

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL ADAPTATION
THEORY AND THE THEORY OF CULTURAL FUSION
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Abstract: *this article provides a comparative analysis of the theory of cultural adaptation, formulated by Y. Kim, and the theory of cultural fusion, proposed by Croucher, S., Kramer, E. The paper analyzes the similarities and key differences in the application of these theories in studying the process of cultural transition of immigrants in the host country. The article offers a proposition that the theory of cultural fusion can be considered to be more actual and applicable in the modern globalizing world.*

Keywords: *migration, cultural adaptation, cultural assimilation, cultural fusion.*

**СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ТЕОРИИ КУЛЬТУРНОЙ
АДАПТАЦИИ И ТЕОРИИ КУЛЬТУРНОГО СИНТЕЗА
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Аннотация: *в данной статье проводится сравнительный анализ теории культурной адаптации, сформулированной Ю. Кимом, и теории культурного синтеза, предложенной Краучером С., Крамером Е. В представленной работе анализируются сходства и ключевые различия в применении этих теорий в изучении процесса культурной адаптации иммигрантов в принимающей стране. В статье выдвигается предположение, что теория культурного синтеза может считаться более актуальной и применимой в условиях современного глобализирующегося мира.*

Ключевые слова: *миграция, культурная адаптация, культурная ассимиляция, культурный синтез.*

It is a common knowledge that nowadays processes of migration and transition gained notable importance and attention from the side of researches and the whole world in total, especially Europe, due to the well-known refugee crisis. Now, integration theories, which are capable to solve cultural problems,

require special attention and accuracy in applying. This paper will compare the theory of cultural adaptation and the theory of cultural fusion in order to identify to which extent these concepts are similar and what are the major differences in their approach to transition.

Cross-cultural adaptation process is one of the prime concerns for communication researches that have been studied throughout past decades and Y. Kim's theory of cultural adaptation is considered to be one of the most applied ones. In this theory, cross-cultural adaptation is unfolded as a dynamic process, where the concurrence of acculturation and deculturation, leading to the direction of assimilation, brings about an internal transformation in immigrants by passing through stress-adaptation-growth model [2]. According to the theory, the process can be affected by multiple factors, the central of which is host communication competence, the ability to communicate in accordance with the norms and practices of the host culture and engagement in its social communication processes.

Cultural fusion is a brand new theory, which borrows elements from a variety of other theoretical frameworks, in order to broaden horizons of old theories and provide a more realistic view on immigrants' integration experience. The theory offers the idea that processes of acculturation into the new culture and maintenance of some aspects of the home culture can be coexisting ones. This theory is pointing out that final product of these processes is not total assimilation of immigrants into a host environment but a fusion of dominant and minority cultural aspects, which leads to the creation of a fused intercultural identity.

First of all, it is important to say that both theories address the same problem and use a similar structure. Both concepts strive to describe theoretically experience of the immigrants in a new culture and to find patterns in their integration process to put this knowledge into practice. Each of the two theories is precisely structured using boundary conditions, assumptions and axioms with the ensuing from them theorems. These are the key elements by which the theories are going to be compared.

As both of the theories appeal to the same situation and context, their boundary conditions are identical and expressed in 3 main points: 1) the immigrants were initially socialized in one culture and then moved to another one; 2) the immigrants are to some extent dependent on the host culture; 3) the immigrants are to some extent involved into communication with the host culture. In this way, theoretically both theories work in the same circumstances.

As concerning assumptions, they are basically similar but have some significant differences, which demonstrate the main discrepancies in their approach to transition. In Kim's adaptation theory is absent the assumption number 2 from the fusion theory: "Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and desire to maintain their cultural identities." [1] In a sense, this statement contradicts with the first assumption of both theories, which says that "Humans

have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental challenges.” [2]. But judging by the explanation of the fusion theory, these assumptions can be parallel ones as humans maintain their identities while still adapting to a new environment through communication.

Consequently, one of the major differences between the concepts is that cultural fusion is the process through which newcomers acculturate into the host culture while still maintaining some elements of their ethnic culture, then cultural adaptation is the process where lifelong goal is assimilation into the dominant culture that means full deculturation, loss of immigrant’s native cultural features. Advocates of the cultural fusion theory argue that complete assimilation is theoretically impossible, while supporters of cultural adaptation think that merging your identity with those of the surrounding cultural identities is the most realistic representation of the adaptation process.

Another discrepancy reflected in the assumptions is the formulation of assumption number 4, where the fusion theory expands Kim’s point by adding the surrounding environment as one of the changing elements [1]. In cultural adaptation theory, the immigrants are the only transforming element, so this concept does not acknowledge their impact on the host culture. For the fusion theory, the fact that the dominant culture is also influenced by the newcomers and then transformed as a result of their interaction is one of the key points. As a result, another difference between the considered theories is that fusion theory is, in a sense, broader than cultural adaptation theory, as it introduces how interaction between the two elements affects both of them.

Taking into consideration the theoretical axioms, it is possible to say that they are more or less developed in the same way in both theories with the exception of the differences based on the mentioned above discrepancies in assumptions. For example, the first axiom of the Kim’s theory states that “cross-cultural adaptation involves both acculturation and deculturation, an eventual possible outcome of which is assimilation” [2], what contradicts with the first axiom of the cultural fusion, mentioning that acculturation and cultural maintenance are the key components of their theory [1]. While both admit that acculturation is inevitable, theories debate the possibility of rather complete abandonment or partial maintenance of the home cultures of immigrants.

Also, when describing influence of social communication, axiom of cultural fusion theory says that “Intercultural transformation facilitates and is facilitated by participation in host and minority (interpersonal and mass) communication activities” [1], while cultural adaptation theory, although mentioning ethnic communication activities, only acknowledges host communication to influence intercultural transformation in its axiom.

Nevertheless, as to the role of communication in general, both concepts share the same opinion. Communication lies at the heart of each of these theories just as it is the very process through which all individuals acquire any cultural knowledge, even the original ones during childhood. Both the quantity and the

quality of individuals' communication activities in a new environment are crucial to the success of the acculturation.

Y. Kim divided communication activities into two dimensions: personal and social, and this division was supported in the fusion theory as well. Scholars have generally defined personal communication as host communication competence. When immigrants need to interact with members of the dominant culture, they must enact their host communication competence. When members of the dominant culture need to interact with newcomers, they must also enact other forms of communicative competence, depending on the situation [1]. In this way, through trial and error, people develop their abilities to relate to the environment. These abilities to receive and process information appropriately are mentioned and described as important factors in both theories.

Nevertheless, even though the concepts describe similar things they show different tone to it. For example, cultural adaptation axioms are mostly written in individual concentrated manner (e.g. “3. The stress-adaptation-growth dynamic brings about an intercultural transformation in the stranger”) [2], while cultural fusion theory states the axioms describing society in general (e.g. “2. Cultural fusion brings about intercultural transformation”) [1], once again emphasizing the fact that cultural fusion is a process where all the participating elements are transformed by affecting each other.

To conclude, cultural adaptation theory and cultural fusion theory at the same time are simple and hard things to compare. Cultural adaptation theory is well-substantiated as a lot of academic papers are dedicated to its development as this concept is older than the theory of cultural fusion, which just appeared as an alternative to existing approaches. At the same time, cultural fusion theory demonstrates a more multicultural approach to the transition as it widened the angle of view to the issue by considering changes happening to a host culture too. As the world becomes more globalized, the borders of states are getting blurred, and the societies become more and more heterogeneous, the theory of cultural fusion, which absorbs the most relevant to date elements from other communicational frameworks, can claim the role of the quintessence of different acculturation theories.

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