

Professional report on the Virtual IACCP Culture & Psychology Summer School

Prepared by

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Event Summary

The Culture & Psychology (C&P) School, sponsored by the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP), was opened to students at PhD and MSc level who were interested in culture and psychology.

The C&P School provided us with a research-intensive and interactive experience to learn from one another and to receive specialized training from experts in different fields that incorporate culture in their study of psychology.

Due to uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 situation, the Culture & Psychology School was online. Two sessions were held on July 12-14 and two sessions were held on July 15-17.

The IACCP C&P School focuses on community engaged scholarship and supports the development of broad research skills, international collaborations, effective grant proposal writing, and preparation of scholarly manuscripts.

Aim of the Virtual IACCP Culture & Psychology School was to stimulate networking and interactions with peers and instructors in a safe and productive environment. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of the applied character of research and necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Culture & Psychology School Organizers

Alex English, Shanghai International Studies University, China

Sharon Glazer, University of Baltimore, USA

Natasza Kosakowska-Berezecka, University of Gdansk, Poland

Saba Safdar (Chair), University of Guelph, Canada

Overview:

I am doing a research on adaptation experiences of international students from the post-Soviet countries. Despite a popularity of this field of the research, there is still a lack of studies on international students from post-Soviet countries, especially comparative studies. I think the summer school was an excellent opportunity to improve my professional skills and gain a lot of experiences in my field.

In my research I am doing a mixed-method approach, qualitative and quantitative methods. Since the third stream in the program, was about the design and analysis of the comparative studies, the participation in the workshop helped me to get an insight into sophisticated statistical tools.

I was also very excited about the fourth stream, which introduced students to an approach to understand the nature and challenges of acculturation. In my quantitative data collection, I used Dr. Valery Chirkov's scales that is why I was interested in meeting him online and participating in the workshop.

Below I will state a short description on two streams that I have chosen to participate. In general there were 4 streams and each participant had to choose only two. I was chosen both Stream 3 and Stream 4.

STREAM 3: Equivalence and Bias - Design and Analysis of Culture-comparative Studies

Instructors: Michael Bender – Tilburg University, Netherlands, & James He – German Institute for International Educational Research, Germany

About the instructors:

Michael Bender is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Psychology at Tilburg University, Research Fellow at Babylon, the Center for the Study of the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University, and Honorary Associate Professor at the School of Psychology at Gratia Christian College, Hong Kong, China.

In his work, he studies culture, in particular acculturation, international student adjustment, threat, inter-group behavior, and identity. He is passionate about teaching and infusing culture into the psychology curriculum and care about the methodological appropriateness of the studies and tools.

James He is Associate Researcher on Educational Measurement at the German Institute for International Educational Research.

Many researchers have consistently advocated to attend to issues of equivalence and bias, including testing for invariance of measures. However, such methods are rarely employed- even in the field of cross-cultural psychology. In this stream of the workshop, we focused on ten of the most common issues in designing, administering, analyzing, and interpreting studies and their data, also covering the role of mixed-methods approaches. Then they talked about various approaches to the study of culture, including some difficult topics such as the definitions of culture (What is culture/not culture? Where does culture come from? What creates cultural differences?), data selection (Which participants should we choose? Which items work?), levels of analysis (individuals and societies), etic versus emic approaches (one single tool, specific research tools per context). Second, they provided us an accessible basic template to understand the principle of how you can test for bias and equivalence yourself – without prior knowledge in this area. Additionally, they set data to the registered participants, and provided a perspective on how to use these basic means of testing for bias also with further, more sophisticated statistical tools.

On the Stream 3 we were taught and discussed the following topics:

Part 1: Ten common methodological problems in cross-cultural research (and solutions)

Translation issues

Design and Analysis of Eight Common Types of Cross-Cultural Studies

Test adaptations

Good translation and adaptations of the test

The structure of the Stream 3 was the following:

- Introduction (day 1)
- Ten problems typical in cross-cultural research design (day 1+2)
- Solutions and developments (including translation/adaptation, background of invariance testing) (day 2+3)
- Practical introduction to invariance testing (with Anovas, regressions) (day 3)

In the workshop, we were a very large group of people with diverse backgrounds and interests, and the instructors' emphasis was on making sure that everyone can get something

useful out of our sessions. That is why they were sometimes too fast, or need to shelve a discussion however interesting it was because they would otherwise run out of time.

STREAM 4: Examining Mechanisms of Acculturation Using the Theory of Sociocultural Models

Instructors: Dr. Valery Chirkov – University of Saskatchewan, Canada, & with Dr. Jin Li – Brown University, USA

This workshop introduced us to an approach to understand the nature and challenges of acculturation based on the theory of sociocultural models (TSCM). It included three days with three modules within each day. On the first day, after introductions, instructors invited students to reflect on the existing research on acculturation. We examined the nature of acculturation and various methodological approaches to study this phenomenon. The first day ended with discussing the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches and examining published critiques of the mainstream acculturation research. On the second day, Dr. Chirkov presented the main propositions of the TSCM, its historical and conceptual roots, and the primary components of sociocultural models relevant for acculturation researchers. This presentation was followed by examining mechanisms of acculturation based on the TSCM. The third day was focused on Dr. Li's program of research of sociocultural learning models of Chinese, Euro-American, and Chinese American students. The historical analysis of these models and methodological approaches to their investigation were presented. The course ended with a general discussion of the covered topics and approaches.

Each module included **Required literature** which instructors request that all students read to have productive conversations. They also included **Recommended literature** that students may find interesting and relevant in their studies and research.

About the instructors:

Valery Chirkov is Professor in the Applied Social Psychology program in the Department of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. He received his Ph.D. in social and personality psychology from the University of Rochester, NY in 2001. Dr. Chirkov's research interests concern the examination of the mechanisms of sociocultural regulation of human behaviour. He works on developing the theory of sociocultural models and elaborates its methodological challenges and practical applications. Dr. Chirkov is also

involved in the theorizing and research in the psychology of immigration and acculturation. He was co-PI or PI on two nationally funded projects on this topic. In 2009, Dr. Chirkov was the guest editor of the special issue of the International Journal of Intercultural Relations titled “Critical Acculturation Psychology.” In 2020, he was a guest editor of the Special Issue on the “Theory of Sociocultural/Cultural Models in Social and Cultural Psychological Research of the Asian Journal of Social Psychology. Another focus of his inquiries is the philosophy and methodology of psychological and cultural research. In 2016, he published the textbook *Fundamentals of research on culture and psychology: Theory and methods*. Finally, his long standing devotion is the topic of human Culture and Psychology Summer School, July 12 -14, 2021

Dr. Jin Li is Professor of Education and Human Development at Brown University. She received her Ed.D. in human development and psychology from Harvard University in 1997. Dr. Li’s research focuses on East Asian virtue-oriented and Western mind-oriented learning models and how these models shape children’s learning beliefs, parental socialization, and achievement. She has studied children and families from Chinese, Taiwanese, Chinese American, European American, and other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Her research has been funded by William T. Grant Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, and the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation. The age groups range from early childhood, middle-childhood and adolescence to college students. Her research has been published in leading academic journals and presses. She has delivered lectures in a dozen different countries. Her 2012 book *Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West* synthesizes related research over the past decades and offers new perspectives on the indispensable role of culture in human learning. Dr. Li was one of the inaugural Berggruen Fellows 2015-18, first at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University and later at Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, China, 2016-17. The Berggruen Fellowship supported her current book manuscript entitled *To be or to become: Philosophical origins and psychological expressions of self in the West and East Asia* where she synthesizes philosophy with psychological research to examine how the self is conceptualized and functions in these two cultural systems.

Workshop schedule

July 12, 2021 (Instructors: Drs. Valery Chirkov and Jin Li)

Module 1.1 (First hour) **Introduction to the course.** Introduction of the students and instructors. A statement of the problem of sociocultural regulation of human behaviour and the issue of acculturation.

Questions that were asked and the topics we have discussed:

1. What is the topic of your research and what problem do you try to solve with your study? Does it relate to the issue of sociocultural regulation of human actions and experiences? How do you understand this form of regulation? Have you experienced acculturation yourself or/and have been involved with acculturation research? Your reflections on these experiences?

2. Have you thought about, discussed, or contemplated about following topics: a. What is your understanding of culture in your research? b. What are the theoretical and practical implications of your study? Do you have any reservations, doubts, concerns about how you approach your acculturation research/reflections? (or, do you have a critical stance about acculturation research?)

3. Based on these introductions and the follow-up discussions, the main topics of participants' interest and concern were identified. The instructors presented their positions and identified their levels of competence to address some of the raised issues.

All the suggested literature was Recommended. We had to read several publications from each group and brought our opinions about them to the table.

Module 3.3 (Third hour) **A closing discussion** (all students and both instructors)

Topics for this discussion. Provide your thoughts and reflections on the presented approach to acculturation. Do the ideas of *sociocultural models* and *mechanisms of acculturation* based on this concept make sense to you? What reflections, comments or questions do you have regarding acculturation research in general and the suggested approach in particular?

Basic idea of the Workshop was to develop as a creative space, in which participants were asked to actively resonate to samples in the distinguished frames described below. Therefore, all participants played an active role in the workshop and shared each one's experiences, reflections and ideas.

In summary, I would like to mention the features of the Culture & Psychology School and what made it to be interesting. First of all, the workshop was very organized. The help was provided on each stage of school, despite it was conducted online. Second of all, the content of the workshops was relevant and provided activities were engaging. Lastly, for me it was important to be connected with other scholars, researchers and get feedbacks on the scope of my research.

I am really thankful for our faculty for giving a financial support to Ph.D. students to participate in such events and to get insights on our research fields.