

CHAPTER III

EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1. Cultural Adaptation Theory

As defined by Kim, Y. Y. (2001), cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic process of personal development that transpires when individuals encounter a new cultural context. This process is not merely a superficial adjustment; rather, it involves a profound transformation in which individuals must navigate the complexities of a different cultural landscape. It entails the capacity to adapt to new cultural norms, values, and practices while preserving one's cultural identity. This duality is crucial, as it allows individuals to integrate into their new environment without completely relinquishing their heritage. Consequently, cultural adaptation is a multifaceted process through which individuals adjust to a new cultural context, encompassing significant changes in behaviors, attitudes, and practices that reflect both the new culture and their original cultural identity.

This process facilitates personal development as individuals face and overcome various challenges inherent in adapting to a new culture. For instance, Kim (2001) stated that individuals may encounter language barriers, differing social customs, and unfamiliar societal expectations, all of which require them to acquire new social skills and strategies for effective communication. Moreover, according to Masten (2001) as Individuals navigate these challenges, they often experience growth in emotional resilience, learning to cope with feelings of isolation, frustration, or homesickness that may arise during the adaptation process. This

emotional growth is essential, as it equips individuals with the tools to manage stress and uncertainty, ultimately fostering a sense of confidence in their ability to thrive in a new environment.

Furthermore, as explained by Berry (2006), key components of this adaptation process include cultural learning, which involves actively seeking to understand and appreciate the new culture's values and practices. This learning can occur through various means, such as engaging with local communities, participating in cultural events, or pursuing formal education. According to Schwartz et al. (2010), behavioral adjustment is another critical aspect, as individuals may need to modify their actions and responses to align with the social norms of their new surroundings. This adjustment can be challenging, as it often requires individuals to step outside their comfort zones and embrace new ways of interacting with others.

Moreover, Erwin (1980) explains that identity negotiation plays a vital role in cross-cultural adaptation. As individuals immerse themselves in a new culture, they may find themselves reevaluating their sense of self and how they relate to both their original culture and the new one. This negotiation can lead to a more nuanced understanding of their identity, allowing them to blend elements from both cultures in a way that feels authentic and fulfilling.

Several factors significantly influence the effectiveness of this adaptation process. According to Berry (1997), cultural distance, or the degree of difference between the individual's original culture and the new one, can impact how easily

one can adapt. Greater cultural distance may present more challenges, while closer cultural ties may facilitate smoother transitions. Social support is another critical factor; having a network of friends, family, or community members can provide emotional and practical assistance, making the adaptation process less daunting.

Additionally, prior experiences with different cultures can enhance an individual's adaptability, as those who have previously navigated cultural transitions may possess valuable skills and insights. To sum up Ward and Kennedy (1999) mentioned that intrinsic motivation—an individual's desire to engage with and learn from the new culture—plays a crucial role in shaping how actively one participates in the adaptation process. Together, these factors create a complex interplay that shapes how individuals engage with their new environment, ultimately determining the success of their cross-cultural adaptation journey.

3.2. The Immigrant in the US society

Theories of immigrants in US society have undergone significant development, moving away from classical assimilation theory which posited a linear integration trajectory for all immigrants (Lee, 2009). This early framework argued that immigrants would gradually adopt the cultural norms and values of the dominant society, eventually leading to cultural homogenization. However, this perspective has been criticized for oversimplifying the complexity of the immigrant experience. Researchers such as Bashi and McDaniel (1997) have introduced a more sophisticated framework, which recognizes the existence of multiple integration pathways influenced by group attributes, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status and social context. This evolution reflects the recognition that

immigrants do not assimilate uniformly; their experiences are influenced by many factors, including their cultural background and the structure of the societies they encounter.

Contemporary theories further explore the nuances of immigrant integration through concepts such as segmented assimilation and spatial assimilation (Lee, 2009). Segmented assimilation refers to the idea that different immigrant groups can integrate into different segments of society, leading to outcomes that vary based on their social and economic context. For example, some groups may achieve upward mobility and full integration, while others may face barriers resulting in marginalization. Spatial assimilation, on the other hand, examines how immigrants settle in specific geographic areas, often influenced by factors such as economic opportunities and social networks. These theories highlight the importance of understanding the diverse experiences of immigrant groups and the structural factors that shape their integration into American society.

Immigration has also had a significant impact on racial hierarchy and stratification in the United States (Bashi & McDaniel, 1997). When new immigrant groups enter the country, they often challenge existing racial dynamics and contribute to the reconfiguration of social hierarchies. This can lead to the emergence of new forms of racial and ethnic stratification, where different groups compete for resources, opportunities and social recognition. The interaction between immigration and race underscores the complexity of social integration, as immigrants face not only cultural differences, but also existing racial landscapes that can affect their experiences and opportunities in society.

The immigrant experience encompasses a variety of processes, including integration, assimilation, acculturation and adaptation, with a clear distinction between integration and assimilation (Kramer, 2016). Integration refers to the process of becoming part of the social fabric of the host society while retaining cultural identity, while assimilation implies a more complete adoption of the dominant culture, often at the expense of the original cultural identity. Acculturation involves the exchange of cultural traits between the immigrant and host cultures, leading to changes in behavior and practices. Adaptation includes broader adjustments that individuals make in response to their new environment. Understanding these differences is crucial to understanding the multifaceted nature of the immigrant experience in the US.

Modern theories also investigate processes such as enclaving and in-group/out-group identification (Kramer, 2016). Enclaving refers to the phenomenon where immigrant groups form communities or neighborhoods that provide social support and cultural familiarity. These enclaves can serve as safe spaces for immigrants, allowing them to maintain their cultural practices while facilitating interaction with the wider society. In-group/out-group identification explores how immigrants perceive themselves in relation to their ethnic community and the dominant culture. These dynamics can affect social interactions, sense of belonging, and the overall experience of integration.

Hence, the immigrant experience in America is characterized by fluctuating migration patterns, settlement dynamics, and integration methods, in addition to evolving societal responses to newcomers (Molesky-Poz et al., 1991). Immigration

trends are influenced by a variety of factors, including economic conditions, the political climate, and global events, which cause shifting

3.3. Economy and Social Condition among the Immigrants.

Human capital and social capital are among the numerous factors that considerably influence the economic integration of immigrants in the United States. The talents, knowledge, and experience that individuals possess can be used to increase their employability and income potential, which is referred to as human capital. Proficiency in English and advanced educational qualifications, such as degrees from accredited institutions, are essential components of human capital that can result in improved employment prospects and a higher occupational status for immigrants (Jung, 2017). For example, immigrants who possess high levels of education and proficiency in the English language are more likely to obtain employment in sectors that offer higher salaries, thereby enhancing their overall economic status. This relationship emphasises the significance of investing in language acquisition and education as a means of enabling economic mobility for immigrant populations.

Furthermore, the economic integration of immigrants is significantly influenced by social capital, in addition to human capital. According to Putnam (2000), social capital refers to the networks, relationships, and social connections that individuals possess, which can grant them access to resources and opportunities. Social capital can be expressed in two primary ways for immigrants: integration into mainstream society and ethnic affinity. Individuals can access information about employment opportunities and navigate the job market with the

assistance of the support and resources available within immigrant communities, which is referred to as ethnic affinity. However, immigrants are able to establish connections with the broader community as a result of their integration into mainstream society, which increases their access to social resources and job opportunities. The significance of community support and social networks in enabling economic success is underscored by research that suggests that both forms of social capital contribute to higher income levels among immigrants (Jung, 2017).

Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge that the integration process for immigrants is intricate and varies considerably among various immigrant groups (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2016). Divergent experiences in terms of economic integration may result from factors such as the cultural context, country of origin, and unique challenges that distinct groups encounter. For instance, barriers such as discrimination, restricted access to resources, or disparities in educational recognition may impede the complete integration of certain immigrant groups into the labor market. Ultimately, the development of targeted policies and programs that address the unique requirements of various immigrant populations is contingent upon an understanding of these variations, which in turn promotes more equitable economic outcomes.

Theories of immigrant absorption have undergone a transformation from classical assimilation models to more sophisticated frameworks that account for group attributes and social context in response to these complexities (Lee, 2009). Classical assimilation theory proposed a linear process by which immigrants would progressively adopt the culture and norms of the host society, resulting in full

integration. Contemporary models acknowledge, however, that this process is not consistent and is influenced by a variety of factors, such as the broader societal context, the social networks of immigrant groups, and their characteristics. In order to inform more effective policy responses, it is crucial to comprehend the multifaceted nature of immigrant experiences and the diverse pathways to economic integration, as these advanced theories underscore.

Thus, the location of schooling has a substantial impact on the economic assimilation of immigrants, as foreign education credentials are frequently associated with a decrease in wealth accumulation (Painter, 2013). Numerous immigrants arrive in the United States with degrees and qualifications from their home countries; however, these credentials may not be acknowledged or valued in the American labour market. This lack of recognition can impede their ability to attain economic stability and restrict their employment opportunities. Furthermore, race and ethnicity continue to be substantial stratifying variables that influence the economic outcomes of immigrants (Painter, 2013). The integration process can be further complicated by discrimination based on race or ethnicity, which can create additional barriers to employment and economic advancement.