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# The Impact of Cultural Internalization and Integration on Well-Being Among Tricultural Individuals

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*The cultural internalization and competence of a diverse sample of tricultural university students was assessed. Based on recent research on the internalization of cultural norms, it was predicted that (a) having a heritage culture that embraced egalitarian values would be conducive to autonomous internalization and cultural competence, (b) competence and internalization would be associated with positive affect in heritage cultural contexts, and (c) the same positive relations between competence, internalization, and affect would be evident in English Canadian and French Canadian contexts. The study included 113 participants representing more than 35 distinct ethnicities. Results supported the hypothesized relations among egalitarianism, autonomous internalization, competence, and affect. Furthermore, the results indicated that individuals' cultural adaptation in both heritage and English Canadian cultures, combined with the extent to which they had integrated their cultural identities in their self, predicted psychological well-being.*

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**Keywords:** *internalization; cultural competence; multicultural identity integration*

**F**or most North Americans, a day in which they strolled through Chinatown, ate fondue at a Bistro, and viewed a Hollywood film would be seen as a day filled with varied cultural experiences. However, for some people, this set of experiences would represent nothing more than a typical day in which they were required to seamlessly negotiate their multicultural identity. The present study explored how individuals manage to simultaneously

function in multiple cultural contexts. Specifically, the study attempted to determine (a) how multicultural individuals derive positive affect within each of their cultural contexts and (b) how a more general sense of psychological well-being, which translates across these cultures, can be developed.

## AUTONOMOUS FORMS OF CULTURAL INTERNALIZATION

Self-determination theory (SDT) argues that the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are universal and that the satisfaction of these needs is a requisite for optimal psychological functioning. Although many researchers have supported the universality of the needs for competence (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), the need for autonomy has been controversial (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003). Autonomy

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concerns the extent to which individuals endorse and stand behind their actions. SDT argues that individuals vary in the degree to which their behavior can be seen as autonomously regulated. Autonomously regulated behaviors truly reflect the abiding interests, values, and sensibilities of the individual. Research in numerous domains has demonstrated that autonomous regulation is associated with successful goal-striving and increased well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Koestner, Losier, Vallerand & Carducci, 1996; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Vallerand, 1997).

SDT has recently been applied to the internalization of cultural norms and practices. SDT has proposed that, as in other domains, the process by which individuals take in cultural guidelines and standards will importantly affect their competence and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In addition, the theory highlights that cultural norms that are inherently compatible with the satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are more likely to be internalized in an autonomous manner. Hierarchical societies may thwart an individual's need for autonomy and relatedness if they require individuals to subjugate themselves to heteronomous influences and impose restrictions on with whom an individual may interact. Thus, the theory would suggest that egalitarian norms that stress equality and reciprocity would be more easily internalized than hierarchical norms that stress status and conformity.

A study by Chirkov et al. (2003) tested SDT's propositions regarding the internalization of cultural guidelines in four countries that were highly distinct in their orientation toward both individualism and collectivism as well as horizontal (emphasizing egalitarian values) and vertical values (emphasizing hierarchies or social stratification). The study measured the internalization of culture by asking participants to indicate their reasons for endorsing cultural practices. Intrinsic and identified reasons (e.g., "because it is interesting and personally important") reflect autonomous internalization, whereas introjected and external reasons (e.g., "because I would feel guilty if I didn't do it") reflect controlled regulation. The study assessed well-being with a variety of measures such as Satisfaction With Life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and the Center for Epidemiological Studies–Depression Inventory (Radloff, 1977). The study found that the extent to which cultural norms were internalized in an autonomous fashion depended on whether the culture was seen as horizontal or vertical by the participant. Individuals in self-described horizontal cultures were more autonomous in how they internalized cultural values than their counterparts in vertical cultures. Furthermore, it was found that autonomous internalization was related to well-being in each of the four cultures; that is, regardless

of whether the sample was American, Turkish, Korean, or Russian, those individuals who reported that their cultural practices and beliefs truly reflected their abiding interests, values, and sensibilities (rather than something they felt compelled to do by external or internal pressures) also reported greater well-being. Chirkov and colleagues concluded that "whether one's behavior and attitudes are individualistic, collectivistic, horizontal or vertical in nature, more autonomous enactment is associated with greater well-being" (p. 106).

The present study sought to extend Chirkov et al.'s (2003) work by examining the relation of cultural internalization to well-being among tricultural individuals who have to navigate among diverse cultural settings in their everyday lives. We planned to measure internalization and well-being in a culture-specific manner to examine whether autonomous internalization was associated with better well-being outcomes regardless of whether the cultural referent was the heritage culture or one of the two host cultures. We also follow Chirkov et al. (2003) in exploring whether egalitarian values are more easily internalized than hierarchical ones. However, rather than using self-report measures of the relative verticality and horizontality of an individual's heritage culture, we will use Schwartz's (1994) cross-national data to estimate the level of egalitarianism inherent in participants' heritage culture. Schwartz (1994, 1999) has identified values on which cultures can be compared and which have been validated in 49 nations around the world.

#### CULTURAL COMPETENCE

By using a sample of tricultural individuals we are also able to further examine the role that internalization plays in the derivation of well-being, as well as in the development of competence in each of the three cultures. Previous research has focused on the development of competence in two cultures, or bicultural competence. Bicultural competence is the ability to successfully interact in one's own heritage culture as well as in one's new host culture. Within this framework, individuals are able to assimilate the norms of the two cultures so that they are readily available to them as they meet the demands of any situation (Mpofo & Watkins, 1997). Several characteristics have been found to be necessary to consider an individual biculturally competent. Within each culture, the individual must have knowledge of the cultural beliefs and value systems, an ability to function in various cultural settings, an understanding of the necessary language and communication skills, and positive attitudes toward the two societies (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). Given the difficulty of mastering all these tasks, it is not surprising that many immigrants and children of immigrants strug-

gle with the process of adapting to a new culture, sometimes suffering bouts of psychological distress and anxiety that can precipitate psychopathology (Rivera-Sinclair, 1997).

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that there are significant psychological benefits derived from developing competence in one's host culture while also maintaining competence in one's culture of origin (see LaFromboise et al., 1993, for a review). Bicultural competence has been linked with greater interpersonal adjustment (Fernandez-Barillas & Morrison, 1984), decreased anxiety (Rivera-Sinclair, 1997), and greater sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Searle, 1991). A new measure of bicultural competence was recently developed in which participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they endorsed the values, engaged in social relations, and adhered to the traditions of both their heritage culture and their host culture (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Of interest, it appears that competence in the host versus heritage culture may impact different aspects of well-being. It was found that immigrants' competence in their heritage culture predicted greater family life satisfaction, whereas host culture competence was associated with greater global adjustment (Ryder et al., 2000). Other studies have obtained similar results using different measures of cultural competence (Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999).

Given the complexity and importance of developing cultural competence, one might ask what would happen if the task was made even more challenging by expanding the number of cultures that one has to simultaneously function within. The Canadian province of Quebec presents an intriguing cultural setting in this regard because it welcomes immigrants from Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America, but it can itself be considered bicultural, with a majority French Canadian culture thriving beside a traditional English Canadian culture. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedom's recognizes that Quebec is a "distinct society" wherein "the vitality and development of the language and culture" of Quebec's French- and English-speaking communities must be preserved (Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, 1992, p. 107). On surveys of values, French Canadian samples group together with European nations such as Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, whereas English Canadian samples cluster with other English-speaking countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Schwartz, 1994, 1999). The purpose of the present study was to make use of the unique cultural context of Quebec to explore motivational factors that influence the development of tricultural competence and to determine what psychological benefits are derived from it.

We expect to find considerable variation in the well-being of individuals as they maneuver between their three cultural contexts; that is, if competence and autonomy can vary across cultures, then the psychological effects of interacting within each culture should also vary. The present study will measure not only global psychological well-being but also reports of positive and negative affect specific to the three cultural settings that all participants navigate among: heritage, English Canadian, and French Canadian. In this way, we will be able to determine which factors are responsible for the derivation of positive affect within a specified cultural context as well as psychological well-being that is experienced across cultural contexts. It is expected that autonomous internalization and competence will relate to greater positive affect within each particular cultural context.

#### MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY INTEGRATION

Based on the cultural specificity of our measures of internalization and competence, it is expected that positive affect in one culture may not translate into positive affect within the context of another culture. For an individual to achieve a generalized sense of well-being that transcends cultural boundaries it is necessary to consider how the individual negotiates their multicultural identity. The acculturation literature has identified two modes of biculturalism that can be described as compatible and oppositional. Someone with a compatible bicultural identity views their heritage and host cultures as complementary, whereas someone with an oppositional identity views the precepts of the two cultures as highly discrepant or even conflicting. The oppositional bicultural view fosters internal conflict that may compromise global well-being (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). Research on these two forms of biculturalism shows that perceptions of compatibility are not a function of the length of time that an individual has resided in the host culture (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) or even their attitudes toward biculturalism (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999).

Thus, the competing demands of a multicultural identity may require some individuals to adopt a chameleon-like approach to managing their multicultural identity. For example, a Korean Canadian may be reluctant to self-disclose with other Koreans but will try to be more expressive when interacting with French Canadians. Although it has been argued that multiple selves are adaptive in a postmodernist society (Gergen, 1991), it also has been suggested that such compartmentalization can lead to fragmentation (Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993). Research on self-complexity has shown that even though compartmentalization does provide a buffering effect against a threat to any one self-aspect, overall, it has a negative main effect on well-being (Ryan, La Guardia, & Rawsthorne,

2001). These researchers maintain that self-complexity is not so much adaptive as it is characteristic of fragmentation, which betrays the incoherence of one's personality. Thus, if a multicultural individual does in fact perceive discrepancies between the cultures that comprise their identity then we would anticipate that, as in previous research on self-complexity, this would not impact their functioning in each culture but would impact their overall psychological well-being. The present study will assess the extent to which participants have integrated their heritage and English and French Canadian identities into a coherent multicultural identity.

#### PRESENT STUDY

The general purpose of the present study was to examine the relation of internalization and integration of cultures to positive affect and psychological well-being among a sample of tricultural individuals. Following Chirkov et al. (2003), internalization was assessed by asking participants to report why they engaged in various cultural practices. However, we asked people to answer these questions separately for their heritage culture, English Canadian culture, and French Canadian culture. Competence in all three cultures was assessed via reports from peers who were members of the specific culture. Well-being in each of the three cultural contexts was assessed with Emmons's (1992) Positive-Negative Affect Scale. Psychological well-being was assessed with Ryff and Singer's (1996) measure. Multicultural identity integration was assessed with a scale developed for this study (modeled after Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002).

Three sets of hypotheses were examined. First, participants' ratings of heritage culture internalization, competence, and affect were used to test Chirkov et al.'s (2003) findings that the values of egalitarian cultures are more easily internalized in an autonomous manner and that such internalization is associated with greater well-being in the culture. Second, the relation of internalization, competence, and well-being also was examined within participants' second and third cultures—English and French Canadian. We expected that the same positive relations would be obtained for each of these cultures, reflecting the fact that autonomous internalization promotes competence and positive affect even for nonheritage cultures that have been adopted later in life. No previous study has examined this issue. Finally, the relation of cultural adaptation and multicultural identity integration to psychological well-being was explored. Cultural adaptation was calculated as an aggregate of the individual's levels of internalization, competence, and affect within each of their three cultures. It was expected that cultural adaptation and multicultural identity integration would have positive and indepen-

dent effects on adjustment. It remained to be seen whether a particular type of cultural adaptation (heritage vs. English or French Canadian) is implicated more in psychological well-being.

#### Methods

##### PARTICIPANTS

One hundred and thirteen individuals participated in this study; 2 individuals failed to indicate a heritage culture and were excluded from all analyses. The remaining 111 participants consisted of 48 men and 63 women, with a mean age of 20.5. For participants not born in Canada, the average number of years that they had been living in Canada was 5.5; 60% of the sample were first-generation immigrants. For all participants, the average number of years that they had been living in Quebec was 5.4. Participants were composed of members of more than 35 ethnic groups. The most frequent self-identified heritage cultures were Chinese ( $n = 24$ ), Korean ( $n = 6$ ), Jewish ( $n = 5$ ), Pakistani ( $n = 5$ ), and Russian ( $n = 5$ ).

##### PROCEDURE

Participants were recruited from the paid participant pool at McGill University. All respondents were paid \$10, whereas peer participants received \$2. Participants completed a self-report questionnaire consisting of demographic information as well as the scales described below. To minimize relations due to self-report biases and shared method variance, peer reports were collected. Specifically, participants were requested to have two people, one from their heritage culture and either an English or French Canadian, complete reports on their behalf. It was decided to request that the participant have only two peers fill out questionnaires to increase the ease of completing the task and thereby increase the response rate. Peers were asked to indicate the nature of their relationship with the participant. The peer then completed a questionnaire that contained shortened versions of the scales already completed by the participants, including competence in the culture of the peer and psychological well-being. The response rate for the peer reports was 63.5%.

##### RESEARCH MATERIALS

*Demographic information.* Participants were asked to indicate their gender, age, ethnic identity, generational status, year of arrival in Canada and Quebec, the language spoken predominantly in their home, as well as their perception of which cultures they identified with the most (i.e., heritage, English Canadian, or French Canadian).

*Relative autonomy of internalization.* To assess the manner in which individuals had internalized cultural norms, a methodology similar to that of Chirkov et al.



(2003) was used. For each of their three cultures, participants were asked to endorse their reasons for “participating in the cultural traditions,” “maintaining the cultural practices,” and “believing in the specific cultural values.” For each statement, participants were asked to indicate “How much do you pursue this for the following reasons?” Four possible reasons representing the types of internalization proposed by self-determination theory were provided: external regulation, “Because my parents and relatives want me to;” introjected regulation, “Because I would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if I didn’t—I feel I ought to do this;” identified regulation, “Because I really believe that it is important to do—I endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly;” and intrinsic regulation, “Because of the fun and enjoyment of participating—the primary reason is simply my interest itself.”

The reasons reflect an underlying continuum of autonomy, with external representing the least autonomous and intrinsic the most autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Possible responses ranged from *not at all for this reason* (1) to *completely for this reason* (9). From this scale, an index of internalization, or relative autonomy, was calculated based on the formula used by Ryan and Connell (1989) and adopted by Chirkov et al. (2003):  $(-2) * \text{External regulation} + (-1) * \text{Introjection} + (1) * \text{Identification} + (2) * \text{Intrinsic}$ . It should be noted that more than 60 studies have used the same procedure to assess internalization in various domains (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For heritage, English Canadian, and French Canadian cultures, Cronbach’s alpha was 0.76, 0.84, and 0.89, respectively.

*Positive affect in culture.* To assess the individual’s positive affect while they were participating in their heritage, English Canadian, and French Canadian cultures, the same three cultural competence items that were used to assess internalization were repeated for each of the three cultures. For each item, participants were asked to rate how they felt while they were in the context of that type of situation using a nine-item affect scale (Emmons, 1992). Four of the emotions described positive affect (e.g., joyful, pleased), whereas the remaining five represented negative affect (e.g., unhappy, frustrated). The negative affect items were recoded to provide a mean positive affect score. Possible responses on the scale ranged from *very slightly* (1) to *extremely* (7). Cronbach’s alpha was 0.90 for heritage culture, 0.92 for English Canadian culture, and 0.94 for French Canadian culture.

*Egalitarian commitment.* Schwartz (1994, 1999) assessed the level of egalitarianism in large samples in 49 nations around the world. Egalitarianism refers to a “transcendence of selfish interests” in that it extols

values that serve to promote the welfare of others (Schwartz, 1994, p. 104). It is characterized by such values as social justice and equality. The standardized scores reported by Schwartz (1994) were applied to the heritage cultures identified by participants to provide an objective assessment of the horizontal versus vertical nature of the values of each culture. Egalitarianism was chosen because it offered the greatest face validity for the distinctions between vertical and horizontal cultures. Given Schwartz’s (1999) assertion that nations cluster according to geographical location, shared history, and religious affiliation, individuals from nations that have not been assessed were assigned the values of the most similar countries based on these criteria. For example, Norway was equated with Sweden. Thus, in our sample, egalitarian scores ranged from Thais who were assigned the value 4.34 to Italians who were assigned the value 5.57. In Schwartz’s (1994) cross-cultural assessment, the mean egalitarianism score was 4.97 and the standard deviation was 0.35.

*Multicultural Identity Integration (MII).* The purpose of this scale was to determine the individual’s perception of compatibility between their heritage culture and English and French Canadian cultures and how they managed conflicts between cultural demands. This scale can be seen as an expanded version of the vignette used by Benet-Martinez and colleagues (2002) to assess bicultural identity integration. The bicultural identity integration vignette asked participants to rate the extent to which they keep their heritage and host cultures separate and feel caught between two competing cultures. The 15-item MII scale used in this study asked participants about their perceptions of cultural disparity, the ease with which their cultures coexist, and their preferred strategy for interacting with individuals from each of the three cultures (i.e., separately or simultaneously). Sample items include, “How I present myself does not change based on the cultural context of a particular situation” and “Within myself, I feel that my heritage, English, and French Canadian cultures conflict” (reverse-scored). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with each item; potential responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (9). Cronbach’s alpha was 0.83.

*Psychological well-being.* This scale was adopted from Ryff and Singer (1996). In the present study, the short form of the scale was used, including three questions for each subscale for a total of 18 items (Ryff, 1989). The six dimensions of this scale are self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly*

*disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.79.

*Peer-rated psychological well-being.* This measure was composed of six items representing each of the dimensions in Ryff and Singer's (1996) scale. Peers were asked to indicate how characteristic of the participant each statement was. Possible responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Cronbach's alpha was 0.55, 0.68, and 0.78, respectively, for heritage, English, and French Canadian peers.

*Peer-rated cultural competence.*<sup>1</sup> This scale was adapted from the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000). The original scale consists of 20 items, 10 of which measure competence in the heritage culture while the remaining 10 items measure the individual's competence in English Canadian culture. To render the scale appropriate for the present sample, an additional 10 items were added to account for French Canadian culture. Thus, three 10-item versions of this questionnaire were utilized that referred to the heritage culture of the participant, English, and French Canadian cultures. Cultural competence was assessed by peers of the participants choosing who were members of each of the respective cultures (i.e., heritage, English Canadian, French Canadian). Peers were asked to indicate the extent to which the participant endorsed the values, engaged in social relations, and adhered to the traditions of each of the cultures. Possible responses on this scale ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (9). For heritage culture competence, Cronbach's alpha was 0.89, for English Canadian it was 0.88, and for French Canadian it was 0.90.

## Results

### RELATIONS BETWEEN EGALITARIANISM, INTERNALIZATION, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND POSITIVE AFFECT IN HERITAGE CULTURE

Chirkov et al. (2003) used self-reports to determine whether a culture was horizontal or vertical. They found that participants who reported that their culture was more horizontal were more likely to have autonomously internalized the norms of their culture. Furthermore, this more autonomous quality of internalization was associated with increased well-being. Our goal was to determine whether the egalitarian nature of one's heritage culture would have an impact on one's well-being even when the individual was living in a different country.

In the present study, we used Schwartz's (1994, 1999) extensive cross-cultural work on the values of countries to assess the relative egalitarianism of the heritage culture of each participant. Individuals were assigned the corresponding standardized score for the extent to

which their country of origin endorsed the value of egalitarianism. This objective indicator of heritage culture egalitarianism correlated with the self-reports of internalization of their culture ( $r = 0.19, p < .05$ ) and with the peer-report of the individual's heritage cultural competence ( $r = 0.27, p < .05$ ). Individuals were more autonomous about their heritage culture when it could be described as egalitarian. Given that these individuals are no longer residing (and for some they have never lived) in their heritage culture and must actively decide whether they will choose to retain this culture, the association between the culture's values and the individual's cultural competence is important to note. Not only were individuals from an egalitarian culture more autonomous about that culture but they were also more likely to be competent in their culture, as rated by another member of the culture. Thus, an egalitarian culture is associated with both autonomous internalization and demonstrable competence.

Autonomous internalization and competence were significantly related to one's affect when in the context of one's heritage culture. Autonomously internalized participants reported experiencing increased positive affect in their heritage culture ( $r = 0.55, p < .001$ ). Similarly, the peer ratings of the individual's heritage competence were associated with greater positive affect ( $r = 0.30, p < .01$ ). This confirms previous findings in the motivation and culture literature. Internalization is positively related to affect. Furthermore, cultural competence also is related to affect even when rated by peers.

The pattern of these findings led us to hypothesize that mediation effects may exist between egalitarianism, internalization, cultural competence, and cultural affect. We used the Sobel (1982) test to examine whether autonomous internalization mediated the relation of egalitarianism with cultural competence. The test was marginally significant,  $t = 1.86, p < .06$ . This provides some support for the idea that an egalitarian culture promotes increased cultural competence by enabling individuals to more autonomously internalize the norms of that culture.

The Sobel test also was used to determine whether competence mediates the impact of autonomous internalization on heritage affect. A highly significant effect,  $t = 4.56, p < .000$ , confirmed that the autonomous internalization of one's heritage culture promotes cultural competence that subsequently results in the individual experiencing greater positive affect when they are interacting with their heritage culture.

The results of these analyses indicate that individuals from an egalitarian culture are able to more autonomously internalize the norms of their culture and develop cultural competence. Our findings also suggest that the relationship between an egalitarian culture and

positive affect in that culture is mediated by the quality of internalization and the level of cultural competence that is developed. Thus, as in Chirkov et al. (2003), we found that egalitarian cultures are more likely to be autonomously internalized and that this internalization is associated with positive affect.

*RELATION AMONG INTERNALIZATION, COMPETENCE,  
AND AFFECT FOR ADOPTED CULTURES*

No study has previously explored the relations among internalization, competence, and affect for secondary and tertiary cultural identities. We expected that the same patterns of positive relations would be observed within English and French Canadian cultural identities.<sup>2</sup> Results supported this prediction. English Canadian internalization was significantly positively related to both peer-rated English Canadian competence ( $r = .28, p < .05$ ) and positive affect in English Canadian cultural settings ( $r = .52, p < .01$ ). English Canadian competence and affect were also significantly positively related ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ). French Canadian culture internalization was significantly positively related to both peer-rated French Canadian competence ( $r = .82, p < .01$ ) and positive affect in French Canadian cultural settings ( $r = .57, p < .01$ ). French Canadian competence and affect were also significantly positively related ( $r = .58, p < .05$ ). It should be noted that only modest relations were obtained across all three cultural settings; for example, English Canadian internalization was unrelated to positive affect in French Canadian settings.<sup>3</sup>

*RELATION OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND  
MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY INTEGRATION  
TO GLOBAL WELL-BEING*

The final goal of the study was to understand how tricultural individuals achieve global psychological well-being. Because we effectively had three measures of positive functioning in each of the cultures—competence, internalization, and positive affect—we created measures of adaptation for each cultural setting by standardizing and combining participants' ratings on these indicators. We then used multiple regression analyses to estimate the amount of variance in psychological well-being that is accounted for by cultural adaptation and integration. Specifically, self-reported and peer-reported psychological well-being were regressed on generational status (entered first), heritage adaptation, English Canadian adaptation, and French Canadian adaptation (entered as a second set), and Multicultural identity integration (entered third). The results of these regression analyses are presented in Table 1. Generational status was included in this analysis because preliminary analysis of the demographic variables indicated that it was marginally positively related to peer reports of psychological well-being.

**TABLE 1: Results of Multiple Regression of Generational Status, Adaptation, and Multicultural Identity Integration (MII) on Self-Reported Adjustment**

Variable	$\beta$	t	p
Generational status	.13	1.34	.18
Heritage adaptation	.20	2.01	.05
English Canadian adaptation	.27	2.51	.01
French Canadian adaptation	-.06	-.57	.57
MII	.33	3.36	.001

The regression for self-reports of psychological well-being was highly significant, multiple  $R = .47, F(6, 96) = 4.52, p < .001$ . It can be seen in Table 1 that generational status and French Canadian adaptation were unrelated to self-reported well-being. Heritage culture adaptation and English Canadian cultural adaptation were both significantly positively related to well-being ( $\beta s = .20$  and  $.27$ , respectively). Multicultural identity integration (MII) also was significantly positively related to well-being<sup>4</sup> ( $\beta = .33$ ).

The regression for peer reports of psychological well-being also was significant, multiple  $R = .42, F(6, 76) = 2.47, p < .001$ . It can be seen in Table 2 that French Canadian and heritage adaptation were unrelated to peer-reported well-being. Generational status was marginally related to well-being ( $\beta = .21$ ), indicating that first-generation immigrants were rated as having relatively lower well-being by their peers than were second- and third-generation individuals. English Canadian cultural adaptation was significantly positively related to peer judgment of well-being ( $\beta = .28$ ). MII was marginally positively related to peer judgments of well-being ( $\beta = .23$ ).

The significant adjustment results for MII lead us to speculate as to its origin. MII was unrelated to both heritage and English Canadian adaptation. However, it was positively associated with being from an egalitarian heritage culture ( $r = 0.23, p < .05$ ). These findings suggest that coming from an egalitarian culture may enhance one's ability to effectively integrate the multiple cultures to which one is exposed. This integration combined with an ability to function in the host culture appears to provide the basis for positive psychological functioning for immigrants and ethnic minorities.

*Discussion*

The primary purpose of this study was to replicate and extend the findings of Chirkov et al. (2003) in regard to the relationship between internalization, cultural orientation, and well-being in a sample of tricultural individuals. Those authors showed that cross-cultural differences in cultural orientations were associated with differing levels of autonomy and well-being derived from that autonomy. We argued that these cross-cultural differ-



**TABLE 2: Results of Multiple Regression of Generational Status, Adaptation, and Multicultural Identity Integration (MII) on Peer-Reported Adjustment**

<i>Variable</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Generational status	.21	1.83	.07
Heritage adaptation	.00	0.00	.99
English Canadian adaptation	.28	2.15	.04
French Canadian adaptation	-.05	-0.39	.70
MII	.23	1.84	.07

ences should be replicated within individuals who are themselves cross-cultural. To test this hypothesis, our study used tricultural individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. We expected that the nature of the individual's heritage culture would impact on their ability to autonomously internalize the culture.

SDT argues that the internalization of cultural norms is a universal process, although the specific content of cultural guidelines varies across cultures. More controversially, the theory proposes that cultural practices can vary in their ability to fulfill an individual's basic needs for autonomy and relatedness (Chirkov et al., 2003). Cultures that endorse hierarchical norms are expected to form a barrier to the fulfillment of those needs, and as a result it is anticipated that they will not be as easily internalized as horizontal cultures. The findings of the present study tend to support these propositions. We found that individuals from more egalitarian cultures reported greater internalization. This internalization was, in turn, associated with enhanced competence and increased positive affect. The associations between internalization, competence, and positive affect were replicated in both English and French Canadian culture. The uniformity of these findings across the three cultural contexts is a testament to the validity of the predicted relations between these constructs.

Unlike Chirkov et al. (2003), we did not find a direct relationship between internalization and global psychological well-being. We suggest that this discrepancy is a function of the differences in our samples. Whereas Chirkov used four monocultural samples, we utilized multicultural participants. As previously outlined in the literature on bicultural competence, the addition of cultural identities can substantially complicate matters for an individual. Subsequently, we found that a composite measure of adaptation in heritage and English Canadian cultures, along with the participants' perceived MII, were the best predictors of self-reported psychological well-being. English Canadian adaptation and MII were the best predictors of peer-reported psychological well-being. Similar to Ryder and colleagues (2000), these results suggest that, at least among college students who spend a significant part of their day interacting with the

host culture, adaptation to the host culture appears to be requisite for optimal psychological well-being. These results also highlight the importance of being able to integrate one's multicultural identity.

Our findings for MII support the argument that identity complexity is indicative of fragmentation. MII was unrelated to one's ability to function in one's heritage, English, and French Canadian cultures. However, MII was associated with greater psychological well-being. Thus, although positive functioning in the aspects of one's cultural identity is generally independent of one's MII, MII does have a significant main effect on one's psychological well-being. Given SDT's assertion that egalitarian norms are more readily internalized, it is perhaps not surprising that egalitarian norms were also more conducive to MII. Egalitarianism may be a characteristic of open societies that allow for greater flexibility in how the culture is practiced, which may enable an individual to synthesize their heritage culture with other cultural forms.

Two methodological strengths of the present study should be highlighted. First, rather than rely on self-reported descriptions of the dominant values of participant's heritage culture, we used Schwartz's (1994) normative multinational data to estimate the culture's level of emphasis on horizontal versus vertical practices. Second, peer reports were used to substantiate self-reports of cultural competence and levels of adjustment. The fact that our results still mirrored those obtained by Chirkov et al. (2003) lends greater support to their main conclusions that horizontal values are easier to internalize in an autonomous manner than are vertical values and that successful internalization and integration of cultural values will predict positive adjustment outcomes across cultural contexts.

The results of this study suggest that it would be interesting to compare cross-national data on cultural values with similar data on levels of psychological well-being. If the values of one's heritage culture can have such a pervasive influence on the well-being of an individual who no longer resides in that environment, then one would anticipate that this relationship would be even stronger for actual residents of the country. We would hypothesize that highly egalitarian nations also would have citizens who report high levels of well-being. Indeed, a comparison of data on national differences in well-being (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995) and values (Schwartz, 1994) reveals that countries that scored highest on well-being, such as Denmark, Switzerland, and New Zealand, also scored highly on egalitarianism. Alternatively, nations that scored quite low on well-being, China, Japan, and Poland, also scored among the lowest on egalitarianism. The proposed relations between egalitarianism and well-being at a national level could provide compelling



evidence for SDT's assertions regarding the psychological benefits of egalitarian cultural norms.

Furthermore, the present results may have important implications for future trends in immigration and adaptation. North America has a strong tradition of accepting immigrants, indeed they have built and shaped the resulting nations; however, international migration also has increased substantially since 1945, and more particularly since the mid-1980s. Given the growing inequalities in wealth between the North and South, ecological and demographic pressures, as well as increasing political and ethnic conflicts in a number of regions, it is expected that this trend will continue and grow in the new millennium (Castles & Miller, 1998). Although the impetus for individuals to leave their culture of origin may primarily be to ensure their material and physical well-being, psychological factors will play an important role in determining how well they adapt in their new host culture. The present study served to elucidate the means whereby individuals faced with the difficult task of juggling multiple cultural identities can derive positive affect within and psychological well-being across cultural contexts.

In conclusion, the present study points to the importance of considering internalization and integration processes to understand the contextual and psychological well-being of multicultural individuals. It seems that well-being will be maximized when individuals internalize cultural beliefs and standards in an autonomous manner and when they are able to coherently integrate their multiple cultural identities within their self. The study also suggests that both the internalization of a single culture and the integration of multiple cultures is made easier when one begins with a heritage culture that emphasizes egalitarian values.

#### NOTES

1. A self-reported measure of tricultural competence was completed by the participant in the initial questionnaire. The self-reported and peer-reported ratings of competence were significantly positively related for each culture.

2. Egalitarianism of one's heritage culture was uncorrelated with internalization of both English Canadian and French Canadian cultures. It is not surprising that the relative egalitarianism of one's heritage culture would not influence internalization of the secondary and tertiary because it has no bearing on the qualities of these two cultures.

3. To test the conceptual and statistical distinctiveness of the three cultures, we conducted three separate regressions in which mood in each culture was regressed simultaneously on the internalization and competence of all three cultures. These regressions showed that the only significant predictors of mood in a given cultural context were internalization and competence in that same culture.

4. Because our index of well-being included six dimensions, the relation of Multicultural identity integration (MII) to each dimension was considered independently. MII was significantly positively correlated with four of the dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, and environmental mastery; it was marginally correlated with purpose in life and uncorrelated with personal growth.

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