

Conceptualizing Berry's Acculturation Model for Family Culture Development

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Abstract: Families create an intentional culture that aligns with their identified family goals by creating a plan that considers System Theory elements in order to mediate and moderate their interactions with and the influences of the larger pluralistic culture in order to achieve their family goals and culture development. Utilizing Berry's Acculturation Model in discussing this process is significant to understanding the options and decisions many families make in determining, establishing, maintaining, and achieving a family culture.

Berry's Model of Acculturation (2001)

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|--------------------|
| | | "Home" Cultural Identity | |
| | | <i>"Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's cultural heritage/unique identity?"</i> | |
| | | NO | YES |
| "Host" Culture Interaction <i>"Is it considered to be of value to develop relationships with the larger society?"</i> | YES | Assimilation | Integration |
| | NO | Marginalization | Separation |

Berry's Model of Acculturation strategy definitions with Systems Theory implications:

Separation occurs when the group maintains a strong sense of identity with their home culture, but has few or negative interactions with the host culture.

Planning and Implementation of a separation-based family culture includes:

- Avoidance of organizations and institutions connected with the host culture
- Maintaining strong ties with the home culture
- Maintaining high levels of external differentiation/low levels of internal differentiation, closed input and output boundaries, and negative feedback loops for change in family culture or identity

Assimilation occurs when the group increasingly interacts with, and begins adopting, the identity of the host culture.

Planning and Implementation of an assimilation-based family culture includes:

- Adoption of the identity of the host culture
- Loss of the distinctive identity of the home culture; identity becomes indistinguishable from the host culture
- Maintaining open input boundaries, high levels of internal differentiation, and positive feedback loops for change

Integration occurs in groups who are well-grounded in their home cultural identity and have the capacity to maintain this identity while having high levels of interaction with the host culture.

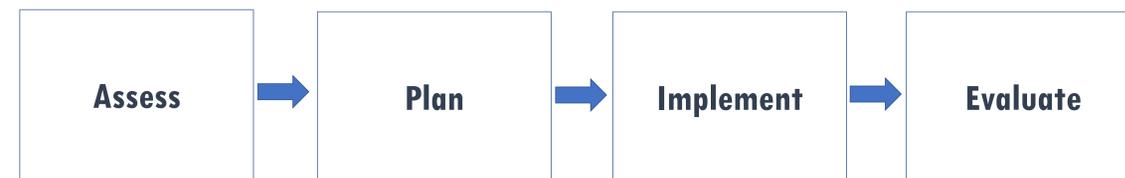
Planning and Implementation of an integration-based family culture includes:

- Strong sense of the values, behaviors, routines, and rituals necessary for the upkeep of their identity
- Establishing semi-open boundaries that allow for the interaction with the host culture
- Maintaining the unique qualities of their home culture through high levels of external differentiation, a balance of feedback loops to allow for consistency, and adaptability for suprasystem changes

Marginalization occurs when the group lacks a strong sense of identity with their home culture, coupled with a lacking or negative interaction with the host culture. *Marginalization is characterized by:*

- A lack of identity and influence
- Little direction for effective family processes or goals development

Family Culture Development



STEP ONE: Families begin by *assessing* their cultural development goals.

- Asks the question "WHERE and WHO do we want to be?"
- Considers the Berry's Model strategy to be achieved: assimilation, integration, marginalization, or separation.
- Emphasizes the values related to their cultural development; determines congruence or distinction between family values and host cultural values.

STEP TWO: Families *plan* for the achievement of their cultural development goals.

- Asks the question, "HOW do we get there?"
- Considers the family processes necessary to achieve the Berry's Model strategy identified in step 1.
- Evaluates the accessibility of internal and external resources needed for the establishment, maintenance, and achievement of their family culture.

STEP THREE: Families *implement* the plan for achieving their culture development goals.

- Characterized by following through on the plan
- Implement family processes – boundaries, routines, rituals, roles, and rules – in order to establish family culture.
- Optimizes family resources and external resources (as appropriate to the identified Berry's Model Strategy) to enhance the family culture development plan.
 - For example, families seeking the integration strategy may utilize semi-permeable input and output boundaries with intercultural institutions in order to advance goals and plans, while families seeking the separation strategy may utilize closed input and output boundaries with intercultural institutions to preserve their internal culture and advance goals and plans.

STEP FOUR: Families then *evaluate* the efficacy of the plan for achieving their cultural development goals.

- Asks the question, "WHERE are we in the plan and HOW is the plan working?"
- Considers the progression toward stated goals and Berry's Model strategy by identifying the correspondence between goals and current family process strategies; evaluates the congruence and relationship between family processes in achieving family culture goals.
- Reviews the value of the previously ascribed Berry's Model strategy; considers any changes to end-stage family cultural goals and/or current family process strategies.

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