

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Poppy Moore's cross-cultural journey in *Wild Child* (2008) reflects an exact process of cultural adaptation, as conceptualized by Berry's (2006) acculturation framework and Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation. At the beginning of the film, Poppy exemplifies the separation strategy. She actively rejects the British cultural environment at Abbey Mount School, clings to her American lifestyle, and expresses resistance through sarcasm, fashion choices, and behavioral rebellion. These actions highlight her desire to maintain her cultural identity while avoiding engagement with the host culture, resulting in emotional conflict and feelings of exclusion.

As the story progresses, Poppy's experience shifts toward integration—the most effective and balanced acculturation strategy according to Berry. Her gradual acceptance of British norms, participation in team activities like lacrosse, and formation of genuine friendships reflect her growing willingness to adapt while still retaining aspects of her American self. These behavioral and emotional shifts align with Kim's theory that cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic, transformative process involving psychological and social change. Through adaptation, Poppy learns empathy, responsibility, and the value of community, eventually feeling a sense of belonging.

However, it is important to note that not all of Berry's four acculturation strategies are represented in *Wild Child*. The film does not portray assimilation—where an individual fully abandons their original culture in favor of the host culture—nor marginalization, which occurs when an individual is disconnected from both their original and host cultures. Poppy never completely discards her American identity, and although she experiences cultural tension and exclusion, she is not entirely cut off from either culture. This selective applicability underscores that cross-cultural adaptation is highly contextual and varies based on personal background, the host environment, and interpersonal relationships.

Eventually, Poppy's transformation from a rebellious outsider to a more balanced and socially integrated individual illustrates the emotional and behavioral depth of cultural adaptation. Her story affirms that adaptation is not about losing identity, but rather about negotiating identity in a way that fosters personal growth, intercultural understanding, and a renewed sense of self.