

Navigating Acculturation: Culture-Caused Critical Incidents between Dutch Ethnic Majorities and Ethnic Minorities and How to Balance Them

Master of Science Business Administration Thesis

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Date: October 21st, 2024

Abstract

In recent years, heightened migration has increased cultural diversity in Western European societies, shifting them from homogenous to more diverse. This demographic shift has impacted the workforce, making cultural acculturation crucial as immigrants bring their perspectives and adapt to new environments. Previous research has mainly focused on exploring the differing views between ethnic majorities and minorities but failed to capture the (in)voluntary acculturation process of immigrants over time. Enklaar (2021) tries to underscore these shortcomings with a new framework, but this remains unexplored in empirical evidence. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by gathering empirical validation and gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of cultural acculturation in a multicultural work environment. By employing a real-time data approach, this study draws insights from a single case study of ethnic minority members from different cultures and Dutch ethnic majority members, respectively working at a hotel. Hence, a qualitative study of 16 semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority staff and Dutch ethnic staff is conducted. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) revealed that while certain “we”-culture characteristics are gradually lost over time, others remain deeply ingrained in one’s identity. Moreover, the findings challenge existing acculturation theories, in particular, Berry et al., (1987) acculturation stress model, and advocate largely for Enklaar’s (2021) acculturation framework as a more accurate reflection of the stages of cultural adaption. Consequently, it is found that we can confirm Enklaar’s (2021) theory largely, but with an important nuance; The phases of acculturation vary by characteristic, meaning not all characteristics of an individual go through the same phase of acculturation at once, as Enklaar (2021) initially proposed. Thus, this research sheds light on the complexities of acculturation in the workplace, emphasizing the importance of longitudinal approaches in studying the process of cultural acculturation.

Keywords: Acculturation, cultural differences, “I”-and “we”-culture, ethnic minorities, Dutch majorities, critical incidents

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1. Introduction

In recent times, the cultural diversity within the populations of Western European societies has increased. This is attributed to heightened migration patterns within these nations, a notably evident trend in the Netherlands (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2003). These patterns transformed the Netherlands from a relatively homogeneous society to one characterized by greater ethnic diversity (Vasta, 2007). As a result, the workforce's demographic composition has also become more heterogeneous regarding culture, gender, age, and nationality (Oerlemans et al., 2009). This trend arises from the fact that when migrants relocate to another country, they inherently bring along their own culture and accumulated perspectives. Gradually familiarizing themselves with the new culture and adjusting their frame of reference entails a complex process. It involves a learning curve of cultural adaptation where migrants become acquainted with the social norms of their new environment (Berry, 1997). To examine the process of acculturation in response to cultural immersion, numerous models were developed over time, ranging from the culture shock model (Oberg, 1960), to adjustment strain (Crano and Crano, 1993) and acculturation stress model (Berry et al., 1987). Each model explains that throughout this acculturation process, inevitable misunderstandings can arise due to clashes between the different frames of reference. In the workplace, these clashes can be explained by the different needs of ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities (Enklaar, 2021; Jayne and Dipboye, 2004). Even though there are already many existing studies done on the different views between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities and how this can produce inequality and potentially foster discrimination (Schlizo et al., 2008), fewer studies are done on how these cultural differences can create a different perspective on the working experience of ethnic minorities while working together with Dutch ethnic majorities (Leyerzapf et al., 2018). In particular, only a few studies have been conducted in multicultural settings where individuals work with more than two cultures. In addition to that, when referring to the acculturation stress model of Berry et al., (1987), the concept of culture is not clearly defined. Within this model "culture" might refer to external culture, internal culture, or cultural identity. In addition to that, Berry et al., (1987) assumes that immigrants willingly choose to maintain their own culture while also adapting to the new culture. However, real-life situations pointed out that there is no voluntary choice to preserve their own culture and adapt. Instead, in a native environment, immigrants are even forced to adapt their behavior to avoid cultural clashes with their new surroundings. The acculturation stress model of Berry et al., (1987) thus does not adequately describe what happens during prolonged contact between groups with different cultures. Enklaar (2021) underscores this shortcoming by elaborating further on this and stating that immigrants cannot simultaneously automatize two cultures. He argues that second and third-generation immigrants adjust their cultural behavior depending on whether they are within their own ethnic group or among Dutch individuals. He states that immigrants who frequently interact with native Dutch people have gained an understanding of the existing cultural differences and consciously attempt to prevent cultural conflicts by adapting themselves. In this last stage of acculturation, immigrants have automatized and made the cultural behavior of the host country spontaneous, but they have to consciously think about showing the right behavior when interacting with people from their own ethnic group. Consequently, with this theory, Enklaar (2021) addresses the limitations of Berry et al., (1987) acculturation stress model. However, it remains an area of interest since it has not been empirically

tested yet and thus remains unexplored. This highlights a clear research gap and therefore it is necessary to acquire this new knowledge and gather empirical validation since this will gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of cultural acculturation in a multicultural work environment. Noting that prominent acculturation theories fail to capture the (in)voluntary acculturation process of immigrants, highlighting a need for empirical validation in multicultural work environments, the following research question is proposed:

“How do ethnic minority employees navigate the process of acculturation while collaborating with Dutch majority employees, balancing cultural differences occurring in the Dutch workplace?”

The overarching research question is also divided into the following sub-research questions:

Sub-RQ1: What critical incidents occur in the workplace when Dutch ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities employees work together?

Sub-RQ2: From which conflicting cultural standards between the “I”-and “we”-cultural characteristics do these critical incidents arise?

Sub-RQ3: To what extent do the narratives confirm the theory about acculturation of Berry et al., (1987)?

Sub-RQ4: To what extent do the narratives confirm the theory about acculturation of Enklaar (2021)?

These questions are answered through qualitative data from interviews with ethnic minority members from different cultures and Dutch ethnic majority members, respectively working at a hotel. Two benchmarks are used to assess the extent to which an interviewee has retained their original culture or embraced the Dutch culture. First, the Dutch values described by Enklaar (2021); and second, the “I”-culture and “we”-culture typology developed by Eppink (1986). This framework provides a structured approach to roughly categorize multiple cultures into two main types: “I”-culture and “we”-culture. In an “I”-culture, the most important building block of society is the individual; any group(s) to which one belongs comes second here. In a “we”-culture the group is the most important building block of society, while the individuals are of secondary importance. The reason for choosing the “I”-and “we”-culture framework, is that given the complexity of researching all cultural differences among all these different cultures and the insufficient information about the different cultural values of the participants, a structured approach is imperative (Eppink, 1986). Hence, to analyze these cultural differences, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) by Flanagan (1954) is used as an effective qualitative research method. A critical incident is a narrative that illustrates a misunderstanding between two or more people from different backgrounds. It can happen during each situation while interacting with another individual, revealing where cultural characteristics are clashing with each other (Enklaar, 2021; Apedaile and Schill, 2008). Hence, the CIT (Flanagan, 1954) is used to better understand where cultural standards are clashing between the ethnic minority employees and the Dutch majority employees and to find out how to overcome these cultural differences. Here, the Dutch ethnic majorities refer to individuals with a full Dutch background and the ethnic minorities refer to individuals with a different background than Dutch.

Overall this research aims to explore a deeper understanding of how ethnic minority employees navigate the process of acculturation while working with Dutch majority employees, particularly focusing on the

factors and potential sources of cultural conflicts and how this shapes the working experience between ethnic minority employees and Dutch majority employees. Hence, the goal of this research is to collect cases of culture-caused frictions, stemming from differences in cultural standards and occurring as critical incidents in collaborations between ethnic minorities and Dutch ethnic majorities in the work environment, to identify the conflicting cultural standards from which these frictions originate; and to find devise coping mechanisms to mitigate these incidents in the future.

In so doing, this research contributes to the existing literature on cross-cultural differences by addressing one main research gap:

Research gap: Acculturation theories fail to capture the (in)voluntary acculturation process of immigrants, highlighting a need for empirical validation in multicultural work environments.

This research gap provides empirical validation for the acculturation process of immigrants in a multicultural work environment. It offers empirical evidence to refine existing acculturation theories, capturing the complexities of immigrants' acculturation process more accurately while relating it to a cooperative setting. In addition to that, with this empirical evidence, this research critically evaluates the acculturation theories of Enklaar (2021) and Berry et al., (1987), determining their validity and offering a valuable contribution to the existing literature on cultural acculturation. The practical relevance of this research is that it serves as a foundational resource delivering practical relevance for businesses seeking to make multicultural collaborations more efficient. In addition to that, this research provides ethnic minority employees and Dutch majority employees with more information about the characteristics of the “we”-and “I”-culture framework and how these can clash, creating a better understanding of their standard cultural behavior. Therefore, this research lowers the barriers that may arise in these cultural clashes and increases mutual trust in the relationships between ethnic minority employees and Dutch majority employees, respectively working in different sectors.

This research is structured as follows; First, the theoretical framework is described. This chapter covers previous theories on this topic and indicates what this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Chapter three presents the research method, which explains the methods used to arrive at the results. After that, the findings are presented. Finally, this research ends with a conclusion, discussion, theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

To examine the acculturation process of ethnic minorities through critical incidents in the work environment, this chapter outlines the definition of culture, theories about acculturation, and the Dutch cultural values through the Emic approach. By establishing these concepts as cornerstones, we can assess how ethnic minorities perceive Dutch cultural values through the “I”-culture and “we”-culture framework. This will be elaborated on more below.

2.1 Defining culture

To comprehend the subsequent concepts in this research, it is essential to first establish a precise definition of “culture” for this research. Culture is a difficult term to define. It lacks a tangible form and therefore there is no singular definition or interpretation that entails its essence. However, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) collected more than two hundred definitions of the concept of culture and several aspects and similarities often reoccurred:

1. Culture refers to human, learned (and not innate behavior);
2. Behavior is largely inherited or learned from preceding generations, including through symbolism;
3. While it involves a complex of behaviors, the individual elements exhibit interrelatedness;
4. It concerns the behavior of people as a member of a group.

For this research, the precise definition of culture provided by Enklaar (2021) is adopted, since this research extends his acculturation theory. Enklaar (2021, p.102) defines culture as “The patterns of thinking and behavior within a specific group of people, along with the meaning these patterns hold for them”. This definition encompasses behavior and thought patterns instilled at a young age through a socialization process involving parents or other individuals within the environment. This signifies that the members of this respective group perceive these patterns as meaningful, logical, and even morally commendable. However, it is important to continue emphasizing that people have individual traits that culture has little or no influence on, such as temperament, flexibility, creativity, intelligence, and the degree of introversion or extroversion (Pinto, 2007).

2.2 Acculturation process

Acculturation is a widespread phenomenon in a lot of societies and encompasses all changes that occur when individuals or groups from different cultures come into contact with one another. Marden and Meyer (1986, p.36) defines acculturation as “The change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture”. Kim (1982) defines acculturation from a communication perspective and explains that it is an interactive and continuous process that evolves in and through the communication of an immigrant with the new sociocultural environment. The acquired communication competence, in turn, reflects the degree of that immigrant’s acculturation (p.380). However, the most commonly used scientific definition of acculturation is “Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al., 1963, p.149). This definition is therefore adopted throughout this research.

Hence, numerous models were developed over time about the acculturation process, ranging from the culture shock model (Oberg, 1960), to adjustment strain (Crano and Crano, 1963) and the acculturation stress model of Berry et al., (1987). Oberg's model (1960) is widely recognized for being the first one to summarize the idea of culture shock. He describes it as an "occupational disease, the anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" such as customs and language (Oberg, 1960, p.177). Therefore, the culture shock model describes the common phases individuals go through when they encounter a new culture. This is useful for understanding the emotional and psychological stages of adapting to a new cultural environment. It includes four phases; the honeymoon, the crisis/culture shock, the adjustment, and the adaptation phase. The honeymoon phase is where individuals often experience excitement and fascination with the new culture. This phase is characterized by a sense of adventure and curiosity. The second phase, the crisis or culture shock, is the phase where the differences between the home culture and the new culture become more apparent and challenging. This phase is marked by confusion and frustration. The adjustment phase is where individuals begin to understand and adapt to the new culture. Here they start developing coping mechanisms and feel more comfortable. Finally, the adaptation phase. At this phase, the individuals have effectively adapted to the new culture. As of this moment, they can function well and feel integrated into the new culture (Furnham, 2012). Figure 1 shows the U-curve of this cultural adjustment and explains the different phases in more depth.

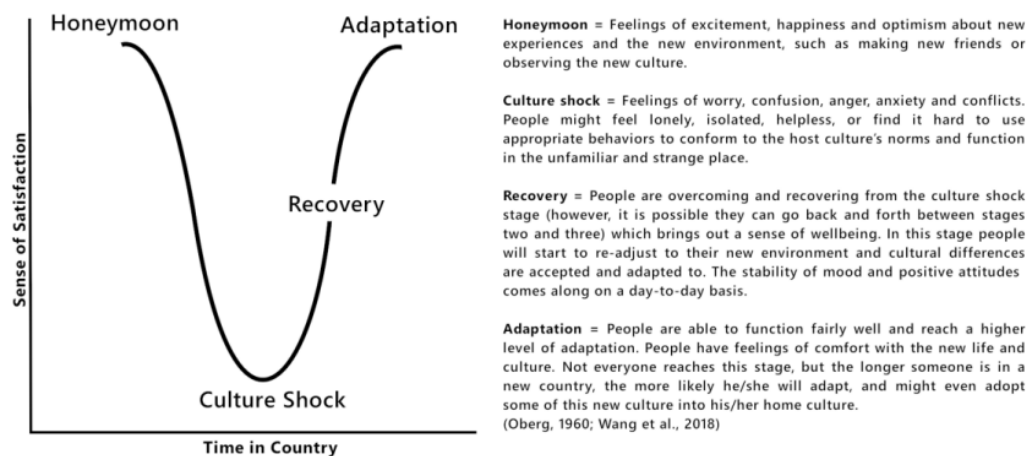


Figure 1: U-curve of cultural adjustments with explanation (Oberg, 1960; Wang et al., 2018)

Crano and Crano (1963) builds further upon the culture shock model of Oberg (1960) and explains that there are only three main phases within the acculturation process; the initial shock, the adjustment period, and adaptation. Thus, omitting the honeymoon phase. In addition to that, Crano and Crano (1963) also states that several main factors can influence the degree of the adjustment strain, including individual factors and contextual factors. The individual factors include personal characteristics, prior experience with cultural change, and personal resilience. The contextual factors include social support systems, the similarity between the old and the new environment, and the degree of change required (Furnham, 2012). Considering these factors, the adjustment strain model of Crano and Crano (1963)

focuses more on psychological stress and coping mechanisms during the adjustment period, whereas Oberg (1960) offers a more general overview of the emotional journey through cultural adaptation.

Berry (1980) views acculturation as an adaptation conceptualized in three other modes: adjustment, reaction, and withdrawal. He focuses on the psychological variables of acculturation which include cognitive style, personality, identity, attitudes, acculturative stress, and language. Psychological acculturation describes the process of change that people go through after being exposed for a long time to a culture different from the own they were raised in (Doucerain, 2019; Sun et al., 2020). In this framework, he outlined four acculturation strategies (1987); integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. In *Integration*, individuals maintain their original culture while also adopting aspects of the new culture. This strategy often leads to the lowest level of acculturative stress. *Assimilation* is where individuals relinquish their original culture and fully embrace the new culture. This can lead to a moderate level of stress, depending on the acceptance of the new culture. *Separation* is when individuals hold on to their original culture and avoid interaction with the new culture. This can result in higher stress levels, especially if the dominant society does not accept their original culture. Finally, *Marginalization* explains when individuals lose their original culture without successfully integrating into the new culture. This typically leads to the highest levels of stress due to the feeling of alienation and loss of identity (Berry et al., 1987). The positive outcomes of acculturation stress include improved problem-solving skills, greater cultural awareness, and personal growth. The negative outcomes however can be anxiety, depression, identity confusion, and various psychosomatic symptoms (Berry and Sam, 2016). Figure 2 shows the four acculturation strategies in more depth.

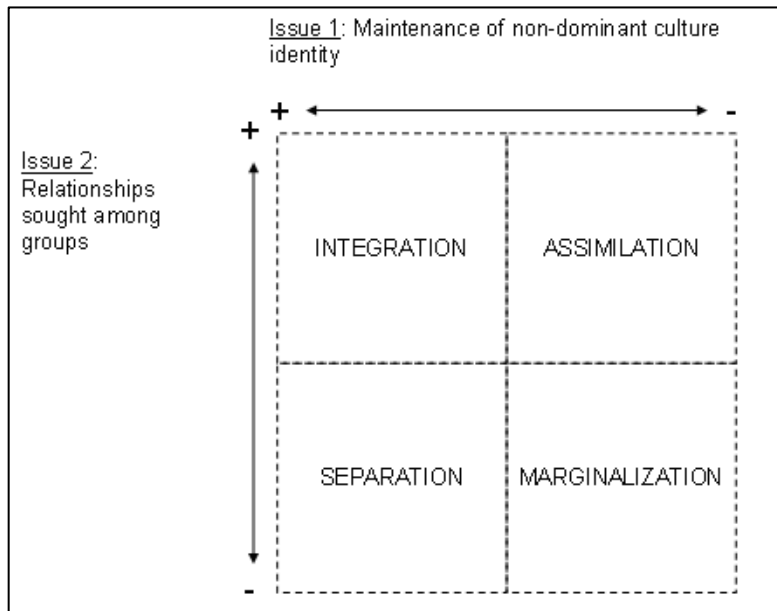


Figure 2: Acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 1987)

In contrast to the culture shock model of Oberg (1960) and the adjustment strain model of Crano and Crano (1963), the acculturation stress model of Berry (1987) acknowledges the importance of coping mechanisms in dealing with acculturation stress. It specifically addresses the stressors experienced by immigrants and minority groups during the process of acculturation. However, while the acculturation

stress model of Berry (1987) is the most popular and widely used model in acculturation research, it also has some limitations (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2003). For example, Berry (1987, p. 10-11) delineates a two-dimensional perspective of acculturation: the retention or loss of the original culture, and the participation in or adoption of certain aspects of the new culture. In this context, it is possible for an immigrant to embody a lot or a little of each of both cultures. However, the question arises whether these two dimensions are not inherently contradictory. Hence, real-life situations pointed out that there is no voluntary choice to preserve their own culture and adapt. Instead, in a host country environment, immigrants are sometimes even forced to adapt their behavior to avoid cultural clashes with their new surroundings. Furthermore, a significant limitation of Berry's model (1987) is that the concept of culture is not clear. His conceptualization of culture fails to distinguish three different definitions of culture (Berry, 1980; 1992; 1997):

- Cultural identity: The cultural group with which one wishes to identify;
- Surface-Level Culture: Specific customs, language, cuisine, religion, holidays, and traditions;
- Deep-Level Culture: Norms and values that drive specific behaviors and beliefs.

These dimensions, however, do not necessarily align. For instance, an Iranian immigrant might completely renounce their Iranian heritage by adopting a Dutch name (cultural identity) without adopting Dutch behavioral norms. Conversely, a woman of Moroccan descent might wear a headscarf (surface-level culture) while fully adopting Dutch behavioral norms and mentality (deep-level culture). Hence, this interchangeable use of these different meanings of culture creates ambiguity regarding what constitutes the preservation of one's original culture. In addition to that, Berry asserts that "This strategy [of *integration* and mutual accommodation] requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time, the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society" (Berry, 1997, p.10-11). Basic societal values represent the deep-level culture of a group or country, which is often in conflict with the values of immigrants. Acculturation is therefore partially a unidirectional process when it concerns deep-level culture. Finally, Berry (1987) relies on self-report methods, which involve asking participants about their feelings, attitudes, and beliefs (Walsh, 1967). However, this approach may not accurately capture the participants' actual behaviors or emotions. Consequently, based on the arguments presented above, it can be assumed that the acculturation stress model of Berry (1987) does not adequately explain the concept of acculturation, particularly given the insufficient research focus on deep-level culture.

Several have attempted to address this shortcoming. For example, Enklaar (2021) stated that immigrants cannot simultaneously automatize two cultures at the same time; In this context "automatize" refers to the process by which certain behaviors from a certain culture become automatic or habitual, meaning they no longer require conscious effort. Hence, he argues that second and third-generation immigrants adjust their cultural behavior depending on whether they are within their own ethnic group or among Dutch individuals (code-switching). Enklaar (2021) distinguishes four stages of acculturation:

1. Unconscious incompetence: Individuals encounter various conflicts with Dutch people, but are unaware that these conflicts stem from their own behavior deviating from the Dutch

cultural norms. They automatically behave according to the standards of their country of origin;

2. **Conscious incompetence:** Individuals recognize that their behavior differs from the Dutch norms, but do not know how to address this issue. They continue to behave automatically according to the standards of their country of origin;
3. **Conscious competence:** Individuals are well aware of the differences between cultural standards in their country of origin and in the Netherlands. They are capable of behaving according to the Dutch norms, but must consciously think about their actions to avoid making mistakes and reverting to automatic behaviors from their country of origin. Adopting Dutch behavior requires significant effort;
4. **Unconscious competence:** Individuals automatically adhere to Dutch standards without needing to think about it; this behavior has become ingrained. However, they need to be cautious not to overly exhibit Dutch behavior around their family and people from the same cultural background to avoid misunderstandings.

For illustration, these four stages of acculturation are presented in Figure 3.

	Incompetence	Competence
Conscious	Conscious Incompetence	Conscious Competence
Unconscious	Unconscious Incompetence	Unconscious Competence

Competent: Capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards
Conscious: Aware of one's own behavior

Figure 3: The four stages of acculturation (Enklaar, 2021)

Enklaar (2021) addresses with this theory the limitations of Berry et al., (1987) acculturation stress model. However, it remains an area of interest since it has not been empirically tested yet and thus remains unexplored. Therefore, this research seeks to delve deeper into this subject matter, aiming to gather empirical evidence to assess the validity of the research of Enklaar (2021). Furthermore, this research specifically emphasizes the examination of deep-level culture, aiming to enhance our understanding of how the acculturation process at this level occurs.

2.3 Etic and Emic approach

Two main approaches are frequently discussed in the literature on cross-culture, namely the etic and emic approaches (House et al., 2002). The etic approach attempts to identify universal aspects of human behavior and seeks to find universal processes that transcend cultural differences or to produce new

theories that can be utilized across cultures (Fukuyama, 1990; Ridley et al., 1994). In other words, the ethic approach assumes that all cultures can be compared in terms of generalizable phenomena (Carminati, 2024). Notable well-known frameworks that have originated from this etic approach include those proposed by Hofstede (1980), Hall (1966), Meyer (2014), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997). The emic approach, however, attempts to identify culture-specific aspects of concepts and behavior, which cannot be comparable across all cultures (Lung-Tan, 2012). Emic researchers therefore believe that the most effective manner to understand a culture is by perceiving it as an integrated system. Hence, in cross-cultural research, the emic approach involves examining one culture at a time to evaluate how insiders of participants interpret a specific phenomenon (Helfrich, 1999). In contrast to Berry et al., (1987), this research adopts a more emic perspective since we consider the unique perspectives and experiences of individuals within their respective cultures. In addition to that, given that this research specifically wants to examine acculturation theories, it is difficult to use etic frameworks. Therefore, the emic approach is utilized, since this approach focuses solely on understanding a single culture without comparison to others (Boyle et al., 2014).

2.4 “I”-culture and “we”-culture cultural framework

To elucidate the emergence of critical incidents within the work environment and to define the cultural differences that conflict with these critical incidents, this research employs the “I”-culture and “we”-culture cultural framework established by Eppink (1986). This framework provides a structured approach to roughly categorize multiple cultures into two main types: “I”-culture and “we”-culture. In an I-culture, the most important building block of society tends to be the individual; any group(s) to which one belongs comes second here. In a we-culture, the group tends to be the most important building block of society. Table 1 below shows the most significant differences between these cultural forms (Enklaar, 2021; Uçar and Enklaar, 2013).

<i>“I”-culture</i>	<i>“we”-culture</i>
• Individual is central	• Group is central
• Emphasis on personal choices and actions	• Emphasis on role behavior
• Emphasis on content	• Respect for roles, emphasis on form
• Mistake: not keeping your promises (guilt)	• Mistake: infringement of group rules (shame)
• Explicit communication	• Implicit communication
• Less close relationships	• Close relationships
• Equality	• Hierarchy
• Feeling quilt	• Honor and saving face
• All about rules	• All about relationships

Table 1: Differences between the “I” and “we”-culture

In a we-culture, everything revolves around the well-being of the group. This stems from the belief that when the group is thriving, the individual members are also thriving. In a we-culture, there exists a close

and warm bond among the group members, and it is inconceivable for individuals within a we-culture to be comfortable when they are isolated from their family and fellow group members. Everything in the we-culture is geared towards maintaining good relationships with group members and avoiding losing sympathy. Preference is given here to expressing things indirectly to avoid causing painful situations and disrupting relationships within the group. In an I-culture however, the relationships between individuals are less tight. Here you can for example leave your family or own group for a long time without suffering much from it. You can make new friends or join new groups and that is seen as a personal choice. Hence, children in an I-culture learn to become strong individuals who are not dependent on the group they are born into.

In both cultures, social interactions are governed by rules and a clear moral code. In a we-culture, these rules are linked to the role an individual fulfills. It primarily concerns how someone behaves outwardly, visible to the world, rather than what someone thinks or does outside of the group. Making a good impression on others here and avoiding losing face is important. In an I-culture however, moral principles are much more general and less strictly defined. It applies to everyone, regardless of the position of role. In an I-culture, people are raised to self-regulate with internalized morality. Therefore, individuals from an I-culture are often more direct and primarily focus on content and facts (Enklaar, 2021). Hence, individuals from an I-culture view humanity primarily as separate individuals who are treated similarly, whereas a we-culture perceives humanity within groups. Consequently, the we-culture tends to defend and support the members of their group, believing they have no obligations toward outsiders and therefore behaving opportunistically.

Based on the above, we can conclude that significant differences exist between the I and we-culture. However, it is important to mention that the “I”-culture and “we”-culture framework is an abstract and schematic representation of culture, rather than a detailed description of an actual existing culture. Hence, this framework is intended as a framework to help this research to present manners of thinking and behaviors that one can encounter in cultures. In addition to that, assists this research in broadly categorizing multiple cultures and thus effectively shedding light on the multiple differences between them (Enklaar, 2021).

3. Method

In this chapter, the research design of the research is initially discussed. It offers insights into the context in which this research is conducted. Subsequently, the methodology employed for the data collection is explained. Finally, the process which is used for the data analysis will be described.

3.1 Research design

For this study on cultural differences and acculturation, an inductive qualitative research approach has been chosen. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate in this context, as it focuses on specific events and the perspectives of those involved (Tehrani et al., 2015). In other words, "Qualitative research collects participants' experiences, perceptions and behaviors" (Tenny et al., 2022, p.71). The reason for choosing a qualitative research approach is that it offers an in-depth explanation of certain phenomena or experiences (Fossey et al., 2003). In addition, qualitative research methods are also preferred in cross-cultural research due to their focus on understanding various aspects of human life such as beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (Enklaar, 2007). Furthermore, an inductive approach is used since it condenses extensive and varied raw text data into a summary format. It allows new links between the research objectives to emerge and provides an efficient manner of analyzing qualitative data for multiple research purposes (Thomas, 2003).

3.2 Data collection

The data for this research is collected by semi-structured interviews with immigrant staff working at a hotel. During the interviews, special attention is given to collecting critical incidents, and stories about situations that give clues about cultural differences between immigrants and Dutch staff. This specific hotel was chosen as the location for this research because the hotel employs many immigrant staff and there is abundant interaction between the ethnic minorities and the Dutch majority staff. Since the interviewees are continuously in contact with each other during their work, this is an ideal place to study cultural acculturation.

Various sorts of studies involve human participation. In scientific research, relying on human involvement to gather data for an analysis, the interests of the participants may sometimes diverge from those of the researcher and the broader scientific community (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a thorough ethical evaluation becomes imperative. Hence, before the data collection, the research design was submitted to the Ethics Committee BMS of the University of Twente for ethical review before conducting the interviews. Once the ethical approval was granted, the researcher conducted the qualitative research.

3.2.1 Sample size and selection

The research question is answered through qualitative data from interviews with ethnic minority members from different cultures and Dutch ethnic majority members, respectively working at Hotel X. These members work in different departments while holding different positions. The researcher herself also works at Hotel X, but not in these departments. The researcher holds another function in another department. The researcher is, however, thus familiar with the participants but does not work closely with them. Hence, purposeful sampling is applied. Purposeful sampling refers to intentionally selecting

participants based on their characteristics, knowledge, experiences, or other criteria (Suri, 2011). In this case, the participants are chosen based on their origin of culture, the duration of living in the Netherlands, and their integration within a Dutch work environment. For example, only participants who worked for at least six months at Hotel X were selected for this research. This requirement needs to be met since the typical duration of the “honeymoon phase” is usually over after six months. Immigrants often exhibit unrealistically positive perceptions of their new environment during this initial period. Subsequent to this, immigrants tend to develop a heightened awareness of cultural differences between their origin culture and their host culture. A second requirement that needed to be met, is that the ethnic minority employees are fully integrated into the team, engaging in regular collaboration with Dutch majority employees. This is necessary to ensure that the ethnic minority employees had multiple interactions with the Dutch culture, facilitating the identification of any cultural differences. In addition to that, purposeful sampling allows the selection of information-rich cases to be studied in-depth. Therefore, purposeful sampling is the best approach for this research, since we want to consider the unique perspectives and experiences of ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities within their respective cultures compared to the Dutch. To ensure sufficient data saturation, the goal was to conduct at least a total minimum of 16 interviews, including at least eight interviews with the ethnic minority employees and at least seven interviews with the Dutch majority employees. Ultimately, nine interviews were conducted with the ethnic minority employees and seven interviews with the Dutch majority employees. The demographic data of these interviewees are detailed in the table below, Table 2.

Interviewee no.	Age	Time in NL	Gender	Origin culture
1.	19	Born in NL	Man	Dutch
2.	63	Born in NL	Man	Dutch
3.	24	Born in NL	Woman	Dutch
4.	30	Born in NL	Man	Dutch
5.	26	Born in NL	Woman	Dutch
6.	27	Born in NL	Woman	Dutch
7.	22	Born in NL	Woman	Dutch
8.	21	6 years	Man	Eritrean
9.	29	13 years	Man	Ethiopian
10.	31	29 years	Woman	Brazilian
11.	32	7 years	Man	Polish
12.	27	1,5 years	Man	Ukrainian
13.	29	1,5 years	Woman	Ukrainian
14.	51	35 years	Man	Nigerian
15.	49	12 years	Man	Iranian
16.	18	13,5 years	Man	Eritrean

Table 2: Demographic data interviewees

3.2.2 Research instrument

The interviews were held in a 1-on-1 setting, to mitigate the potential inhibition of respondents and to minimize the influence of the participants on the formulation of responses (Acocella, 2012). Hence, the interviews were held in focus groups. The interview guides were developed in both Dutch and English because some ethnic minority members were not fluent in the Dutch language. These interview guides focused on conducting semi-structured interviews as this provides a balanced approach between being flexible and providing guidance in contrast to structured or unstructured interviews. The various interview guides are presented in Appendices I, II, and III.

The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews is that it enables researchers to gather in-depth, nuanced, and context-rich data while maintaining enough structure to ensure that all the relevant topics are addressed (Barriball and While, 1994). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are well suited for the exploration of the perceptions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues. Hence, this allows the participants to establish a certain perspective regarding the research topic (Adams, 2015).

Before conducting the interviews, participants were asked to provide written consent to be recorded (Appendix IV and V). Additionally, they were reminded at the start of each interview that the conversation would be recorded. Given the proficiency of the research in both languages, the interviews were conducted in both Dutch and English, using a standard interview guide with open-ended questions. The participants were asked to detail their interactions and experiences with Dutch majority employees and ethnic minority employees and to share specific examples (critical incidents) that highlighted the cultural differences between these two groups. The objective of the interviews is to gather comprehensive scenarios of cultural clashes due to certain behaviors from the two groups. To ensure a detailed explanation of critical incidents and the cultural differences between the two groups, the researcher needs to encourage the participants to elaborate further on the topic if the participant makes certain statements or expressions. The goal was to have each interview last approximately one hour, which was successful. The interviews first were recorded and transcribed using Teams. Additionally, the researcher also recorded the interviews with a phone as a backup. Given the potential transcribing errors in Teams transcripts, the transcripts were also reviewed and corrected as necessary.

3.3 Data analysis

After transcribing the interviews, the Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) is used to analyze the data. TA is an accessible, flexible, and popular method of qualitative data analysis. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within and across qualitative data. It organizes and describes qualitative data in rich detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006). TA consists of six phases, namely:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the data you collected by transcribing the data, reading the data, and writing down potential ideas;
2. Generate initial codes using quotes and sentences from the interviewees;
3. Search for potential themes and gather all the data that are relevant for a potential theme;

4. Review the identified themes and compare them with the extracted codes and the complete data;
5. Define and label the distinct themes;
6. Generate an overview by analyzing the data, selecting examples that support the codes and themes, and answering the research question.

However, it is important to note that TA is not a straightforward step-by-step process. Instead, it is iterative, requiring movement back and forth between phases when needed. This process unfolds gradually and therefore should not be hurried (Ely et al., 1997). To ensure the robustness of qualitative analysis in this research, the methodology of this research also incorporates the framework of Gioia et al., (2013) in the coding process, consisting out of first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions. This aligns with three phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) TA; The development of first-order concepts corresponds to the second phase of TA, while the formation of second-order themes relates to the third phase. Moreover, the creation of aggregate dimensions corresponds with the fifth phase of TA.

The first-order concepts are derived from the paraphrased quotes of the participants, representing their perspectives. These concepts were then synthesized into second-order themes, which captured broader patterns or "cultural standards" observed across the data. Finally, the aggregate dimensions elucidated the underlying cultural values that inform these themes.

4. Findings

This chapter provides a presentation and in-depth analysis of the research findings. It starts with offering concise overviews of the conflicting cultural attitudes between the “I”-and “we”-culture (Eppink, 1986) identified in this research and the critical incidents emerging from these differences. Subsequently, there is a reflection on the cultural characteristics employed by ethnic minorities to navigate these critical incidents. Finally, these findings are examined in relation to the acculturation theory of Berry et al., (1987) and Enklaar’s (2021) acculturation theory, assessing the extent to which these theories are supported or rejected by the findings in this study.

4.1 Cultural differences

The cultural differences that were mentioned, both by the majority and minority members, clearly reflect the contrast between the typical “I”-culture and “we”-culture. Through an in-depth analysis of the interviews, four out of nine conflicting cultural characteristics were identified between the “I” and “we”-cultures characteristics. These conflicting cultural characteristics are further elaborated below. Each passage will present a neutral description of the specific clashing “I” and “we”-cultural characteristic, followed by quotes from the interviewees illustrating the critical incidents where cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities and Dutch majorities clashed. Thus, this will highlight the specific cultural tensions experienced during cross-cultural interactions in a multicultural work environment. To conclude, each section ends with a reflection on the coping mechanisms employed by ethnic minorities to navigate these critical incidents.

4.1.1 Individual versus group

According to the interviews, we can conclude that there are clear differences between the focus on the individual or the group. In an “I” culture, the focus lies the most on the individual, emphasizing personal freedom, independence, and self-interest. Here the decisions are made based on the individual needs and desires. In the “we”-culture, however, the focus lies the most on the group, emphasizing community, solidarity, and the well-being of the group. Here the decisions are made based on the interest of the group. These differences are also noted in the interviews stating that, in for example Ethiopia and Eritrea, conflicts often extend beyond the individuals who are directly involved and encompass their wider social networks. This reflects a strong sense of collective loyalty and interconnectedness. This was addressed in the interviews as follows;

“For example, if someone in our culture gets angry, they involve everyone. So, if you have a conflict with me, then you also have a conflict with all my friends and family. Here in the Netherlands, it’s very different. We calmly talk things through, and the argument always stays just between the two of us. I think this has to do with loyalty to friends and family. Loyalty is very high and important in Ethiopia and Eritrea”. (Interviewee 16)

As indicated above, another prominent characteristic of a “we”-culture is the strong emphasis placed on collective well-being, with a particular focus on families and friends. Within the Ethiopian and Eritrean cultures, this communal orientation also became evident during the interviews. Here the enduring

commitment to family care was expressed, which contrasts sharply with the individualistic tendencies observed in an “I”-culture, where personal autonomy and self-reliance are often prioritized over collective responsibilities. This cultural distinction was also further illustrated in the interviews:

“I don’t need to hold on to everything from my culture. Look, in our culture, it’s normal to always take care of your parents. If your parents need something, you simply help them. But here, children leave home when they turn 18 and don’t help or care for their parents anymore. And I won’t accept that. I still help my father. For example, my father is sick right now, and I’m still trying to take care of him as best as I can from here. So, I send him money and medicine every month. My father is just very important to me, and I miss that value among Dutch people”. (Interviewee 9, Eritrean)

“Family is so important to them that they automatically want to work harder and have more authority, for example with a boss, because they need to provide money for their family. And also, they have more at stake. So, if I get fired, it doesn’t have much of an impact, but they might have to go back to their own country or may no longer be able to earn money for their family, and that would, of course, be terrible. So, they just have more at stake than we do. We don’t do nearly as much for our families as they do”. (Interviewee 1, Dutch)

These three quotes highlight differing expectations between the Dutch majorities and the ethnic minorities regarding familial responsibilities. Both interviewees highlight the significance of family loyalty in their cultures, contrasting the individualistic Dutch culture, where conflicts remain between the individuals directly involved, and children are not expected to maintain the same level of responsibility towards their parents once they get older. However, while interviewee 9 describes that they do not feel the need to adapt to every aspect of the Dutch culture, both ethnic minority interviewees show a level of adjustment to the Dutch culture while balancing both cultures.

4.1.2 Explicit communication versus implicit communication

Another clear difference between the “I”-and “we”-culture lies in explicit versus implicit communication. Several minority interviewees noted that communication often happens directly and honestly in the Netherlands (an “I”-culture), while in their countries indirectness is more common. This has led to several misunderstandings in the beginning since it takes time for the ethnic minority interviewees to adapt to these cultural differences. For instance, interviewee 11, who is from Poland, highlighted that the most pronounced difference between the Polish culture and the Dutch culture is the directness and openness in communication. He acknowledged that adapting to this was challenging in the beginning:

“What stands out to me about Dutch culture is the directness and openness in communication. People here just say what they think and are very honest. I had to get used to that in the beginning”.
(Interviewee 11, Polish)

This cultural difference was also noted by the Dutch majority employees. Interviewee 4 remarked the following:

“And yes, here in the Netherlands, we are simply more direct, and sometimes you have to do something that needs to be done at that moment. You are asked to do so, and I think that in their society, this might not be as common or as urgent. They might also be higher-context communicators, while we are very direct. This clashes sometimes”. (Interviewee 4, Dutch)

These differences in communication styles, direct versus indirect communication for instance, can thus sometimes lead to cultural clashes. Furthermore, the interviews showed that several ethnic minority interviewees demonstrated a strong commitment to assimilating into the Dutch culture, motivated by their voluntary decision to relocate to the Netherlands. These individuals are actively engaged in adapting to their new cultural environment. However, in contrast, two interviewees indicated that their potential plans for returning to their countries of origin, affect their willingness to fully embrace the Dutch cultural norms and behaviors, as well as their way of communicating. The reasons behind their migration – wanting to return after war – significantly influence their motivation for integration. This variation in integration motivations was expressed as follows:

“As I already said, it is my main goal to move back to Ukraine so I do not want to forget my culture. It is part of who I am and it also gives me a connection with home. So yes, I think it is really important. And I find it important to maintain everything from this because I really want to go back, so yeah I do not really change my communication style. There is not something I really want to forget or so”.

(Interviewee 13, Ukrainian)

This phenomenon is also observed by the Dutch majority employees, who noted that the motivation for work and integration approaches vary depending on the reason for leaving their country of origin:

“So, I think it really varies by person and by the situation in the country they come from, whether they adapt to Dutch culture or not. Everyone does this in their own way and is in their own kind of ‘phase’ of integration. So, it is very diverse”. (Interviewee 1, Dutch)

This highlights the complexities of the willingness to adapt between different cultural frameworks and underscores the diverse experiences of ethnic minority employees as they use coping mechanisms to navigate their integration into Dutch society. The varying levels of acculturation reflect not only personal preferences but also broader contextual factors, including future aspirations and reasons for migration.

4.1.3 Hierarchical versus equality

A key difference that was mentioned in the interviews is the difference in hierarchy. This was addressed by both the Dutch majority and the ethnic minority interviewees. For example, interviewee 2, a Dutch majority employee, observed that despite some of his colleagues having resided in the Netherlands for an extended period, they continue to maintain a high level of formality in their interactions with their boss. This formality, according to interviewee 2, stems partly from the fear of making mistakes. He addressed this as follows:

“For example, there is one colleague of mine who remains extremely formal with my manager. My manager is a very calm person; he is very relaxed and you can address him by his first name without

any issue—it doesn't bother him at all. However, my foreign colleague treats him with a great deal of formality, which is entirely unnecessary. I also notice that this colleague seems particularly fearful of making mistakes, likely because errors were not tolerated in his country of origin". (Interviewee 6, Dutch)

Hence, interviewee 9 and 16 confirmed this observation, who shared their personal experience on this:

With John, not really, because he put me at ease right away and also enjoys making jokes and such. But when John is on vacation and Mick is, for example, in charge, I do still experience that. I am still a bit apprehensive because he doesn't know me as well as John does. So, I often remain quite formal in those situations". (Interviewee 9, Ethiopian)

"Yes, I found it strange. I wondered why everyone here addresses the manager by their first name. I found that odd. I still don't do it, since I do not want to sound disrespectful. I always remain formal, addressing my supervisor as "you" (using the formal form)". (Interviewee 8, Eritrean)

These quotations illustrate how the hierarchical dynamics in the workplace can be influenced by different cultural backgrounds. In the Dutch culture ("I"-culture), there is a relatively informal approach to hierarchy, with a focus on egalitarianism and approachability. In contrast to the cultures represented by the ethnic minority employees, there is a stronger emphasis on formality and respect for authority, influenced by experiences in their countries of origin where hierarchical relationships are more rigid and errors are less tolerated.

These insights reflect a broader theme in the interviews: the adaptation challenges faced by ethnic minority employees as they navigate the different expectations of hierarchical interactions in the Dutch workplace. This adjustment is not merely a matter of adjusting to new norms but also involves a complex negotiation between maintaining one's cultural values and integration into a different organizational culture.

4.1.4 Feeling guilt versus honor and saving face

Feeling guilt is a central concept in cultures where moral responsibility is internally driven. In such cultures, individuals are expected to acknowledge their faults and assume responsibility for their actions. For instance, the Dutch culture – an "I"-culture – has an important value named "guilt", which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and owning one's mistakes (Enklaar, 2021). However, in cultures where honor and saving face are paramount, moral responsibility is externally oriented, focusing on preserving one's reputation and avoiding shame from the perspective of others. This cultural distinction was also evident in the interviews, where ethnic minority employees, when faced with a critical incident involving a Dutch majority employee, were more inclined to nod in agreement rather than openly admit their mistakes. This is illustrated with the following quotations:

"One time, a dish was sent back by a guest because it wasn't cooked properly, according to them. I told one of my foreign colleagues, and despite nodding 'yes' when I asked if he understood, he ended up preparing an entirely different dish instead of just cooking the original dish more thoroughly. As a

result, we lost time and both got frustrated. *And that's really because we didn't understand each other*". (Interviewee 2, Dutch)

"Yes, well, that has happened sometimes, like with things related to the schedule, for example. The dishwashing guys would occasionally say afterward, "Yeah, she didn't ask me" or "No, I can't do that at all. *But then I think, well, I really did ask or check because at the time, they did say yes. So maybe in those cases, they're just afraid of making mistakes and don't want to admit it*". (Interviewee 3, Dutch)

This critical incident underscores the complexities and practical challenges that arise from differing cultural conceptions. In this case, the Dutch majority employee expected a direct acknowledgment of the mistake, reflecting the Dutch "I"-culture's emphasis on personal accountability. In contrast, the ethnic minority employee, from a culture where maintaining honor and avoiding public embarrassment is important, chose a more indirect approach, leading to a communication breakdown. This highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and strategies to bridge these gaps, fostering better understanding and collaboration in multicultural work environments.

Conclusion; The "we"- and "I"-culture framework is useful in describing the potential main cultural attitude differences and is reflected in the statements of the minority and majority employees working at the hotel. Now that we have verified this basic framework of cultural differences, we will look into the acculturation process, and to what extent the individual immigrants have evolved from a we-culture towards a Dutch I-culture.

4.2 Acculturation on an individual level

Now that we put these findings about the "we"-culture characteristics together, we can create a table to analyze the extent to which the ethnic minority employees continue to adhere to the four "we"-culture characteristics and identify those who have gradually or partially relinquished these characteristics over time. The results are presented in the matrix below, Table 3. Here, the horizontal axis displays the interviewee numbers, accompanied by the corresponding number of years they have resided in the Netherlands. The vertical axis represents the four identified "we"-culture characteristics, allowing for a more comparative analysis of cultural retention over time. The quotations on which the input of Table 3 is based, are detailed in Appendix VI.

Interviewee:	12 (1,5 years)	13 (1,5 years)	8 (6 years)	11 (7 years)	15 (12 years)	9 (13 years)	16 (13,5 years)	10 (29 years)	14 (35 years)
Group focus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Hierarchical awe	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Implicit communication	X	X	X						
Honor and saving face	X	X	X						

Table 3: Cultural acculturation matrix

As seen in Table 3, “group focus” and “hierarchical awe” are characteristics that nearly all immigrant interviewees showed and which only disappeared after many years of staying in the Netherlands (29-35 years). This indicates that these characteristics of the “we”-culture are deeply embedded and the least likely to be relinquished. On the other hand, the “we”-culture characteristic “implicit communication” tends to fade over time. Those who have lived in the Netherlands for a shorter period retrain this characteristic, but as their residency lengthens (e.g., interviewees 10, 14, 15, and 16), they tend to adopt a more direct communication style typical of Dutch culture. A similar pattern is seen with the characteristic of “honor and saving face”. Newer immigrants, such as interviewees 12, 13, and 8 still place significant importance on saving face, while those who have spent many years in the Netherlands (e.g., 10 and 14) entirely moved away from this characteristic.

However, Table 3 does not imply a linear or uniform progression in which every immigrant gradually sheds all “we”-culture characteristics simply through extended residence or work experience in the Netherlands. The process of cultural adaptation is far more complex and varies significantly based on individual circumstances. For example, some individuals may abandon “implicit communication” and “honor and saving face” relatively early, yet continue to hold onto hierarchical structures and group orientation, regardless of how long they reside in the Netherlands or their stage of life. Hence, for this, there are too numerous personal factors at play, such as the age at which an individual migrates to the Netherlands. What the table does highlight, however, is that certain aspects of the “we”-culture tend to be more susceptible to change over time than others. Specifically, some characteristics are more easily adapted to the norms of the new cultural environment, while others are more resilient and persist despite external pressures. Several factors can contribute to this varied retention or adaptation of cultural traits. For instance, the conducted interviews pointed out that the reason behind migration among immigrants also plays a significant role. The interviews revealed that immigrants who leave their home country voluntarily, driven by factors such as economic opportunities, political circumstances, or the pursuit of a better future, tend to exhibit a higher motivation for adapting to the Dutch culture than those who have fled their country due to circumstances like war and plan to return afterward (interviewee 12 and 13). Hence, these immigrants provisionally show a lower motivation to integrate into Dutch society due to a strong desire to return to Ukraine once the war ends, which led them to consciously resist adapting to the Dutch cultural norms and choose to maintain their own cultural behavior. This phenomenon is captured in the following quotations:

“As I already said, it is my main goal to move back to Ukraine so I do not want to forget my culture. It is part of who I am and it also gives me a connection with home. So yes, I think it is really important. And I find it important to maintain everything from this because I really want to go back, so yeah. There is not something I really want to forget or so”. (Interviewee 13, Ukrainian).

“No, I think it is really easy to combine my culture with the Dutch culture. I am just living and doing my job and not really experiencing any difficulties while living here. However, I do want to move back some time”. (Interviewee 12, Ukrainian)

These quotations indicate that both interviewees are not consciously engaging or adapting to the cultural differences between their own culture and the Dutch culture. Their primary focus is on doing their job,

rather than on cultural integration at work. However, in contrast with the interviews with the immigrants who do not plan to return to their home country, there is a stronger motivation to integrate into Dutch society. For instance, when looking at interviewee 8. Interviewee 8 also still retains all the four “we”-culture characteristics just as interviewees 12 and 13, yet he has already begun taking steps towards integration, such as learning the Dutch language and studying for his driving theory exam. This demonstrates a higher level of motivation for integration compared to interviewees 12 and 13, who do not show the same degree of commitment. Hence, the other interviewees view their migration more as an opportunity for a better life and are, therefore, more committed to embracing the Dutch cultural standards and norms. This became also evident in the following fragments:

"Ultimately, I came to the Netherlands because of my religion. I am Christian, and there are many problems with that in Iran because the Iranian regime only accepts Muslims. They cause problems for other religions, so I was not accepted there. Only Islam was accepted. And that's why I'm very happy that this is not the case here, and I really do try my best here." (Interviewee 15, Iran)

"Yes, I find it very important to adapt to Dutch culture and embrace it. That's why I took an integration course to really learn Dutch and learn about the Netherlands. And as I said, I voluntarily chose to move to the Netherlands because I have better job prospects here. Therefore, I feel that I really must adapt, so I try to do that." (Interviewee 11, Poland)

In addition to this, social environments can also play a significant role in contributing to the varied retention or adaptation of cultural traits. For instance, immigrants embedded in tight-knit ethnic communities are less likely to relinquish their cultural traits compared to those more fully socially integrated into Dutch society, for example through work, school, or other social networks. Hence, they have more exposure to the Dutch culture, which may lead to a greater willingness to make cultural adjustments. This phenomenon is also evident among the interviewees. Those who, for instance expressed that they have (a mix of) Dutch friends or attend a Dutch school (e.g., interviewees 11, 15, 16, 9, 10, and 14) no longer display all the four “we”-culture characteristics as seen in Table 3. In contrast, interviewees who expressed that they do not have such interactions and hence remain within more tight-knit ethnic communities (e.g., interviewees 8, 12, and 13) continue to exhibit their cultural traits.

Finally, the factor of personal identity also must be considered. Some immigrants may have a profound attachment to their cultural background and perceive the preservation of specific “we”-culture characteristics as a fundamental aspect of their identity. For these individuals, the loss of such values can be perceived as a threat to their sense of self and cultural continuity, resulting in a prolonged adherence to these values. This also became evident in the interviews with the following statements:

"I find it important to preserve my own culture, that is, Eritrea, because it is simply your own country, right? It is truly a part of who I am, and I will never forget that." (Interviewee 7, Eritrean)

"I find it very important to preserve my Polish culture. It is a significant part of who I am personally. I also see Poland as my country, and there are many things I want to teach my children about it, such as respect for elderly people." (Interviewee 11, Poland)

In conclusion, while Table 3 offers valuable insights into the general trends of cultural adaptation, it does not cover the complexity of each individual’s experience. Personal, social, and cultural factors intersect to shape the unique path that each immigrant follows. Therefore, although certain “we”-culture characteristics may be more likely to fade, others remain robust, reflecting the diversity of immigrant experiences in navigating new cultural landscapes.

4.3 Acculturation – Berry et al., (1987)

Based on the insights presented above, we can now examine the extent to which Berry et al., (1987) acculturation theory is reflected in these data. We can attempt to categorize the interviewees within the four acculturation strategies of the framework - assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization – by relating the interviewees’ responses in the interviews to the two central factors of Berry et al., (1987) framework; maintenance of non-dominant culture identity and relationships sought among groups. For clarification, the framework is presented once again below.

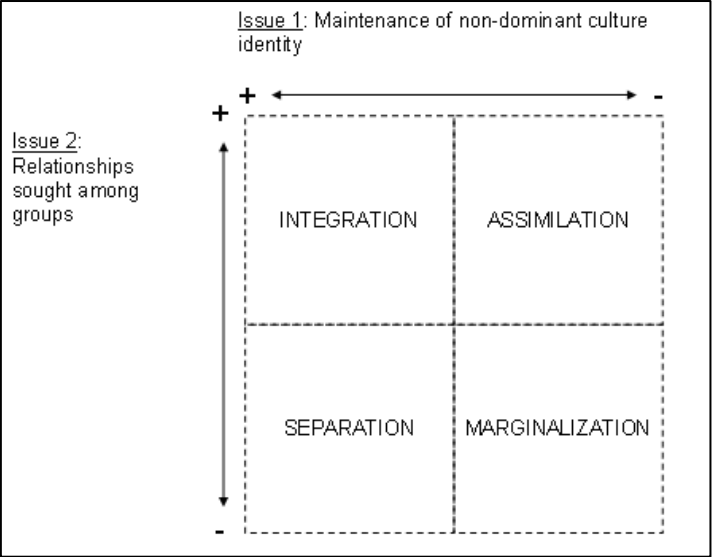


Figure 4: Acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 1987)

We begin by analyzing how interviewees 12 and 13 fit within the framework of Berry et al., (1987). Both interviewees, who have been living in the Netherlands for 1,5 years, indicated that they do not have any Dutch friends outside of their workplace. Their social circle still consists entirely of people with a Ukrainian background, with whom they maintain daily contact. Hence, when asked the question; “Do you think it is important to retain your own culture?”, both interviewees emphasized the significance of preserving their cultural identity, as it represents who they are as a person and because their primary focus is returning to their homeland (Ukraine) after the war. This sentiment was also reflected in their responses to other questions, for example, both interviewees continue to watch Ukrainian television, celebrate Ukrainian holidays, and hold on to Ukrainian values and norms, such as formal respect towards authority figures. This indicates a strong attachment to their original cultural identity, suggesting that they are in the early stages of the *separation* acculturation strategy. They consciously resist in adapting to the Dutch cultural norms since their primary focus is returning to their homeland (Ukraine).

Hence, their motivation for integration is low, aligning with the separation acculturation strategy of Berry (1987), where the individual focuses on preserving their heritage culture while only minimally engaging with the host culture. In summary, we can describe them as follows:

- Cultural identity: I feel Ukrainian;
- Participation in majority society: Minimal, only engagement with Dutch people in their workplace;
- Cultural artifacts: I am attached to Ukrainian things; watching the news, celebrating holidays, all the norms and values;
- Mentality: “we”-culture.

A similar pattern can be observed for interviewee 8 (6 years in the Netherlands). He mentioned in the interviews that his friends are solely from Eritrea, and only sees them on the weekends, thus he does not surround himself with Dutch friends. In addition to that, he mentioned that he still listens to Eritrean music and watches Eritrean football, and that respect for his family, his boss, and his work remain core values for him. He emphasized that Eritrea continues to represent his culture because it is his homeland, indicating a strong connection to its original cultural identity. However, as mentioned earlier, interviewee 8 shows more active engagement within the integration process than interviewees 12 and 13. For example, he is already actively learning the Dutch language and working towards obtaining his driving theory, indicating a higher level of motivation to integrate. Nevertheless, despite this proactive approach, his behavior still aligns with the *separation* acculturation strategy; Not rejecting the host culture outright, but also not actively engaging within the Dutch cultural norms and values. In summary, we can describe this as follows:

- Cultural identity: I feel Eritrean;
- Participation in majority society: Minimal, only engagement with Dutch people in their workplace;
- Cultural artifacts: I am attached to Eritrean things; listening to music, watching sports, and all the norms and values;
- Mentality: “we”-culture.

The next group of interviewees – Interviewee 11 (7 years in the Netherlands), interviewee 15 (12 years in the Netherlands), interviewee 9 (13 years in the Netherlands), and interviewee 16 (13,5 years in the Netherlands) – show a more complex picture. These individuals have a mix of Dutch friends and friends from their cultural background and also socialize with their Dutch colleagues outside of work. Interviewees 9, 15, and 16, for example, have largely shifted away from consuming media from their home countries, no longer watching TV or listening to music from their native culture, while interviewee 11 still watches TV and series from his home country. Despite this, almost all four interviewees continue to place a strong emphasis on the importance of family and formal respect for authority figures. This pattern is indicative of an *integration* acculturation strategy. Hence, these interviewees still value aspects of their heritage culture, particularly concerning social hierarchy and group dynamics, but they have also begun to embrace for example more direct forms of communication typical of Dutch society. They show a willingness to integrate, with for example attending language courses and learning how to ride a bike, and are motivated to become a part of the Dutch culture. Hence, the partial retention of hierarchical awe and group focus (“we”-culture characteristics) suggests that the interviewee values certain elements of

their heritage culture, while at the same time, they have adapted to the new cultural environment. In summary, this group reflects the following:

- Cultural identity: Balance between the heritage culture and the Dutch culture;
- Participation in majority society: Substantial, maintaining friendships with both Dutch and other cultures, and socializing with Dutch colleagues outside of work;
- Cultural artifacts: Interviewee 11 – watching Polish TV and series;
- Mentality: “we”-culture/some characteristics of “I”-culture.

Interviewee 10 (29 years in the Netherlands) and interviewee 14 (35 years in the Netherlands) predominantly exhibit Dutch behaviors. Interviewee 10 was adopted at the age of 2.5 and was raised in a Dutch household. However, she notes that her best friends are Surinamese and Haitian and that she retains some cultural artifacts from Brazil, such as eating a lot of rice and having a Brazilian flag in her bedroom. Nevertheless, her behavior during the interview was notably Dutch; she was quite direct and did not seem to display many characteristics of the “we”-culture. This is similar to interviewee 14. He has a Dutch wife and two Dutch daughters, indicating a predominantly Dutch household. However, he mentions that he still has many friends from Nigeria and goes on vacation there a few times a year. Therefore we can put them in the *integration* acculturation strategy since they have ongoing connections to their original heritage. In summary, these interviewees therefore reflect the following:

- Cultural identity: I feel Dutch;
- Participation in majority society: High, but having friendships with people from other cultures;
- Cultural artifacts: Still attached to some Brazilian and Nigerian things; Brazilian flag, food, and friends;
- Mentality: “I”-culture.

With this summarization of the data, we can now categorize the interviewees within the framework of Berry et al., (1987). The result is presented in the figure below, Figure 5.

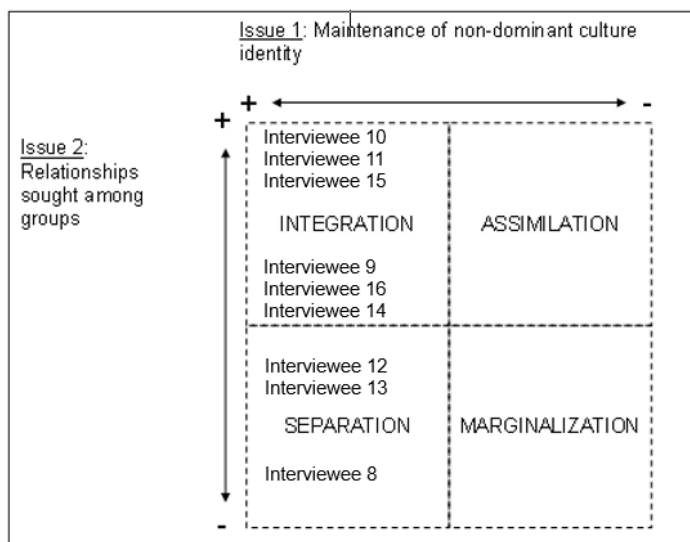


Figure 5: Acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 1987) on individual level

However, this classification raises important considerations. When referring to the framework of Berry et al., (1987), interviewees 10 and 14 would be placed within the *integration* acculturation strategy, given

that they still engage in activities related to their country of origin, such as going on vacation to Nigeria or displaying a Brazilian flag in their bedroom (surface-level culture). Hence, according to the framework of Berry (1987), this retention of cultural ties implies that they have not fully assimilated into the Dutch culture, thus preventing them from being categorized under the *assimilation* acculturation strategy. However, it became evident in the interviews that these interviewees, did however, fully embrace the Dutch culture and adapted themselves to the Dutch norms and values (deep-level culture). Hence, cultural artifacts or vacation destinations alone are insufficient to determine the degree of acculturation of an individual. For instance, many Dutch persons travel to the United States for vacations or listen to English music – yet this doesn't make them less Dutch. This interchangeable use of these different meanings of culture creates ambiguity regarding what constitutes the preservation of one's original culture.

In conclusion, our data thus shows that Berry et al., (1987) "acculturation" framework is less about cultural adaptation and more about social integration and identity, specifically focusing on whether or not individuals interact with Dutch persons and Dutch culture. Hence, according to our data, this framework lacks depth in addressing the more intricate aspects of deep-level culture and therefore does not adequately explain the concept of acculturation. To further this understanding, the acculturation theory of Enklaar (2021) is tested. His framework, which divides acculturation into four stages – unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence – approaches acculturation from a purely cultural perspective, capturing the gradual progression and internal problems that immigrants face in adapting to a new cultural environment. Therefore, this framework will be further used to emphasize the examination of deep-level culture.

4.4 Acculturation – Enklaar (2021)

Enklaar (2021) states that immigrants cannot simultaneously automatize two cultures at the same time. He argues that first, second, and third-generation immigrants adjust their cultural behavior depending on whether they are within their ethnic group or among Dutch individuals (code-switching). Hence, Enklaar (2021) distinguishes four stages of acculturation, this is shown in the framework below.

	Incompetence	Competence
Conscious	Conscious Incompetence	Conscious Competence
Unconscious	Unconscious Incompetence	Unconscious Competence

Competent: Capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards
Conscious: Aware of one's own behavior

Figure 6: The four stages of acculturation (Enklaar, 2021)

We can now attempt to categorize the interviewees within the four stages of acculturation of the framework of Enklaar (2021) – conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious incompetence, and unconscious competence, beginning with analyzing where interviewees 12 and 13 fit into the framework. These interviewees are aware that they are not yet integrating into Dutch society, as they consciously maintain close ties with their Ukrainian heritage and have little to no contact with people outside of work. They consciously resisted adapting to the Dutch norms because their focus remains on returning to Ukraine after the war. Therefore, we can assign them to *unconscious incompetence*, as they have yet to recognize the utility and value of the missing cultural competence, given their lack of awareness regarding cultural differences (Broadwell, 1969). This becomes evident in the interviews where they state that it is seemingly easy to combine Dutch and Ukrainian cultures, reflecting an unawareness of deeper cultural nuances. In summary, these interviewees therefore reflect the following:

- Consciousness: Low, unaware of one's own (Ukrainian) behavior; unconscious;
- Competence: Low, not capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards; incompetence.

This is similar to interviewee 8. Interviewee 8 still has strong ties to Eritrean culture but is actively engaging with the Dutch culture by learning the language and working on obtaining his driver's license. He is aware of the need to adapt but has not fully integrated yet. Therefore, we can assign him to *conscious incompetence*, but moving towards *conscious competence*. He is aware of the competence he lacks but is slowly taking steps to acquire it (Broadwell, 1969). This reflects a growing understanding of cultural differences and the deliberate effort to overcome them. In summary, we can describe this as follows:

- Consciousness: High, aware of one's own behavior; conscious;
- Competence: Moderate, starting to develop the competence of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards; incompetence/competence.

The next group of interviewees – interviewees 11, 15, 9, and 16 – demonstrate both the phase *conscious competence and unconscious competence*. Beginning with interviewee 11, interviewee 11 has adapted to Dutch society by learning the Dutch language, now speaking Dutch at home as well, and automatically adopting a more direct communication style typical of the Dutch culture (explicit communication; unconscious competence). However, he occasionally struggles with formality. For example, he still addresses his boss with the formal "u", despite the more informal norms used on the Dutch work floor, indicating he is aware of the difference but must consciously think about their actions to avoid making mistakes (conscious competence). A similar pattern is observed for interviewees 15 and 9. Both interviewees expressed that they have experienced little difficulty in adjusting to the Dutch culture and working with Dutch colleagues. Interviewee 15 even actively introduces elements of Iranian culture to them. However, interviewee 15 still follows certain Iranian customs at home and both interviewees sometimes still make mistakes regarding the Dutch formalities. Interviewee 9 for example indicates that it requires conscious effort and energy to manage not making these mistakes, indicating the phase of *conscious competence*. However, he also mentions that when he does make a mistake, he now admits

it and takes responsibility (feeling guilt), whereas in the past, he would remain silent to protect himself. This suggests that in this characteristic, he has progressed to the stage of *unconscious competence*. Interviewee 16, however, is still primarily in the *conscious competence* phase. While he adjusts to Dutch culture in daily life, certain aspects of Dutch society still surprise him, such as the custom of men and women sitting together during lunch breaks. These instances of surprise indicate that he is still consciously processing and adapting to cultural differences, rather than having internalized them fully. In summary, this group reflects the following:

- Consciousness: High/Low, aware of one's own original behavior and automatically behaving Dutch, differs per characteristic; conscious/unconscious;
- Competence: High, capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards; competence.

In contrast, interviewees 10 and 14 can be categorized under *unconscious competence*, as they have fully adapted to Dutch society and predominantly exhibit Dutch behaviors, which was also observed while conducting the interviews. Though they retain some cultural artifacts from Brazil and Nigeria, they unconsciously follow Dutch norms and values in their daily lives. However, interviewee 14 for example, expressed that he needs to be cautious not to overly exhibit Dutch behavior around his Nigerian friends to avoid misunderstandings, highlighting the subtle navigation required when engaging with multiple cultural contexts. In summary, these interviewees therefore reflect the following:

- Consciousness: Low, automatically behaving Dutch; unconscious;
- Competence: High, capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards; competence.

With this summarization of the data, we can now categorize the interviewees within the framework of Enklaar (2021). The result is presented in the figure below, Figure 7.

	Incompetence	Competence
Conscious	Conscious Incompetence Interviewee 8	Conscious Competence Interviewee 11 and 15 Interviewee 9 and 16
Unconscious	Unconscious Incompetence Interviewee 12 Interviewee 13	Unconscious Competence Interviewee 11, 15, 9, 10, and 14

Competent: Capable of adhering to Dutch norms and cultural standards
Conscious: Aware of one's own behavior

Figure 7: The four stages of acculturation (Enklaar, 2021) on individual level

According to our data, we can state that the narratives generally are in line with the acculturation theory of Enklaar (2021). Enklaar (2021) argues that immigrants cannot automatize two cultures simultaneously, and second and third-generation immigrants adjust their cultural behavior based on their social context. This is largely supported by the empirical evidence from our participants; The gradual shift from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence is reflected in their adaptation to Dutch norms, values, and behaviors. However, while the theory claims that individuals cannot

automatize two cultures simultaneously, our participants show that they have transformed certain “we”-culture characteristics (e.g., implicit communication, honor and saving face) into “I”-culture characteristics, thereby automatically exhibiting “I”-culture behaviors in these specific areas (e.g., explicit communication, feeling guilt), while still holding on to the “we”-culture in other characteristics (e.g., hierarchical awe), requiring conscious effort when navigating between their heritage culture and the Dutch context, demonstrating the ongoing need for code-switching. Therefore, we can state that the theory of Enklaar (2021) is largely confirmed in practice but with an important nuance; That individuals may remain in the “*conscious competence*” phase for certain characteristics, while already having progressed to the “*unconscious competence*” phase for other characteristics. This finding thus suggests that the phases of acculturation vary by characteristic, meaning not all characteristics go through the same phase of acculturation at once, as Enklaar (2021) initially proposed.

5. Discussion

The present study examines the acculturation process of immigrants in a multicultural work environment, offering empirical evidence to refine existing acculturation theories. More specifically, this study argues that the process of acculturation is affected by the individual level of acculturation, showing that not all characteristics of an individual go through the same phase of acculturation at once. Hence, the following research question is answered: *“How do ethnic minority employees navigate the process of acculturation while collaborating with Dutch majority employees, balancing cultural differences occurring in the Dutch workplace?”*. The theoretical and practical implications, as well as the limitations and future research, are explained below.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This research makes a significant contribution to the existing literature on cultural acculturation and cross-cultural differences in multicultural workplaces, specifically by examining how ethnic minority employees navigate the process of acculturation while collaborating with Dutch majority employees. Prior studies predominantly focused on the different views between ethnic majorities and ethnic minorities and failed to capture the (in)voluntary acculturation process of immigrants (Berry et al., 1987; Schlizo et al., 2008). In contrast, the results of this research offer a more nuanced understanding of how the acculturation process of immigrants unfolds in practice, shedding light on the complexities of cultural adaptation.

First, one of the main insights from the findings is that, over time, immigrants tend to lose more of their “we”-culture characteristics and adopt more characteristics of the “I”-culture. This gradual shift aligns with the observation that integration into a new cultural environment not only involves acquiring new cultural traits but also letting go of old ones (Redfield et al., 1963, p.149). In addition to that, the findings further reveal that some cultural characteristics are more resistant to change than others, suggesting that they are more deeply ingrained in an individual’s cultural identity. This insight extends current knowledge (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2012) since this highlights the complex nature of acculturation where certain elements of culture are easier to adapt or relinquish.

Second, the findings highlight that besides personal, social, and cultural factors, the prospect of returning to one’s home country significantly influences the acculturation process of immigrants, thereby extending the research of Crano and Crano (1963). When this prospect is present, the motivation to fully integrate into Dutch society is lower than that of immigrants who do not plan to return to their home country. This extends the current literature on understanding acculturation by emphasizing the impact of long-term settlement plans on immigrants’ willingness to adapt (Liu et al., 2020).

Third, this research offers empirical evidence to refine existing acculturation theories, e.g. Berry et al., (1987) and Enklaar (2021), focusing on cultural differences and cooperation in multicultural work environments. Notably, this research shows that the acculturation framework of Berry et al., (1987) is more about social integration and identity formation rather than cultural adaptation. This calls into question the framework’s status as a comprehensive acculturation model, despite its widespread use in existing literature on cultural acculturation and as a helpful tool in examining the process of acculturation of immigrants. On the other hand, this research provides strong support for Enklaar’s (2021)

acculturation framework. This framework, which emphasizes both the two factors of awareness and competence, is shown to be more effective in capturing the dynamic and evolving nature of acculturation compared to the Berry et al., (1987) model. It underscores the need to shift away from Berry et al., (1987) framework when studying the stages of acculturation, and instead, highlights the relevance of Enklaar's (2021) framework. However, it became evident that the framework of Enklaar (2021) comes with an important nuance; The findings showed that the phases of acculturation vary by characteristic, meaning not all characteristics of an individual go through the same phase of acculturation at once, as Enklaar (2021) initially proposed. Hence, this is an important theoretical implication as this is a new insight into the process of acculturation, presenting a new valuable addition to the literature on cultural acculturation.

In essence, these theoretical implications underscore the need for a clearer picture of the process that immigrants undergo when adapting to a new cultural context. It demonstrates that the acculturation process involves the gradual adoption of new cultural characteristics while retaining or losing certain elements of the original culture, depending on how deeply they are rooted in an individual's identity. Furthermore, the findings challenge the widespread use of Berry et al., (1987) model as an acculturation framework and advocate partially for the adoption of Enklaar's (2021) framework, which better captures the stages of cultural adaptation, but with an important note as mentioned above. This shift in theoretical perspective has important implications for future research on cultural acculturation and adds a valuable contribution to the existing literature.

5.2 Practical implications

Besides the theoretical implications, this research also provides practical implications for businesses, policymakers, and both ethnic minority and Dutch majority employees in multicultural work environments. These practical insights offer valuable guidance for improving workplace dynamics, fostering better intercultural understanding, and reducing the potential for conflict.

First, we found that this research could serve as a foundational source delivering practical relevance for businesses seeking to make multicultural collaborations more efficient. By identifying the specific areas where cultural clashes commonly occur, such as within communication, hierarchical expectations, and approaches to conflict resolution, businesses can develop a more targeted training program. Hence, this research provides more awareness of the various multicultural scenarios businesses could encounter in their operations.

Second, this research can provide ethnic minority employees or Dutch majority employees with more information about the cultural clashes they may be included in and experience. Hence, this research could lower the barriers that may arise in these cultural clashes and increase mutual trust in the relationships between ethnic minority employees and Dutch majority employees, respectively working in different sectors.

Third and lastly, this research also demonstrates that the predicted frictions between the "we"-and "I"-culture framework are not only theoretical but also occur in the analyzed organization, in this case, a hotel. This observation highlights that the characteristics of the "we"-and "I"-culture framework can help Dutch ethnic majority employees and ethnic minority employees in gaining a better understanding of

their standard cultural behavior, as well as those of their colleagues. Hence, the findings pointed out that ethnic minority employees from a “we”-culture initially struggle with for example the direct Dutch work culture regarding communication, but over time, adapt to their new environment and thus this communication style. This adaptability shows that some characteristics fade over time, while others require more thoughtful navigation.

In conclusion, this research thus provides practical insights for businesses, policymakers, and employees to develop more effective strategies for bridging cultural differences and thereby improving productivity and collaboration in multicultural teams.

5.3 Limitations and future research

As with all research, this study is not without limitations. First, despite the researcher being a work colleague and well-acquainted with the participants, the ethnicity of the researcher, being an ethnic majority member and a woman, can inadvertently introduce biases that could affect the authenticity and reliability of the data collected. These social and cultural dynamics are critical to consider, as they can influence both the interview process, and the responses provided by the interviewees. Future research should minimize the risk of such bias by using external interviewers to validate self-assessments and enhance the credibility of the findings (Belz & Baumbach, 2010). Yet, we are confident that potential biases in the data were minimal due to the researcher’s awareness of these dynamics and efforts to maintain objectivity throughout the research process.

Second, the generalizability of this study might be limited. The sample is confined to a single hotel setting, and ethnic minorities and Dutch majorities were selected as the core participants of this study to match its aim. Although these participants provided high-quality empirical data, future research must consider other industries and broader work environments. Moreover, a larger and more diverse sample of ethnic minorities from varying sectors and cultural backgrounds is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the acculturation process in different multicultural workplace contexts. Third, this research exclusively relied on self-reported data collected through semi-structured interviews. While this method allows for an in-depth exploration of the participants’ experiences, it is subject to recall bias and social desirability bias. Participants may selectively recall incidents or present themselves more favorably, especially given the role of the researcher as both an interviewer and an employee of the hotel. This limitation could reduce the objectivity of the data, as participants may not fully disclose their experiences or behaviors regarding sensitive topics. Hence, future research could mitigate this limitation by incorporating additional data collection methods such as direct observations or quantitative data. Lastly, while the relatively short timeframe of six months fits the exploratory goal of this study, a more extended timeframe is desirable. Future studies might benefit from widening the timeframe, as it allows for a more longitudinal approach, particularly in assessing the acculturation process of ethnic minorities. For example, conducting interviews at multiple intervals could have provided deeper insights into their adaptation process and coping mechanisms over time. This approach would have enabled a more comprehensive understanding of their acculturation process and the changes in their attitudes and behaviors as they navigated cultural differences. Moreover, a longer timeframe might have allowed for a broader sample size or the inclusion of more ethnic minorities. Therefore, future research would benefit

from incorporating such longitudinal methods to better track the ongoing development of ethnic minorities' experiences and their coping strategies.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated how ethnic minority employees navigate the process of acculturation while working with Dutch majority employees, balancing cultural differences occurring in the Dutch workplace. By drawing on the “we”-and “I”-culture framework, we elucidate the underlying clashing cultural characteristics of critical incidents. Certain conflicting cultural characteristics between the “I” and “we”-cultures were identified, which in turn can significantly affect the process of acculturation of ethnic minorities in the workplace. This significant effect is found moderated by the individual level of acculturation. Hence, it was found that some characteristics of the “we”-culture are more deeply embedded in the cultural identity of ethnic minorities than others, and that the phases of acculturation vary by characteristic, meaning not all characteristics of an individual go through the same phase of acculturation at once. To ensure flourishing of ethnic minority employees, organizations need to foster an inclusive workplace culture that recognizes and values diverse cultural perspectives. Given this conclusion, it is recommended for organizations to focus on enhancing cultural competence within their teams to facilitate smoother cultural collaboration and improve overall workplace harmony.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Interview guide Ethnic minorities Hotel X – English

Introduction and conducting the interview

Introduction	<p>Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. I am Megan van der Steeg and I live in the Netherlands. At present, I am pursuing a Master of Business Administration, and for my Master's Thesis, I am conducting research on how ethnic minorities perceive their working experience among Dutch ethnic majorities. Therefore, I am interested in learning how the collaboration between you and your Dutch colleagues has shaped your working experience and what miscommunications may have occurred in this regard.</p>
Purpose of the interview	<p>The interview will consist of 12 broad questions and 1 statement around 3 broad topics: your integration process, your culture and miscommunication and experiences with your Dutch colleagues. It will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. The results of this interview will provide me with relevant input for the final research of my Master's Thesis.</p>
Recording	<p>As far as we know there are no disadvantages associated with participating in this interview. For this research, your answers will be analyzed and transcribed by means of a recording. Do you give permission for this interview to be recorded? And for the record to be transcribed?</p> <p>The data will be used in a responsible and confidential manner and in accordance with the AVG, I will ensure that the specific requirements are met. Do you agree with that?</p> <p>You can change your mind and stop at any time while participating in the interview. I will then use your data until the moment you stop. Do you also agree with this?</p>
Start Interview	<p>Then, after permission, I will now turn on the recording device and we will start with the first questions.</p>

<p>General questions</p>	<p>Before we start with the actual questions about the topic, I would first like to know more about you as a person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are you and where do you come from? (name, age and gender) 2. When did you moved to the Netherlands? 3. What is your function within Hotel X? 4. How long have you been working for Hotel X? 5. What kind of tasks encompasses your function? 6. Did you work at other places before Hotel X?
<p>Background questions</p>	<p>Before we move on to the other topics, I first want to ask you some background questions about your integration process in the Netherlands. To start with the first question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. How is your situation at home? Are you living with your family or alone, married, have kids etc.? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you have friends of your home culture or only Dutch friends? b. How often do you see them? c. Do you still watch television from your home country (name)? d. Do you think you have changed since your arrival in the Netherlands? e. Do you behave differently when your are with your family/friends than when you are working at Hotel X? Can you give some examples? f. What cost you the most energy? To be and to talk with the Dutch or with your own family and friends? And why? g. Do you sometimes make a mistake in the cultures? For example, to be formal to a Dutch boss or disagree with an elderly (name country) person? <p>For example; In the Netherlands you treat your parents, elderly people and bosses as equal. You can disagree with them. Was it difficult for you to learn this Dutch behavior?</p>

<p>Culture (Berry et al., 1987)</p>	<p>Then I would like to move on to the second topic, which is about culture. Starting with the first question:</p> <p>8. Do you think it is important to contain your own culture?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is typical for your (name) culture? (traditions, values, norms etc.) b. What do you think is important to retain from this? <p>9. You are now ofcourse working and living in the Netherlands. Do you think it is important to also embrace and adapt to the Dutch culture?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is typical for Dutch culture in your opinion? (traditions, values, norms etc.) b. What do you think is important to adopt from this? <p>10. What are in your opinion the differences between your culture and the Dutch culture? Can you give some examples of what you experienced?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What qualities do you often find lacking in Dutch people? Can you provide examples? b. How do you manage to combine your own culture with the Dutch culture? Do you find this hard? Could you give some examples?
<p>(Mis)communication and experiences</p>	<p>Now I would like to move on to the third and last topic, which is about miscommunication and experiences between you and your Dutch colleagues:</p> <p>11. How often do you have contact with your Dutch colleagues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Would you consider this contact with your Dutch colleagues as good? And why? b. What is the most positive thing in working together with Dutch colleagues/supervisors/clients? Could you provide examples? c. What is the most difficult thing in working together with Dutch colleagues/supervisors/clients? Could you provide examples?

	<p>12. Have you ever experienced misunderstandings between you and your Dutch colleagues when you started working at Hotel X? How did this come?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you still experiences misunderstandings now and then between you and your Dutch colleagues? b. Have you ever had other problems with Dutch people? c. How did you overcome these problems?
Statement:	<p>“It is easier to collaborate with someone from my own culture than with a Dutch person.” What is your opinion on that and for what reason?</p>

Conclusion

Closing	<p>Would you like to add anything to this interview? Are there any aspects that you think have not yet been mentioned during this interview but that you would like to mention?</p>
Member checking	<p>If there are no further comments, I will stop the recording now. The interview will be transcribed based on the recording made. I will send you the results of the transcribed interview so that you can check it.</p> <p>I will use the result for internal purposes and as data for my Master Thesis. Your name will not be mentioned and I will make sure that your statements cannot be traced back to you.</p>
Thanking for the interview and the end	<p>I would like to thank you very much for your time, effort, and participation in the interview. If you have any questions or additions, you can always contact me. Thank you very much and have a nice day!</p>

Introductie en afname van het interview

Introductie	<p>Bedankt voor het nemen van de tijd om deel te nemen aan dit interview. Ik ben Megan van der Steeg en woonachtig in Apeldoorn, Nederland. Momenteel volg ik een Master Business Administration en voor mijn afstuderen doe ik onderzoek naar hoe etnische minderheidsgroepen hun werkervaring beleven tussen Nederlandse etnische meerderheidsgroepen. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in hoe de samenwerking tussen u en uw Nederlandse collega's uw werkervaring hebben gevormd en welke misverstanden er in dit opzicht zijn opgetreden.</p>
Doel van het interview	<p>Het interview zal bestaan uit 12 brede vragen en 1 stelling over drie brede onderwerpen: uw integratieproces, uw cultuur en miscommunicatie en ervaringen met uw Nederlandse collega's. Het zal ongeveer 60 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. De resultaten zullen relevante input bieden voor mijn Master Thesis.</p>
Opname	<p>Uw deelname aan dit interview brengt zover bekend geen nadelen met zich mee. Uw antwoorden worden enkel opgenomen voor analyse- en transcriptiedoeleinden.</p> <p>Stemt u in met het opnemen en transcriberen van het interview? Uw gegevens worden verantwoord en vertrouwelijk behandeld, in overeenstemming met de AVG. Stemt u in met deze voorwaarden?</p> <p>U heeft het recht om op elk moment het interview te stoppen, en ik zal alleen de tot dat moment vermelde gegevens dan gebruiken. Stemt u hier ook mee in?</p>
Start interview	<p>Na toestemming zal ik beginnen met opnemen en zullen we starten met de vragen.</p>

<p>Algemene vragen</p>	<p>Voordat we ingaan op de hoofdonderwerpen, wil ik eerst meer over u persoonlijk weten:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wie bent u en waar komt u vandaan? (naam, leeftijd en geslacht) 2. Wanneer bent u naar Nederland verhuisd? 3. Wat is uw functie binnen Hotel X? 4. Hoelang werkt u al bij Hotel X? 5. Welke taken omvat uw functie? 6. Heeft u voor Hotel X ook nog op andere plekken gewerkt?
<p>Achtergrondvragen</p>	<p>Voordat we doorgaan naar de andere onderwerpen, wil ik graag eerst wat achtergrondvragen stellen over uw integratieproces in Nederland. Om te beginnen met de eerste vraag:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Hoe is uw thuissituatie? Woont u met uw familie of alleen, bent u getrouwd, heeft u kinderen etc.? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Heeft u veel Nederlandse vrienden of bent u voornamelijk bevriend met mensen van dezelfde cultuur als u? b. Hoe vaak ziet u hen? c. Kijkt u nog steeds naar de televisie uit uw thuisland (naam land)? d. Denkt u dat u veranderd bent sinds uw aankomst in Nederland? e. Gedraagt u zich anders wanneer u bij uw familie/vrienden bent dan wanneer u werkt bij Hotel X? Kunt u daarvan enkele voorbeelden geven? f. Wat kost u de meeste energie? Om met Nederlanders te zijn en te praten of met uw eigen familie en vrienden? En waarom? g. Maakt u soms fouten in de culturen? Bijvoorbeeld te formeel zijn tegen een Nederlandse baas of het niet eens zijn met een ouder persoon uit uw land van oorsprong (naam land)? <p>Voorbeeld: In Nederland behandelt u uw ouders, ouderen en bazen als gelijkwaardig. U kunt het met hen</p>

	<p>oneens zijn. Was het moeilijk voor u om dit Nederlandse gedrag te leren?</p>
Cultuur (Berry et al., 1987)	<p>Dan wil ik graag doorgaan naar het tweede onderwerp, dat gaat over cultuur. Beginnend met de eerste vraag:</p> <p>8. Vindt u het belangrijk om uw eigen cultuur te behouden?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wat is typerend in uw cultuur (naam land)? (gewoontes, tradities etc.) b. Wat vindt u belangrijk om hiervan te behouden? <p>9. U woont en werkt natuurlijk nu in Nederland. Vindt u het belangrijk om ook de Nederlandse cultuur te omarmen en u hieraan aan te passen?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wat is typerend voor de Nederlandse cultuur volgens u? (gedragingen, gewoontes, tradities etc.) b. Wat vindt u belangrijk hiervan om over te nemen? <p>10. Wat zijn volgens u de verschillen tussen uw cultuur en de Nederlandse cultuur? Kunt u hiervan enkele voorbeelden geven die u heeft ervaren?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Welke eigenschappen mist u vaak bij Nederlanders? Kunt u voorbeelden geven? b. Hoe slaagt u erin om uw eigen cultuur te combineren met de Nederlandse cultuur? Vindt u dit lastig? En kan u hier voorbeelden van geven?
(Mis)communicatie en ervaringen	<p>Nu wil ik graag doorgaan naar het derde en laatste onderwerp; Miscommunicatie en ervaringen tussen u en uw Nederlandse collega's:</p> <p>11. Hoe vaak heeft u contact met uw Nederlandse collega's?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Zou u dit contact als goed beschouwen? En zo ja/hee, waarom? b. Wat is het meest positieve aspect aan samenwerken met Nederlandse collega's/supervisors/klanten? Kunt u hiervan voorbeelden geven?

	<p>c. Wat is het moeilijkste aan samenwerken met Nederlandse collega's/supervisors/klanten? Kunt u hiervan ook voorbeelden geven?</p> <p>12. Heeft u wel eens misverstanden ervaren met uw Nederlandse collega's toen u begon bij Hotel X? Hoe kwam dat?</p> <p>a. Ervaart u op dit moment nog steeds af en toe misverstanden tussen u en uw Nederlandse collega's? Zo ja, waar gaat dit over?</p> <p>b. Heeft u ooit andere misverstanden gehad met Nederlanders?</p> <p>c. Hoe heeft u dit opgelost?</p>
Stelling:	<p>"Het is makkelijker om samen te werken met iemand uit mijn eigen cultuur dan met een Nederlands persoon". Wat is uw mening over deze stelling, en waarom?</p>

Conclusie

Afsluiting	<p>Wilt u nog iets toevoegen aan het interview? Zijn er aspecten die we nog niet hebben behandeld maar die u graag wilt benoemen?</p>
Controle deelnemer	<p>Indien er geen verdere opmerkingen zijn, zal ik de opname nu stoppen. Het interview wordt getranscribeerd en aan u laten zien ter controle.</p> <p>Uw antwoorden worden enkel gebruikt voor mijn Master Thesis, waarbij vertrouwelijkheid wordt gewaarborgd. Uw naam zal niet worden bekend gemaakt en uw uitspraken zullen geanonimiseerd worden.</p>
Dank voor het interview en afsluiting	<p>Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd, inspanning en deelname aan dit interview. Als u nog vragen of aanvullende gedachten heeft, neemt u dan gerust contact met mij op. Nogmaals bedankt en nog een fijne dag!</p>

Appendix III: Interview guide Dutch majorities Hotel X – Dutch

<p>Introductie</p>	<p>Bedankt voor het nemen van de tijd om deel te nemen aan dit interview. Ik ben Megan van der Steeg en woonachtig in Apeldoorn, Nederland. Momenteel volg ik een Master Business Administration en voor mijn afstuderen doe ik onderzoek naar hoe etnische minderheidsgroepen hun werkervaring beleven tussen Nederlandse etnische meerderheidsgroepen en andersom. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in hoe de samenwerking tussen u en uw buitenlandse collega's uw werkervaring hebben gevormd en welke misverstanden er in dit opzicht zijn opgetreden.</p>
<p>Doel van het interview</p>	<p>Het interview zal bestaan uit 11 brede vragen en 1 stelling over vier brede onderwerpen: communicatie, ervaringen, miscommunicatie met uw buitenlandse collega's en het acculturatieproces van uw buitenlandse collega's. Het zal ongeveer 60 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. De resultaten zullen relevante input bieden voor mijn Master Thesis.</p>
<p>Opname</p>	<p>Uw deelname aan dit interview brengt zover bekend geen nadelen met zich mee. Uw antwoorden worden enkel opgenomen voor analyse- en transcriptiedoeleinden.</p> <p>Stemt u in met het opnemen en transcriberen van het interview? Uw gegevens worden verantwoord en vertrouwelijk behandeld, in overeenstemming met de AVG. Stemt u in met deze voorwaarden?</p> <p>U heeft het recht om op elk moment het interview te stoppen, en ik zal alleen de tot dat moment vermelde gegevens dan gebruiken. Stemt u hier ook mee in?</p>
<p>Start interview</p>	<p>Na toestemming zal ik beginnen met opnemen en zullen we starten met de vragen.</p>

Algemene vragen	<p>Voordat we ingaan op de hoofdonderwerpen, wil ik eerst meer over u persoonlijk weten:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wie bent u en waar komt u vandaan? (naam, leeftijd en geslacht) 2. Wat is uw functie binnen Hotel X? 3. Hoelang werkt u al bij Hotel X? 4. Welke taken omvat uw functie?
Communicatie	<p>Voordat we ingaan op de andere drie onderwerpen, wil ik eerst wat algemene vragen stellen over de gesprekken tussen u en uw buitenlandse collega's. Om te beginnen met de eerste vraag:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Hoe vaak communiceert u met uw buitenlandse collega's? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Waaruit bestaat dit contact (telefonisch, e-mail, in persoon)? b. Welke onderwerpen bespreekt u meestal met hen? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven? c. Wat is uw rol in deze gesprekken en wat is de rol van uw buitenlandse collega? d. In welke taal communiceert u met uw buitenlandse collega's? 6. Zou u de communicatie met uw buitenlandse collega's als effectief beschrijven? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hoe zou u de sfeer tussen u en uw buitenlandse collega's omschrijven? b. Is de samenwerking volgens u goed of kan het beter? c. Zijn de persoonlijke relaties met uw buitenlandse collega's goed of kan het beter volgens u?
Ervaringen met immigranten	<p>Dan wil ik graag doorgaan naar het volgende onderwerp, ervaringen met immigranten. De eerste vraag is als volgt:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Wat zijn volgens u de grootste verschillen tussen de Nederlandse cultuur en één andere cultuur van uw buitenlandse collega? Kunt u hiervan enkele voorbeelden geven die u heeft ervaren? En met welke cultuur?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Welke eigenschappen mist u vaak bij uw buitenlandse collega's? Kunt u voorbeelden geven? b. Merkt u dat uw buitenlandse collega's het lastig vinden om hun eigen cultuur te combineren met de Nederlandse cultuur? <p>8. Kunt u de meest positieve ervaring delen die u met een buitenlandse collega heeft gehad? Kunt u hiervan voorbeelden geven?</p> <p>9. Heeft u ook een minder prettige ervaring gehad met een buitenlandse collega? Kunt u hiervan voorbeelden geven?</p>
<p>Miscommunicatie</p>	<p>Nu wil ik graag overgaan naar het derde onderwerp; eventuele miscommunicatie tussen u en uw buitenlandse collega's:</p> <p>10. Heeft u wel eens misverstanden ervaren met uw buitenlandse collega's?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ontstaan er vaker miscommunicaties met uw buitenlandse collega's dan uw Nederlandse collega's? En zo ja, hoe denkt u dat dit komt? b. Heeft u ooit andere misverstanden gehad met buitenlandse mensen? c. Hoe lost u deze problemen dan vervolgens op? d. Hoe denkt u dat dit in de toekomst voorkomen kan worden?
<p>Acculturatieproces</p>	<p>Dan wil ik graag overgaan naar het laatste onderwerp, wat het acculturatieproces van uw buitenlandse collega's betreft:</p> <p>11. Hoe Nederlands zijn uw buitenlandse collega's volgens u in hun gedrag? Waaruit blijkt dit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bent u van mening dat uw buitenlandse collega's de Nederlandse cultuur omarmen en zich daaraan aan passen? b. Zo niet/zo ja, kunt u hiervan enkele voorbeelden geven?

	<p>c. Indien nee, waardoor denkt u dat dit komt en hoe dit eventueel verbeterd kan worden?</p> <p>d. Gaan uw buitenlandse collega's vooral met elkaar om of mengen ze zich ook tussen de Nederlandse collega's?</p> <p>e. Heeft u het idee dat uw buitenlandse collega's wel eens fouten maken in de culturen? Dus dat ze bijvoorbeeld te formeel zijn tegen hun Nederlandse baas of het niet eens zijn met een ouderlijk persoon (culturen door de war halen)?</p>
Stelling:	<p>"Het is makkelijker om samen te werken met iemand uit Nederland dan met een persoon van een andere cultuur". Wat is uw mening over deze stelling, en waarom?</p>

Conclusie

Afsluiting	<p>Wilt u nog iets toevoegen aan het interview? Zijn er aspecten die we nog niet hebben behandeld maar die u graag wilt benoemen?</p>
Controle deelnemer	<p>Indien er geen verdere opmerkingen zijn, zal ik de opname nu stoppen. Het interview wordt getranscribeerd en aan u laten zien ter controle.</p> <p>Uw antwoorden worden enkel gebruikt voor mijn Master Thesis, waarbij vertrouwelijkheid wordt gewaarborgd. Uw naam zal niet worden bekend gemaakt en uw uitspraken zullen geanonimiseerd worden.</p>
Dank voor het interview en afsluiting	<p>Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd, inspanning en deelname aan dit interview. Als u nog vragen of aanvullende gedachten heeft, neemt u dan gerust contact met mij op. Nogmaals bedankt en nog een fijne dag!</p>

“Navigating Acculturation: Culture-Caused Critical Incidents between Dutch Ethnic Majorities and Ethnic Minorities and How to Cope with Them.”

Principal Investigator

Megan van der Steeg, Student
MSc Business Administration
University of Twente
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Purpose

In recent times, the Netherlands transformed from a relatively homogenous society to one characterized by greater diversity, resulting in a more heterogeneous workforce. Consequently, immigrants may encounter challenges adapting to the distinct cultural values of their host country. However, there is still limited research available on how immigrants navigate this process of acculturation, specifically at the deep-level of culture. Highlighting a need for empirical validation in multicultural work environments. Therefore, this Master's thesis will bridge this gap by determining how ethnic minority employees navigate this process of acculturation while collaborating with Dutch majority employees. It aims to provide ethnic minorities, Dutch ethnic majorities, and businesses with coping mechanisms to mitigate conflicting cultural standards.

Description

I would like to ask you if you would be willing to participate in an interview for my Master's Thesis. Should you agree, you will be asked to share insights from your personal and professional experiences working and living in the Netherlands, particularly focusing on instances where your cultural background may have clashed with Dutch culture. With your consent, the interview will be recorded. The interviews are expected to last approximately 60 minutes.

Use of Research

The results of this research will be presented in the final Master's Thesis required for the completion of my master's in International Business Administration with a specialization in International Management & Consultancy.

Risk of harm

Participating in this research poses no risk or harm to you. All personal information will be anonymized, ensuring that any identifying details will not be included in the final master's thesis.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time, without providing a reason. Should any interview questions cause you discomfort, you are free to decline to answer them. Additionally, if you wish to review the questions in advance, the researcher can provide you with a copy of the interview guide.

Management of Research Information/Data

The interviews will be hosted in real life and will be recorded with Teams. The recordings will be temporarily stored on my laptop until they are transcribed. Following the transcriptions, all the recordings will be deleted. The transcripts will serve as the basis for data analysis and will also be discarded upon completion of the research.

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby give my consent to participate in this research under the following terms:

"I give my consent to the interview being recorded, and to the utilization of the data I will provide for the above-mentioned research"

Yes

No

Participant Name:

Appendix V: Consent Form Interviews – Dutch majorities

“Navigating Acculturation: Culture-Caused Critical Incidents between Dutch Ethnic Majorities and Ethnic Minorities and How to Cope with Them.”

Principal Investigator

Megan van der Steeg, Student

MSc Business Administration

University of Twente

m.vandersteeg@student.utwente.nl

Purpose

In recent times, the Netherlands transformed from a relatively homogenous society to one characterized by greater diversity, resulting in a more heterogeneous workforce. Consequently, immigrants may encounter challenges adapting to the distinct cultural values of their host country. However, there is still limited research available on how immigrants navigate this process of acculturation, specifically at the deep-level of culture. Highlighting a need for empirical validation in multicultural work environments. Therefore, this Master's thesis will bridge this gap by determining how ethnic minority employees navigate this process of acculturation while collaborating with Dutch majority employees. It aims to provide ethnic minorities, Dutch ethnic majorities, and businesses with coping mechanisms to mitigate conflicting cultural standards.

Description

I would like to ask you if you would be willing to participate in an interview for my Master's Thesis. Should you agree, you will be asked to share insights from your personal and professional experiences working and living with foreigners, particularly focusing on instances where your values may have clashed with your foreign colleagues. With your consent, the interview will be recorded. The interviews are expected to last approximately 60 minutes.

Use of Research

The results of this research will be presented in the final Master's Thesis required for the completion of my master's in International Business Administration with a specialization in International Management & Consultancy.

Risk of harm

Participating in this research poses no risk or harm to you. All personal information will be anonymized, ensuring that any identifying details will not be included in the final master's thesis.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time, without providing a reason. Should any interview questions cause you discomfort, you are free to decline to answer them. Additionally, if you wish to review the questions in advance, the researcher can provide you with a copy of the interview guide.

Management of Research Information/Data

The interviews will be hosted in real life and will be recorded with Teams. The recordings will be temporarily stored on my laptop until they are transcribed. Following the transcriptions, all the recordings will be deleted. The transcripts will serve as the basis for data analysis and will also be discarded upon completion of the research.

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby give my consent to participate in this research under the following terms:

"I give my consent to the interview being recorded, and to the utilization of the data I will provide for the above-mentioned research"

Yes

No

Participant Name:

Appendix VI: Justification Table 3

The justification for Table 3, presented in the findings, is detailed below. For clarity and ease of reference, Table 3 is presented again. Following this, each cell with a cross in the table will be accompanied by a corresponding statement from the relevant interviewee, upon which the cross is based. This allows for verification that the conclusions drawn are indeed supported by the interview data.

Interviewee:	12 (1,5 year)	13 (1,5 year)	8 (6 years)	11 (7 years)	15 (12 years)	9 (13 years)	16 (13,5 years)	10 (29 years)	14 (35 years)
Group focus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Hierarchical awe	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Implicit communication	X	X	X						
Honor and saving face	X	X	X						

Table 3: Cultural acculturation matrix

Interviewee: 12 (1,5 year in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“In main sense I think it’s a lot of the same between our cultures. Because in both cultures people are kind, willing to help and that is also at home. But we are more focused on friends and family.”
Hierarchical awe	“Only the hierarchy is really different compared to Ukraine.”
Implicit communication	“Yes, sometimes but that is normal. It is not due to that I am from Ukraine. Everyone sometimes have misunderstandings with their colleagues but there is no miscommunication, everyone can speak English so we understand each other fine.”
Honor and saving face	“Yeah, maybe here it’s a little bit more easy to live. Here people care less about things than in Ukraine. In Ukraine they really care about if somebody is saying something wrong about them and here they don’t really do that. I, for example, really care about someone’s opinion”.
Interviewee: 13 (1,5 year in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Sometimes I miss the warmth we Ukrainians all have. We are just really friendly and we keep our friendships and family, yeah just really close. And here, people focus more on themselves sometimes and I am not really used to that. So that is something I miss from home in people, yeah.”
Hierarchical awe	“Yes, sometimes I make cultural mistakes. In Ukraine it is for example very normal to be formal with your boss and here in the Netherlands it is much more informal and that was

	really difficult to get used to in the beginning. And I am still learning, I sometimes forget to address my boss with his first name but I am still learning.”
Implicit communication	“Communication. The Dutch are really direct and informal, and we are way more indirect and far more formal.”
Honor and saving face	“We talked about it and they explained their feeling and I do not want to let someone feel left out, so now we only speak Ukrainian outside of work. However, my Ukrainian colleague at first didn’t want to admit his mistake, because he didn’t want people to see him as wrong. I could understand that. But yeah, that was some misunderstanding in the beginning. Now we do not have it anymore.”
Interviewee: 8 (6 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Familie is heel belangrijk en vrienden ook voor ons. Dat is een van de belangrijkste dingen in onze cultuur.”
Hierarchical awe	“Ik ben altijd netjes, niet echt anders. Ik thuis ook altijd netjes. Dat is gewoon belangrijk in Eritrea. Respect hebben voor familie, maar ook voor je baas, je werk.”
Implicit communication	“Nederlanders zijn wel echt heel direct, maarja daar leer ik ook van.”
Honor and saving face	“Nee ja, als jij niet begrijpen, dat hebben mensen soms ook wel bij afwassen dan kan ik mensen toch ook niet begrijpen toch? Dus ik kan dan wel praten, maar als jij niet begrijpen? Dan ja, hou ik liever mijn mond om niet op een bepaalde manier over te komen.”
Interviewee: 11 (7 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Vooral familiewaarden zal ik altijd blijven behouden, mijn familie zal altijd op nummer één staan. Ik zal alles voor hun doen en dat is ook iets wat ik heel erg heb meegekregen.”
Hierarchical awe	“De hiërarchie in Polen is veel hoger dan hier, dus in het begin was ik vaak te formeel tegen John, maar ik was dat gewoon zo gewend. En dat duurde wel even voordat ik door had dat de Nederlandse bazen bijvoorbeeld gewoon openstaan voor feedback en dat we ze gewoon kunnen aanspreken met “je”. Maar hier maak ik soms nog steeds wel fouten in.”
Implicit communication	“Ik moet wel zeggen dat ik hier een beetje aan moest wennen. Maar Pools mensen zijn ook wel direct, hebben vaak een harde stem. Ik heb ook een harde stem, dus op zich was dit niet heel veel nieuws voor mij. Inmiddels ga ik daar dus wel in mee.”
Honor and saving face	“John werkt ook mee in de keuken bijvoorbeeld, dus dat is heen anders dan in Polen en in Polen, als je dan een fout maakte dan werd je daar ook wel voor afgestraft. Dus ik was in het begin ook wel bang, maar nu niet meer.”
Interviewee: 15 (12 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Ik combineer de Iraanse cultuur gewoon een beetje met de Nederlandse cultuur. Bijvoorbeeld he, als ik op de koffie kom bij mijn Nederlandse vrienden. Dan bieden ze me gewoon één koffie en één chocolaatje aan. Dat is helemaal prima en respecteer ik ook, maar dat is bij mij anders. Als ik mijn vrienden of familie uitnodig dan mogen ze echt alles

	pakken. Dan mag je 10 keer chocolade pakken. Dus dat is wel anders, maar ik respecteer beide. Ik zou nooit erom lachen.”
Hierarchical awe	“Nee ik zeg nu wel gewoon John inmiddels. Hij was in het begin ook wel echt verbaasd toen ik meneer zei. Dus langzaam aan begon ik hem met je aan te spreken en met John, maar nog steeds moet ik nog wel schakelen en vergeet ik het soms.”
Implicit communication	“Nee eigenlijk niet, wel makkelijk vind ik. Ik vind ook gewoon dat ik mezelf moet aanpassen, omdat ik woon hier. In het begin heb ik ook een cursus gedaan om te leren en ik probeer nog altijd te leren.”
Honor and saving face	“Ja wel eens, ik had toen een keer een fout gemaakt en toen werd die persoon wel boos. Toen zei ik rustig jongen, ik ben nieuw, er is niks aan de hand. Waarom ben je boos? En toen zei mijn collega ook geen probleem, misschien begreep ik je ook verkeerd en toen zei ik oke, ik ga het nog een keer proberen. Dus toen was het ook wel opgelost.”
Interviewee: 9 (13 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Kijk in onze cultuur is het gewoon normaal om altijd voor je ouders te blijven zorgen. Als je ouders wat nodig hebben, dan help je ze gewoon. Maar hier, kinderen gaan weg als ze 18 zijn en helpen of verzorgen hun ouders dan niet meer. En dat zal ik niet accepteren. Ik help mijn vader nog altijd.”
Hierarchical awe	“Bij John niet echt want hij stelde mij direct op me gemak en houd ook van grapjes enzo. Maar wanneer John op vakantie is en Mick is bijvoorbeeld de baas, dan heb ik dat nog wel. Dan ben ik nog steeds wel een beetje bang omdat hij mij niet zo goed kent als John dat doet. Dus dan ben ik vaak nog wel formeel ja.”
Implicit communication	“Nou ik heb natuurlijk veel geleerd, bijvoorbeeld over communiceren en werken. Hier ziet iedereen elkaar veel meer als gelijken en wordt iedereen veel minder snel boos bijvoorbeeld. Als iemand hier boos wordt bijvoorbeeld dan praten we het eerst uit en lossen we het gewoon netjes op. Maar als iemand in mijn land boos is, dan is het direct ruzie, echt boos worden. En dat is iets wat ik nu niet meer doe.”
Honor and saving face	“Ja sommige personen hier op werk vertrouw ik meer dan andere personen. En een ander verschil is bijvoorbeeld ook dat ik bij mijn vrienden direct zeg van “ja, dit heb jij fout gedaan” en dan spreken we het uit, maar hier op werk geef ik ook mijn fouten toe. Ik probeer het dan alleen wel eerst zelf op te lossen voordat ik iemand erbij haal.”
Interviewee: 16 (13,5 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Bijvoorbeeld, als iemand bij ons boos is dan betreft hij of zij iedereen erbij. Dus als je ruzie hebt met mij dan heb je ook met al mijn vrienden en familie ruzie. Hier in Nederland is dat heel anders. Wij praten het hier rustig uit en de ruzie blijft ook altijd tussen ons 2. Ik denk dat dit te maken heeft met loyaliteit aan vrienden en familie. Dat is erg hoog en belangrijk in Ethiopië en Eritrea, maar dat heb ik nog steeds wel.”
Hierarchical awe	“Heel anders. Een voorbeeld waaruit dit blijkt is bijvoorbeeld, hier hebben we gewoon vrijheid, dus hier mag je praten tegen wie je wilt, en daar moet je weten tegen wie je praat en welke woorden je gebuikt. Hier kan ik bijvoorbeeld tegen mijn manager praten op een

	manier wat ik nooit zou kunnen doen in Ethiopië. Daar is de hiërarchie veel belangrijker. En soms moet ik daar nog wel aan wennen. “
Implicit communication	“Ik veel leer van een Nederlander. Ik kan mijn Nederlands bijvoorbeeld verbeteren en ik leer ook veel over de Nederlandse waarden en normen en de manier waarop ze communiceren, veel directer. En dat waardeer ik erg.”
Honor and saving face	-
Interviewee: 10 (29 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	“Ja, ik stond op het punt om te vertellen dat ik weg ging en toen kwam corona dus dat kwam wel goed eigenlijk. En daarnaast had ik daar ook een chef, ze was wel aardig maar veel op haar teentjes getrapt zeg maar, dus die kon het ook allemaal niet zo goed handelen. Dat kwam ook doordat ze thuis allemaal problemen had en zo, dus dat ik weg ging kwam mij eigenlijk heel goed uit.”
Hierarchical awe	“Ook qua auwehoeren, wij begrijpen elkaar beter. En dat heb ik ook met mensen die bijvoorbeeld ook geadopteerd zijn, zoals John mijn baas. Wij zitten gewoon op een ander level met elkaar en ik merk dan toch dat bij Nederlanders, ja die zijn gewoon negatiever. Die hebben overal een mening over, vinden overal wat van, stressen veel meer. En dan heb ik gewoon zoiets van, doe even rustig.
Implicit communication	“Ja, sommige mensen vinden mij qua gedrag nog wel wat asociaal. Ik ben hier natuurlijk ook gewoon lekker mondig in de omgang, maar buiten werk ben ik dan nog wat mondiger. Kijk, ik heb mijn woordje dan wel altijd klaar, dat weet ik ook en dat brengt me soms ook wel eens in de problemen, dat weet ik ook. Maar ik bedoel ik ben er toch wel heel trots op hoe ik ben.”
Honor and saving face	“Ja, kort samengevat, wij hebben een beetje lak aan wat mensen van ons vinden en wat ze van ons denken. Het maakt ons niks uit.”
Interviewee: 14 (35 years in the Netherlands)	
Group focus	-
Hierarchical awe	“Ja raar, want het was hiervoor heel belangrijk voor me. Bijvoorbeeld, toen ik voor het eerst de vader van mijn vrouw ontmoette, toen was ik heel formeel en netjes naar hem. Maar toen zei hij van “Joh doe niet zo raar, noem me gewoon papa en kom we gaan een biertje drinken”. Ja dat vond ik echt heel verrassend want ik was dat totaal niet gewend. Nu noem ik hem inmiddels papa maar daar moest ik wel echt aan wennen. “
Implicit communication	“Nee, niet perse want iedereen begrijpt mij wel. Dus ik denk dat daarin niet heel veel verschil zit tussen de Nederlanders en de Nigerianen, beide gaat mij wel goed af. En ik heb natuurlijk ook een Nederlands gezin, dus ik ben het wel gewend. Mijn dochters kunnen enkel een aantal Nigeriaanse woorden, verder zijn zij gewoon volledig Nederlands.”
Honor and saving face	“Ja, ze hebben me nog heel erg geprobeerd te houden. Ze zijn zelfs nog in gesprek gegaan met mijn vrouw bijvoorbeeld en boden me ook veel meer geld aan. Maar ik hoef

	hun geld niet, als je eenmaal mijn respect en vertrouwen bent verloren, dan komt het ook niet meer terug.”
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