

Introduction

Transnational migration, also referred to as migrating across national borders has been an emerging form of migration since the late 1990s. As Lee and An (2022) state, it is an era of transnational migration.

Such migration has been linked to both positive and negative mental health outcomes. Previous research argued that migration left immigrants with a lack of complete sense of belongingness to either society (Dolberg & Amit, 2022; Wang & Collins, 2016). However, some studies show that embracing a multicultural acculturation strategy may have associations with better mental well-being and general satisfaction (Dolberg & Amit, 2022).

Researchers have yet to reach a consensus on the precise definition of 1.5-generation immigrants, but this can be generally understood as those born in a place that is not their home country but emigrated during their childhood between the ages of 6-12 (Rumbaut, 2004; Ahn, 2020).

Overall the research suggests that 1.5-generation immigrants have unique experiences with identity formation, sense of belonging, and language switching.

Methodology

Participant recruitment was conducted through mass-emailing undergraduate, and postgraduate students and staff members at the University of York and the University of Hong Kong, and posters were promoted on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Thirty-three adult participants, the majority of whom were females (n=24) participated in the study. On average, participants were 23.42 years of age (SD=6.736), with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum of 46. The sample mainly comprised undergraduates (n=25), with 2 PhD students, 1 masters student, 1 further education student and 4 who identified as 'Other'. Table 1 shows participants' country of origin.

Aim and Rationale

The present study was designed to compare the experiences of 1.5-generation immigrants across a range of countries. The current literature seems to focus on specific minority groups in a host society, which highlights the need to expand the sample to different ethnic groups from multiple host cultures. This would broaden the understanding of 1.5-generation immigrants as a population and distinguish their experiences from other immigrants. The following research questions aim to narrow the research gap:

- ❖ How do 1.5 -generation immigrants manage their use of language when they are in their heritage-majority versus non-heritage-majority contexts?
- ❖ What methods do 1.5 -generation immigrants use to adapt when they are in heritage-majority versus non-heritage-majority contexts?
- ❖ How do 1.5 -generation immigrants' sense of belongingness differ when they are in heritage-majority versus non-heritage-majority contexts?

Results

"How does one identify with a culture that views you as an outsider?"

- 1) **Language switching** - all had a frequent tendency to switch languages according to the context in which they found themselves or the people with whom they were interacting
 - a) Restricted use of heritage languages
 - b) Increased use of host language over time
 - c) Being a skilled multilingual
- 2) **Nurturing the host culture identity** - various ways in which participants have embraced their host culture identity, starting from their upbringing from childhood to their current social circles
 - a) Parenting styles
 - b) Grouping with people of the same culture of origin/third-culture kids
- 3) **Being "hybrid"-positive** - benefits of maintaining dual or more cultural identities
 - a) Cultural accommodation/integration
 - b) Intrinsic sense of hybrid identity
 - c) Embracing hybrid-friendly strategies
- 4) **Feeling like a forever "stranger"** - living in a host country very different to their home country
 - a) Alienation from host culture/language
 - b) Identity confusion/conflict
 - c) Feelings of in-betweenness
 - d) Compartmentalisation
 - e) Being 'unsettled'
- 5) **Global citizenship** - international-minded individuals willing to contribute to the majority
 - a) Appreciation of being a transnational migrant
 - b) Positive future outlook
 - c) Internationalisation through international schooling
 - d) Transnational identity

References

- Ahn, S. (2020). 1.5 generations of Korean Americans' transnational identity: Stories from four college students. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 22(1), 16-34. <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v22i1.1961>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic Analysis. APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Vol 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*, 57-71. <https://doi.org/10.1037/12620-004>
- Dolberg, P., & Amit, K. (2022). On a fast-track to adulthood: Social Integration and identity formation experiences of young-adults of 1.5 generation immigrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(1), 253-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2022.2064841>
- Kim, B. S., Brenner, B. R., Liang, C. T., & Asay, P. A. (2003). A qualitative study of adaptation experiences of 1.5-generation Asian Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 9(2), 156-170. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-5809.9.2.156>
- Park, K. (1999). "I really do feel I'm 1.5!": The construction of self and community by young Korean Americans. *Amerasia Journal*, 25(1), 139-164. <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.25.1.07.682624415676>
- Park, S. (2009). Negotiating identities and re-acculturation of second-generation Korean Americans: The Role of Ethnic Media and Peer Group Dynamics. *Korea Journal*, 49(1), 61-97. <https://doi.org/10.25023/kj.2009.49.1.61>
- Rumbaut, R. G. (2008). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the immigrant first and second generations in the United States. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1160-1205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00232.x>
- Tyrell, N., Sime, D., Kelly, C., & McMeillon, C. (2018). Belonging in Brexit Britain: Central and eastern European 1.5 generation young people's experiences. *Population, Space and Place*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2205>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Citizenship*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship>
- Wang, B., & Collins, F. I. (2016). Becoming cosmopolitan? Hybridity and intercultural encounters amongst 1.5 generation Chinese migrants in New Zealand. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(15), 2777-2795. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01418759.2016.1171372>
- Yoon, I.-J. (2012). Migration and the Korean diaspora: A comparative description of five cases. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(3), 413-435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2012.658545>
- Yoon, K. (2018). Multicultural digital media practices of 1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Canada. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 27(2), 148-165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0117196818766906>

Conclusion

The results from the survey support the findings of previous literature on biculturalism, compartmentalisation and the use of social media as a medium to connect with other immigrants or third-culture kids (Ahn, 2020; Yoon, 2012; Lam, 2009).

The three initial research questions were investigated in depth through participants' responses. In response to the first question, our first theme of language switching covers the various aspects on how language use is dependent on the context and people. The major difference in the non-heritage-majority (NHM) contexts is the avoidance or restricted use of heritage language in public spaces, usually associated with lower confidence or proficiency level. Thus, participants largely preferred using their heritage language in more intimate relationships, where they feel comfortable speaking.

For the second research question, participants had various conflicting strategies that were employed. This ties in with the cultural identity they perceived themselves to have. For participants who were engaged with their culture of origin, this was due to their parents reinforcing the importance of keeping connected with their cultural roots.

Lastly, the third research question discusses the sense of belongingness. Identity conflict is a process that is commonly experienced by 1.5-generation immigrants as they struggle to balance between their perceived self and presenting self in NHM contexts. This leads to feelings of in-betweenness and a lack of belongingness, as well as compartmentalization to be different things in different contexts.

These findings encourage maintaining good connections with both the heritage and host culture, and embracing cultural diversity. Furthermore, this work adds to the current literature by expanding on the complexities of cultural integration, acknowledgement of every immigrants' personal experience, and the importance of fostering inclusive communities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Laidlaw foundation and the Horizons Office at the University of Hong Kong for providing a generous scholarship and opportunity to pursue this research abroad at the University of York. Most importantly, I would like to thank Dr Karisha Kimone and Dr Lucy Hsu for guiding me throughout the research journey, and allowing me to learn and grow as an individual and a researcher this summer.