ATTACHMENT STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN UNITED KINGDOM

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Abstract

People who migrate from their countries to foreign countries with their culture and values consciously or unconsciously elect how they would interact with the people in the new location, though, this is largely determined by the acculturation strategy adopted by the individuals. The present study investigates the extent to which attachment style influences how individuals who relocates to another country adapts to the culture in their new environment. The study focuses on four identified attachment styles in social psychological literature which includes: secure attachment, fearful, dismissive and preoccupied attachment styles and their influence on adaptations, i.e. integration, marginalisation, separation and assimilation.The study was conducted online. Nigerians and other African immigrants residing in London were invited to fill an online questionnaire. Snowball approach was used to get respondents who were 3000 in all. The two measures adopted in the research included: Attachment Styles Scales developed by Hazen & Shaver (1987) and Acculturation Strategy Scale developed by (Berry 1994). The data collected was analysed using a Simple Regression analysis, Chi square and Pearson coefficient correlation analysis. The results of the hypotheses tested showed that secure attachment style has a significant influence on the adoption of integration strategy in acculturation, the study also found a significant positive relationship between fearful attachment style and separation adaptation strategy. Moreover, preoccupied attachment style was found to be significantly related to marginalisation strategy. However, the result was unable to find any significant relationship between dismissive style and marginalisation strategy. The study discussed the implications of the findings on intergroup relations of migrants and their hosts.

Introduction

United Kingdom is a destination of choice for many African immigrants including Nigerians. There are about 2 million Africans in the United Kingdom according to the Office for National Statistics (2013). the attraction to the country as a former colonial

master of countries of the immigrants is not only for economic reasons, this is because many who relocated were comfortable people, or children of the rich who could easily move up the social ladders in the African society. Some Africans travelled to United Kingdom for further education and upon completion decided to stay back to make a living, other moved into the country for change of environment and/ or for greener pastures, this comprises of those unauthorized labour immigrants and those with different kinds of employment-based visas and with the various preference categories for family reunification visas (Sorensen, Bean, Ku, & Zimmerman, 1992).

Whenever immigration happens, it is accompanied by a major change in the cultural setup of both the immigrants as well as for the members of the new community. Acculturation strategy has been pointed out as one of the main elements in the field of acculturation study.

The classical definition of acculturation includes the main idea of the multicultural model which states that when people from two different cultures come into contacts, the outcome is usually the change in original culture patterns of either of both groups (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936). Going by this classical definition, acculturation and culture change can not be integrated together, although both are interrelated but assimilation is one of its aspects, which is at times a phase of acculturation (Berry, 1998), whereas Graves (1967 pg. 34) conceptualised the term as "the changes an individual experience as a result of being in contact with other cultures, or participating in the acculturation that one's cultural or ethnic group is undergoing". In other words, acculturation is a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society…." At the group level, acculturation often results in changes to culture, religious practices, health care, and other social institutions. Rudmin (2003) describes more than 100 taxonomies of acculturation constructs. A widely used framework however is the one provided by Berry. This includes country level as well as psychological variables. Psychosocial mediators or moderators of adaptation which are traced among factors that existed before immigration (e.g., structural elements of the country of origin or sociodemographic characteristics of individuals) and among factors that emerge during acculturation (e.g., length of stay in the host country, group stereotypes, perceived discrimination). In this process, two questions are of specific interest for immigrants:

In spite of an increase in African immigration into the United Kingdom like many western countries, there remains a significant gap in studies on the acculturation of immigrants among Africans, unlike United States where there is a substantial volume of studies on acculturation of groups such as the African American, Mexican Americans, Hispanics in the U.S, and multiple groups (see Matsudaira, 2006 for a recent literature review). There were also psychological acculturation studies on Asian groups in the country, although few of them focus on the East Asian (e.g. the Chinese immigrants) and other Asian ethnic groups in the United States (Barry, 2001) and not necessarily economic immigrants from Africa. Indeed, African immigration in the United Kingdom has witnessed over 100 years of history prior to period of colonialism. (Asia Society, 2010) It is therefore a worthwhile effort to undertake studies that investigate psychological dynamics of adaptation of the migrants.

In the past 30 years or so, there has been a great interest in psychology on the study of adult attachments, the interest was motivated by the intriguing results from research on attachment of new-born infants to their caregivers, For example, study on attachments of children shows that it has relatedness to certain domains in life, including competence in preschool and kindergarten; behavioural problems; relations with peers, friends, and siblings (Ubha & Cahill, 2014). In attachment theory as propounded by Bowlby (1969) new-born formed attachment bond with their care givers during the infancy stage of life. Bowlby identified three attachment styles which included secure attachment style which is developed when children perceive their caregivers as available and responsive. "In contrast, children develop an ambivalent or avoidant style when they perceive their caregivers as either inconsistently responsive or unavailable and not responsive, whereas children with Anxious-resistant attachment are infants who experienced great levels of distress and, upon reuniting with parents, seemed both to seek comfort and to attempt to "punish" the parents for leaving. (Fraley, 2010).

However, attachment study was extended to adults starting with the work of Hazan & Shaver (1987) who invented a self –report instrument in which people were able to classify themselves as secure, avoidant or ambivalent. Further to this are several other studies which aimed to ascertain the extent to which the dimensions of attachments are related to other domains of behaviour and affect , some of the findings suggested that attachment orientations has influence on reactions to bereavement (Fraley & Bonanno, 2004), romantic relationship functioning (Brennan &Shaver, 1995); and from relationship with God (Beck & McDonald, 2004) ,support giving and seeking in a stressful situation (Simpson, Rholes, Orina, & Grich, 2002). Attachment styles influence the way we approach unfamiliar others (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), for example, out-groups (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). Mikulincer and Shaver (2001) found that the activation of the sense of a secure base, which is characteristic of the secure attachment style leads people to react less negatively to members of several out-groups (e.g. immigrants), to be more open to other world views and to be more accepting of people who do not belong to their own group. Thus, further to these findings this study wishes to extend the frontier by interrogating the relevance of attachment style to immigrant's acculturation strategies.

This study therefore sought to examine the extent to which each of the domain of attachment have influences on the adaptation strategies of selected African migrants residing in the United Kingdom

Objectives

Specifically, the study examined:

- Immigrant with fearful attachment style would adopt a separation acculturation strategy.
- there is a relationship between secure attachment style and integration adaptation strategy.
- There is a relationship between preoccupied attachment style and assimilation strategy.
- There is a relationship between a dismissive attachment style and marginalization strategy

Literature Review

Although, acculturation is a concept which has its origin in Anthropology, but has become a widely studied area in the field of cross-cultural psychology. In psychology, acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological modification due to intercultural contact (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Making a distinction between the cultural and psychological levels of acculturation is necessary for our understanding of individual differences in acculturation (Berry, 2003). In Literature, three levels of acculturation are identified, they include: group, contextual and individual. The group level focuses on the change that occurs basically in the political, economic and demographic aspects of a peoples exposed to a new culture whereas the contextual level focuses on the changes both for the individual and the host culture, resulting from the interplay between the two parties while the individual level is concerned with the changes an individual experience due to contacts with a new people, which is usually referred to as psychological acculturation (Graves, 1967). This may happen as a consequence of the strategies adopted by the individuals to adapt in the new place. One can identify four adaptation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry et al., 1989). The four strategies are based on the assumption that immigrants have the freedom to choose how they want to acculturate. Some researchers have confirmed that greater cultural differences do not favor adaptation and that such differences may affect the choice of acculturation strategies (Horenczyk, 1996). Often, people with great cultural differences are not well accepted in the host society and do not have the opportunity of spontaneously choosing a strategy of acculturation; rather, they are forced to follow a specific strategy (Berry 1997). According to social identity theory (Tajfel,1985), it is very important for a minority group to feel accepted by the majority group and to develop relationships with this group. In the process of gaining acceptance, members of the minority may choose between two strategies: assimilation and integration.

Immigrants of different nationalities are major group in Britain, and intercultural contact is an essential part of their life in the new location with a different culture, therefore, social identification, culture learning, stress and coping frameworks represent comprehensive conceptual bases for the study of intercultural contact and change. Social identification framework involving the changes in ethnic identity is the way people view themselves and others. The cultural learning framework stresses the significance of social skills and social interactions. Stress and coping framework emphasizes the affective component of intercultural contact and change. Immigrants evaluate themselves in the new culture and their intercultural experiences. These processes determine the strategies that an immigrant would adopt to adapt to his new location, but beyond these social dynamics, psychological processes are some of the underlying factors that facilitate the adaptation processes Acculturation strategies indicate the modes in which immigrants intend to interact with the host society, particularly (a) the importance that immigrants ascribe to their own cultural identity (e.g., language, customs, and habits of the home culture) and (b) the relationships with the majority group in the host society (Berry et al., 1989).

Method
The study was an online survey which used a purposive method of data collection. Nigerians and other African immigrants residing in London were invited to respond to an online survey. Snowball approach was used to draw a sample of 300 participants. Direct messages were sent by email and WhatsApp to some of the participants and were urged to help forward same request to respond to others in their contacts and also urging their contacts to help pass the request to others.

Measures
The two measures used for the study are: Adult Attachment Scales and Acculturation Strategy Scale (AAS)

Adult Attachment Scale. (AAS)
The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was designed in 1990, although it was a modified version of what had earlier been developed by Hazen & Shaver (1987) and Levy & Davis (1988). The scale emerged from the original three prototypical descriptions into a series of 18 items. The scale was scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale. It measures adult attachment styles named "Secure", "Anxious" and "Avoidant". Thirteen questions were carefully selected in line with the research. The scale contains three subscales, each composed of six items. The three subscales are *close*, *depend*, and *anxiety*. The *close* scale measures the extent to which a person is comfortable with closeness and intimacy. The *depend s*cale measures the extent to which a person feels he/she can depend on others to be available when needed. The *anxiety* subscale measures the extent to which a person is worried about being abandoned or unloved. The scale was scored by taking the average ratings of the six items of the sub scale.

Acculturation Strategy Scale (ASS).
Berry's (1994, 2001) model for understanding the strategies that people use in acculturation was used in this section. Berry's (1994; 2001) model includes Four types of acculturation strategies; Integration, Separation, Assimilation and Marginalization.
Integration: The individual maintains his or her own cultural identity while at the same time becomes a participant in the host culture.
Assimilation: The individual gives up his or her own cultural identity and becomes absorbed into the host culture.
Separation: The individual maintains his or her own cultural identity and rejects involvement with the host culture.
Marginalization: The individual does not identify with or participate in either his or her culture or the host culture.
The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis
1. An immigrant with a fearful attachment would adopt a separation acculturation strategy.
2. There would be a significant relationship between secure attachment style and integration adaptation strategy of migrants.

3. There would be a significant relationship between a preoccupied attachment style assimilation adaptation strategy.
4. There is a significant relationship between dismissive attachment and Marginalization strategy

Results
Table 1.0 showing the demographic information of the participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-25	144	57.6
26-35	67	26.8
36-45	23	9.2
45 and above	16	6.4
Total	250	100.0
Gender		
Male	120	48.0
Female	130	52.0
Total	250	100.0
Marital Status		
Married	52	20.8
Single	198	79.2
Total	250	100.0
Period of Stay in the country		
0-2 years	89	35.6
3-5 years	80	32.0
5-7 years	60	24.0
7 years and above	21	8.4
Total	250	100.0

Hypothesis one
An immigrant with fearful attachment would adopt a separation acculturation strategy
Table 2.0 showing the result of effect of Fearful attachment on separation acculturation

Model R	R Square	Ar square	St. Error	Df	F
Fearful style	.050	.068	1.335	245	0.13
Separation					

Using the enter method, the model was significant: F= (0.13), df = 245 p < .05. The Adjusted R square value shows that the model accounts for 65% of variance in the separation strategy Intention (AR^2 = .68). The table thus indicates that fearful attachment variables entered into the model is a significant predictors of separation adaptation. The hypothesis is thus accepted; i.e. Fearful attachment influences choice of separation acculturation strategy

Hypothesis Two

There is a significant relationship between secure attachment and integration adaptation strategy

Table 3.0: Test Statistics of significant relationship between secure attachment and integration adaptation strategy

	I find it relatively easy to get close to others	I am comfortable depending on others	I do not worry about someone getting too close to me	I am comfortable having others depend on me	I have to depend on other people to show me how things are done here
Chi-Square	14.960[a]	40.320[a]	19.040[a]	46.280[a]	34.760[a]
Df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.005	.000	.001	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 50.0.

Chi Square analyses were performed to determine the relationship between secure attachment and integration adaptation based on their choice of strategy. Results from these analyses indicate that more participants who are high on secure attachment prefer integration strategy.

Decision: From the acceptance/rejection criterion we can infer that 'There is a significant relationship between secure attachment and integration adaptation strategy' since the variables have P values less than 0.05

Hypothesis three

H_1: There is a significant relationship between preoccupied attachment and assimilation strategy

Table 4.0: Test Statistics of significant relationship between preoccupied attachment and assimilation strategy

	I find that others are reluctant to get as close as i would like	I find that people are never there when you need them	Often, partners want me to be closer than i feel comfortable being	I consider it important to pass our traditions to the next (future) generation	I have frequent contact with British people	In my experience, encounters with the British are fine
Chi-Square	23.600[a]	41.120[a]	20.320[a]	48.800[a]	35.560[a]	26.960[a]
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 50.0.

Chi Square analyses were performed to determine the relationship between preoccupied attachment and assimilation strategy adaptation based on their choice of strategy. Results from these analyses indicate that more participants who are high on preoccupied attachment prefer assimilation strategy.

Decision: From the acceptance/rejection criterion one can infer that 'There is a significant relationship between Preoccupied Attachment and Assimilation strategy' since the variables have P values less than 0.05

Hypothesis 4

H_1: There is a significant relationship between dismissive attachment and marginalization strategy

In the correlation matrix items on the scales

Sig* at P < 0.05, N = 250, R value between -1 and 1.

No significant relationships were found among the various variables on the correlation matrix at P value of 0.05, hence, the hypothesis that there would be a relationship between dismissive attachment style and assimilation strategy could not be upheld.

Discussion

The result of the first hypothesis showed that an immigrant with fearful attachment would adopt a separation acculturation strategy. The result is in agreement with the finding of Yang Tian and Oudenhoven, (2009) who found that fearful attachment style significantly predicts the attitude toward the separation adaptation strategy; and the attachment style also significantly predicted the attitude toward the marginalization strategy. Thus a fearful style which entails the tendency for an individual to withdraw self or dismiss other too easily would likely make people to interface with the people in the host community with a significant high level of caution.

The result of hypothesis two also found a significant relationship between secure attachment and integration adaptation strategy. This is in line with Bakker, Oudenhoven & Van der Zee (2004) who reported that positive relationships were found between Secure attachment on the one hand and psychological and sociocultural adjustment on the other. This finding also tallied with the report that immigrants and majority members, with a secure attachment style were positive towards integration, (Oudenhaoven & Hofstra, 2006), by implication, immigrants who are high on secure attachment interact well with the host, they are able to bond and relate more effectively.

In the same vein the result of third hypothesis shows that there exists a significant relationship between a preoccupied style and assimilation. This is consistent with the findings of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) who reported that preoccupation style indicated a sense of unworthiness, that is a negative working model of self, combined with a positive evaluation of others. It also tallies with Berry (1980)'s findings who viewed the assimilation strategy as showing a need for contact with the majority group combined with no such wish to maintain the original culture. Polek et al (2008) found that such a group reported negativity on psychological health and life satisfaction. However, the result of the last hypothesis could not confirm a relationship between dismissive attachment style and assimilation strategy

Conclusion
The need for peaceful coexistence of people of different racial background as well as different psychological dispositions made studies such as this one a necessity, findings from the current study has thus called further attention to the need for better understanding of the psychological underlay of immigrants to better predict how they would interact with the new world in which they have relocated into, this theoretical understanding can indeed be an effective guide for clinicians, policy makers and members of the public as to what to expect regarding the behavioural tendencies of new immigrants in their new locations. Although the last two result of the hypothesis tested merely showed that relationship existed between attachment styles and acculturation strategies with the first hypothesis indicating its predictive value, the study remains an important contribution to the understanding of immigrant's attitudes and behaviours in their new chosen country of residence.

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