
ACCULTURATION AND PERCEIVED TRUSTWORTHINESS OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION AMONG MIGRANT PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

Migrant workers face difficulties in evaluating the accuracy of technical information in a new cultural and organizational context. Acculturation, the process in which a person or group from a specific culture adopts the behaviors of a different culture, significantly influences how technical information is perceived and accepted. This study looks into how different acculturation styles—assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization—affect the credibility of technical information in multinational corporations. We aim to identify the patterns of trust perception, communication, and information processing as well as the trust perception concerning information's credibility in a given context among a group of 150 migrant workers from the engineering, healthcare, and IT sectors using a mixed-methods approach. The findings suggest that perceptions of integration and assimilation processes positively correlate with perceptions of trustworthiness, and separation and marginalization processes correlate with lowered trust thresholds. The study proposes an acculturation-informed trust assessment model with HR and training program recommendations. This model additionally allows organizations to better assist migrant professionals in critical information-dependent contexts.

Keywords: Acculturation, Perceived Trust, Migrant Professionals, Technical Information, Cultural Adaptation, Workplace Communication, Organizational Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Organizations often hire migrant professionals in an increasingly globalized labor market due to their advanced skills and cultural experience (Shimazu, 2023). However, adapting to a new organizational culture involves more than fluency in a given language or technical skills—it involves the ability to analyze, assess, and contextualize information (Chlaihawi, 2023). The compliance, collaboration, and decision-making processes within the IT, healthcare, or engineering industries often face challenges due to differing perceptions of trust regarding technical information (Santhakumar et al., 2025).

Acculturation, which refers to the psychological and cultural adjustment process experienced by migrants, impacts how individuals perceive information's authenticity and authority. Due to cultural reference frameworks, former communication patterns, and norms regarding hierarchy and respect, migrants interpret the same information in differing ways (Mehta & Sharma, 2024). Hence, to construct effective and high-performing inclusive cross-culturally diverse teams, it is crucial to comprehend the impact of acculturation on trust in technical documents and information (Awadzi, 2018).

This research focuses on the relationship between different acculturation styles and trust appraisal and evaluation in technical contexts. By studying migrant professionals and their behaviors and perceptions across industries, we aim to identify better practices for integration, human resources, and communications policies (Karimov et al., 2024).

LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Acculturation Theory and Workplace Integration

Acculturation is the psychological and sociocultural transformation that takes place when a person from one culture interacts more closely with another culture (Nair&Rao, 2023). In the context of the workplace, particularly in multicultural settings, acculturation influences the patterns of perception, processing, and responses to technical and sociocultural stimuli. Two cultures lead to four primary styles of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization, with varying levels of engagement with the host and/or the heritage culture. Assimilation occurs when a person completely adopts the host culture (William et al., 2025). Integration is the balanced approach to the two cultures where the person identifies with the heritage culture and embraces the host culture. Separation is the rejection of the host culture and its norms while clinging to the heritage culture. Marginalization is the absence of both cultures, which often leads to cultural disorientation. Integration, in most studies, is the most adaptive, leading to enhanced engagement with the workplace, communicative fluency, and active participation in teamwork. Understanding cultural adaptation, its influence, and integration on the perception of information trustworthiness and workplace communication is essential (Kavitha,2025).

2.2 Trust Formation in Multicultural Work Environments

Trust is an integral part of any organization and is more pronounced in teams that require precision, mutual dependence, and quick decisions. In the case of multicultural teams, the formation of trust is more complex because of differences in cultural values, ways of communicating, and behaviors. For example, the majority of Asian cultures perceive trust to be linked to submission and indirectness, and in contrast to that, more Western and assertive cultures view trust to be connected with directness and assertiveness (Nor-Ahmad et al., 2025). This poses challenges to how team members interpret the trustworthiness of people and data. Provided with certain documents, migrant professionals may find it hard to accept the authenticity of the technical information if it is not presented in a certain way, further complicating issues of overconfidence and underconfidence. In addition, people bring with them prior experiences from their culture which, in turn, will influence whether they uncritically accept, peer group consensus, or expert testimony as a measurement of a source of information's trustworthiness. This form of intercultural trust highlights the need to understand how migrant professionals navigate trust and credibility in multicultural professional environments (Deshmukh& Nair,2024).

2.3 Technical Communication and Perceived Credibility

As emphasized in prior lectures, the clarity, tone, structure, and visual elements of technical documents greatly influence information reception, especially in multicultural teams. Like many, migrant professionals have acute difficulties grappling with the unspoken social and contextual cues, such as informal expectations, abbreviations, or voice markers of authority, that are culturally embedded in the institutional framework (Meenakshi et al., 2024). Such challenges can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, or unjust doubt toward accurate information. Conversely, vague and overly simplistic communication may be analyzed as an insufficient intellectual engagement. This is often the case with technical documents crafted with robust detail that are uncharacteristically sparse. Trust can be undermined due to a nuanced and hierarchical linguistic design. For these reasons, the cross-cultural cultivations of trust, usability, and credibility must be approached as a structured system that transcends a singular culture (Normalini et al., 2018). Thus, communities tend to bypass trust as a focus and lose sight of the framework of their technical communication. Integrating the multicultural spectra of technical information prompts accurate design and adaptable communications (Kumar& Rajeshwari, 2024).

2.4 Challenges Faced by Migrant Professionals

Beyond language problems, migrant specialists grapple with several other challenges, such as preconceptions, cultural biases, absence of sponsorship, mentorship, and informal networks wherein crucial organizational information is disseminated. These professionals may encounter microaggressions as well, subtle and often unintentional responses that undermine their confidence regarding their peers and what is publicly available. Moreover, microaggressions may mean that the local coworkers disregard the importance or the reliability of technical updates. Thus, migrant workers who possess local counterparts may lean excessively on local information channels that are more familiar to them which are not always correct or contextually relevant (Danesh & Emadi, 2014). This phenomenon of selective trust formation leads to the establishment of communication silos and impedes proper collaboration in technical work of high precision and mutual understanding.

2.5 Gaps in Research

Even though trust and acculturation have been examined separately in organizational psychology and cross-cultural communication, their interplay within the context of technical information processing is still lacking. There is scant empirical research on how particular styles of acculturation shape trust within professional contexts that hinge on

precise technical details. In addition, very few models provide actionable steps that culturally diverse professionals' trust can be supported in calibration through organizational intervention. There is an urgent gap in models that incorporate trust-building strategies, technical communication, and acculturation theory. Developing this model will advance organizational inclusivity, decrease error rates stemming from miscommunication, and enable migrant professionals to participate in the workplace more fully and effectively.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

To explore the association between the levels of acculturation and the trust attributed to technical information, the study uses a mixed-methods approach. This method leverages quantitative and qualitative techniques simultaneously for a richer analysis of not just numerical patterns, but also the narratives and meaning frameworks of migrant professionals. The study sample consists of 150 migrant professionals from five multinational companies in the fields of engineering, healthcare, and information technology. These subjects span a wide array of cultures, professions, and personal and professional experiences, and therefore, offer great value for both comparative and exploratory analysis.

3.1 Research Framework

Step 1: Acculturation Profiling

The first step of the research is to classify the participants through the use of an Acculturation Index, which is done through a self-reported Acculturation Index. This questionnaire contains questions that assess the attitude towards the host and heritage cultures. Participants are then placed into one of the four acculturation styles: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization. This classification serves as the primary independent variable for the subsequent analysis of trust perceptions. The profiling in addition to the classification, captures demographic information such as the length of stay in the host country, occupation, and the primary language used at the workplace, which enriches the context of trust perceptions.

Step 2: Trust Evaluation Task

During the second stage, participants perform trust evaluation tasks on three technical documents: a standard operating procedure, an internal memorandum, and a subject matter expert report. The documents vary in their complexity, authorship, and presentation style. Clarity, credibility, relevance, and perceived bias are the documents are scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 10. This simulation replicates unlike in the real world, where people have to make decisions out of limited information within the organizational pecking order and cultural paradigms. The outcome of the study offers quantifiable evidence on the trust gaps and the level of acculturation and the type of document.

Step 3: Interviews and Perception Mapping

After completing the trust evaluation task, a subset of participants ($n = 60$) is invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to capture the cognitive and emotional processes more thoroughly which led to the trust ratings. The interviews aim to find specific trust cues (including style of language, layout, and the credibility of the source), culture clashes (such as varied interpretations of hierarchy or formality), and other adaptive methods employed to deal with trust blurriness. Their qualitative findings are then coded thematically and connected with the acculturation categories, thus illustrating how different cultural orientations shape the perception and processing of technical information.

All together, these three steps create a comprehensive and reproducible method to capture both the observable actions and the underlying psychological changes that impact trust calibration in multicultural technical contexts.

3.2 Flowchart of Methodology

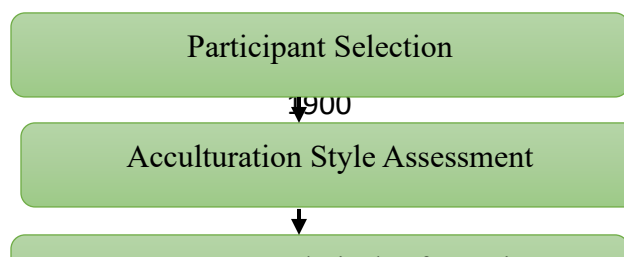


Figure 1: Methodology Flow

In figure 1, a sequential three-stage research framework examines how acculturation impacts trust perception within a professional context of migration and mobility. The first step, Acculturation Profiling, involves classifying participants via the Acculturation Index. Following that step is the Trust Evaluation Task, during which participants evaluate a set of technical documents to judge their trustworthiness. Then, in the step called Interviews and Perception Mapping, participants provide explanations for their trust ratings in a semi-structured format to reveal hidden cultural variables. This methodology enables measuring trust calibration in diverse workplaces quantitatively, while simultaneously gaining qualitative insights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Distribution of Participants

Table 1: Distribution of Participants by Acculturation Style

| Acculturation Style | Count | Percentage |
|---------------------|-------|------------|
| Integration | 58 | 38.7% |
| Assimilation | 41 | 27.3% |
| Separation | 31 | 20.7% |
| Marginalization | 20 | 13.3% |

Table 1 displays how participants have been classified into four distinct acculturation styles: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The most common integration showed that migrant professionals tended to balance between host and heritage cultures. Meanwhile, marginalization showed the least common integration that represented individuals that held weak identification with both cultures.

4.2 Average Trust Rating

Table 2: Average Trust Rating of Technical Documents by Acculturation Style (Scale: 1 to 10)

| Document Type | Integration | Assimilation | Separation | Marginalization |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| Standard Protocol | 8.6 | 8.3 | 6.7 | 5.9 |
| Internal Memos | 7.9 | 7.5 | 6.0 | 5.5 |
| Expert Reports | 8.8 | 8.4 | 6.9 | 6.2 |

As shown in Table 2, trust ratings for three categories of technical documents are segmented by acculturation styles. The integration and assimilation groups commonly rated documents as more trustworthy, while the separation and marginalization groups had lower trust, and this was particularly for informal or non-authoritative documents.

4.3 Qualitative Themes

Table 3: Identified Trust Cues in Interviews

| Trust Cue | Frequency | Common in Style(s) |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Native-like language | 27 | Integration, Assimilation |
| Technical accuracy | 34 | All styles |
| Familiar format | 22 | Separation |
| Cultural references | 19 | Marginalization |

This table 3 illustrates the cues that shaped trust determinants as synthesizing trustable cues from the interview is trustable cues from the interview are trustable cues from. Trustable cues from. Trustable cues from. Trustable cues from. Acculturation differences significantly shaped trust perceptions alongside the presence of technical accuracy, language familiarity, as well as cultural references.

4.4 Pre vs. Post Study

Table 4: Change in Reported Confidence in Using Technical Info

| Group | Pre-Study Confidence (Avg) | Post-Study Confidence (Avg) | Change (%) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Integration | 7.2 | 8.4 | +16.7% |
| Assimilation | 6.9 | 8.0 | +15.9% |
| Separation | 5.8 | 6.6 | +13.8% |
| Marginalization | 5.1 | 5.9 | +15.7% |

Table 4 illustrates the change in self-reported confidence before and after the study. All groups demonstrated increased levels of confidence, with the integration and assimilation styles achieving the greatest gains. The findings highlight the importance of guided exposure and reflection in trust calibration improvement.

CONCLUSION

Acculturation, as this research demonstrates, affects how migrant professionals evaluate the trust placed in technical information. Individuals with integrated or assimilated acculturation tend to be more confident and correct in evaluating technical information, whereas individuals in the separated or marginalized categories face extreme obstacles. Organizations can design onboarding, communication, and training frameworks that build trust and inclusion after grasping the dynamics described. The method and findings provided can be built upon in future research that seeks to enhance knowledge assimilation and mitigate miscommunication in a workforce with diverse cultures.

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