FACTORS INVOLVED IN ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Valeria Sorokina, Randal Tonks, Iurii Puzanov
Camosun College/ University of Victoria

ABSTRACT

- This paper provides a cross-cultural comparison of profiles of stress and positive adjustment between international and domestic students at a Canadian University (N=202) using the BPSHI-r (Bio-Psycho-Social Health Index). Beginning with an overview of the reported levels of stress symptoms across the three major dimensions (bio-psycho-social), along with a measure of positive adjustment and reports of global current stress levels, comparisons between the profiles of international students vs. domestic students is made. Further detailed analysis of the impact on stress and adjustment for the factors of: country of origin, length of residence in Canada, living with one's family or not, and gender reveals differences in current, psychological, and social stress, but not somatization. Differences were also observed in feelings of belonging in Canada and strength of ethnic identity for the participants and their stress profiles.

OVERVIEW

- **Acculturation & Stress**
- **Current Study:**
  Comparing International and Domestic Students
  - Stress scores and the nature of stress
  - Stress and Region of migration
  - Stress and Gender
  - Stress and living with Family
  - **Reflections and Discussion**

CURRENT STUDY

- Examined profiles of stress between International (106) and Domestic (91) students
- Made use of the Bio-Psycho-Social Health Index (BPSHI-r.)
- Students Ranged in Age from 17 to 51 with a mean age of 20.73 (4.433)

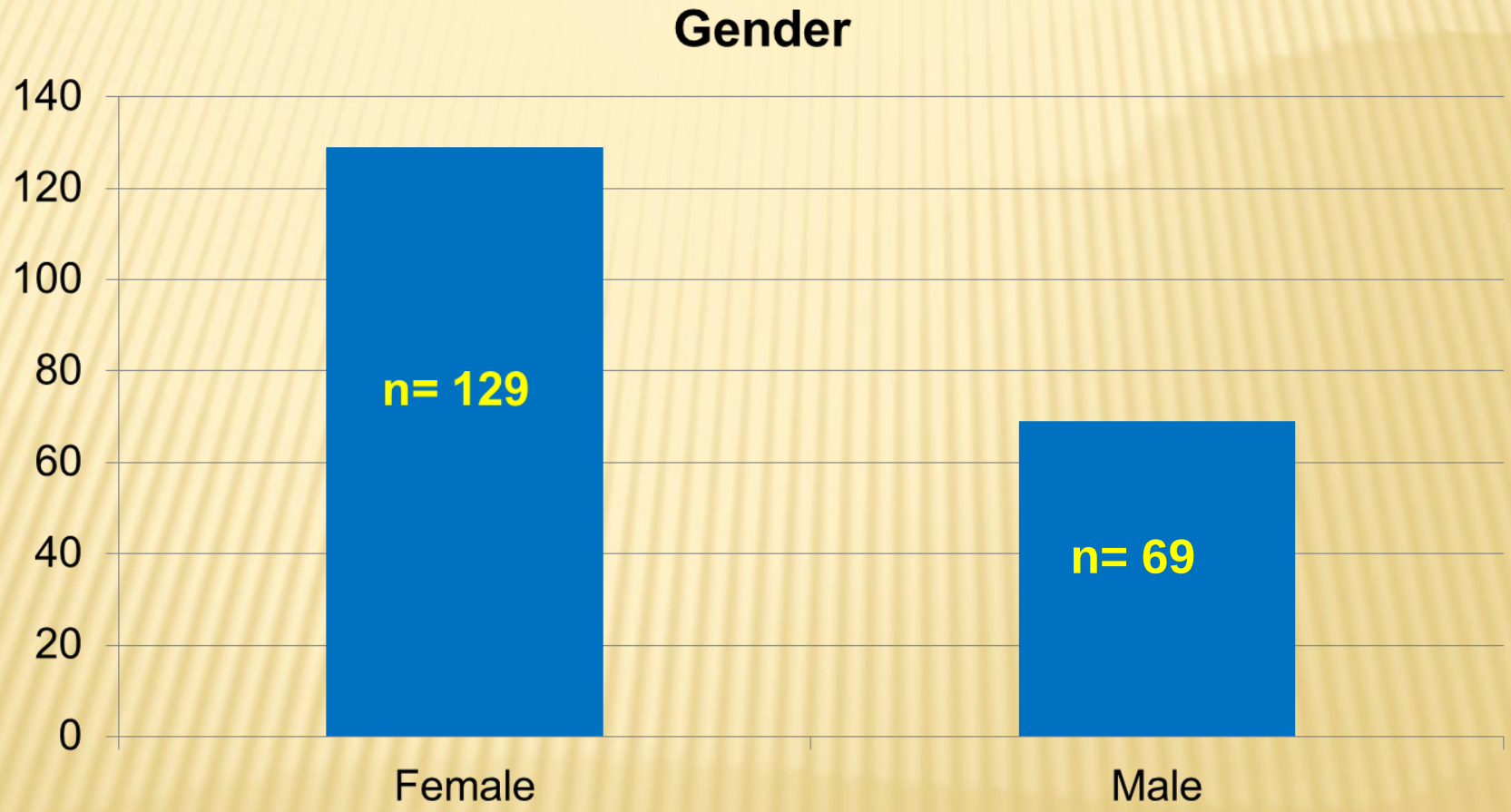
ACCULTURATIVE STRESS

- ***Acculturative Stress*** is often experienced as part of the transition of living between or among cultures

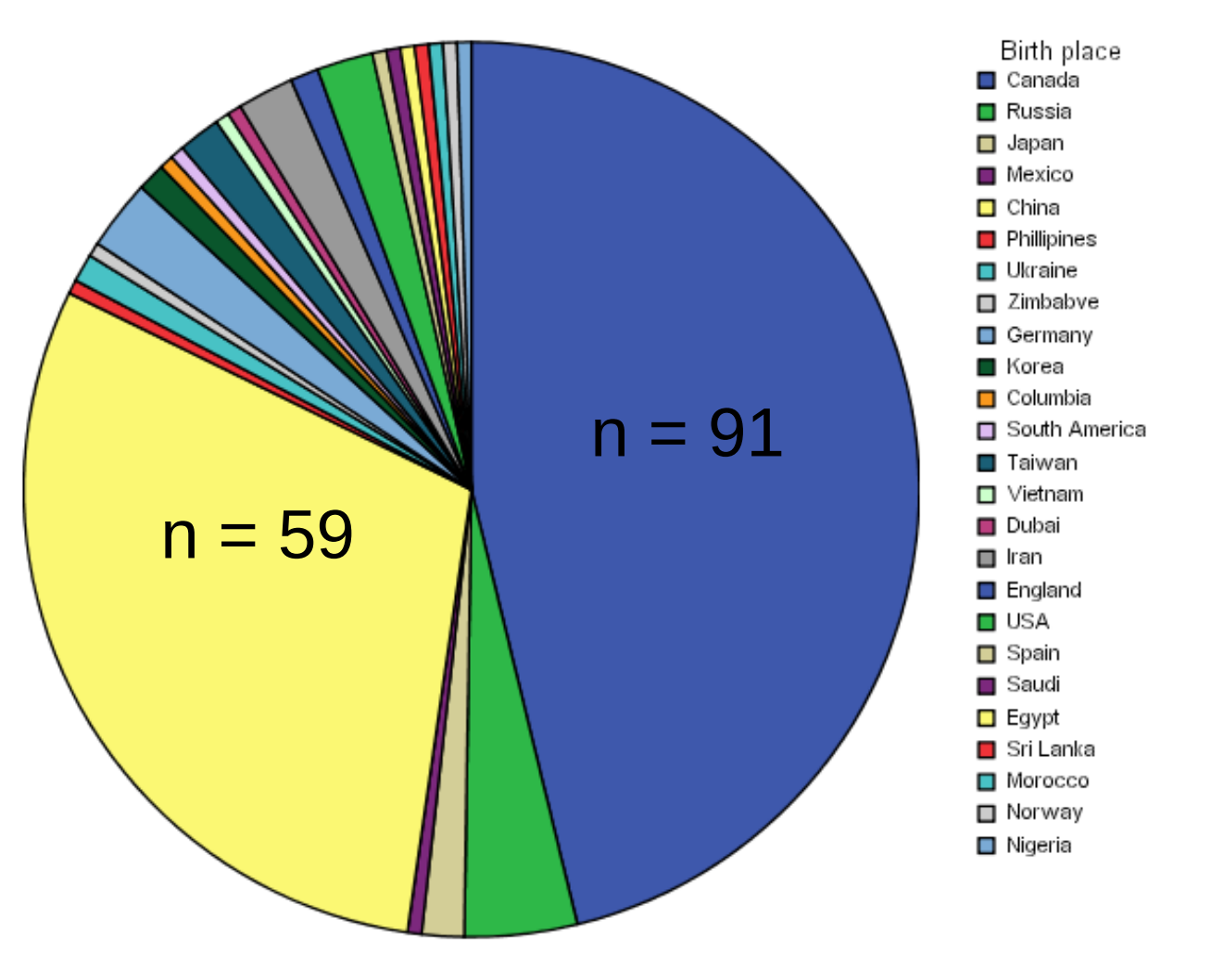
- Acculturative Stress has been associated with ***acculturative styles*** (Cawte, Bianchi, & Kiloh, 1968; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Berry, 2006)

  - Moving towards **Integration** involves ***sociocultural*** adaptation ***psychological*** adaptation (Tonks 2004)

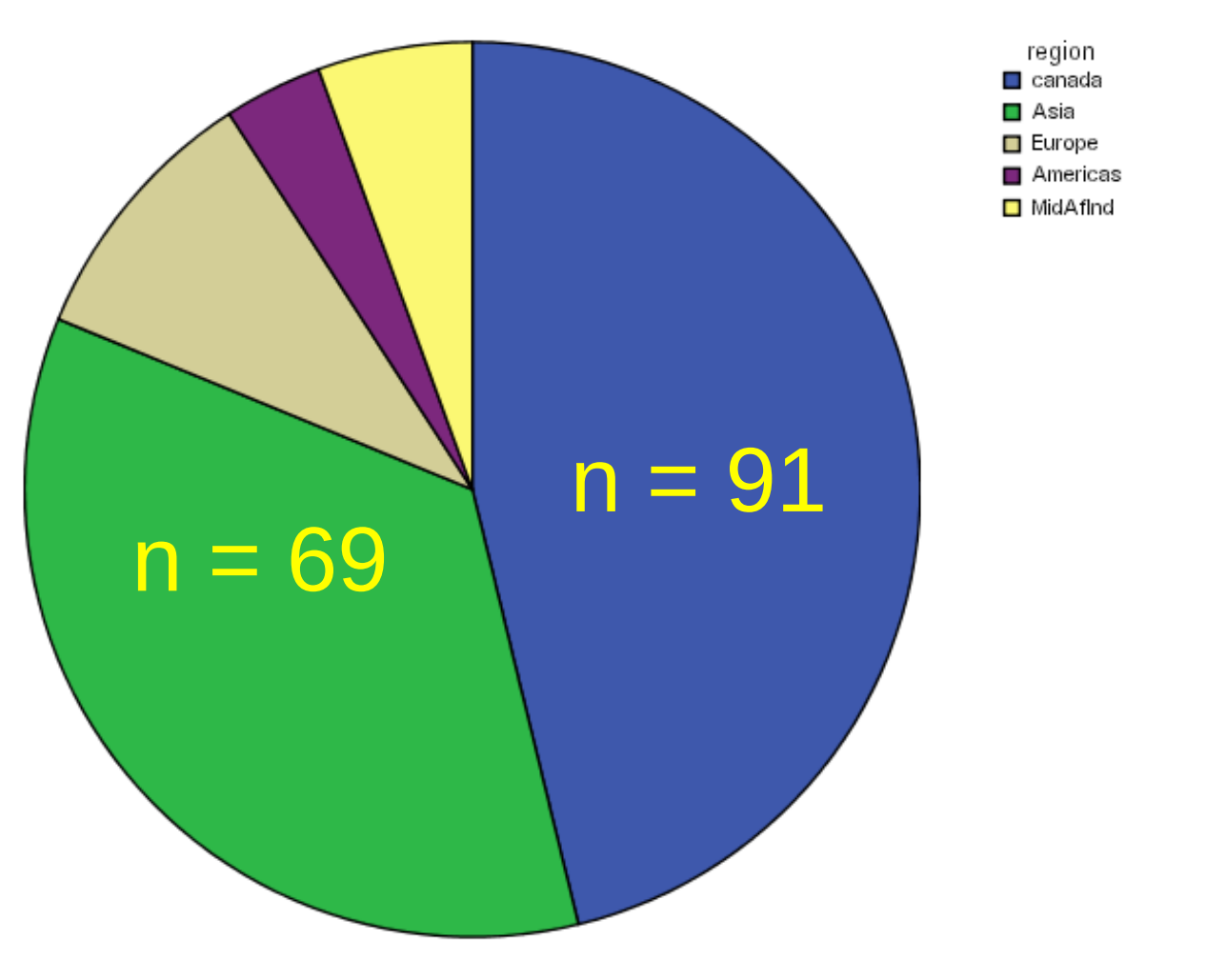
PARTICIPANTS



PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTRY



PARTICIPANTS BY REGION



BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL HEALTH INDEX (BPSHI)

- Focus on **stress** and **positive adjustment** to 5 point likert scales (Tonks, Bates, Lai & Paranjpe, 2000).
- Specifically examines **social factors** and responses in addition to **physiological** and **psychological**.
- Provides **subscale scores** for each of these dimensions of stress & adjustment.

BPSHI-Revised (2012)

- Based upon the relationships among questions on the Tonks et al. (2000) study a revised form was developed with:
- 12 Positive Adjustment questions
- 8 Biological Stress questions
- 12 Psychological Stress questions
- 12 Social Stress questions
- 3 Cultural Identity questions
- Each Rated on a 5 point Likert Scale

STRESS TOTAL & CURRENT STRESS

- **Stress Total** = Bio-Stress + Psycho-Stress + Social Stress

- **Current Stress**: Indicate on a scale of 1 - 10 the degree of stress you are currently experiencing, where 1=no stress at all and 10 is extreme stress at your limits.

RESULTS

- ANOVA for:
  - Canadian vs International
  - Region
  - Gender
  - Family
- Correlations
- Inter-Item relationships

CANADIAN VS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STRESS

	Psy-Stress	Soc-Stress	Total Stress	Current Stress	Cultural Identity	Belonging
Canadian (N=91)	28.1	22.7	***62***	***5.5***	9.2	***3.3***
International (N=106)	**31.0**	***28.1***	50	3.8	**10**	2.6
Sig.	.002	.000	.000	.000	.011	.000

REGION VS STRESS

(Sig)	Psyc- Stress (.005)	Social- Stress (.000)	Total Stress (.000)	Current Stress (.000)	Belonging (.001)
Canada (N=91)	28.1	22.7	***62***	***5.5***	***3.3***
Asia (N=69)	***31.7***	***28.9***	50.4	3.8	2.7
Europe (N=19)	28.1	25.8	35.9	2.7	2.3
Americas (N=7)	***31.1***	27.9	54.4	3.3	**3**
Mid/Af/Ind (N=11)	***31.5***	27.6	***67.6***	***6.7***	2.8

STRESS & NOT LIVING WITH FAMILY

	Psyc-Stress	Soc-Stress
With Family (N=90)	28.3	24.2
Without Family (N=104)	*31.1*	*26.7*
Sig.	.003	.011

GENDER STRESS & ADJUSTMENT

	Psyc-Stress	Pos Adjustment
Male (N=69)	29.7	35.7
Female (N=129)	**29.8**	**35.8**
Sig	.019	.020

SUB-SCALE CORRELATIONS

	Bio-Stress	Psycho-Stress	Social-Stress	Total-Stress	Current Stress	Positive Adjustment
Psycho-Stress	**.444** **.000**					
Social-Stress	**.329** **.000**	**.727** **.000**				
Total-Stress	**.304** **.000**	**.186** **.000**	.009 .897			
Current Stress	**.427** **.000**	.073 .310	**.522** **.000**	**.725** **.000**		
Positive Adjustment	-.166 .025	**-.175*** **.017**	-.074 .318	**-.258** **.000**	**-.257** **.000**	
Cultural Identity	-.122 .094	.002 .978	-.043 .553	.053 .465	-.057 .428	**.261*** **.000**
Belonging	-.097 .183	**-.325** **.000**	**-.391** **.000**	**.343** **.000**	**.255** **.000**	**.233*** **.001**

INTERNAL RELIABILITY OF SCALES CHRONBACH'S ALPHA

Scale	*(2016)*	*(2014)*
Positive Adjustment	*.409**	.627
Bio-Stress	*.551**	.687
Psycho-stress	.757	.770
Social Stress	.769	.762
Cultural Identity	*.256**	.614

POSITIVE ADJUSTMENT

- .065 I exercise regularly (2 times a week or more)
- .087 I eat meals at regular times each day.
- .150 I have plenty of energy to go about my daily tasks.
- -.002 I socialise with people if given the opportunity.
- **.359 I feel happy with the way my life is.**
- **.325 I discuss this feeling with someone close to me.**
- **.272 I go out with friends on a regular basis to the cinema.**
- .150 to nightclubs or bars.
- .153 to religious meetings.
- .106 to other gatherings.
- **.341 I participate in team sports or activities on a regular basis.**
- -.104 I discuss this feeling (of racial exclusion) with someone in order to help me

BIO-STRESS

- .105 I suffer from bad headaches.
- **.295 I suffer from pains in my body.**
- .225 I get colds/flu on a regular basis.
- **.506 My muscles and joints constantly feel stiff.**
- .208 I usually feel tired and exhausted in the morning.
- .266 I usually have great difficulty in falling asleep/staying asleep.
- .277 I often shake or tremble.
- **.306 I often break out in a cold sweat.**

PSYCHO-STRESS

- **.503 I generally keep a low profile due to fear.**
- .173 I wish that I was back in my home country.
- **.513 I am extremely shy or sensitive.**
- **.449 Homesickness bothers me.**
- .325 I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods.
- **.418 I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings.**
- **.412 I fear for my personal safety:** my different cultural background.
- .046 I prefer my own company.
- **.473 I usually feel unhappy and depressed.**
- **.466 Worrying continually gets me down.**
- .390 It makes me angry to have anyone tell me what to do.
- .253 People often annoy or irritate me.

SOCIAL-STRESS

- .191 I feel shy when meeting new people.
- .390 I feel excluded from social activities.
- .286 I feel alone.
- **.491 I feel excluded on the basis of race alone.**
- .355 Different Social activities
- .326 I feel intimidated to participate in social activities.
- **.598 Others are biased toward me.**
- **.490 Others don't appreciate my cultural values.**
- **.437 I am treated differently because of my appearance.**
- **.428 People insult me verbally.**
- **.484 I am uncomfortable with new cultural values**
- **.535 I feel my status in this society is low due to my cultural background.**

CULTURAL IDENTITY & BELONGING

- .039 - I like to choose a best friend who is someone of my own ethnicity.
- .167 - I feel it is important to maintain my cultural identity.
- **.231 - I feel good about associating with people from my ethnicity.**
- I feel a sense of belonging here (to a community)

REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

- Self-report data – may not get accurate info
- Characteristics of sample
  - Canadian & International
- Characteristics of Measures
  - Some only meaningful for Internationals
- Acculturative vs 'Everyday' Stress

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Further examine longitudinal features of stress and adjustment (see Lowe et al.)
- Development of “student stress measure” to tease out features of acculturative vs. everyday stress
- Examine internal vs. external migrants

THANK-YOU!

REFERENCES

Berry, J.W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *International Migration Review, 21, (3),* 491-511.

Cawte, J., Bianchi, G., & Kiloh, L. (1968). Personal discomfort in Australian Aborigines. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 2*, 69-79.

Sandhu, D.S.; Asrabadi, B.R. (1994). Development of an acculturative stress scale for international students: Preliminary findings. *Psychological Reports,* 75, 435-449.

Tonks, R.G. (2004). History making of self and identity: A hermeneutical account of psyche and polis. Chapter 2 in W. Smythe & A. Baydala (Eds.) *Studies in how the mind publicly enfolds into being*. Mellen Studies in Psychology Vol 9. New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Tonks, R.G. (2014) On the assessment of acculturative stress and adjustment.Presentation to the Canadian Psychological Association annual conference, Vancouver, June 7th, 2014.

Tonks, R.G., Bates, S., Lai Y-F, & Paranjpe, A.C. (2000). Assessment of Acculturative Stress Among Temporary and Permanent Immigrants. Paper presented to the Metropolis National Convention, Toronto.

Wu, M.G., Tonks, R.G. & Sorokina, V. (2014). Immigrant and international student stress and adjustment.Poster presentation to the Canadian Psychological Association annual conference, Vancouver, June 7th, 2014.