

## **Bicultural Attitudes and Psychological Adjustment of Ethnic Minority Youth in Bangladesh**

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### **Abstract**

This study explored relationships between bicultural attitudes and psychological adjustment of Bangladeshi ethnic-minority youths. The study was conducted on 412 young adults ( $M_{\text{age}} = 22$  years), 40% women and 60% men, from 18 Bangladeshi ethnic subgroups. The Bicultural Attitude Scale (BAS) and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) were used as measures. Results presented that 57% of the respondents were biculturally oriented, 42% were uniculturally oriented (39% were oriented toward heritage culture and only 3% toward national culture), and less than 1% were culturally alienated or marginalized. In addition, the results showed that the mean score of importance ratings was significantly higher for the heritage culture than for the national culture. Results also showed a significant negative correlation between the attitude toward heritage culture and the psychological maladjustment of the respondents. The findings further showed that heritage (not national) culture has significant and unique effects on the psychological adjustment of both male and female minority ethnic youth in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** bicultural attitudes, ethnicity, heritage culture, national culture, psychological adjustment

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Biculturalism is a process of acculturation through which individuals of one culture know about other culture(s), change their unicultural identity, and acquire bicultural or multicultural identity due to increasing contact with people of other cultural groups (Berry, 1997, 2006). Earlier scholars viewed biculturalism as a unidirectional process of internalization of new cultural values through communication with persons of the host culture(s) and loss of the old cultural values (culture of origin) and traditions (Gordon, 1964). However, current protagonists of biculturalism view it as a combination of old and new cultural principles in which many aspects of behavior could change, including clothing patterns, food habits, language, and other aspects (Berry, 2005). An important question is whether the acquisition of host cultural values and behavior or the loss of heritage cultural values and behavior is associated with problems in bicultural identity development. Research conducted on minority ethnic populations supports a two-dimensional acculturation model that includes a wide range of participation in both the host and heritage cultures (Berry, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010). Thus, bicultural identity development can be viewed as a process with many possible mixtures of endorsements of the culture of origin and new host culture (Berry, 2003).

Interaction and communications between people of different cultures and subcultures are increasing quickly due to social changes and the mobility of people countrywide and globally (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2011). Consequently, many people are adopting more than one culture and becoming bicultural or multicultural (Benet-Martínez, 2012). The bicultural and multicultural individuals can be of diverse types, including immigrants, refugees, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, and so forth (Berry, 2006). Biculturalism and acculturation are codependent notions (Berry, 2006). The interplay between the national culture (dominant culture) and heritage culture can result in four possible forms of acculturation processes like as assimilation (unicultural orientation toward the national culture only), separation (unicultural orientation toward the heritage culture only), integration (bicultural orientation toward both the national culture and heritage culture), and marginality (alienation from both heritage culture and national culture) (Berry, 2006). Therefore, biculturalism is an acculturation approach developed through the process of integration, in which individuals embrace both the host culture and their heritage culture of origin and combine the two at the same time (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Several investigations emphasized the importance of biculturalism and multiculturalism for comprehending developmental issues, including parent-child affairs (Kalia et al., 2022; Khaleque et al., 2021) and behavior development and psychological functioning and well-being among ethnic minorities in the United States and globally (Carlo et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2007). However, the research results on the impacts of acculturation and cultural orientations on psychological well-being have not been sufficiently clear (Balidemaj, 2016; Carlo et al., 2016). Research literature states that the acculturation process is often stressful and may affect individuals' mental health and well-being. For example, there is clear evidence that acculturative stress is related to depression and anxiety (Guevrekian et al., 2020). Additionally, acculturation stress shows a strong negative relationship with

psychological well-being and is associated with mental health outcomes (Hwang & Ting, 2008). Additionally, acculturative stress was found to be directly related to psychological adjustment and distress (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Moreover, Papazyan et al. (2016) showed that lower levels of acculturative stress revealed greater life satisfaction than higher levels of acculturative stress. Acculturative stress plays a significant role in predicting both depression and anxiety levels, which have a direct effect on individuals' psychological functioning (Guevrekian et al., 2020).

A careful examination of the acculturation literature discloses several inquiries that are yet to be answered and are worthy of further investigation. One question is whether the adolescent's higher level of bicultural identity or the parent's lower level of bicultural identity and a higher level of unicultural identity are most predictive of adolescent problems (Daniel et al., 2012; Suinn, 2010). Several researchers have identified several understudied and unexplained issues in the bicultural identity development of minority ethnic youth and their family members (especially parents), such as (1) a generation gap in cultural orientations (Khaleque et al., 2015; Kibria, 2006; Kim et al., 2007); (2) intergenerational acculturation gaps between parents and offspring may lead to family discord, children's alienation, behavioral and conduct issues, alcohol and substance abuse, maladjustment, and depression (Gonzales et al., 2002; Gonzales et al., 2006); (3) gender differences in cultural orientations (Khaleque et al., 2015); and (4) parent-child relationships (e.g., parental acceptance-rejection), and cultural orientations, and psychological adjustment of children (Khaleque, 2020; Khaleque et al. 2008).

Moreover, the assessment of bicultural alignments appears to be an important issue for understanding the process of combination among diverse ethnocultural groups in any multi-ethnic and multi-racial country with people of many cultures and subcultures who are living together side by side and generation after generation (Khaleque, 2016; Khaleque et al., 2015). Although some investigations have focused on the challenges connected to the acculturation of migrant families, few empirical studies have studied the acculturation experiences of non-migrant ethnic minority groups (Balidemaj, 2016; Kim et al., 2007).

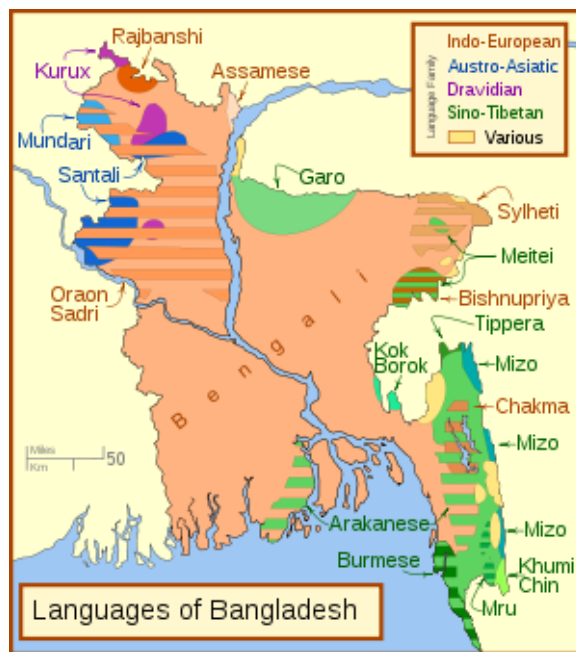
Some researchers have articulated the significance of biculturalism and acculturation processes for understanding socio-cultural developmental difficulty and psychological health-related issues, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, delinquent behavior, impaired self-esteem, and suicidal tendencies (Benet-Martínez et al., 2006). Although the acculturation process in the immigrant population has recently received a considerable level of attention, and a notable number of studies have been conducted in Western and developed countries (Carlo et al., 2016; Prez-Brena et al., 2018), its consequences on individuals' psychological functioning remain unclear (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Moreover, little research has been conducted on the bicultural difficulties of the native ethnic minority population, especially in developing countries, including Bangladesh (Khaleque, 2020). The following section encompasses a brief portrayal of the minority ethnic population in Bangladesh.

### Minority Ethnic Population in Bangladesh

The total population of Bangladesh is about 166.4 million (Worldometer, 2020). Approximately 98 % comprise the major ethnic group (i.e., the Bengali). Ethnically, Bengalis are of Indo-Aryan origin. Approximately 2 % of the population consists of ethnic subgroups, including many tribal subgroups. Major tribal groups include Chakma, Marma, Santal, Garo, and Tripura. Originally, they were from various ethnic communities, including Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian races. The southeastern (Chittagong Hill Tracts), northeastern (Sylhet), northwestern (Rajshahi), northern (Dinajpur), and north-central (Mymensing) regions of the country are their living region (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*The Map of Bangladesh Showing Locations of Different Ethnic Groups and Languages*



Note: Adapted from <https://www.showmeneel.blogspot.com>

People of these ethnicities speak different dialects, although most can speak Bangla, the national language of Bangladesh. Each tribal group has its own cultural identity, values, and lifestyle, including language, family and marriage system, food habits, dress patterns, work, income, and employment (see Figures 2 and 3).

**Figure 2**

*Traditional Dress of the Garo Tribal Group*



Note: Adapted from <https://www.showmeneel.blogspot.com>

**Figure 3**

*A Chakma Tribal Woman Weaving a Saree*



Note. Adapted from <https://www.showmeneel.blogspot.com>

They practice different religions (including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and animism). As noted above, individuals of almost all the tribal groups included in this research have their own ethnocultural identity consisting of their own language, religious beliefs, music, arts, dress patterns, food habits, family values, and marriage systems, etc., which are different from their national cultural identity consisting of Bengali language, religious beliefs, music, arts, dress patterns, food habits, marriage systems, and so forth (Khaleque, 2016). As tribal children grow, they come into contact with mainstream Bengali culture and learn about it from their ethnic culture (Khaleque et al., 2016). Thus, the minority ethnic population develops a bicultural identity (Partha, 2014).

### **Present Study**

As mentioned before, so far, little or no investigation has been done on the bicultural issues of native ethnic minority populations, particularly in developing countries, including Bangladesh. In this context, the current study was intended to explore the unicultural and bicultural orientations of the minority ethnic youth in Bangladesh and the relationships between their cultural orientations and psychological adjustment. Forming a bicultural identity involves blending the components of two different cultures. According to some scholars (e.g., Friedman, 2012; Khaleque, 2016), the psychosocial development of bicultural persons is molded by integrating two unlike cultures, which is also true for the Bangladeshi tribal sample in this study.

As noted earlier, this is an exploratory study, and for this reason, instead of formulating any hypotheses, the study specifically explored the following research questions:

1. Do the Bangladeshi ethnic minority youth consider their heritage cultural values or national cultural values as the more important part of their lives?
2. Are there any differences between young men and women in affiliation with the different components of heritage and national culture?
3. Is there any difference between the unicultural and bicultural orientations of the youth?
4. Are there significant correlations between bicultural attitudes, gender, and psychological adjustment of the youth?
5. Are there independent effects of the national cultural orientation and the heritage cultural orientation on the psychological adjustment of the youth?

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants were 412 youth (60 % men, 40% women) from five major ethnic subgroups (i.e., Chakma, Marma, Garo, Santal, and Tripura) in Bangladesh. The average age of the participants was 22 years, ranging from 18 to 30. Their educational levels varied from

undergraduate (88 %) to graduate (12 %). The participants were recruited from six major public universities in Bangladesh based on convenience, willing consent to participate.

## Measures

The following two self-report questionnaires were administered to measure the bicultural attitudes and psychological adjustment of the participants respectively: (1) The Bicultural Attitude Scale for Youth (BAS for Youth), and (2) the Adult version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ) along with a socio-demographic questionnaire.

### *The Bicultural Attitude Scale for Youth (BAS for Youth)*

To measure individuals' cultural orientations, the Bangla version (Uddin et al., 2014) of the 16-item BAS was applied. The BAS was developed (Khaleque, 2006, 2008, 2014) based on the content of focus group discussions on bicultural orientations (Cortés, et al., 1994). The original BAS was devised in 2006 and was revised twice, first in 2011 and then in 2014 (Khaleque, 2011, 2014). The latest version of BAS (Khaleque, 2014, 2016) was used in this study. The first eight items (items 1–8, e.g., How important is it to you to celebrate holidays in of host (Bengali) culture?) assess an individual's orientation toward national culture (or host culture), and the last eight items (items 9–16, e.g., How important is it to you to wear the dress of your heritage culture?) assess an individual's orientation toward ethnic culture or heritage culture. Individuals replied to each item on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "not at all" to (4) "very much". The total score of the first eight items (1–8) indicates an individual's orientation toward the national or host culture. The sum score of the last eight items (9–16) represents an individual's orientation toward ethnic or heritage culture. The possible scores on the BAS for each cultural orientation (national culture and heritage culture) range from 8-32, with a midpoint of 20. The scale is conceptually designed in such a way that scores at or above the midpoint on the cultural values of the national or host culture (i.e., above the midpoint of the total score on items 1 through 8) indicate unicultural orientation toward the national culture and values at or above the midpoint on the cultural values of the heritage/ ethnic culture (i.e., above the midpoint of the total score on items 9 through 16) designate unicultural orientation toward heritage culture. Conversely, scores at or above the midpoint on the cultural values of both heritage culture and national culture designate bicultural orientation. In contrast, scores below the midpoint on the cultural values of both heritage and national cultures indicate cultural alienation or marginalization. The BAS (Youth) has been translated into five languages (i.e., Bangla, English, Italian, Korean, and Urdu) and has been administered to study the cultural orientations of immigrant or ethnic populations in several countries of Asia, Europe, and North America. Primary evidence about the validity of the BAS derived from an exploratory factor analysis showed two factors (Khaleque, 2008, 2016). Several other works (Khaleque, 2011, 2016; Khaleque et al., 2008; Podio-Guidugli, 2010) indicated that the scale is highly reliable (alpha coefficients vary from .80 to .86) and valid (item factor loading ranged from .62 -.96). In the present study, the alpha coefficient of BAS was .79 for the national culture and .85 for the heritage culture.

### ***The Adult version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ)***

The Bangla version (Uddin & Aktar, 2014) of the 42-item adult PAQ was designed to assess adult perceptions of their psychological adjustment/maladjustment (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005; Rohner, 2020). The questionnaire consists of seven subscales (6 items for each) associated with seven personality dispositions: hostility/ aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and negative worldview). Sample items for each of the seven subscales include: I want to hit something or someone (Hostility/Aggression), I like my friends to show a lot of affection toward me (Dependency), When I meet someone I do not know, I think s(he) is better than I am (Negative Self-Esteem), I think I am a failure (Negative Self-Adequacy), I have trouble making and keeping good friends (Emotional unresponsiveness), I am in a bad mood and get angry when I try to do something and I cannot do it (Emotional Instability) and I see the world as a dangerous place (Negative Worldview). The items of the PAQ scale were scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from almost always true (4) to almost never true (1). A higher sum score in all seven sub-scales designates lower psychological maladjustment and vice-versa. The sum of scores on the PAQ can ranged from a low of 42 (indicating high psychological adjustment) to a high of 168 (indicating serious psychological maladjustment). The scale is designed so that scores at or above the midpoint of 105 indicate psychological maladjustment and any score below the midpoint reveals psychological adjustment. Rigorous evidence reported by Rohner and Khaleque (2005) shows the robust reliability and validity of the Adult PAQ for use in cross-cultural research. Several evidences show that the coefficient alpha for the PAQ ranges from .81 to .91 (Khaleque & Ali, 2017; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). In the present study, the alpha coefficient of PAQ was .84.

### ***Socio-demographic Questionnaire***

All participants answered a socio-demographic questionnaire that elicited information regarding age, sex, ethnicity, marital status, socio-economic status, etc.

### ***Procedure***

Prior to the beginning of the data collection, approvals were obtained from the participants and their institutions. The study was conducted following the Helsinki Declaration. For the present study, we approached the university students in their classrooms. To include any students as participants, we recruited those who were from any tribal groups of Bangladesh (to measure bicultural attitude), as they have their own ethnocultural identity, including food habits, dress patterns, languages, cultural values, etc., and they come in interaction with the mainstream Bengali (national) culture. Before surveying, we presented an explanatory note describing the purposes of the study, including the ethical details and an informed consent form. Participants were informed that the data would be firmly confidential and only used for scientific analyses, combining data from all participants without specifying any individuals. Only participants who met inclusion criteria and provided written informed consent could participate in the study. We administered the survey questionnaires to the



participants in their classes with the approval of the concerned teachers. All measures were administered to the respondents in paper-pencil form. Participants were thanked, and token gifts were provided after finishing participation. Those who did not specify their tribal ethnicity in the socio-demographic form were excluded from the data set.

### Data Analyses

As the present study was designed to explore unicultural and bicultural orientations of the minority ethnic youth (also considering gender) in Bangladesh, the number of participants (i.e., frequency), descriptive statistics in terms of cultural orientations (national and heritage culture), and different components of national and heritage culture were calculated. We also computed a t-test to find if there are gender differences in the different components of measuring cultural orientations, including overall heritage culture and national culture. Furthermore, as the study was designed to investigate the relationships between cultural orientations and psychological adjustment of Bangladeshi ethnic minority youths, intercorrelations between these variables were examined. Multiple regression analysis examined the independent contributions of the national and heritage cultural orientations on psychological adjustment. Statistical analyses were executed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

### Results

Results in Table 1 show that a significantly greater number of the ethnic minority youth, regardless of gender, considered their heritage cultural values a more important part of their lives than the national cultural values. A detailed description of the table revealed that most of the youth considered some components of the heritage cultural values, such as speaking in the language of their heritage culture, wearing the traditional dresses of the heritage culture, celebrating holidays in the ways of the heritage culture, growing up with values of heritage culture, and marrying someone belonging to their heritage culture more important than that of the national cultural values. Similarly, they enjoy eating food and listening to music from their heritage culture more than the national culture.

**Table 1**

*Cultural Orientations of the Bangladeshi Ethnic-Minority Youths*

Cultural orientations	n	%	$\chi^2$
Bicultural orientation	236	57%	385.18***
Unicultural orientation (toward heritage culture)	162	39%	
Unicultural orientation (toward national culture)	13	3%	
Culturally marginal or isolate	1	0.24%	

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 1 also demonstrates that the largest number of young adults (57%) tended to be biculturally oriented. The second largest number of them were uniculturally oriented toward the heritage culture, a smaller number of them (only 3%) were uniculturally oriented toward the national culture, and less than one percent of them were culturally alienated or

marginal. These differences are statistically significant.

Table 2 shows that compared to young men, a significantly greater proportion of the ethnic minority young women expressed stronger affiliations with different components of their heritage culture, such as cultural identity, food, dress, language, and marriage. In contrast, a significantly greater proportion of the ethnic minority young men expressed stronger orientations with some components of the national culture, such as cultural values, language, dress, and marriage, than the young women.

**Table 2**

*Contingency Table for Response Options According to Gender (N = 412)*

	Items	Gender	Response Options				Contingency Coefficient
			Not at All	A Little	Some what	Very Much	
1	How much are the values of the national culture a part of your life?	F	15	88	48	15	.158*
		M	44	101	67	34	
2	How important is it to you to celebrate holidays in the ways people do nationally?	F	4	18	78	66	.072
		M	5	33	99	109	
3	How important is it to you to grow up with values of the national culture?	F	21	76	50	19	.117
		M	52	96	66	32	
4	How important is it to you to speak in the national language of your country?	F	4	28	96	38	.140*
		M	7	58	107	74	
5	How important is it to you to wear the dresses of the national culture?	F	20	88	47	11	.157*
		M	54	104	61	27	
6	How much do you enjoy eating the foods of the main stream population of your country?	F	8	61	68	29	.061
		M	14	98	86	48	
7	How much do you enjoy the music of the national culture?	F	5	38	75	48	.119
		M	12	77	105	52	
8	How important is it to you to marry someone belonging to the national culture?	F	130	22	6	8	.240***
		M	138	44	31	33	
9	How much are the values of your ethnic heritage culture a part of your life?	F	5	8	24	129	.058
		M	5	15	43	183	
10	How important is it to you to celebrate holidays in the ways of your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	4	2	16	144	.143*
		M	0	9	29	208	

11	How important is it to you to grow up with the values of your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	4	2	17	143	.159*
		M	1	9	45	191	
12	How important is it to you to speak in the language of your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	5	5	13	143	.158*
		M	1	13	37	195	
13	How important is it to you to wear dresses that match your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	5	5	26	130	.216***
		M	4	33	59	150	
14	How much do you enjoy eating foods of your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	2	4	22	138	.143*
		M	0	18	40	188	
15	How much do you enjoy the music of your ethnic/heritage culture?	F	3	9	53	101	.109
		M	7	28	70	141	
16	How important is it to you to marry someone belonging to your ethnic heritage culture?	F	2	5	16	143	.049
		M	4	10	29	203	
		M	4	10	29	203	

Note. F= Female, M= Male; \* p<.05, \*\*\*p<.001.

Results in Table 3 present the mean difference between the ratings of the importance of the national culture and heritage cultures’ importance. The table revealed that the mean importance score is significantly higher for the heritage culture than for the national culture. The results also revealed that young women and men considered their heritage cultural values as a more important part of their lives compared to the national cultural values.

**Table 3**  
*Mean Difference Between Ratings of Perceived Importance of the National Cultural Values and the Heritage Cultural Values*

	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
National culture	412	20.47	4.36	28.57***
Heritage culture	412	29.46	3.57	

Note. \*\*\*p < .001

However, Table 4 showed that young women expressed their feelings of the heritage culture’s importance more strongly than young men. Moreover, as shown in Table 2, young women considered some components of heritage culture more important than young men.

**Table 4**

*Mean Differences Between the Ratings of Importance of the Heritage Culture and the National Culture of the Minority Youngs According to Gender*

	Gender	<i>n</i> (412)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Heritage culture	Women	166	29.85	3.75	1.81***	.18
	Men	246	29.20	3.54		
National culture	Women	166	20.39	3.72	.31	.03
	Men	246	20.53	4.71		

Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Results in Table 5 show a significant correlation between youth's involvement with the heritage and national cultures. As the majority (57%) of the youth are biculturally orientated, so they are likely to have significant involvement with both cultures. However, the results showed a significant correlation between psychological adjustment and heritage cultural orientation. However, the correlation between national cultural orientation and psychological adjustment was not significant. Similarly, gender has no significant correlation with psychological adjustment.

**Table 5**

*Correlations between Attitudes Toward Heritage Culture, National Culture, and Psychological Adjustment of the Respondents*

	Gender	National	Heritage	PAQ
Gender	—	.016	-.089	-.075
National		—	-.30***	-.02
Heritage			—	-.149**
PAQ				—

Note. PAQ = Personality Assessment Questionnaire.

\*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

To see the independent impacts of the national cultural orientation and the heritage cultural orientation on the psychological adjustment of both the young men and the women, hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted with culture orientations and gender as predictive variables and psychological adjustment as the outcome variable. Table 6 shows that only heritage cultural orientation made a significant independent contribution to the psychological adjustment of respondents. The national cultural orientation and the respondents' gender made no significant salient contributions to the psychological adjustment of the respondents.

**Table 6**

*Multiple Regression Analyses of Heritage Culture, National Culture, and Gender as Predictors of Psychological Adjustment of the Bangladeshi Ethnic Youths*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1 (Constant)	108.50	5.48			
Heritage culture	.56	.18	.15**	.02	.02
Excluded variables					
National culture			.07		
Gender			.09		

Note. \*\*p <.01

Table 6 also shows that after controlling for the effect of national cultural orientation and gender, the heritage cultural orientation alone explains about 2% of the variability in the psychological adjustment of young men and women.

### Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that a significantly greater number of Bangladeshi ethnic youth are inclined to be biculturally oriented, although both the young men and women consider their ethnic cultural values to be more essential in their lives than the national cultural values, and the ethnic women have a stronger feeling about heritage culture than their men counterpart. Thus, the results direct a tendency of young men and women, especially young men, to adapt, accommodate, and adjust to the national culture and their heritage culture. The conclusions seem to confirm the acculturation literature, which shows that, generally, young people tend to acculturate rapidly with the host or national culture (Gil et al., 1994; Szapocznik et al., 1990). Acculturation literature suggests that a vital element of healthy intergroup affairs is the positive attitudes of the majority and the minority ethnic groups toward each other's cultures. A positive attitude implies a blending of a positive view of the cultural preservation of ethnic groups and an appreciation of the need to accommodate diversity equitably (Berry, 2001; Citrin et al., 1997). Research findings show that biculturalism or multiculturalism in a society dramatically influences the acculturation process and cultural adaptation of ethnic minority and majority societies (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003)

The findings of this research show that compared to young men, a significantly greater proportion of young women have stronger affiliations to different components of their heritage culture, including food, dress, language, and marriage with someone belonging to their heritage culture. On the contrary, a significantly greater proportion of young men than women have stronger affiliations to some components of the national culture, including national language, dress, and marriage with someone from other cultures. The

findings of this study are in line with that of several other studies, which showed that women are generally inclined to be more uniculturally oriented toward their ethnic culture, and men tend to be more biculturally oriented toward both the ethnic and the national cultures (Khaleque et al., 2015, 2016). In all likelihood, one primary reason for this gender difference lies in the fact that women tend to be less exposed to affiliates of other ethnic groups than men. Unlike minority ethnic groups, men are likely to be more exposed to other cultures because most of them work outside the home and have more social and cultural interactions with people from different cultures.

Additionally, the findings display that heritage cultural orientation (not national cultural orientation) has a significant independent effect on the psychological functioning of Bangladeshi ethnic youth, regardless of gender. It may be noted here that in the present study, the response patterns of young men and women on different components of bicultural attitudes were analyzed mainly to understand how gender differences in cultural orientations are related to the psychological adjustment of young men and women. Whereas, in another study, the response patterns of young men and women on different components of bicultural attitudes were analyzed mainly to understand how gender differences in cultural orientations are related to paternal and maternal acceptance-rejection., and the findings revealed that perceived parental acceptance has a stronger relationship with the heritage culture than perceived maternal acceptance of the youth (Khaleque et al., 2021).

Confirmatory evidence of strong relationships between psychological well-being, heritage culture, and traditional family orientations (Cauce & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2002; Priest et al., 2016). The primary reason for the unique effect of heritage cultural orientation on psychological adjustment is that individuals with a favorable attitude toward their ethnic culture are likely to receive familial support to integrate the heritage culture values with the national cultural values (Perez-Brena et al., 2018). They try to make better adjustments in a bicultural or multicultural environment, especially when the family environment highlights the ethnic-racial socialization of the members (Nguyen et al., 2015). The family often plays an important role in fostering cultural transition, intercultural integration, social values, and psychological well-being of its members, especially its young members, by providing support (Stuart et al., 2010). In addition, adaptive culture in the family often aids as a buffer or risk absorber for youth by providing emotional care in intercultural conflict and adjustment (Dunbar et al., 2015; Priest et al., 2016).

Another likely reason for the unique effect of heritage cultural orientation on the psychological adjustment of the youth is that they consider their heritage cultural values to be an integral part of their identity. According to Erikson (1982), identity development is critical during adolescence and young adulthood. The question “Who am I?” becomes central during young adulthood. Erikson viewed adolescence and emerging adulthood as a critical period of life because of significant physical, psychological, and social changes. During this stage of life, emerging adults try to form a clear view of self-concept and identity and make decisions about education, career paths, and life-partner selection. Despite different

views about the onset of self-concept and identity development, researchers agree that a person's self-concept and identity tremendously influence his/her behavior, self-esteem, social skill development, and psychological adjustment (Khaleque, 2018; Marsh & Martin, 2011).

### **Limitations and Strength**

Although this investigation is based on a reasonably large sample and provides valuable information about cultural orientations and psychological adjustment of Bangladeshi ethnic minority youth, the study is not free from certain limitations, such as the sample sizes from some ethnic groups were few to make statistically meaningful inter-ethnic comparisons. Moreover, the study is based on convenience samples. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where respondents are selected because of their accessibility and proximity to researchers. The most obvious criticism about convenience sampling is that the sample is not representative of the target population and has limited generalizability to infer about the target population. Nevertheless, convenience sampling is one of the most frequently used and common techniques. Researchers prefer this sampling technique because it is readily available, fast, and inexpensive (Jager et al., 2017). Although convenience samples have less clear generalizability because of questionable representation of the target population than probability samples, researchers argue that the representativeness and generalizability of convenience samples can be improved by increasing the homogeneity and the size of convenience samples (Suen et al., 2014). The present study used convenience samples from a homogenous population (i. e., the minority ethnic population in Bangladesh), and the sample size was quite large (i. e., n=412). In addition, since it was a cross-sectional study, it was impossible to know how acculturation patterns change over individuals' lifespans. About 94% of social surveys are cross-sectional, mainly because they take less time and money to complete a research project than longitudinal research. However, researchers (Jap & Anderson, 2004) have been increasingly concerned about the validity of cross-sectional research for mainly two reasons: (1) common method variance (CMV) (i.e., systematic method error due to the use of a single rater or single source), and (2) lack of causal inference (CI) (i.e., inability to infer causation from observed empirical relations). Thus, conducting longitudinal studies as a means of reducing CMV and enhancing CI would appear to be a worthy alternative. However, an extensive review of the literature (Rindfleisch et al., 2008) indicates that this solution is also not perfect because of some potential problems of longitudinal studies, such as confounding findings due to intervening events during extended periods of data collection and reduction in sample size due to respondent attrition. Therefore, a well-designed cross-sectional study may be an adequate substitute for longitudinal data collection (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). In addition, in an exploratory study, researchers generally start with a cross-sectional design to determine whether there are links or associations between certain variables. Then, they would set up a longitudinal study to discover the directions of relationships that lead to establishing cause and effect relationships (Putnick et al., 2014; Rindfleisch et al., 2008).

### **Implications and Future Research**

Despite these limitations, we think the present findings provide valuable information about the cultural orientation patterns and the psychological adjustment of the ethnic minority youth in Bangladesh. Acculturation researchers have found an association between bicultural identity and adolescent externalizing problem behaviors, such as delinquency and conduct problems (Smokowski et al., 2008). Acculturation gaps between parents and children can cause family conflict, increasing the likelihood that youth will indulge in externalizing problem behaviors (Khaleque et al., 2015; Mogro-Wilson, 2008). A disturbing concern to researchers and clinicians is the empirical findings that high levels of acculturation often result in the development of severe behavior problems and drug abuse in adolescents (Tonin et al., 2008).

Several researchers have identified some specific factors connected with acculturation processes that significantly mediate the emergence of behavior problems in minority ethnic youth (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Two important mediators, among others, are family (Gonzales et al., 2006) and specific parenting practices (Allen et al., 2008; Khaleque et al., 2021). Literature on minority ethnic families suggests that preference for “familism” based on the emphasis on the importance of the family over autonomy and individualism (Comas-Díaz, 2006) often works as a protective factor against the development of behavior problems (Driscoll & Torres, 2020). Further, the literature on adolescents’ behavior problems has also revealed that parenting practices, such as weak monitoring and low parental control, often lead to the emergence of externalizing and other delinquent behavior (Wagner et al., 2010). Research literature also shows that cultural beliefs and values about parenting practices can vary between different cultural traditions (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009).

These findings shed light on the central role of family processes and parenting practices in the context of bicultural identity and behavioral development of minority ethnic youth (Gonzales et al., 2006). Moreover, these findings have important scientific and clinical implications for indicating that any effective intervention strategy and the next generation of counselors’ training programs to handle the behavioral problems of ethnic minority youth should take into account their family processes and parenting practices in the context of their acculturation processes (Shriver & Allen, 2008; Khaleque et al., 2021). The current study was cross-sectional research, so it was impossible to know how acculturation patterns change over individuals’ lifespans. Therefore, future research with longitudinal design seems necessary to better understand the influences of family and parenting processes on changes in cultural orientation forms of ethnic minority youth over their lifespan.



## **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

### **Ethical Approval**

All procedures were performed for data collection of this study in accordance with the ethical standards of the respective universities' institutional review committees and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments.

### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent was obtained from all participants included in this study.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no competing interests.

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