cognitions, attitudes and social relationships in multi-cultural societies. This study tested the relationship between acculturation, social connectedness, motivational persistence, career satisfaction and well-being, in a convenience sample of first-, second and third-generation migrants who reside in the UK. A correlational design based on data gathered using a cross-sectional survey on 450 migrant respondents yielded conflicting results. Structural Equation Modelling and regression analyses results are discussed in light of the current literature in cross-cultural psychology, with implications for future studies.

Keywords: acculturation, well-being, motivational persistence, adult migrants, United Kingdom.

Introduction

The relations between host communities and immigrants have long been a topic of research in multi-cultural societies. The past decade brought displacement due to wars, such as in Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan and more recently in Ukraine, with extensive movement of people fleeing war but also of sojourners in search for a better life (Newman, 2023).

According to figures from the European Commission, in 2022, 5.1 million immigrants arrived in the European Union from non-EU countries, compared to 2.4 million in 2021 (Eurostat, 2024). According to the same report, "in 2022, 1.5 million people moved from one EU country to another. This is an increase of 7% compared with 2021" (p. 1). Data from the OECD, cited by Oxford University's Migration Observatory, regarding the foreign-born population in countries such as the UK or the USA was at 15% of the total population in 2023 (Sumption et al., 2024). Referring directly to the UK, net migration (i.e. more people leave than arrive in the country in any given year) to the UK reached a peak of 906,000 by June 2023, figures which decreased to 728,000 in the year ending June 2024 (Sumption et al., 2024, p. 6).

The quality of life that migrants perceive is extremely important, and unhappiness can signify several things, such as exclusion, inability to adjust and acculturate to the new environment, lack of social support, poor health, mental health needs, a culture clash and others. Public policies and

programmes that are designed to support immigrants rely on empirical studies to give guidance and offer practical solutions. Bourhis et al. noted that "immigrants […] may trigger a redefinition of the collective identity of the dominant host society", and as a consequence, "can compel a reassessment of the role of the state in defining and promoting the collective identity of the dominant host society" (1997, p. 372).

However, the connection between a migrant's mental health and personality variables, individual skills and cultural acculturation "may not be adequately explained by investigating a direct relationship on a single dimension", as mediating variables will impact it (Yoon et al., 2008, p. 247). Broadly, the objectives of this study are to examine the association between the degree of acculturation and psychosocial variables, and outcome measures; to identify the relationships between independent, dependent and potential moderating and mediating variables; to further test the English version of the Motivational Persistence scale and analyse it withing a broader empirical context.

Acculturation – conceptual evolution in intercultural studies

Acculturation refers to changes that happen as a result of interactions between dissimilar people or groups of individuals, in a cultural setting (Berry & Sabatier, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010). Acculturation is studied both for immigrant groups who live in a foreign country, such as sojourners or refugees, but also for those who are subjected to the effects of globalisation, phenomenon labelled *remote acculturation*. The concept has great importance for both academia and for practice, in the counselling and education sectors, in advocacy and policy-making, as it pertains to the lives of immigrants/refugees and racial/ethnic minorities (Yoon et al., 2020).

Berry (1980) changed the view about the concept from unidirectional to bi-directional, and developed an acculturation model with four possible acculturative styles, namely integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. The bi-directional model covers immigrants' orientation towards one of the four acculturative styles, with elements from the *mainstream* (or host/ residency) environment and from the *heritage* (home/ native) culture.

A recent systematic review that looked at the results from 52 articles (Andronic & Constantin, 2024) confirms Berry's theoretical approach that *integration* is the most prominent acculturation strategy, as identification with both cultures contribute to higher well-being in immigrants and participation in the host/mainstream culture correlates with well-being (Berry, 2005). The same review found that culturally integrated employees report higher job satisfaction and that integration mediates the path from mainstream acculturation conditions to work success (Andronic & Constantin, 2024).

But there is a distinction to be made between first- and second-generation migrants. First generation migrants are those who migrate during adulthood, when they are independent individuals and can make this decision on their own. They leave their home countries due to a wide variety of reason but can end up facing challenges that can affect their mental health (Toth-Bos et al., 2020). First generation migrants can "experience higher levels of anxious and depressive symptoms and higher levels of acculturative stress compared to second-generation due to the way they internalise acculturating challenges" (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014, p. 22) or end up feeling "alienated and insecure with diminished levels of support, face challenges of identity management and perceived discrimination" (Sharma & Sharma, 2010, p. 317).

Furthermore, second-generation immigrants, understood as children of immigrants who were born in the mainstream country or have immigrated at a young age, have a different experience

in regards to acculturation (Schwartz et al., 2010). Their daily lives include simultaneous acculturation to both cultures, as they mature and develop competencies from "at least two cultures: the culture of their parents (i.e., the heritage culture) and the culture of their host country (i.e., the mainstream culture)" (Schwartz & Pfammatter, 2024, p. 2). Biculturalism, or the ability to integrate two cultures, can lead to improved social adaptation and higher psychological adjustment (Berry et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2008). Third generation immigrants, who are born in the mainstream country (same as their second-generation parents), and have at least one grandparent of migrant origin, exhibit even less influences from the first generation's native cultural background.

A systematic review found that a migrant's gender, ethnicity, educational level, occupational adjustment and length of residence in the host country can assert moderating effects on the relationship between acculturation and well-being. The same study identified mediators of the relationship between WB and acculturation, such as social connectedness, acculturative stress, experiences of discrimination (Andronic & Constantin, 2024). Acculturation is linked to variables such as aspects of the heritage culture, to characteristics of migrants themselves, to their status, level of education before migration, the languages they speak, to the particularities of the receiving culture (Crockett & Zamboanga, 2009).

More research is needed, as pointed out by researchers, because a wide majority of studies are USA-based, therefor the current number of localised European studies are insufficient to generate "conclusions on the role of the societal context on acculturation" (Schwartz & Pfammatter, 2024, p. 4). As pointed out by Berry (2005), further research is essential, because in the "absence of conceptual clarity and empirical foundations", the social and psychological costs of multiculturalism can be high and might outweigh the benefits (p. 711). Diversity is part of our lives and migration will continue or even intensify in the future, therefor cultural diversity elements and variables should be integrated in this type of research.

Acculturation and its connection to Life and Work satisfaction

Well-being is a complex, multi-faceted construct, which combines cognitive, affective and somatic elements (Toth-Bos et al., 2020). There are two similar concepts, namely subjective well-being and psychological well-being. SWB refers to positive or negative affective and cognitive evaluations that people make about their lives (Diener, 2000, p.34), and PWB is "the state of a series of positive conditions an individual is experiencing" (Ruelas, 2019, p. 10).

Acculturation and well-being have been studied together extensively in numerous studies (Choy et al., 2021; Lopez-Class et al., 2011; Toth-Bos et al., 2020; Ward & Szabo, 2023), due to the increased interest in the mental health outcomes that migrant adaptation can generate, and mediating and moderating variables have been identified as having an impact on this causal relationship (Andronic & Constantin, 2024). Personality factors (such as self-esteem or positive affect), income (socio-economic status), demographic aspects (age, gender, ethnicity, religiosity), or social factors (such as environmental mastery, social integration), can impact the process of acculturation.

Literature on the relationship between acculturation and other concepts, such as migrants' socioeconomic status (SES), length of stay in a host country, mainstream language proficiency, and their effects on well-being have been found to generate discrepant results (Wilczewska, 2023). The same author notes that acculturation can be regarded as a "broad concept, with multiple possible indicators", therefor it is possible that "a pattern of relationships between some indicators of acculturation and indicators of SES exist in addition to their associations with well-being" (Wilczewska, 2023, p. 1339).

As Ramos et al., (2014) noted, "the relationship between acculturation preferences and well-being might be more complex than initially hypothesized by Berry and colleagues" (2014, p. 9).

In epidemiological research, studies often show inconsistencies in operationalization and measurement of the concept of acculturation, exhibiting unclear outcomes, and generating a lack of comparability, generalizability and transferability of the results (Schumann et al., 2020). In social and cross-cultural psychology, studies have theorised that potential moderators of the relation between acculturation and/or enculturation ("retention of or cultural socialization to one's culture of origin", Yoon et al., 2013, p. 16) and well-being can be classed in three main groups: 1. sample characteristics (race, gender, age), 2. researchers' conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation (e.g., linearity, dimensionality) or 3. contextual influence of research location and time (Yoon et al., 2013, p. 17).

Diener has emphasised that a strong predictor of happiness is the fulfilment or absence of basic psychological needs (Diener et al., 2018). Out of the three factors of the basic psychological needs theory, the sense of relatedness could be affected by the inability of migrants to connect with the host culture (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Acculturation & Motivational persistence

Persistence is the tendency to remain engaged in specific goal-related activities, despite difficulties, obstacles, fatigue, low feasibility or frustration (Constantin et al., 2011). Persistence entails, on one hand, sustained involvement in an activity, intensification of effort when one is facing obstacles, and on the other hand, a renewal of commitment to achieve desired goals.

Berry's acculturation framework proposed that migrants are confronted with the process of acculturation, a balance of will, of persistence and involvement which will decide how much of their native culture and values to retain, and how many elements of the new culture will be assimilated (Berry, 1980; Bourhis et al., 1997). More recent research described acculturation as a motivated process for those who migrate, and the motivation to both acculturate to a host country and to also preserve one's heritage values and culture are uniquely associated with the respective means of doing so (Vishkin et al., 2021, p. 1). This theory of Goal Constructs which looks at the differences between migrants' motivations and means, alongside Recker et al.'s (2018) theoretical model of motivations for cultural maintenance and host culture exploration have all generated mixed results. Therefor, there is scope for a deeper analysis of the way acculturation and motivation are connected.

Acculturation & Social connectedness

Connectedness is one of the needs that evolve and develop as people live their lives and have diverse experiences and social interactions, basically establishing a sense of comfort in social contexts and being able to identify with others alike (Lee & Robbins, 1995). When we feel disconnected or distant and we have difficulties connecting and forming meaningful social relationships, the negative outcomes such as frustration, isolation, rejection appear. The impact on an individual's life can be significant, as "frustrations along any aspect in the development of belongingness may impair the person's ability to effectively function in life" (1995, p. 233).

Yoon et al. (2008; 2012) studied social connectedness as a mediator, researching whether "highly acculturated individuals would feel more connected to and accepted in mainstream society, whereas highly enculturated individuals would feel the same way in the ethnic community" (2012, p. 87). Results showed that connectedness to mainstream society partially mediated the link of

acculturation and subjective well-being in immigrant populations, suggesting that further research is needed, to incorporate additional variables in the relationship. A meta-analysis study confirmed that social connectedness has been identified as a mediating variable in the relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being in several other empirical research articles (Andronic & Constantin, 2024).

Acculturation & Language proficiency and Length of Stay

The past decade brought an improvement in empirical research designs, as earlier studies looked at the direct connection between acculturation and outcome variables, such as mental health or career development variables (Yoon et al., 2012). Research has shown that various variables, such as demographic variables (age, gender), religiosity, education level, or length of stay in a foreign country, can all impact a person's acculturation journey (Andronic & Constantin, 2024).

Language proficiency in the national tongue of a host country is often used in empirical studies as an indicator of acculturation (Rudmin, 2009). The relationship between the two variables is complex, with "language proficiency and use (behaviors) are often used to measure acculturation orientations, but they can also be seen as outcomes of the acculturation process" (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006b, p. 15).

Similar to host country language proficiency, used as one of the most employed single indicator proxy measures for migrant integration, another variable is the *length of stay* or duration of living in a new country since immigration occurred (Schumann et al., 2020). The general belief is that "the more time immigrants spend in the new place, the more they become familiar with and adjust to it", leading to a more acculturated individual (Wilczewska, 2023, p. 1341). Length of stay and language proficiency of the host country are usually correlated, but "the two variables are conceptually quite distinct and their causal order is clear" (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006b, p. 14).

Aims of the current research

Empirical literature published in the last decades presents divergent findings and mostly contradictory results, especially in the case of studies on European migrant populations. Acculturation has a special place in cross-cultural research, as empirical studies analyse it either as an independent, a dependent or a moderating variable. Different research designs look at acculturation in very different manners, and often the results are not in unison with each other. There is also a gap in quantitative acculturation-related research in the United Kingdom, hence the importance of addressing it by including the concept of migrant acculturation in our design.

The goals of the present study are two-fold: *a)* to test a path model to identify if acculturation (home vs. host and as a stand-alone concept) impacts the relationship between personality variables and specific outcomes (life and work satisfaction); and *b)* to test the influence of social variables (social connectedness, social status) and psychological variables (motivational persistence) in relation to UK migrants' well-being.

Regarding the first objective, we want to understand how acculturation relates to other variables in our model and to see if it is connected to migrants' motivation, their willingness to become socially connected with others in their host country, and their self-reported satisfaction with life and work satisfaction. A secondary research objective is to introduce variables that connect to social and psychological needs and test their relationship with our main research variables (acculturation and life and work satisfaction). We are not aware of any other empirical study which has analysed all these

variables together, as usually empirical research looks at them taken separately or two-by-two, with specific moderating and mediating variables. More detailed summaries of such relationships can be found in several recent systematic reviews (Andronic & Constantin, 2024; Choi et al., 2021; Ward & Szabo, 2023).

Variables and study hypotheses are as follows:

H1: There is a positive correlation between acculturation, demographic variables (gender, age) and well-being.

H2: Length of residence in the UK is an indicator of acculturation and positively correlates to demographic indicators of integration (work status, relationship status, income, language skills).

H3: There is a positive relation between acculturation and socio-demographic variables (income, English level, time spent in the UK) in the sense that acculturation in the UK (host country) impacts a migrant's adaptive skills.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Following institutional approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (no. 1544 from the 22nd of July 2022), a total number of 527 participants were recruited to take part in the study. All study participants took part in the study by completing the online Google docs form, and the consent form that preceded the instruments offered respondents all the necessary information regarding their participation.

Demographic information. The convenience sample is composed of UK residents, out of which 77 identified as British- born UK natives (14.6% of the total convenience sample) and the remaining 450 respondents (85.4%) identified as 1st generation migrants (430 respondents), 2nd and 3rd generation migrants (18 and 2 respondents, respectively). For the purpose of the current study, we will only analyse data from respondents who are not British natives and have a migrant background, therefor our final sample is 450. Our aim was to have a large enough sample to be able to run covariance analyses and get accurate results, and as structural equation models are usually sensitive to sample sizes, we planned on having more than the "critical sample size" of 200 respondents and obtain a level of predictive power based on the complexity of our model (Garver and Mentzer, 1999, apud. Collier, 2020).

Participants' *age* ranged from 18 years old to 78 (M=36; SD= 11.22). A complete breakdown of means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis levels for the research variables and demographic items can be found in Table 2.

In terms of *gender*, 244 respondents were female (54.2%), 198 males (44%) and 8 who selected Other or prefer not to say (1.8%). For length of time lived in the UK, 26 respondents selected Below 1 year (5.7%), 99 respondents have been in the UK between 1 and 5 years (22%), 102 over 5 years (22.6%), 203 respondents who lived in the UK for longer than 10 years (45.1%), and 20 UK only, who have never lived anywhere else (4.4%).

The respondents' *English level*, self-reported during the survey, ranged from Pre-entry (1 person, .2% of the sample), Beginner (1 person, .2%), Intermediate (95 respondents, 21.1%), Advanced (287, 63.7%), and English proficient or native speaker (66, 14.6%).

In terms of *current work status*, 77 respondents reported they are not in work (17.1%), 260 are working full-time (57.7%), and 113 are working part-time (25.1%).

The study participants' self-reported *relationship status* ranged from Single (158 respondents, 35.1%), Cohabitation (72, 16%), Married (185, 41.1%), Separated (11, 2.4%), Divorced (20, 4.4%), Widowed (3, .6%), Other (1, .2%).

The *education level* (highest level achieved to date) ranged from Primary education (2 respondents, .4%), Lower secondary (7, 1.5%), Upper secondary (30, 6.6%), Post secondary (77, 17.1%), Tertiary education (36, 8%), Diploma (128, 28.4%), Master or PhD level (170, 37.7%).

In terms of *annual income*, respondents reported the following: No income (22, 4.8%), Under £12.5k (65, 14.4%), between 12.5k to 30k (128, 28.4%), over 30k (102, 22.6%), over 50k (104, 23.1%), over 100k (29, 6.4%).

Out of those self-reporting being migrants to the country, the *reason* stated for their decision to migrate to or settle in the UK was split into several categories, labelled Entirely my decision (204, 45.3%), Partially my idea (42, 9.3%), Both myself and my family or partner (111, 24.6%), Mostly my family or partner (35, 7.7%), Entirely their decision (48, 10.6%), and prefer not to say (10, 2.2%).

2.2. Procedure

Online-only questionnaires were administered in English, and data was collected over the course of several months, from September 2022 to May 2023, using various social media outlets, such as LinkedIn, Facebook migrant groups, student groups, and by sharing the Google forms link with both London-based and UK charities, educational institutions and third-sector organisations. All instruments used in this research were self-report measures.

2.2.1. Motivational Persistence scale (EMP)

The Evaluation of the Motivational Persistence questionnaire, the English version of the Romanian scale designed to measure facets of motivational persistence (MPS, Constantin et al., 2011). EMP has 30 items and 6 factors (ambition, determination, planning, implementation, recurrence, self-discipline). Respondents selected their response on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *Very Little Extent* to *Very Large Extent*.

For the first factor, Ambition, examples of items include "I am an ambitious person"; "I always expect more from myself and from my future". For Determination, items include "I continue to invest time and effort into projects that require months of patience and hard work"; "I don't like to pursue goals that require months or years of effort". Items for the factor named Planning are "I use an agenda and make lists to plan what I have to do every day"; "I plan in detail what I have to do the next day". For the fourth factor, Implementation, examples of items are "Some days, I deviate from my planned activities"; "When I plan to do something, I don't give up until I get it done". For Self-discipline, "I am a disciplined individual in anything I do"; "I honour my commitments, even when I lose or am at a disadvantage". Recurrence of unattained purposes displays items such as "I still think about the goals I gave up on, even though they don't matter anymore"; "I always think back at my unrealized projects".

The original version (MPS) of the scale was designed to evaluate three main facets of persistence, namely *current purpose pursuit*, which refers to persistence for short-term behaviours; *long-term purpose pursuit*, meaning the sustainment of actions over long periods of time; and *recurrence of unattained purposes*, the mental reactivation of past goals or postponed actions. It has since been tested on larger convenience samples and developed into a 30-item and six factor more

stable measure (Constantin & Nicuță, 2025). The Romanian version was translated into English in 2021, adapted and validated in a preliminary study on UK respondents (Andronic & Constantin, 2025) and will be used for the purpose of the current research project to assess its construct validity and reliability and to measure its association with acculturation.

This measure is multi-dimensional and has adequate reliability and validity across racial groups (i.e., Cronbach's alpha for EMP is .83). a detailed breakdown of Cronback's Alpha internal consistency scores for each factor can be found in *Table 1.* As noted by Collier (2020), Cronbach's alpha "measures the degree to which responses are consistent across the items within a construct" (p. 26), with higher values representing a more reliable scale. As far as we know, the concept of motivational persistence has never been studied empirically alongside acculturation, therefor it is our aim to test the two variables together in the same study.

2.2.2. Vancouver Index of Acculturation scale (VIA)

Following recommendations from studies evaluating methods used to study acculturation, this concept was measured using the 20-item Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) scale (Ryder et al., 2000; Paulhus, 2013). The questionnaire assesses how much migrants relate to and identify with their a) *host* (mainstream culture, British, in this case) and b) *home* (native, heritage) cultures. Respondents selected their response on a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Each of the two subscales is comprised of 10 items, and each refer to one culture-the native/ heritage and the host/mainstream cultures.

Some items from the Host culture are "I often participate in mainstream British cultural traditions"; "I am comfortable interacting with typical British people". Items from the Heritage culture include "I often participate in my heritage cultural traditions"; "I believe in the values of my heritage culture".

This measure was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, the instrument is in line with current views of acculturation as a bidimensional process, and VIA is comprised of two subscales, namely the heritage and mainstream acculturation facets. As per researchers' conceptualization of the variable, linearity and dimensionality have to be addressed empirically, to help "detect the beneficial effects of mainstream culture" and "separate the process of acquiring mainstream culture from the process of distancing from culture of origin" (Yoon et al., 2013, p. 17). We chose to measure the construct of acculturation directly, and not by proxy measures, such as educational, occupational or generational status, which "may not be effective, as it does not provide the level of detail that is needed for an adequate understanding" (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006a, p. 147). This scale is useful in assessing multiple elements of acculturation, such as values, traditions, people's adhesion to cultural norms, social relations, et. (Schwartz & Pfammatter, 2024).

Secondly, VIA can also be used on all ethnic groups, which is relevant for the current research, where data was collected from migrants from 83 countries who reside in the UK and also from English natives (both white British and of second and third generation migrant descendent naturalised UK nationals). According to a meta-analysis study, VIA is the most used bilinear and multi-dimensional instrument which is calibrated to be used on multi-ethnic migratory populations (Yoon et al., 2020). As pointed out by Schwartz and Pfammatter (2024), VIA has good psychometric properties and has been used for other two European studies (Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2013; Testa et al., 2019). Our results show a Cronbach's alpha value at .92 for the overall scale, with .91 for the acculturation Host factor and .92 for the acculturation Native country factor *(Table 1)*.

2.2.3. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Subjective well-being, operationalized as a migrant's satisfaction with life, was measured using the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). Study participants selected their response on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Examples of items include "The conditions of my life are excellent" and "If I could live my life over again, I would change almost nothing". Cronbach's alpha internal consistency value for this scale stands at .90 *(Table 1)*.

2.2.4. Career satisfaction Scale (CSS)

Work satisfaction was measured using the 5-item scale developed by Greenhaus et al., (1990). Respondents selected their response on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples of items include "I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for advancement"; "I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for the development of new skills". Cronbach's alpha value is .94 *(Table 1)*.

2.2.5. Social Connectedness Scale (SCS)

Social Connectedness was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Lee and Robbins (1995). Respondents selected their response on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). It is a scale that measures aspects related to social relationships, social inclusion, safety, diversity. Examples of items include "I feel disconnected from the world around me"; "Even around people I know, I don't feel that I really belong". Cronbach's alpha for the social connectedness scale is .95 *(Table 1)*.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha for the study variables

Scale	N	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Acculturation (VIA)		20	.926
Acculturation Host country	450	10	.916
Acculturation Native country		10	.928
Motivational Persistence (EMP)		30	.833
Ambition		5	.509
Determination		5	.744
Planning	450	5	.873
Implementation		5	.682
Recurrence		5	.816
Self-Discipline		5	.655
Social Connectedness (SCS)	450	8	.953
Well-being (SWLS)	450	5	.90
Career Satisfaction (CSS)	450	5	.942

To conclude, we can see that Cronbach's alpha levels for both Acculturation factors, for Social Connectedness, Well-being and Career Satisfaction exhibit excellent internal consistency levels. Motivational persistence has a good Cronbach's alpha coefficient overall, but we can see that Ambition has the lowest internal consistency of all the six factors, followed closely by Self-Discipline and Implementation. Suggestions on corrections will follow in the discussions section.

3. Results

Analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 26 and AMOS 20.

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, and the skewness and kurtosis levels for the variables included in the current research. Preliminary analysis shows that the levels of skewness and kurtosis for all variables, except for generation level, are within the recommended levels.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics- Means, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis*

	M	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
age	36.01	11.221	0.651	0.121
english_level	3.92	0.618	-0.237	0.767
gender	1.55	0.498	-0.21	-1.965
years_uk	3.2	1.02	-0.494	-0.702
work_status	2.41	0.765	-0.838	-0.797
relationship_status	2.27	1.14	0.556	-0.002
education_level	5.67	1.414	-0.862	-0.257
income	2.64	1.29	-0.081	-0.727
reason_movingUK	2.28	1.395	0.649	-0.867
generation	1.05	0.236	5.181	29.001
Acculturation	123.4044	28.27909	-0.817	0.612
Acculturation Native Country	6.3304	1.76065	-0.75	0.049
Acculturation Host Country	6.01	1.5996	-0.557	-0.037
Social Connectedness	32.9711	10.89539	-0.321	-0.9
Wellbeing	22.1556	7.05895	-0.432	-0.643
Career Satisfaction	15.7222	5.25397	-0.378	-0.679
Ambition	11.1333	2.38779	-0.41	-0.225
Determination	17.0578	3.53553	-0.082	-0.337
Planning	14.5489	4.95805	0.014	-0.652
Implementation	15.92	3.31532	-0.005	0.022
Recurrence	14.5444	4.42749	-0.121	-0.558
Self-discipline	13.9222	2.99602	-0.245	-0.15

Note: N= 450. Std. Error of Skewness =.115. Std. Error of Kurtosis = .230.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1 age	1																					
2 english_level	-.133**	1																				
3 gender	0.04	0.045	1																			
4 years_UK	.310**	.283**	0.043	1																		
5 work_status	0.07	.093*	-0.091	.182**	1																	
6 relationship_status	.606**	-.132**	.106*	.175**	0.051	1																
7 education_level	0.078	0.061	0.039	-0.03	.285**	.097*	1															
8 income	.227**	0.027	-.104*	.296**	.537**	.200**	.344**	1														
9 reason_moving UK	-.160**	.264**	.099*	.275**	-.202**	-0.023	-.133**	-.137**	1													
10 generation	-.099*	.362**	0.027	.366**	-0.024	-.132**	-0.059	-0.059	.397**	1												
11 Acculturation	0.003	.147**	0.016	0.04	0.005	-0.071	-0.038	0.024	0.031	0.086	1											
12 Acculturation Native Country	-0.035	0.09	0.05	-0.061	-0.063	-0.075	-0.068	-0.074	0.065	0.068	.857**	1										
13 Acculturation Host Country	0.044	.160**	-0.026	.138**	0.078	-0.042	0.007	.123**	-0.018	0.078	.824**	.415**	1									
14 Social Connectedness	0.084	.152**	0.06	0.083	.144**	0.052	.101*	.193**	-0.013	0.058	.178**	.135**	.167**	1								
15 Wellbeing	0.04	0.062	.129**	.093*	.140**	0.083	.149**	.176**	-0.011	0.036	0.07	0.013	.110*	.456**	1							
16 Basic Psychological Needs	-0.056	0.075	0.025	-0.011	-0.037	0.006	-0.059	-.105*	.147**	0.066	.213**	.168**	.191**	-.214**	-0.024	1						
17 Career Satisfaction	-0.001	.133**	0.068	.092*	.228**	0.055	.116*	.216**	0.023	0.083	.093*	0.028	.135**	.418**	.515**	-0.029	1					
18 Ambition	-.211**	0.054	-0.025	-0.068	0.06	-0.046	0.038	-0.01	0.037	-0.02	.156**	0.073	.196**	.174**	.095*	.292**	.245**	1				
19 Determination	-0.023	0.043	0.038	0.025	.095*	0.017	.171**	.097*	-0.048	-0.019	0.056	-0.029	.131**	.315**	.252**	-0.015	.410**	.548**	1			
20 Planning	0.081	0.048	.177**	0.012	0.063	0.088	.134**	.108*	-0.055	0.006	0.073	0.046	0.078	.194**	.176**	0.091	.282**	.364**	.412**	1		
21 Implementation	0.07	0.026	.142**	0.069	.119*	0.083	0.075	0.09	-.120*	0.051	0.06	0.004	.102*	.375**	.329**	-.208**	.383**	.225**	.471**	.312**	1	
22 Recurrence	-0.048	-0.004	-.141**	-.135**	-.154**	-0.013	-.121**	-.142**	.094*	-0.028	0.056	0.085	0.005	-.296**	-.301**	.393**	-.258**	.166**	-.133**	0.074	-.368**	1
23 Self-discipline	0.021	0.01	.120*	0.025	0.089	0.082	.117*	0.09	-0.088	0.031	.111*	0.047	.145**	.315**	.319**	0.085	.358**	.445**	.553**	.501**	.575**	-0.033

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

3.3. Exploration of the covariance matrix

We used AMOS version 20 to conduct our confirmatory factor analyses and to further explore the data and test our hypotheses.

3.3.1. Structural modelling of the complete theorical research design

Annex 1, at *Figure 1* represents the complete AMOS measurement model analysis. The output tab, under Estimates, offers information on our correlations and covariances. This section helps establish if our model presents a possible multicollinearity issue (Collier, 2020, p. 79). Looking at the P-values for the first table, where the unstandardized regression weights are displayed, we can see that except for one item, namely the first item from the Motivational Persistence Scale (under the factor labelled Ambition), all the rest of the indicators significantly loaded on the specified unobservable construct.

Under Model Fit, we are presented with the list of model fit indices. Our model has 134 number of parameters, which signifies a complex analysis (NPAR on the first column), and the value of chi-square (CMIN) is 5421.12, with 1577 degrees of freedom (DF) at a p < 0.001. The large number of degrees of freedom give us an over-identified model, which is the desired option to have, meaning that we have "more observations than parameters that need to be estimated" (Colliers, 2020, p. 30). The relative chi-square fit test is 3.4, with an acceptable fit. The comparative fit indices from the Baseline comparison table, namely CFI (Comparative Fit Index), TLI (Tucker Lewis Index), IFI (Incremental Fit Index) and NFI (Normed Fit Index) are all below .90, meaning that the model does not fit the data. Looking at the RMSEA value of .074, a higher value than the ideal .05, which represents an admissible but not good fit. Finally, looking at the confidence intervals for the RMSEA, the lower bound (LO) is .072 and the upper bound is .076, showing a small confidence interval around our estimate and delivering a fairly precise reading of our model.

3.3.2. Additional analyses to improve the existing model

Annex 2, *Figure 2* represents the amended AMOS measurement model analysis, in which we changed covariances between variables and removed five out of six factors of the Motivational Persistence variable and kept *Determination*, as it is the factors with the highest reliability. In the output, under the section called Estimates, all of the P-values are significant at a .001 value, which means that, compared to the previous model, they significantly loaded on the specified unobservable construct.

Under Model Fit, we analyse the model fit indices, and see that our model has 96 number of parameters, and the value of chi-square (CMIN) is 1003.9, with 465 degrees of freedom (DF) at a p < .001. As previously explained, the degrees of freedom give us an over-identified model, which is the desired option. The relative chi-square fit test is 2.1, with an acceptable fit. The comparative fit indices, namely CFI (Comparative Fit Index) is .95, TLI (Tucker Lewis Index) is .94, IFI (Incremental Fit Index) is .95 and NFI (Normed Fit Index) is .91. All the baseline indicators are above .90, meaning that the model fits the data and our indicators measure the concepts appropriately. Additional evidence that our model fits the data comes from the RMSEA value of .051, which represents an adequate fit. Looking at the confidence intervals for the RMSEA, the lower bound (LO) is .046 and the upper bound is .055, a small confidence interval around our estimate which delivers a valid reading of our model.

Annex 3, *Figure 3* represents the same corrected model we discussed in this section, but from Motivational Persistence we only introduced *Ambition*. Being the factors with the lowest reliability, we wanted to compare its influence on the overall model. In the output, under Estimates, all of the P-values are significant at a .001 value, except for non-significant P-value for items 1 and 13 from the MPS. These two items have been identified to be the root cause of the .50 Cronbach's alpha for Ambition. Under Model Fit, our model has 96 number of parameters, and a chi-square (CMIN) of 1122.8, with 465 degrees of freedom (DF) at a p < .001, and a relative chi-square fit test is 2.4, with an acceptable fit. The comparative fit indices are all above .90, meaning that the model fits the data and our indicators measure the concepts. The RMSEA value of .056, with a lower bound (LO) of .052 and an upper bound of .060, a higher root-mean square error of approximation compared to the previous analysis. The results clearly show an improvement in data analysed as part of figure 2., compared to the first model which followed the theoretical design more closely.

ANOVA analysis.

We wanted to test the effect of acculturation (host and home country) on well-being/ life satisfaction and career satisfaction.

An initial statistical analysis was run using an 2x2 design (low vs. high native country acculturation and low vs. high host country acculturation). The descriptive statistics figures can be viewed in *table 4*. Our results show that migrants' acculturation towards the host country- UK has a significant effect over life satisfaction (F $(1, 118)$ = 5.38, p = .022), with a small size effect (η^2 = *.048*). The effect of acculturation towards the home country does not exhibit a significant effect over life satisfaction (F $(1, 118)$ = 1.06, p = .305). The interaction effect of the two acculturation facets is not significant (F $(1, 118)$ =1.53, p = .219*)* and therefor does not exert an effect over life satisfaction. We can conclude that acculturation towards the UK has a positive influence over life satisfaction, as the more acculturated migrants feel they are, the more satisfied with their lives they report being. The post-hoc tests (Bonferroni) did not show significant differences between groups.

Group	M	SD	N
Low Native + Low UK	4.00	1.41	10
Low Native + High UK	4.64	.95	18
High Native + Low UK	4.12	1.12	26
High Native + High UK	4.66	1.05	68

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for ANOVA

The 2x2 design (low vs. high native country acculturation and low vs. high UK acculturation) was used with the dependent variable being career satisfaction. The descriptive statistics figures can be viewed in *table 5.* Our results show that migrants' acculturation towards the host country- UK has no a significant effect over professional satisfaction F $(1, 434)$ = 0.024, p = .876, and acculturation towards the native country of our participants did not exhibit a significant effect, F $(1, 434)$ = 2.245, p = .135. With R^2 = 0.009, the model explains less than 1% in the variance in work satisfaction.

Group	M	SD
Low UK + Low native acculturation	15.87	5.07
High UK + Low native acculturation	16.44	4.05
Low UK + High Native acculturation	14.82	5.05
High UK + High Native acculturation	15.55	5.40

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for ANOVA

4. Discussion

In this study, we attempted to address the question surrounding the relationships between our research variables, motivational persistence, acculturation, life and work satisfaction, and how they are impacted by other mediating and moderating variables, such as individual resources and social connectedness.

Despite various empirical studies and literature reviews which looked at the relation between acculturation and well-being in migratory populations (Choy et al., 2021; Lopez-Class et al., 2011; Toth-Bos et al., 2020; Ward & Szabo, 2023; Yoon et al., 2008), and the discrepancies in research findings with equivocal results (Wilczewska, 2023), there is still a gap in the literature for European-based migratory populations. We wanted to address the literature gap with a UK-based study, and to include variables that have been previously identified as having a moderating (host country length of residence, gender, age) and mediating (social connectedness) effect (Andronic & Constantin, 2024).

There are several topics of debate to be discussed here, regarding the data and convenience sample characteristics.

Firstly, referring to the construct validity of the Evaluation of Motivational Persistence Questionnaire, we recommend further testing of the scale on larger samples, and even a re-phrasing of the items which exhibited smaller internal consistency. The EPM scale can be translated and adapted into other languages spoken by migratory populations, and we recommend further psychometric analyses of scale reliability and factorial structure.

An important aspect of the current research was to measure acculturation using a previously validated and trustworthy instrument (VIA), rather than a proxy measure or a single-item question. Single items exhibit "low content validity (construct coverage) " and low reliability, therefor "it is difficult to see how the multifaceted complexities of acculturation can be captured in a one-item measure" (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006b, p. 17).

This is important, because "variations in how acculturation is measured, as well as inadequate measurement, have been named as other potential reasons for the discrepancies in research findings" (Wilczewska, 2023, p. 1338). For example, proxy or alternative measures of acculturation, such as "generational status, age at migration, place of birth, and place of education" might give the impression that acculturation "can be approximated by the amount of exposure that individuals have to a dominant culture" (Lopez-Class et al., 2011, p. 1558).

Discussion related to sample characteristics and data collection.

Firstly, data was collected using a survey and all items and empirical instruments were self-report measures. Also, the respondents were reached via different means, such as social media, through UK-based charitable organisations, a London-based University, therefor data was collected via a convenience sample. The demographic items asked questions around generation

(1st, 2nd and 3rd generation migrants and UK natives), reason for moving to the UK, length of time spent in the UK since moving here. At the data analysis, we noticed a discrepancy between the number of respondents who did not complete the non-mandatory Acculturation scale, as the Generation item was present at the beginning and also at the end of the survey, in order to filter respondents and direct them to certain scale (i.e. native English people did not complete the Acculturation questionnaire, only people who identified as migrants or from a distanced migrant background had to fill it in). 77 respondents did not complete the Acculturation scale, when at Reason for moving to the UK, 6 respondents did not answer. At the generation item, only 74 identified as a native at the end-of-questionnaire item, when in the beginning, the same question yielded 77 native UK responses. We can only assume that people who initially identified as UK natives reconsidered their status after completing the entire questionnaire, which made them reflect on their heritage and ethnic background. This is a factor that should be taken into consideration in future studies.

Secondly, looking at the demographic data, our convenience sample was diverse from the standpoint of ethnicities and languages spoken, but it was also comprised of a majority of people who self-reported high levels of spoken English and of educational levels, which could impact the generalisability of data. Language proficiency can be regarded as a double-edge sword, because respondents should master the language on a good enough level for them to adequately comprehend the items and the meaning of each statistical instrument, yet this reduces greatly the ability of migrants with lower language skills to take part in such studies.

Thirdly, it is important to draw conclusions with caution, depending on the groups of migrants and on the environmental context. Namely, researchers should closely "assess the behavioral patterns of acculturation in atypical groups or individuals" or of those in so-called ethnic enclaves, because "some immigrants may adapt differently based on their unique environmental experiences, cultural orientation or the political upheaval occurring in their country of origin" (Lopez-Class et al., 2011, p. 1559). Context is an important factor that might even moderate the impact on acculturation for some groups of migrants, with acculturative changes being influenced by facets of the social context, such as the location in which individuals live, daily interactions with their social networks and with local institutions (Lopez-Class et al., 2011, p. 1558). Not only that, but academics have pointed out that certain minorities are "not always free to follow their own preferences", as "receiving societies have the power to impose restraints that unilaterally determine how relations are managed" (Ramos et al., 2014, p. 1).

Overall, our findings add to the existing literature in cross-cultural psychology, on the topic of acculturation studies on migratory populations in Europe. We looked at the pattern of relations between the main research variables (motivational persistence, acculturation, life and work satisfaction), and the impact mediating and moderating variables (individual resources and social connectedness) have on this complex association.

5. Limitations and suggestions for future research

The findings of the current study should be regarded in consideration of several limitations. Firstly, this study used a convenience sample of respondents who voluntarily took part in the research, therefor suggesting they might possess higher levels of motivational persistence as a personality trait, compared to the general population. Secondly, the study had access to a limited number of migrant respondents (N=450), and this can have an impact on the

generalisability of results on a larger scale or on sub-groups of immigrant populations. Our conclusions and data interpretation are delivered with caution, because we wish to avoid a "one size fits all" explanatory approach (Schwartz et al., 2010), as our sample consisted of a majority of first-generation migrants and fewer second and third-generation, which impacted our ability to compare groups. Thirdly, the study might have excluded high-risk populations of migrants, such as refugees or asylum seeker, especially those who are not online or who are unable to read and understand English fluently.

Fourthly, the use of self-report measures, that brings numerous limitations to self-report instruments (Paulhus, 1991), such as a vulnerability to the social desirability bias. Only 14.6% of our respondents identified themselves as native or fluent English speakers, and the rest of our study participants were non-native English speakers on different levels of proficiency (first, second and third generation migrants), which could have impacted on their understanding of the survey items. Another limitation for this cross-sectional study is the use of correlation analyses from which causal inferences cannot be drawn, and further research should be conducted using either experiments or longitudinal studies. Finally, our research dataset originates in the UK, mainly London, a multi-cultural place, therefor it remains to be seen if other studies in similarly heterogenous environments would generate similar results.

Future studies should test the multidimensionality of our model, and help generate specific interventions and practical applications of the current conceptual framework. Our findings also require additional re-examination with larger samples from a variety of geographical locations and on different sub-groups of immigrant populations. Some researchers might consider translating the survey items into the native languages of their respondents, in order to aide their understanding of each instrument, but also to open up participation to wider migratory populations, who might not be fluent in English. Longitudinal designs could help widen and expand on the snapshot perspective of our research and aide to explain the dynamic model of migrant integration. Finally, future empirical studies should try to capture additional variables which have been shown to impact the relation between acculturation and well-being, such as acculturative stress, experiences of discrimination, cultural distance and other mediating concepts (Andronic & Constantin, 2024). The current survey design that has been used for this study utilised a limited set of items to try and measure the independent, dependent, moderating and mediating variables, as not to place an excessive strain on respondents and not to exceed a 30-minutes survey completion time.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the present study contributes to the development of the current understanding of migrant adaptation and its consequences in the UK, especially in the context of Brexit, recent wars, refugee influxes and post-pandemic migration. With respect to public policies, both in the UK, where our research is based, but also in similarly developed European countries, we encourage policy-makers and NGOs to focus on policies that support integration (such as language courses and social interaction), policies that can reduce acculturative stress and foster a better collaboration with natives.

Conclusions

In a world with increased population displacement due to a wide variety of causes, and where globalisation plays an important role in how people acquire inter-cultural skills, norms, values and practices, where human interaction is diverse, we must rely on empirical findings from

studies and research to base our understanding of cultural groups and their behaviours. Such informed conclusions are essential in supporting local, regional and national authorities to implement and adequately develop policies and support structures to better integrate migrants, to support adaptation and to remove cross-cultural barriers. In our research, we wanted to add to the understanding of factors that support immigrant acculturation, which variables lead to an increase in well-being, in the context of migration in western Europe. Our research provides an overview of the issues faced by first generation migrant populations in the UK, and offers solid recommendations for future studies.

Acknowledgments

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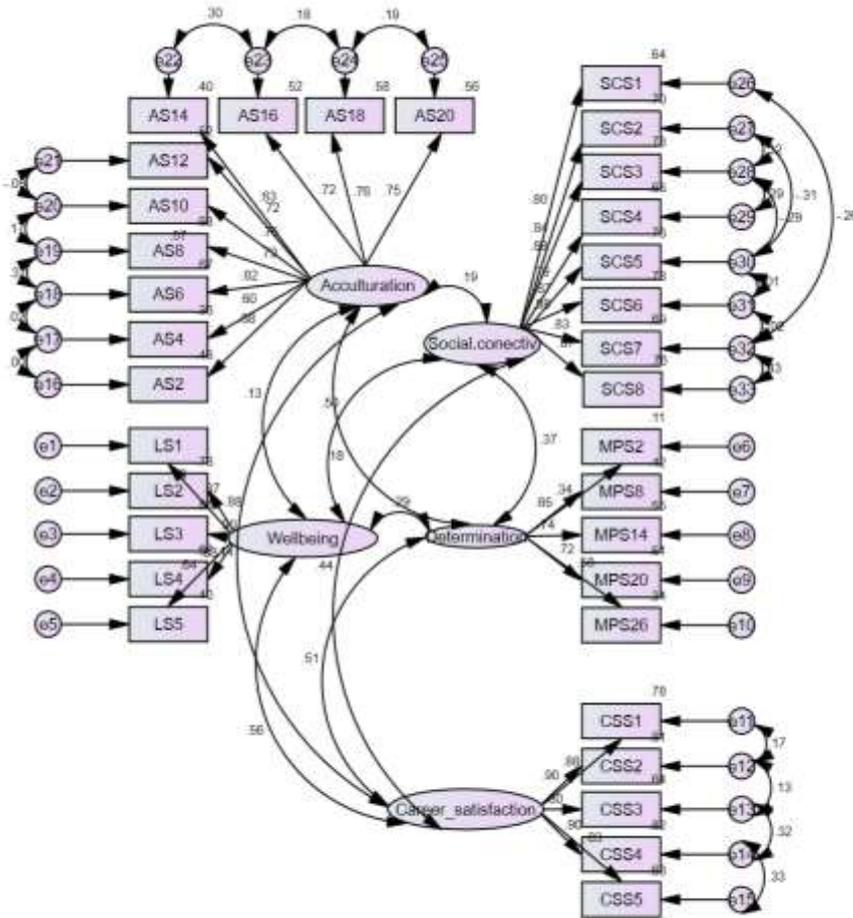
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Annex 1

Figure 1. AMOS model of analysis (theoretical research design with all six factors of MPS)

Annex 2
Figure 2. AMOS model of analysis (with the Determination factor of MPS)

Annex 3
Figure 3. AMOS model of analysis (Ambition factor of MPS)