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## Relationship Between Types of Acculturation and Happiness: A Study on Different Generation of Ahiska Turks Living in the Usa, Russia and Kazakhstan

Alikhan Zhamalov, Emine İnan, Özlem Ersan

### Abstract

At the current stage of human development, the percentage of people migrating to improve their living standards is increasing. Therefore, nowadays, the topic of cultural interaction and its consequences have become relevant and is considered within the framework of the concept of acculturation. The first part of the study aimed to find out what types of acculturation are mainly used by Ahiska Turks in three different countries (the United States, Russia and Kazakhstan). The second part of the study shows the main purpose of the study that is to examine how happiness changes according to types of acculturation across generations in three countries? This study was conducted in Russia, the United States, and Kazakhstan with participation from Ahiska Turks (n = 188) living in these countries. The results of the Independent Factorial ANOVA indicated a statistically significant interaction effect between acculturation and happiness in the United States and Kazakhstan. However, no interaction effect between acculturation and happiness was observed among participants from Russia. The main effect for acculturation in all three countries was statistically significant, indicating that integrated participants are happier than separated, assimilated and marginalized. Another key contribution of this study is its examination of three generations of Ahiska Turks. This generational approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how acculturation patterns vary across generations and their relationship to happiness. Moreover, the study offers valuable insights into the role of age in the acculturation process, thereby contributing to future research in this field.

**Keywords:** Migration, Acculturation, Happiness, Integration, Ahiska Turks

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KÜLLİYE

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## Kültürleşme Türleri İle Mutluluk Arasındaki İlişki: Abd, Rusya Ve Kazakistan'da Yaşayan Farklı Kuşaklardan Ahıska Türkleri Üzerine Bir Çalışma

Alikhan Zhamalov, Emine İnan, Özlem Ersan

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### Özet

İnsan gelişiminin günümüzdeki aşamasında, yaşam standartlarını yükseltmek amacıyla göç eden insanların oranı artmaktadır. Bu nedenle günümüzde kültürlerin etkileşimi ve bu etkileşimin sonuçları güncel bir konu olmakta ve kültürleşme kavramı çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır. Araştırmanın ilk bölümünde, Ahıska Türklerinin üç farklı ülkede (Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Rusya ve Kazakistan) hangi kültürleşme türlerini ağırlıklı olarak benimsedikleri incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde ise araştırmanın temel amacı olan, üç ülkede kuşaklar arasında kültürleşme türlerine göre mutluluğun nasıl değiştiği ortaya konulmuştur. Bu çalışma, söz konusu ülkelerde yaşayan Ahıska Türklerinin (n = 188) katılımıyla Rusya, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Kazakistan'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bağımsız Faktör ANOVA analizlerinin sonuçları, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Kazakistan'da kültürleşme ve mutluluk arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkileşim etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, Rusya'dan katılımcılar arasında kültürleşme ile mutluluk arasında herhangi bir etkileşim etkisi gözlemlenmemiştir. Her üç ülkede de kültürleşme ana etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olup, entegre olmuş katılımcıların ayrılmış, asimile olmuş ve marjinalleşmiş katılımcılardan daha mutlu olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu çalışmanın bir diğer önemli katkısı ise üç kuşak Ahıska Türklerini incelemesidir. Bu kuşak yaklaşımı, kültürleşme kalıplarının kuşaklar arasında nasıl değiştiğini ve mutlulukla ilişkisini kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamayı sağlamaktadır. Dahası, çalışma yaşın kültürleşme sürecindeki rolüne dair değerli bilgiler sunarak bu alandaki gelecek araştırmalara katkıda bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Kültürleşme, Mutluluk, Entegrasyon, Ahıska Türkleri

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## **Introduction**

In the social sciences, the question of interaction between cultures is becoming one of the most significant and relevant topics. This is because, daily, thousands of representatives of different cultures and ethnic groups migrate around the world (Bilan, 2012). These migrations can be voluntary to improve living conditions and forced migration due to war, natural disasters or political conflict (Espin, 1987). Therefore, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) stated that the number of migrants increases each year, so if in 2000 the number of migrants was 174 million, today this number has increased to 281 million (UN DESA Report, 2024). Thus, for the peaceful coexistence of migrants with the host society, it is necessary to study deeply the patterns of interaction between different cultures, mutual influence, and features of ethnic groups (Berry et al., 1987; Brislin et al., 1986; Tangalycheva, 2015). Therefore, it is important to check which types of acculturation are most often used in different countries to see the dynamics of cultural development. It is also important to learn how age and generations influence this process. Are there many differences in the acculturation process between generations, or do they remain the same? All these questions will help science learn how acculturation affects happiness levels, and what type of acculturation makes immigrants happier and more productive.

Ahiska Turks, a Turkic-speaking ethnic group whose history is linked to forced migration and prolonged residence in culturally diverse environments, are of particular interest for studying acculturation processes. Historically, they lived in the Meskhetia region (southwestern modern Georgia), but in 1944, they were forcibly deported to the republics of Central Asia by the order of the Soviet government with a ban on returning to their native land (Bugay, 2021).

Subsequently, the Ahiska Turks settled in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, and after the events in the Fergana Valley in 1989, they were forced to migrate again. Currently, representatives of this people live in a number of countries, including Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and the USA (Aydingün et al., 2006). The US, Russia, and Kazakhstan were chosen for the study of the acculturation of the Ahiska Turks because these countries are home to a significant number of members of the diaspora, and each country provides different socio-political, cultural, and religious conditions. This allows for a comparison of adaptation strategies, the preservation of ethnic identity, and the influence of local societal characteristics on the acculturation processes. Multiple migrations and life in multi-ethnic societies make Ahiska Turks a significant object for studying acculturation strategies and their impact on subjective well-being.

## **The Concept of Acculturation**

The first scientific research in the field of acculturation was conducted in the United States and Europe (Berry, 2005). Since the end of the 20th century, scientists have begun to involve the concept of acculturation in the scientific literature (acculturation can be explained by a compounding of the Latin prefix “ac”, which means direction to something, convergence, adding, joining, relation with something and “culture”). Therefore, acculturation can be understood as a cooperation between different cultures (Ushkanova, 2010).

The first classical definition of acculturation was introduced by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in 1936. They argued that acculturation is a straight, long-term, and natural process of interaction between groups with different cultures, where both groups undergo a change in their cultural pattern (Redfield et al., 1936). Following anthropologists, acculturation was considered from the point of view of sociology and psychology. Sociologists view acculturation as a social phenomenon in which an individual, entering a new social environment, acquires new social skills,

patterns, and cultural values (Eaton, 1952; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1919). This process is also characterized by changes in the behaviour and dynamics of the ethnic minority (Berkson, 1969; Miller, 1924; Wirth, 1945). The first psychologist who emphasized the influence of acculturation on internal psychological processes was Graves (1967). The scientist argued that the differentiation between the group level and the personal level would help, first, to assess the psychological changes of each individual participating in the acculturation process. The second, group level of acculturation, shows the general picture of the impact of acculturation on ethnic minorities, but not on everyone separately.

According to Berry, the combination of these two, the desire to preserve their ethnicity and the desire to build a close relationship with a new culture, led to the formation of 4 types of acculturation: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration (Sam & Berry, 2006). Thus, Berry characterizes assimilation as a type of acculturation in which an individual moves away from their ethnicity and enters a close relationship with the host culture. As a result, the individual is guided by the norms and values not of their own culture, but the culture of the host society. Separation, on the contrary, is characterized by the individual's desire to preserve the norms and values of their culture, which leads to distance and restriction of relations with the host society. Integration is a type of acculturation in which an individual accepts the norms and values of the host society, but at the same time, tries to preserve their cultural identity. Marginalization is the opposite of integration; this type of acculturation is characterized by distance from their own ethnic culture and the culture of the host society. Furthermore, it often occurs in individuals who live in a multicultural society (Berry, 1997).

Researchers have stated that the most preferred type of acculturation is integration. It is characterized by a high level of adaptation and socialization in a new society. This type of acculturation is typical for multicultural societies with low levels of ethnocentrism, racism, and selfishness. On the contrary, marginalization is the least sympathetic type of acculturation used by migrants. This type of acculturation is also characteristic of multicultural societies, where there is a large influence of several cultures, especially dominant ones (Berry & Kalin, 1995). As for assimilation and separation, these two strategies show different results in different societies (Sam & Berry, 2006).

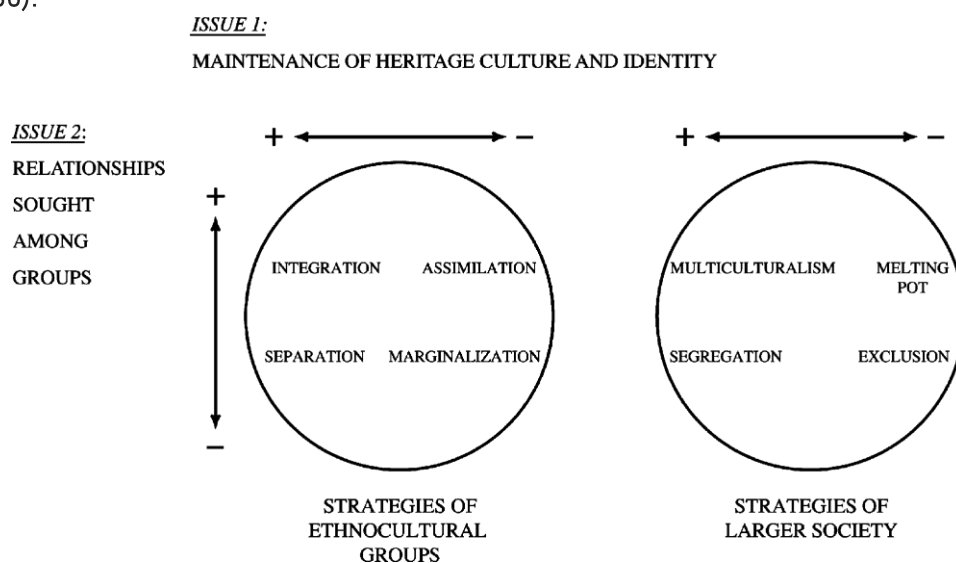


Figure 1. Four Acculturation Strategies based on, Ethnocultural groups and the Larger Society (Berry, 2005).

## **The Concept of Happiness**

Previous studies have shown that one of the main reasons for migration is that people feel quite unhappy compared to other residents who have the same socio-economic characteristics (Graham & Markowitz, 2011). Therefore, the significant goal of migration is to improve the quality of life, respectively, to increase the level of happiness. Answering the question of how to study and measure happiness, Argyle (2013) concluded that "*happiness is a single factor of human experience, but it consists of at least three partially independent factors: life satisfaction, positive emotions, and the absence of negative ones*" (p.33).

In the scientific literature, the term happiness has been considered by various sciences, in particular, cross-cultural psychology. Thus, cross-cultural studies have shown that the happiness level of migrants depends on several factors. The first one is the desire of the migrants to belong to the appropriate social group (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). For instance, a strong sense of belonging to their historical homeland can cause them not to be accepted into the new society. Conversely, the desires of migrants to belong to the group of the host society reflects how they feel accepted, protected, and uninhibited in the new society (Berry, 2005).

The second important factor that affects migrants' happiness is ethnic identity. Utsey et al. (2002) found a positive correlation between ethnic identity and happiness levels. Moreover, scientists have found that integrated migrants with a strong ethnic identity have a high level of adaptation, which is one of the conditions for happiness (Phinney, 1990). Other factors which influence immigrant happiness level are the degree of dependence from an ethnic minority (Bocharova, 2013), the value - attitude features of the group towards the new society (Shamionov & Grigorieva, 2014), and behaviour of the migrants and the level of cultural differences between groups (Shamionov, 2004). Moreover, Shamionov (2016) determined that in the process of adaptation in different age, happiness has its own peculiarities. For example, if at one age, stability is an indicator of happiness, then at another, it may be psychological or personal growth.

The study of Inglehart and Klingemann (2000) indicated the huge impact of the culture of ethnic minority on the level of migrants' happiness. Scientists argued that to study the relationship between the level of happiness and the culture of an ethnic minority, it is necessary to make a transition from an intercountry analysis to an interethnic one. That is, not to study ethnic minorities only in one country, but to analyse samples of one ethnic minority from different countries. Moreover, Hofstede and Bond (1988) found that culture affects the level of happiness, explaining that the basis of culture is the collective programming of the mind of its members. As a result, the encoded cultural characteristics that determine the attitudes, the level, and standards of life are passed from generation to generation without significant changes.

The analysis of humanities research on happiness helps outline future directions for studying this phenomenon. Although existing measures of happiness use similar indicators, they largely overlook ethnocultural values, which are crucial since ideas of happiness are shaped by cultural context. This study emphasized key approaches to defining happiness by highlighting factors influencing its level, emphasizing that happiness involves not only personal emotions but also cultural and historical dimensions.

## **The Impact of Acculturation on Happiness**

One of the key issues of modern cross-cultural psychology is the impact of acculturation on happiness, which is defined as a cognitive and affective assessment of one's own life, including life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions (Diener, 1984). Research (Yoon et al., 2011) shows that

acculturation strategies have different effects on the level of happiness. For example, work among first- and second-generation immigrant students in the United States has demonstrated that high identity with both the culture of origin and the culture of the host society positively correlates with psychological and eudaimonic well-being, confirming the beneficial effect of integration strategies (Yoon et al., 2011). On the contrary, the strategy of marginalization, characterized by rejection of both cultures, is associated with a low level of subjective well-being. An analysis of data from Syrian adolescents in Turkey showed that orientation towards the culture of the host society and low perception of discrimination contributed to a higher level of positive affect, while marginalization increased negative affect (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

Moreover, a study of Korean immigrants in the United States showed that social connection with an ethnic community completely mediates the relationship between orientation to the culture of origin and subjective well-being, while the connection with the culture of the host society is partially manifested (Lee et al., 2006). These data emphasize that successful acculturation involves not only personal strategies, but also social resources that support happiness.

Generational differences also significantly affect the relationship between acculturation and happiness. In a study among Vietnamese immigrants, younger generations demonstrated a higher degree of acculturation and, as a result, a higher level of happiness compared with older ones (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). The context of the country of residence acts as an additional moderator. For example, among Latin migrants in the United States, the degree of acculturation reinforced the positive relationship between income and happiness: more acculturated individuals reported greater life satisfaction with a high income (Mejia & Morales, 2022). Thus, the cultural and social environment creates opportunities and limitations for the implementation of acculturation strategies and their impact on happiness. Finally, differences in the perception of happiness can be explained by cultural norms and values. In Eastern cultures, happiness being is closely related to collectivist orientations - contributions to family and community, rather than individual achievements (Diener et al., 2003). Consequently, acculturation strategies can have different effects on happiness, depending on the cultural context and the individual's personal priorities. Thus, existing research confirms that acculturation strategies, social support, generational differences, and the cultural context of the country of residence are key factors determining the level of happiness of migrants.

### **Ahiska Turks**

The ethnonym "Ahiska Turks" is a collective term defining an ethnic minority (Turks), whose historical homeland was Ahiska, located on the border of Turkey and Georgia. This territory was ruled by the Ottoman Empire for a long time. As a result of the war, the Treaty of Adrianople (Treaty of Edirne) was concluded between Turkey and Russia in 1829, because of which Ahiska became part of the Russian Empire (Zeyrek, 2008). The life of Ahiska Turks changed second time during the Second World War, when all the male population fought for their homeland; their families who remained in Ahiska were deported to the countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan) (Zeyrek, 2001).

The next important events that took place in the history of the Ahiska Turks were in Uzbekistan. There were massive clashes between Uzbeks and Ahiska Turks in the cities of Fergana and Margilan, from 23 May to 8 June 1989. This became the reason for the second wave of migrations of Ahiska Turks from Uzbekistan to Russia and the nearest countries (Zeyrek, 2001). According to Petrov (2003), the settlement of Ahiska Turks took place in 27 regions of the Russian Federation. As a result of the non-acceptance of the Ahiska Turks by the host society, conflict situations arose;

the Ahiska Turks were not allowed to get a job, they did not have the same rights as the representatives of other nationalities, their ethnicity, language, and religion were also affected (restricted). These and many other factors led to the third wave of migration of the Ahiska Turks from Russia to the United States and other countries (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2014).

The historical events described above influenced the social and cultural characteristics of these people. Therefore, the peculiarities of the Ahiska Turks are their patriarchal family organization, strong clan-kinship relations, diaspora organization, and subordination to the authority of leaders. Ahiska Turks in a foreign environment live inside the large ethnic groups, so they more strictly follow the norms and values of their culture (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2014; Keskin & Anaç, 2016; Zeyrek, 2001). However, none of these historical events and their negative consequences prevented the Ahiska Turks, on the one hand, to preserve their native language, culture, and religion, and on the other hand, to establish good relations with residents (Keskin & Anaç, 2016). Pokrovskaya (2020) noted that the long process of traumatization and the common past of several generations of Ahiska Turks determine a strong and long-lasting connection between representatives of different generations of this ethnic group.

Studies conducted in different countries demonstrate the variability of social and acculturation processes among Ahiska Turks. In Turkey, issues of spatial belonging and social adaptation are analysed, emphasizing the importance of a "sense of homeland", associated with both Turkey and the historical territories of residence (Karaman & Mursül, 2018). Other Turkish studies show a high level of socio-cultural adaptation among Ahiska Turks, while the degree of adaptation varies depending on the conditions of resettlement and the region of residence (İpek et al., 2024).

In the USA, research focuses on the relationship between acculturation, stress, and health, indicating the complex and ambiguous nature of the influence of cultural adaptation on well-being (Temircan, 2022). In Central Asian countries, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, researchers focus on the processes of community formation and cultural adaptation in the local context (Cihan, 2008). Collectively, the studies mentioned above confirm that the acculturation of Ahiska Turks is determined by the country of residence, migration conditions, and state policy, and the collective experience of deportation continues to influence intergenerational ties and the self-identification of this ethnic group.

### **Purpose of the Current Study**

The first part of the study aimed to find out what types of acculturation are mainly used by Ahiska Turks in three different countries (the United States, Russia, and Kazakhstan). The second part focuses on the main purpose of the study, which is to investigate the relationship between acculturation types and the happiness level of Ahiska Turks. In addition, the present study aims to characterize this process across different generations.

### **Hypotheses of the Current Study**

In line with the existing literature on the association between acculturation and happiness, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between types of acculturation and happiness among Ahiska Turks living in Kazakhstan, Russia, and the United States.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Ahiska Turks who adopt an integration strategy (maintaining heritage culture while adapting to the host culture) will report higher levels of happiness compared to those who adopt assimilation, separation, or marginalization strategies.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Generational differences will significantly influence happiness, with younger generations (second and third) reporting higher levels of happiness than the first generation.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** The relationship between acculturation type and happiness will vary across host countries, with integration being more strongly associated with happiness in multicultural contexts (e.g., the USA) compared to more homogenous societies (e.g., Russia and Kazakhstan).

## Method

This study employed a **quantitative, cross-sectional survey design** to examine the relationship between types of acculturation and levels of happiness among Ahiska Turks. The design was chosen to allow for the collection of standardized data from a diverse sample, enabling statistical analysis of the associations between variables across different generational groups and host countries.

## Participants

A hundred eighty-eight Ahiska Turks (87 male, 101 female) participated in the current study. A stratified purposive sampling method was used to ensure adequate representation across generations. Therefore, the participants were chosen from culturally, socially, and religiously different countries, which were the USA, Kazakhstan, and Russia. The study excluded those under 15, non-Ahiska Turks, recent arrivals, unwilling participants, or individuals with cognitive impairments that prevent informed responses. The age range of participants was between 15 - 70 years old ( $M = 36.72$ ;  $SD = 13.64$ ). Therefore, the researcher created three different age groups: youth (15 - 30 years old;  $n = 65$ ,  $M = 23.14$ ;  $SD = 4.55$ ), middle age (31 - 45 years old;  $n = 72$ ,  $M = 38.72$ ;  $SD = 4.27$ ) and the last one is old age group (46 years and older;  $n = 51$ ,  $M = 57.62$ ;  $SD = 8.14$ ). Other demographic characteristics of the participants were given in table 1.

Variables	Frequency (%)	Mean (SD)
<b>Country</b>		
Russia	61 (32.4%)	
United States	62 (33%)	
Kazakhstan	65 (34.6%)	
<b>Age</b>		36.72 (13.64)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	101 (53.7%)	
Male	87 (46.3%)	
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	73 (38.8%)	
Married	110 (58.5%)	
Divorced	5 (2.7%)	
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Do not have	21 (11.2%)	
High School	138 (73.4%)	
University Degree	29 (15.4%)	
<b>Employment</b>		
Not Working	27 (14.4%)	
Student	31 (16.5%)	
Job Require Professional		
Qualifications	51 (27.1%)	
Job does not Require Professional		
Qualifications	47 (25.0%)	
Office Worker	32 (17.0%)	
<b>Religiosity</b>		
Muslim	188 (100%)	
Adhere to the Canons of Islam	107 (56.9%)	
Do not Adhere to the Canons of Islam	81 (43.1%)	

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 188)

## **Instruments**

### **Socio-demographic Information Form**

This form was created by the researcher to accumulate information about the participants. The current form consists of 14 questions that include indicators such as age, gender, educational status, occupation, marital status, religion, and level of religiosity, the ethnicity of the participants, parents' nationality, country of residence, age of migration, knowledge of languages, and what language participants speak at home and outside (see Appendix A).

### **Acculturation Attitude Scale (AAS)**

This questionnaire has been designed by Kim (1989) in order to measure the types of acculturation of Koreans living in Canada. AAS consists of 14 directions of an individual's social life, and all directions include 4 items. These directions represent the main spheres of human social life. It includes such spheres as friendship, language, child-rearing, marriage, naming children, society, Korean town, teaching values and customs to children, interests, a history course, TV station, newspaper, success, and furniture. Moreover, each direction consists of 4 statements that correspond to a specific type of acculturation (Assimilation, Integration, Marginalization, and Separation). For example, "I would encourage children to be educated and to participate fully in various aspects of American society while teaching them the Turkish values and customs" (i.e., integration); "Teaching children Turkish values and customs only create a barrier with other Americans. I would rather teach them American values so that they could be like other American" (i.e., assimilation); "I would teach children mainly Turkish values and customs so that they will not become Americanized, but remain as Turks" (i.e., separation); and "As a parent, it is best to keep the children away from learning all the violence and corruption that the present society has to offer" (i.e., marginalization).

The current study used the Russian version of the scale for participants from Russia and Kazakhstan and the English version for Ahiska Turks living in the United States. AAS was translated into the Russian language by the researcher and three different specialists. After comparing all versions of the translation, the most suitable one was selected. Kim (1989) confirmed the meaningful Cronbach alpha for this scale, which is .84 for integration, .72 for marginalization, .77 for separation, and .84 for assimilation. The current study finds out that Cronbach's alpha for the Russian version was .87 for integration, .71 for marginalization, .82 for separation, and .80 for assimilation. For the English version was .83 for integration, .75 for marginalization, .80 for separation, and .83 for assimilation.

### **Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)**

The OHQ questionnaire was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) to measure the general level of happiness. The Russian version of OHQ was translated by Golubev and Dorosheva (2017). This scale consists of 29 questions, 12 of which measure the presence of negative attitudes. Moreover, the scores are counted by using the Likert measurement system, which includes 6 points: completely disagree (1) and, respectively, completely agree (6). So, the higher the scores mean the higher the level of happiness.

The English version of the scale was used in many studies and showed a high level of reliability and validity. Thus, the analysis of the reliability of the scale reported as .90 and a seven-week test-retest reliability of .78 (Hadinezhad & Zaree, 2009). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was reported as .86 (Hadinezhad & Zaree, 2009). The study also used the Russian version of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, which was adapted by Golubev

and Dorosheva (2017). With an interval of three months, test-retest reliability was reported as .80, and the Cronbach alpha internal consistency was .89 (Golubev & Dorosheva, 2017). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for Russian version was .92 and for English version was .85.

### **Procedure**

The ethical approval was received from the Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University Ethical Committee for Humanities and Social Sciences, to confirm that instruments used in the current study are relevant. In addition, a request was sent to the World Association of Ahiska Turks (DATÜB) in order to get information about which regions of the United States, Russia, and Kazakhstan have many Ahiska Turks. The researcher used several channels to recruit participants: invitations to participate were disseminated through local Ahiska Turkish associations, social media, and personal contacts. The research was conducted individually and confidentially, face-to-face with each participant. The interviews were semi-structured, conducted in a language convenient for the participants (Russian), and all data were processed anonymously in accordance with ethical research requirements.

The current research consisted of several stages. At the beginning of the research, the purpose of the study, the confidentiality, and non-disclosure of the obtained data were explained to all participants. The researcher asked participants to read the Consent Form and informed them that they could leave at any stage of the study. After explaining all the formalities, the participants were given the *Socio-demographic Information Form*. After filling out the form, participants were given the *Acculturation Attitude Scale* and *Oxford Happiness Questionnaire*. The process of completing the scales lasted about 15-20 minutes for each participant. During the research, just three participants from the USA declined to participate in the current study.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics. To test the hypotheses of the study, ANOVA was conducted to compare happiness levels across acculturation strategies and generations in different countries.

### **Results**

#### **Types of Acculturation according to Different Countries**

Descriptive statistic was carried out to examine what types of acculturation are mostly used by Ahiska Turks living in Russia, the United States, and Kazakhstan. The percentage of types of acculturation used by the Ahiska Turks in different countries was presented in Figure 2.

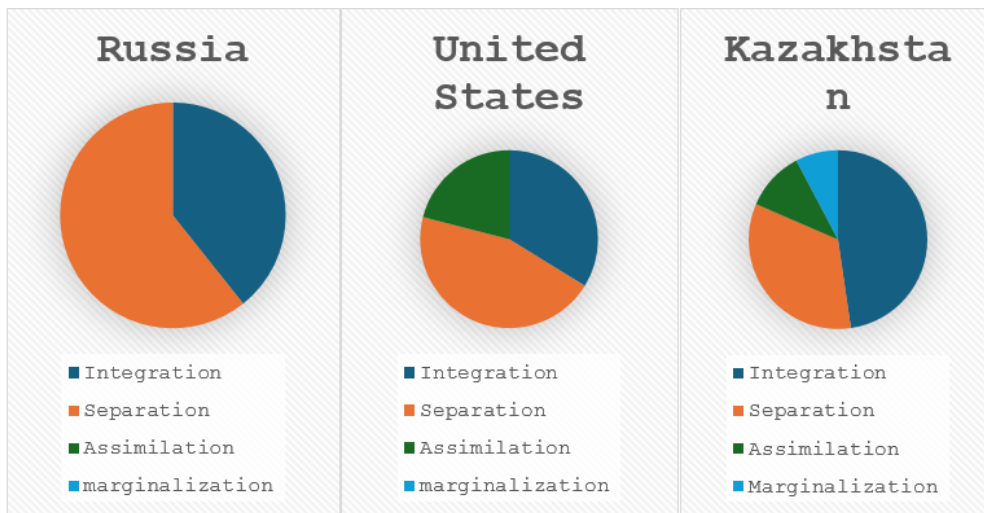


Figure 2. Types of acculturation according to different countries

According to the figure 2, it is possible to conclude that in all three countries, the types of acculturation that Ahiska Turks use are different. For example, the strategy of integration and separation was found to be common to all three countries, but with different percentages in each country (*Integration*: United States (34%), Russia (39%), Kazakhstan (48%); *Separation*: Russia (61%), United States (45%), and Kazakhstan (34%)). However, assimilation strategy is less common and was found in the United States (21%) and Kazakhstan (11%). Moreover, the marginalization strategy is less popular in Ahiska Turkish society and was found only in Kazakhstan (7%). This means that all three countries have their own characteristics regarding process of acculturation. As a result, it is possible to conclude that the highest percentage of Ahiska Turks living in Russia and the United States use the separation strategy. However, Ahiska Turks from Kazakhstan show the highest percentage of using the integration strategy.

### The Differences between Age and Types of Acculturation in Terms of the Level of Happiness

To check whether there are group differences in the main effect of types of acculturation and the main effect of different age groups, and the interaction effect between types of acculturation and different age groups on the level of happiness Independent Factorial ANOVA was performed. The mean and standard deviation can be seen in table 5.

#### Russia

The result of the interaction effect was not significant,  $F(2, 55) = 1.39, p > .05, \eta^2 = .05$ . However, the main effect of age was significant: happiness increased as the age decreased. The main effect of acculturation was also statistically significant, indicating that integrated participants are happier than separated ones.

#### The United States

The result demonstrated a significant interaction effect between acculturation and age on happiness,  $F(3, 54) = 3.24, p < .05, \eta^2 = .15$ . Post Hoc analysis indicated that assimilated young (15-30 years old) Ahiska Turks have the highest level of happiness than separated and integrated participants, which do not differ from each other. The participants in the middle age group (31-45 years old) are happier using assimilation and integration than separation type of acculturation. The old (46 years old-older) Ahiska Turks happier using integration type of acculturation than separation.

The result of Post Hoc analysis of acculturation showed that assimilated Ahiska Turks are happier in young age than in middle age. However, separated participants differ from each other in terms of happiness, with the highest level among the young participants and the lowest happiness level among old ones. As for integration, the participant in young and middle age groups have high score on happiness than old group participants. The main effect of acculturation was also statistically significant indicating that the highest level has assimilated Ahiska Turks, and the lowest level has separated. Moreover, the main effect of age was statistically significant, denoting that the older the participant, the lower their level of happiness.

**Kazakhstan**

The result of independent factorial ANOVA showed a statistically significant interaction effect,  $F(2, 57) = 14.66, p < .05, \eta^2 = .34$ . The Post Hoc analysis indicated that in young age Ahiska Turks have a greater level of happiness using integration type of acculturation than separation and marginalization, which do not differ from each other. In the middle age, participants' happier using integration, on second-place separated participants, and the lowest score on happiness have assimilated one. However, the old group of Ahiska Turks is happier being separated than integrated. The result of Post Hoc analysis of acculturation indicated that separated Ahiska Turks have the highest level of happiness among old age group and the lowest level has young participants. Those who use integration demonstrated the highest level of happiness in middle age compared to young and old age groups, which do not differ from each other. Assimilated Ahiska Turks were found among middle-aged participants. As for marginalization, it was found only in young age group. The main effect for acculturation was also significant, indicating that the means score of separation and integration was statistically higher than the means of assimilation and marginalization types of acculturation, which do not differ from each other. Moreover, the main effect of age was statistically significant: as the age of Ahiska Turks increased, the level of happiness also rose.

Variables				15-30 age group		31-45 age group		46-older age group		Total	
	F	F1	F2	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Russia</b>	1.39	3.72*	14.74*								
<i>Integration</i>				82.65	4.50	79.83	2.92	80.00	3.01	82.08	7.88
<i>Separation</i>				77.40	2.20	70.53	3.13	60.88	2.94	67.03	10.34
<b>Total</b>				80.20	8.33	75.18	8.89	70.44	9.83		
<b>United States</b>	3.24*	23.25*	9.17*								
<i>Integration</i>				81.80	4.07	81.25	1.91	73.33	7.64	80.38	4.83
<i>Separation</i>				84.00	2.71	75.89	2.15	63.44	8.37	69.64	6.95
<i>Assimilation</i>				92.13	3.18	83.40	1.52			88.77	5.12
<b>Total</b>				86.05	5.96	79.55	6.71	65.00	8.86		
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	14.66*	7.02*	23.30*								
<i>Integration</i>				80.00	13.49	87.90	5.72	71.89	8.40	80.19	12.05
<i>Separation</i>				60.57	12.73	77.80	2.58	86.40	5.56	76.23	13.87
<i>Assimilation</i>						48.71	6.65			48.71	10.65
<i>Marginalization</i>				58.80	13.79					58.80	13.79
<b>Total</b>				69.92	13.70	73.14	14.32	79.53	14.88		

Note 1. \* p < .05,  
 Note 2. F1- the main effect of age  
 Note 3. F2- the main effect of acculturation  
 Note 4. The means differences correspond to statistical significance.

**Table 5.** Differences between the Level of Happiness and the Types of Acculturation depending on Age Groups

## **Discussion**

The discussion consists of several parts according to the aims of the study. First, the acculturation types used by Ahiska Turks were discussed. After that, the researcher explained the relationship between the level of happiness and types of acculturation used by Ahiska Turks according to different generations. The current research was performed in three different countries: Kazakhstan, Russia, and the United States. The countries were chosen with different social structure, religion, culture, economy, and political system to increase the value of the current study.

### **Types of Acculturation according to Different Countries**

The results of this study demonstrated that separation is the most frequently used acculturation strategy among Ahiska Turks. The second popular acculturation type is integration. However, types of acculturation like assimilation and marginalization is not too prevalent in Ahiska Turks society. That can be explained by the fact that for these people, saving their culture and language is very important. Therefore, the acculturation types, which include the preservation of culture, are common regardless of generation. This result is supported by Akkiewa (2019), who investigated that Ahiska Turks are tied to their culture and try to transfer it with the language, customs, and traditions to the next generation. Ataca and Berry's (2002) in their study in Germany found that representatives of the Turks culture mostly use separation type of acculturation, which also confirm that for Turks to keep their culture is important.

This study found that separation is dominated type of acculturation among the old group of Ahiska Turks in all three countries. Moreover, in the USA and Russia, a lot of young and middle-aged representatives still prefer to be separated. As Aydin and Kemahli (2017) in their study noted that Ahiska Turks live in more than 10 different countries, but their knowledge of customs and traditions, lifestyle, and other features are the same in all these countries. However, the result with Kazakhstan participants showed a tendency in young and middle age to transform from separation to integration types of acculturation. The result of the study by Berry et al. (2006) investigated that integration is a common type of acculturation among the migrants born in the host country. Consequently, almost all of Ahiska Turks living in Kazakhstan were born in this country, so they show a preference for integration.

The integration type of acculturation becomes more popular among middle age in all three countries, less popular in young Ahiska Turks living in Russia. As for young participants from the USA, they started to use the assimilation type of acculturation. Also, assimilated young Ahiska Turks were found in Kazakhstan, but not as much as in the USA. The assimilation was found among young Ahiska Turks who do not know or have little knowledge about their mother tongue. Berry et al. (1989) in research with Bulgarian migrants showed that the participants who know their mother tongue choose a separation and integration type of acculturation. As well as Lambert (1967) noted that the knowledge of the native language is the most important variable of ethnic identity. Since almost all Ahiska Turks from Russia know their mother tongue, the study did not find any assimilated participants.

On the other hand, marginalization type of acculturation was detected just at the young age group of Ahiska Turks living in Kazakhstan in a region with many Russian people. Thus, the Russian culture and language prevail in this region. According to the survey data, Ahiska Turks living in this region at home and outside speak Russian language. As a result, a small number of Ahiska Turks were marginalized and estranged from Turks and Kazakh culture and became closer to Russian

culture. In general, it could be concluded that Ahiska Turks mainly use the separation and integration acculturation types and are less expect to prefer the assimilation and marginalization.

### **Level of Happiness according to Generations and Acculturation Types**

The results of this study showed that at different generations, the acculturation types used by Ahiska Turks change, and as a result, the level of happiness also changes. For example, the third generation (46 years old-older), regardless of the country of residence, used only either integration or separation type of acculturation. As for the second generation (31-45 years old), the study found assimilated, integrated, and separated participants in Kazakhstan and the US. The final first generation (15-30 years old) uses all four acculturation types, including marginalization. Although it was mentioned above that in all generations of Ahiska Turks the level of happiness has its specificity, however there is a common pattern in this relationship. For example, almost all age groups, Ahiska Turks are happier using integration type of acculturation; exceptions assimilated young participants from the US and separated old participants from Kazakhstan. Berry & Kalin (1995) proved that the integration type of acculturation has a high level of adaptation and life satisfaction among migrants. The second type of acculturation, after integration, that showed a high score on the level of happiness is separation. Moreover, in Kazakhstan, the highest score on happiness was found among the third generation of Ahiska Turks. This can be explained by the fact that these people extremely respect their culture and pass it on from generation to generation (Demiray, 2012). Moreover, from childhood, children are instilled with love and respect for their culture and are brought up by the same customs and traditions that have existed for a long time. As Aydin & Kemahli (2017) noted, Ahiska Turks live in large communities to preserve their language and culture, which also influences the choice of the type of acculturation.

The next acculturation type is assimilation, which was found in young participants from the US and the second generation from Kazakhstan. On one hand, young assimilated Ahiska Turks from the US showed the highest level of happiness compared to other acculturation types in all age groups. Berry et al. (2006) also claimed that it is easier for young migrants who have chosen the assimilation type of acculturation to adapt and inter to the new social environment like schools, youth communities, etc. Moreover, assimilated migrants are closely associated with the host society and play an active role in social life, so they feel like a part of this society and not as a stranger (Hendriks & Bartram, 2019). On the other hand, the assimilated participants from Kazakhstan demonstrated the lowest score on happiness level. Therefore, it can be concluded that not just acculturation types have a significant effect on happiness level, but also the country of residence. The last marginalization type of acculturation was revealed just in Kazakhstan with the low level of happiness.

In general, it is possible to note that among three generation Ahiska Turks living in different countries are happier using integration and separation type of acculturation than assimilation and marginalization. However, as the result of the study showed, there is a tendency to move from separation (old age group) to assimilation (young age group).

### **Strengths of the Current Study**

Nowadays, topics about migrants have become one of the most important in the social sciences. Therefore, this study explained the way of coexistence of migrants and the host society, which is very valuable for countries with a huge number of migrants. Thus, the research on acculturation aim to show the relationship between two or more cultures existing in the same society, the behaviour of the migrants, and to establish ways of adaptation and socialization in a new environment.

This study is one of the first in psychological science that demonstrates that using what type of acculturation migrants have a high level of happiness. Another strength of this study is that this study was conducted in three culturally, religiously, socially, and economically different countries. This helped to explore the relationship between acculturation and happiness from different perspectives. In addition, participants play an important role in this study. Because previous studies have analysed Ahiska Turks from historical, political, and linguistic points of view. So, this is the first study that investigated the Ahiska Turks from a psychological perspective.

Another important point of this study is that the researcher investigated three generations of Ahiska Turks. This feature helps the reader to understand the full picture of how different types of acculturation differ depending on the generation, which is significant for establishing the happiness level. Also, the study of different generations will help future researchers to see how age affects the process of acculturation.

### **Limitation and Suggestions for Further Studies**

This study was limited by several factors. The first one is the number of participants, so to raise the value of the result, the sample size should be increased. Moreover, some participants withdrew from the study, explaining it by the fact that they are not citizens and afraid to answer such kinds of questions. The last limitation was the number of dependent variables. Therefore, in a future study, it can be possible to investigate the relationship between acculturation and stress, life satisfaction, native language, and so on.

First, before beginning that kind of research, it could be beneficial to relate to the board of the Ahiska Turk association in that particular area. This study was conducted in three countries; however, Turkey and Georgia were not included in the research, due to the significant number of Ahiska Turks, these two countries should be considered. Another suggestion is to compare the level of happiness depending on acculturation between Ahiska Turks and other ethnic minorities living in a particular country. Moreover, the interview method can be used to unveil the external and internal forces that pushed them to choose a certain type of acculturation.

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## Appendix A

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

You are participating in a study on migration and interethnic relations of Ahiska Turks. Please read the instructions for the questions carefully and answer sincerely. Thank you for participating in this study.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_

2. Your gender? Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_

3. What is your level of education? Associate degree\_\_\_ University degree \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

4. What is your religion? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you rate your level of religiosity?

I believe in God, but I do not observe all religious rites (pray, fasting, etc.)

I believe in God and try to observe the rites of my religion

6. Your profession (job)?

Job that does not require qualifications (cleaner, porter, etc.)

Job requires qualifications (technician, carpenter, hairdresser, seamstress, etc.)

Office worker (clerk, sales manager, secretary, etc.)

Specialist (doctor, lawyer, teacher, manager, etc.)

7. What is your nationality?

American

Ahiska Turks

I find it difficult to answer

8. Your parents ' nationality?

Mather \_\_\_\_\_

Father \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you married? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

10. What country do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

11. At what age did you move to USA? \_\_\_\_

12. What languages do you know?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

13. What language do you speak at home?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
I speak Ahiska Turkish				
I speak English				
I speak another language				

14. What language do you speak in the area where you live (shopping, hospital, etc.)?

	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
I speak Ahiska Turkish				
I speak English				
I speak another language				