



## ACCULTURATION: A STUDY OF INTEGRATIONAL ASPECTS AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN TALLINN, ESTONIA

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### ABSTRACT

Due to globalization and ever increasing human movements, number of international students in Estonia have been increasing over the last one decade. International students are facing various challenges in a new environment. Despite of the increasing numbers, very few scholarly works attempted to address international student's integrational aspects. The Purpose of this study was to examine acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn. The survey sample comprise of 151 International students from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ukraine, Nepal, India, Pakistan. Data were obtained through survey and analyzed by using Berry's (2005) model of acculturation. Due to the sample size, the results cannot be generalized. Using Berry's original model of Acculturation, results showed that Integration was the most preferred strategy and the tendency towards integration varies when analyzing different socio-cultural domains of Marriage, Language, Education, Friends etc. Interview data to know the reasons of choosing different acculturation domains however suggests that even though integration has been the most preferred strategy, it can have different point of understanding for respondents. This study finally suggests that more in-depth study is required in order understand international student's integrational aspects.

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## Introduction

International students worldwide have been on the increasing side. In the year 2008, 3.3 million students moved from one country to another only to study their tertiary -level education (OECD 2010). Only the USA accepted more than a million international students in the year 2018 ( IIE, The power of international education , 2018). In Europe the trend is also the same where the United Kingdom is being the most attractive country for international students followed by Germany, France, Spain and Belgium (Study international, 2018). This trend is visible for other countries in European Union and the number of international students are rising. In Estonia in the year 2005 there were only 840 International students, in the year 2010 the number was 1282 and in the year 2017 the number of international students were 4395. It means the growth rate is very high. It also indicates that the number of foreign-born people has been increasing in Estonia. If a country contains number of immigrants and if the number is on the increasing side, their policymakers will have to pay special attention on these particular phenomena (Robinson 2005). International students however not only is significant for the universities that host them, they are also important for the country and society which hosts them as they enrich these countries with their different cultures and perspectives, which also brings cultural awareness and appreciation (Ghuman, 2003). International students not only add their value to the society in terms of workforce but also contribute to the intellectual aspects to make into capital for the host society. This is where the concept of acculturation comes into the entire discourse of international students. It is a process of changes that occur as a result of two or more cultures getting into contact on a regular basis (Berry 2005) When international students move to a new country they may face challenges and acculturation stresses (Berry, 2005) due to adjustment problems etc. There have been studies based on the acculturation concept concerning refugees or immigrants but the previous studies have somewhat neglected their focus on International students and their acculturation ( Zhou 2008, Clore and Gaynor 2018) Even though international student go through different psychological problems and adjustment stresses. Considering all these aspects into account, this study aims to enhance our understanding of Acculturation preferences of International students in Tallinn, Estonia.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, which is to enhance our understanding of acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn, Estonia. This study asked the following research questions: What are the acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn, Estonia? How do these acculturation preferences play out in different social-cultural domains? What are the reasons of choosing these different acculturation preferences?

## **Theoretical Framework**

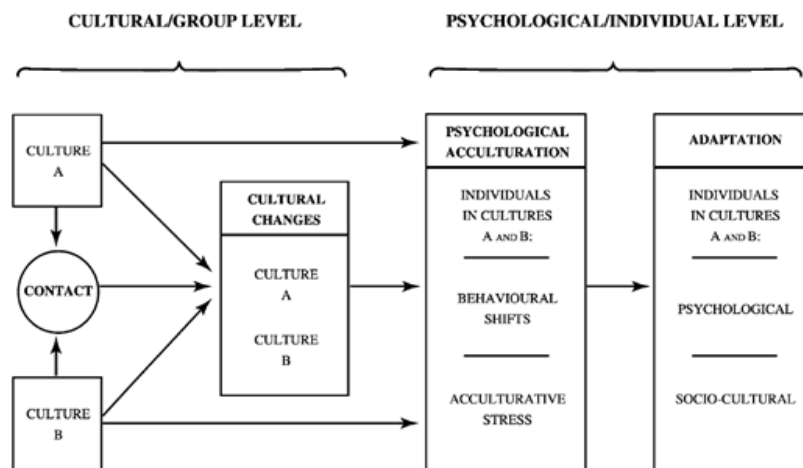
### *Acculturation*

The Initial conceptualization of acculturation has been viewed as uni-dimensional model and the focus was only on the migrants and it was theorized that migrant goes through a process of discarding cultural heritage and coping with the host country's values (Schwartz, 2010). From uni-dimensional, acculturation has been conceptualized as bi-dimensional over the last few decades, Berry (1992, 1997, 2005) for instance came up with the idea that acculturation as 'dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between more cultural groups and their individual members (Bery, 2005).

Several models on Acculturation have been formulated in order to indicate acculturation process. Ward and his colleagues (2001) formulated a framework to distinguish between different approached like how to learn culture based on cultural approach, coping approach and societal approach as a whole. However coping and stress framework was first developed by Berry (1997) where he explained factors that affect acculturation and adaptation.

Berry (1992, 1997, 2005) designed his framework in a way which linked psychological and cultural acculturation focusing on two different groups which are living together and closely associated each other. Both group and individual level has been emphasized in this frame. On the group level, the formulation of different cultural groups and their core contacts and changes in behaviour have been highlighted, whereas on the individual level, psychological changes and eventual adaptation have been focused as Berry (2005) stated that "these changes can be a set of rather easily accomplished behavioural shifts or they can be more problematic, producing acculturative stress as manifested by uncertainty, anxiety, and depression"

Acculturation strategies based on groups and individuals can differ on their preferences in the acculturation process (Zhang, 2011). Two components are core for these strategies: behaviour and attitude, attitude is the individual's preferences and behaviour is an individual's activities. When it comes to conceptualizing these strategies and adaptive on both cultural and psychological aspects, Berry (2005) developed the model to measure acculturation preferences.



**Figure 1.1:** General Acculturation Strategies Framework (Berry, 2005)

This can be illustrated by referencing each component highlighted in the figure 1.1. Berry has suggested that acculturation strategies of ethnicity can be described in terms of two independent dimensions: one is the retention of one's cultural tradition and the other is the establishment and maintenance of relationships with the larger society. One can conceptualize a framework when these criteria are considered simultaneously and it posits four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry 1997). From the point of non-dominant group's view, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the assimilation strategy is defined. Here individuals prefer to shed their heritage culture and become absorbed into the dominant society, in contrast, when individual's place value on holding onto their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the separation alternative is defined. Here the individuals turn their back on involvement with other cultural groups and turn inward toward their own heritage culture. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's heritage culture in daily interactions

and with other groups, integration is an option. In this case, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained while at the same time seeking, as a member of an ethno cultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is a little possibility or interest in heritage cultural maintenance (often reasons for enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) marginalization is defined (Berry 2005). Islam (2008) in his research on acculturation preferences among migrants in UK and Sweden stated that acculturation preferences varies because of immigrants' policy of host country. Therefore, it is also significant to have a framework of empirical studies based on acculturation process and strategies.

#### **4.2 Acculturation model by Berry (1997, 2005, 2011)**

As mentioned above Berry (1997, 2005, 2011) suggested that acculturation strategies can be explained from two dimensional ways: Retention of someone's cultural tradition can be on one side and the other side maintaining relationships with the larger society. This framework can be conceptualizing within four strategies: Assimilation, Integration, Separation and Marginalization (Berry, 1997,2005, 2011).

These strategies are from the non-dominant point of view it means it carries the names from the immigrants who live in a different cultural (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2011). When an individual do not want to maintain his or her own culture and seek to daily interaction with other cultures Assimilation is defined. Individuals in this strategy chose to shed their own culture. On the other hand when an individual only wants to maintain the original cultures and do not wish to interact with any other cultures, separation is what it is called according to the strategies. Here, individuals only prefers to maintain their heritage culture. Maintaining both heritage and host cultures and other cultures and maintaining daily interaction with other groups is called Integration. So, here some degree of integrity in cultures can be found. When an individual or individuals do not maintain both heritage culture and other cultures, often because of social exclusion or discrimination, marginalization is defined (Berry, 1997, 2005 , 2011)

#### **Empirical studies on Acculturation**

When a student move from one academic environment to another it has the relocation aspects to a new country and this relocation is becoming common

phenomena in the recent years. This in one hand gives intellectual and cultural enrichment for the students but at the same time, it also has many challenges and difficulties. Brisset and his colleagues (2010) did a study on Vietnamese international students in France to know their Psychological and Sociological adaptation. In this study they came up with an understanding that International students go through increasing number of psychological pressure than the local students. Yeh and Inose (2003) stated that Chinese International students may encounter considerable amount stress in their academic and social sphere. In a study of the Role of Identity, discrimination and acculturation among international students in American Classroom, Brooke and his colleagues (2008) came up with findings that Acculturation and perceived discrimination were related to international students' educational satisfaction. Identity gap has also been another aspect which relates educational satisfaction and mediate the relationships among acculturation and their study satisfaction. These challenges however often results less in satisfaction in their university experiences ( Zhau, 2008) Utilizing the concept of acculturation Jenny and Charless (2007) explored the experiences of international students in the US southeast university. In this study they found that not all of the issues of international students that they can be problematized in the context of adjustment, as the other researchers do, but some more serious issues need to be taken into account due to inadequacies within the host society.

From home to any host society, this transition can be exiting for students but many students experiences homesickness during their transition ( Naeem and Gul 2010) This homesickness however is viewed as psychological problem that students suffer during their transition period ( Wei, 2007) Among the Irinian students studying in Malaysia 43.3% faces homesickness and 33.8% faces depression while pursuing their studies in Malaysia (Majid, 2014) those who are homesick usually miss their parents , friends and family members. This prolonged homesickness could lead to psychological disorder and many students experienced this during they study period (Lee and Smith 2008 ) This depressive symptoms may lead to negative mood, loneliness and students sometimes become pessimistic in their thoughts about the host society (Orzechowska, 2013). Depression affects an individual's social functioning and affects his or her basic daily activities. Even though depression is a serious mental health and is imperative to go under treatment but very less number of people can recover from it (Naeem et al 2004) Students who suffer this problem, it can become major issues in their future life though studies have not explored this issue as much as it should be given emphasized (Lee and Smith 2008, Majid, 2014, Levine and Sanaka 2010).

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Sometimes various environmental factors influenced students during their transition period. Factors which includes low social support may influence to bad mood and negative attitude towards host country, which can also produce homesickness. Sometimes when certain demands are to be fulfilled or met in the new environment it leads the feeling of separation or being marginalized which also leads to homesickness (Naeem and Gul 2010)

Individuals do cope into a new environment their own ways. However, there are two main types of coping strategies, one is problem focused coping strategies and the other is emotion focused. Problem focused strategy is more associated with adaptation where an individual focused on overcoming the problems and to get engaged with the society. This strategy tries to take control of the stress (Folkman and Lazarus 1985) Emotion focused coping try to involve emotional support from relatives and friends. One of the good examples of emotion focused strategy is to keep individuals busy with other activities. (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985)

Often universities or mental health professionals provides psychological treatment and many universities also have counsellor to support students (Roberts and Bottonari, 2007) many students however are not willing to consult and get treatment for their depression and homesickness and some students do not even want to recognize it due to the social stigma related to it (Clore and Gaynor, 2008). These students do not want to reveal their problems to their teachers, friends and mental health professionals and very few students have been able to overcome this situation themselves by using their self-help techniques (Roberts and Bottonari, 2007) Saravanan and Alizi (2017) did their research on International students in Malaysia and came up with the results that most of the students suffer from acculturative stress and many of them even face marginalization during their transition period.

Many studies came up with the fact that higher education institutions need to have the understanding and the implications of synthesis and choices of international students. For a multicultural environment it is particularly important who believes in internal values and culture of differences (Howard, 2018) Many studies however found out that Asian students do not use counselling system compare to non-Asian students (Hazan, 2006). Many international students only seek from their known ones but do not turn to university counselling and any other social support (Sue 1981). International students have different degrees of acculturation, which results different levels of satisfaction. Social adjustment and unfamiliarity is also one aspect to consider in their acculturative process (Berry, 2005)

Studies have shown that Asian and African students encounter many difficulties when they try to acculturate into the host society ( Saravan and Alias 2019) Many students informed that they do not feel welcome by the host society members (Tan, 1994 ) Islam (2008) came with the fact that Asian and African students do not endorse emotional social issues but they are more associated with practical and career issues, which can also be at some point be measured as acculturative stressors and could lead psychological disorder as it sometimes leaves the individual alienated from their friends and society. Asian community maintains their history and cultural values (Islam, 2008)

Islam (2008 ) in his study on Acculturation stated that the term ethnic identity has often synonymous used with acculturation but these are two different aspects and should be distinguished. Acculturation is focused more on changes when individuals come into contact with different cultural groups and more associated from group aspect whereas ethnic identity may be an aspect of acculturation and more concern of individual level.

Ghuman (1997, 99, 03) did a research on acculturation on Asian immigrants in the UK and came up with the findings that “Majority of young Asian people prefers integration and rejects assimilation, marginalization, and separation strategies. Thus the majority of young Asians are bi-lingual, and bi-cultural. They have maintained some aspects of their own culture and at the same time adopted some of the majority cultural norms, they defined personal identity in a ‘hyphenated way’, for example, ‘Indo-English’ However it is to state that many studies have shown that integration is the most adaptive way of acculturation and can be conducive for immigrants while marginalization is the worst adaptive way of acculturation (Lee and Smith 2008, Majid, 2014, Levin and Sanaka 2010).

## Methodology

This study took its departure point to enhance our understanding of acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn and how these preferences play out in different socio-cultural domains. One of the reasons of choosing Estonian context is because the number of international students are increasing over the last few years. This study took its data from three different universities in Tallinn and they are Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology and Tallinn University.



These universities were selected because of the fact that these are universities that have large number of foreign students in Tallinn.

To answer the first research question: What are the acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn, a quantitative methodology has been used by utilizing survey questions as prescribed by Berry (1997, 2005, 2011) To answer the second research question of how these preferences varies in different socio-cultural domains, a quantitative methodology has been deployed by constructing survey questions as prescribed by Lathi (2002) and to answer the third research question of what are the reasons of choosing these different acculturation preferences, a qualitative method has been used by conducting semi-structured interviews as prescribed by Islam (2017)

### **Advantages and limitations of the chosen methodology**

One of the advantages of chosen methodology is to have the flexibility of data sources, which gives the researcher the convenience to collect data, and it can be utilized for both informal and formal interviews and discussion. Though interview method may not give us statistical understanding but can give us rich textual data, which can provide in-depth understanding of how preferences play out in different socio-cultural domains and the reasons of choosing them. It is also conducive to use interview method to understand complex behaviours and people's emotion.

It is however to note that there were some limitations in collecting data through chosen methods. Due to time constraint, it was difficult to select large number of respondents for both survey and interview. However, it is also to note that out of the population, large number of sample may not always give us good results as some in-depth understanding can also bring rich data which can be analysed through relevant theoretical context.

### **Sampling**

To be able to have diverse and representative number of respondents a simple random sampling technique was utilized. With this technique, all participants have equal chance to be involved in the same of this study. Samples were selected from three different universities: Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology and Tallinn University and the

participants are from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ukraine. This is here to note that, this study took only the full time students into account as they often face the acculturation stressors than the short time exchange students and mentioned groups are the dominant nationalities that are studying in Tallinn as an International student. In total 151 participants attended the survey questions out of 295 that were prescribed by the international coordinators from three different universities. In the beginning, the questionnaires were sent to the respondents where the objective of the research was mentioned to give them the idea of the study and their there was an option whether or not they want to take part of Interview session. These way interview respondents were selected to have in-depth understanding.

### Sample size and data collection

For the survey, there were 151 participants and they answered questions through on line questionnaire. Participants are all full time current students from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and Ukraine. Since these study will not analyse their preferences based on nationality, rather this study will analyse only their overall preferences in acculturation strategies and how it plays out in different socio-cultural domains, that's why participants demographic information have not been provided in this dissertation, however all these information were taken for another study and was part of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire questions were made from Berry's (1997, 2005 , 2011) model and contains 16 close ended questions. First section is designed in a way where students overall preferred acculturation can be found and the second section has been designed to have understanding how it varies in different socio-cultural domains.

Respondents have been approached through the international coordinators from three different universities. Tallinn University of Technology's international students coordinator prescribed 60 students mail list, who were willing to participate on line survey. Tallinn University's international students coordinator sent 55 students mail list and EUAS's hostel coordinator sent 80 participants list. So, all together 295 students mail list have been prescribed from three different universities and out of them 151 respondents answered and filled in the on line survey form.

Semi- structured interviews were conducted among 11 international students who are all at the moment studying. The interview questions were formulated based on the Acculturation stressors mention in the theoretical framework; hence the

Academic stressors, Language stressors and Socio-cultural stressors were in foundation of the interview questions. Among interview participants, 3 were from Bangladesh, 3 from Nigeria, 2 from Cameroon, 1 each from Pakistan, India and Ukraine. This is to note that interview respondents have been selected from the on line survey where it was mentioned whether or not respondents want to participate a face-to-face interview. 11 respondents answered yes, and they all have been interviewed. However, interview data have been analyzed to get in-depth ideas about the reasons of choosing different acculturation domains as prescribed by Islam (2017). Interview gives us rich textual data, despite of the fact that this cannot be generalized.

### **Data Analysis**

Interview data were analyzed through Narrative analysis. Initial data were transcribed and then double-checked and then the next step was to code them and the coding has been made through theoretical coding and then they were categorized and through the categories the narratives were formulated. Survey data have been analyzed through simple mean and percentages using several tables.

### *Ranking of the variables*

In this study, variables are ranked Low, Moderate and High scale (Lathi 2002) Where low being 1, Moderate being 2 and High being 3 in order. Here Integration will be ranked as Independent variable using different socio-cultural domains (Islam, 2008) the descriptions of what this rank means are as follows

**Low:** Intention to integrate is low or no Intention.

**Moderate:** Intention towards integration is minimum.

**High:** Intention to integrate is high.

This scale will be used for different socio-cultural domains as prescribed by Islam (2008)

### *Marriage (M)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual does not want to get married outside his or her own community.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says, he or she does not mind to get married outside the community but prefers to get married inside the community.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not want to get married inside their community.

### *Social Activities (S)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she organize or join to their community based activities but do not participate any other activities organized by other communities.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says he or she participates their community activities but do not mind participating activities outside the community.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not like participating activities inside their community, rather prefers participating activities outside the community.

### *Language (L)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she does not want to learn or speak the host society's language.

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says he or she knows the host society language but prefers to speak own language and wants to practice both.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she wants to speak only host society's language.

### *Educational Activities (E)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says, he or she does not want to study further in Estonia

**Moderate Intention:** If an individual says, he or she wants to study further in Estonia but would prefer to study in some other European countries.

**High Intention:** If an individual says he or she wants further in Estonia.

### *Entrepreneurial Activities (En)*

**Low Intention:** If an individual says he or she doesn't want to establish a business in Estonia

**High Intention:** If an individual says, he or she wants to establish a business in Estonia.

### Number of International students in Estonia

The number of international students increasing in Estonia quite rapidly. Below table will illustrate the rate and the exact number of international students from the year 2005 until 2018.

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Year	Number of International students
2005	840
2006	901
2007	885
2008	908
2009	1072
2010	1282
2011	1573
2012	1876
2013	2230
2014	2287
2015	3476
2016	3917
2017	4395
2018	5047

(Table 1, Number of international students' science 2005, source Statics Estonia)

In the year 2018 the total number of international students in Estonia were 5047. Among them 1740 students were BA level students, 2129 were at MA level and 516 were at PhD level and integrated level were 322 and students of applied sciences were 340. The top 10 countries of foreign degree students are from Finland, Russia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Georgia, USA and Latvia. 21 BA level programs are taught in English in Estonian, 65 MA level programs are taught and 68 PhD levels are taught at the moment all over the Estonian universities. Currently, eight universities are offering International degree programs, among them 6 are located in Tallinn and two in Tartu.

## Presentation of Acculturation Strategies among International students in Tallinn

### *Acculturation preferences among International students in Tallinn*

Acculturation preferences	Percentage
Integration	79.7 (118)
Assimilation	20.3 (30)
Separation	0
Marginalization	0

Using Barry's (1992 Typology ) Results consistently indicated that high number of respondents 118 of 148 (79.7%) preferred Integration as their preferred strategy, followed by Assimilation 30 of 148 (13%) as opposed to separation and marginalization. 3 Respondents out of 151 however preferred no comments. What is significant here is that the number of respondents who preferred assimilation as their mode of acculturation which is different than host country's strategy as Estonia follows Integration as the mechanism to adapt to foreigners in the society. It would be interesting to get an analysis by the socio-cultural domain discussed below.

### *Integration Strategy Marriage (M)*

Integration Strategy (M)	Percentage
Low Intention	55 (83)
Moderate Intention	23.8 (36)
High Intention	21.2 (32)

More than half of the respondent 83 of 151 (55%) had low intention towards integration and they do not prefer getting married outside of their own community members, whereas 32 of 151 (21.2%) had the opposite view and they preferred to get married someone from the host society. A significant number of respondents 36 of 151 (23.8%) had moderate intention towards integration, they do not mind getting married someone from host society but would prefer someone from their own community. This data shows how foreign students want to lead their life at home as marriage as socio-cultural domain remains or reflects the daily lives at home where partners need to interact every single moment and everyday activities.

### Integration Strategy Social Activities (S)

Integration Strategy (S)	Percentage
Low Intention	6.6 (10)
Moderate Intention	16.6 (25)
High Intention	76.8 (116)

A significant number of respondents 116 of 151 (76.8%) preferred high intention towards integration and they do attend social events organized by the locals and they want to organize events with local friends and people. 25 respondents (16.6%) however preferred moderate intention as their mode of adaptation as they don't mind attending events organized by host society members but prefer attending events organized by their own community members. However 10 respondents among 151 (6.6%) percent had low intention towards integration as they do neither attended at events organized by host society member, nor they expect to attend any events organized by host society members.

### Integration Strategy Language (L)

Integration Strategy (L)	Percentage
Low Intention	14.6 (22)
Moderate Intention	23.8 (36)
High Intention	61.6 (93)

High number of respondents wants to learn Local language, 93 of 151 (61.6%), so they preferred high intention as their mode of acculturation, whereas 22 respondents of 151 (14.6%) had no intention to learn local language and 36 respondents or 151 (23.8%) do not mind learning local language but would prefer communicating in their own language. If we combine both moderate and low intention, it shows a significant number still had confusion whether or not they should learn local language and the benefit of it which can actually reflect ultimately how they want to integrate with the host society members and it would be interesting to know in depth of their view from the interview data.

### Integration Strategy Educational Activities (E)

Integration Strategy (E)	Percentage
Low Intention	19.5 (29)
Moderate Intention	24.2 (37)
High Intention	56.4 (85)

More than half of the respondents 85 of 151 (56.4%) had the intention to continue their studies in Estonian and somewhat satisfied with whatever educational services they have received, whereas 29 respondents had low intention towards integration as they do not intend to continue their studies in Estonia nor are they happy with the services that they have received. However, 37 respondents (24.2%) remained moderate as their mode of acculturation as they do not mind continuing their studies in Estonia but would prefer to continue their studies to some other European countries.

### Integration Strategy Entrepreneurial Activities (En)

Integration Strategy (En)	Percentage
Low Intention	30.2 (45)
High Intention	69.8 (104)

A high number of respondents wants to establish a business in Estonian, 104 respondents of 149 (69.8%) preferred high intention as their mode of acculturation as opposed to 45 respondents of 151 (30.2%) preferred not to establish any business in Estonia and would like to do any kind of business activities to some other countries than in Estonian. Two respondents preferred no comments to answer for this particular domain.

### Respondents View

**Impose Narratives:** *'I am an international student, if I were to settle in Estonian I have to learn the Estonian Language'*



Narratives concerning language accounts respondent's own language, English as an international language and host country's language. Own and international language is emphasized by many respondents, can be the reason that learning a new language can be time-consuming at the same time importance of learning language appeared strong as a narrative as X, a 24 year man from African continent (exact identity has been avoided due to ethical reasons) stated his concern on language.

#### Extract 1

1. I am from Africa, was living with my family members in village
2. Then moved to the capital city because of my education purpose
3. Had to learn English language
4. Before it was good enough to communicate with my tribal language
5. Now I am in Estonian again for higher study purpose
6. To be settled here, I need to learn again another language.

This respondent described about his country of origin (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4) quite elaborately while asked about Estonian language and what he thinks about learning this language. Hence the narratives of his own language and English as an international language were strong, it appeared his own native language narratives are well formulated (1.3 and 1.4) and English as a foreign language narrative appeared as something he had to learn (1.4) for his study purpose, hence forced narrative appeared evident in this regard. Learning Estonian language is something respondent wants to learn, as he wants to be settled in Estonia (1.6). it is not for any amusement, nor out of respondents own willing to interact with host society members or to get adapted with the society, but to get a an objective full filled, which is to get settled in a country (1.5 and 1.6), hence it appeared as impose narratives.

#### Extract 2

1. Learning any language is good.
2. But you decide to learn a new language; you need to think of its utility.
3. Estonian language does not have utility even in Tallinn.
4. Rather Russian language can be utilizing.
5. You learn Russian language, communicate with many locals.
6. And even in some foreign countries Russian language is spoken.
7. I still have to learn this language, as I am told to learn it to get permanent residence.

Respondent from Asian continent aged 22 (exact identity has been avoided due to ethical reasons) shared his sense of learning language. Respondent shared why it is not necessary to learn the Estonian Language (2.2, 2.3, 2.4,2.5,2.6) and at the same time, learning a new language has been shared as good aspect in life (2.1) whereas less valued narrative appeared very strongly when it came to learning host country's language (2.3,2.4). Wider social aspect of diverse language and its conflict has been shared by the respondent (2.3), as this respondent has mentioned the utility of local language is even questionable in the context of Tallinn (2.3, 2.5) which gives the respondents valid narratives not to learn local language. The necessity of learning local language however has been shared by the respondents (2.7) but no wider context of integration in terms of having friends and engaging any social activities or finding a job, rather getting permanent residence permit appeared as strong narrative (2.7) which can be viewed as impose narratives.

**Own linking narratives:** *'I have Estonian friends, they are nice but I would prefer to have my life partner from my own community.'*

Since language narratives in terms of having, friends and social activities or getting married was almost non-existent; follow up questions were made to illustrate their activities. However, respondents and their willingness to answer questions and express their opinion was well respected even when follow up questions were made. It can be understood that, international students sometimes go through tough situation while being abroad and studying in a different country with different situation, therefore some additional questions were directed to abort their emotion from the entire context. Concerning having friends and partner from host societies, many of the respondents own linking narratives appeared stronger and differed from the language narratives in some extent.

#### Extract 3

1. I have local friends
2. They are nice
3. Sometimes I get some advice from them which is also helpful
4. To spend time, one needs to have friends
5. I have friends who are also from my country
6. But you need variation
7. They are nice but I don't think I can think of having a life partner among them

Respondent's narratives towards friends and choosing partners appeared not yet developed from this extract, as local and country friends (3.1 and 3.5) have been categorized as friends. Own likings and willingness to have local friends appeared strong from this extract (3.1, 3.2, 3.3,3.4 and 3.6) willingness to have variation to choose friends appeared strong narrative (3.6) also it suggests international student's loneliness while being abroad. One significant aspect of choosing friend however can be viewed as to get advice in many regards to get adapted in a new country can be found from this extract (3.3), which is somewhat different from previous extracts. Own likings of choosing partners from same community appeared strong (3.7), which can also be associated with family and home life that can be viewed somewhat different than social activities.

Concerning social activities, respondents own linking appeared strong. Respondent aged 28 from Asian continent expressed her opinion.

#### Extract 4

1. I like attending events and enjoying my life
2. Going out to any events are OK for me
3. I like dancing, sometime my community members do not see it as good for female members, that's why I sometime prefer even to go out with my local friends
4. Social events arranged by my community members are also very nice and interesting.

Own liking narratives appeared strong to attend events and social activities (4.1,4.3 and 4.4). Attending event arranged by the locals however can be viewed something extra or doing as an external factor as the respondent mentioned "that's why I even prefer" (4.3), the word "even" (4.3) can be illustrated in a way where respondent described these kind of events as an additional activities on top of the activities arranged by her community members. However, own linking narratives appeared very strong from this extract, especially when it came to attending social activities arranged by her own community members as she mentioned, "social events arranged by my community members are also very nice and interesting" (4.4). The word "also" (4.4) illustrated her own linking quite significantly but at the same time not being able to perform dance when she likes most also appeared as differ narrative.

**Double identity narratives:** *'I want to be a humble and integrated Estonian citizen but I am still an Indian.'*

Double identity narratives are evident for the overall acculturation strategies. Indian respondent of 25 aged described.

#### Extract 5

1. I want to learn Estonian norms and values
2. I already know many of them
3. As I want be an integrated Estonian citizen
4. It doesn't mean I will give away my own culture
5. I have an uncle who has been living in UK for more than 40 years, he is a British-Indian, he practice all the Indian culture in UK
6. I think it is not a problem to practice my own culture
7. I am still an Indian
8. I want to be an Indian-Estonian just like my uncle.

In this extract respondent illustrated his identity in a hyphenated way to be recognized for future as he mentioned, "I want to be an Indian-Estonian" (5.8). Significant part of this extract represents of double identity narratives (5.4, 5.5, 5.6 5.7, 5.8) despite of a strong wish to become an integrated Estonian citizen (5.3) respondent here illustrated his double identify by making his remark- it does not mean I would give away my own culture (5.4). It also signifies the chosen acculturation strategy where integration has been overwhelmingly the most preferred one, but in different socio-cultural domains, it varies quite significantly. The strong wish of keeping own culture can be extracted from this extract as the respondent spontaneously gave an example of his uncle's case ( 5.5) while it was asked by the interviewer, not only suggests the strong wish but also to illustrate the double identity practice at home and away from home.

International students often try to remember the country's education system sometimes to heal out the overall situation that the faced in the beginning of their study abroad and in many extent identity themselves as trained differently than the ones who only have education back home. A respondent from African continent mentioned.

#### Extract 6

1. Education system here in Estonian is different
2. I had to cope so many things
3. I even suffered a lot
4. I don't know whether it is good or bad
5. But now that I am finishing my studies I am happy

6. I will have a foreign degree
7. This will give a different identity back home

While asked about how is trying to get integrated, respondent from Africa kept on mentioning about his studies in Estonia and keep on visiting back home while stating the study system in Estonia (6.1, 6.2,6.6,6.7). This also illustrate double identity quite strongly as the respondent viewed his degree in Estonian will give him different identity back home (6.7). Respondent at the same time mentioned quite clearly how difficult it was to cope with the new study system (6.2, 6.3), this also emphasize the strong desire to cope with the new system while at the same time desire of having foreign degree is stated (6.6). The word foreign degree (6.6) gives the impression the double identity of living in one place and at the same time mentioning the place as foreign land, when the strong wish of adapting and integrating with society is evident.

**Avoid Narratives:** *"I can easily get integrated with the society, I have many friends; do I still need to learn language and all other cultures?"*

Avoid narratives appeared strong from many respondents. While integration can be termed as most preferred strategies followed by assimilation, avoid narratives remained quite strong among many respondents. A respondents aged 27, doing her masters stated.

#### Extract 7

1. I have many friends who are either Estonian or Russian
2. I can easily communicate with them
3. I go and celebrate many events
4. Many of them I think consider me as their good friends
5. Do I still need to learn the language?

While asked about learning language and having friends in order to get integrated with the host society, respondents seem to have reluctant strategies on it by avoiding the long term effects of these domains to accepted to cope with the host society as she addressed (7.1, 7.2,7.3,7.4,7.5). Stressing the point whether or not learning the language or values are part of integration, as she already have many friends and many of them consider her as friend as well (7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4). This is to address that, she is expecting her friends to know her language that she speaks and this should be first basis to communicate, where she herself is trying to avoid their language to learn. Another aspect to address from this extract is- she is even asking

the interviewer by pointing- “do I still need to learn the language” (7.5), gives a clear indication, she wants to avoid this part of integration aspect.

Despite the fact that participants expressed their experiences their daily lives, friends, life partner and other aspects of acculturation, yet they expressed a point of disclosure to get into detail. A respondent of 31 years of age expressed his narratives.

#### Extract 8

1. I am living here for over one and half years
2. You are doing research on international students and their adaptation issues
3. Good to know that someone at least thinking about it
4. Well, I am happy here in this country
5. I have things that I need
6. I have work, school and friends here
7. So I am happy
8. But please I do not want to share details, as I might feel stressed afterwards

Respondent expressed his daily lives and how he is finding in in Estonian in a way that one can find the sense of being neglected (8.3), as he mentioned the word “at least” by stating that at least someone is doing research on it, while at the same time mentioned twice he is happy (8.3, 8.7). In the first place, might give an impression that he is indeed happy. When one categorize this sense of happiness is the expression of getting away from the mental stress that one might go through as a foreigner as it can be found from extract (8.5, 8.6) respondent has work, school and friends and according to the respondents these are the things which should make him happy. This also the impression of avoid narratives (8.8)

## Conclusion

The study of acculturation preferences among the respondents in Tallinn, Estonian revealed that Integration is the most preferred strategy by using the Berry’s (2005) model. There are differences when one uses Lathi et al (2001) framework from different socio-cultural domains. Respondents showed low intention towards integration for the domain Marriage, on the other hand for the domains Language, Friends and social activities had high to moderate tendency towards integration. The models which have been used to investigate, validates to study acculturation preferences among international students in Tallinn. However, from interview data, there were some in-depth understanding of why students want to learn language and

the reasons for that suggests that there is a need to study in-depth understanding of what the respondents mean by their preferred strategies. In future, scholars can investigate qualitative study in order to understand their point of view.

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