Article

The Rohingya Refugees and their Acculturation Process in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Acculturation refers to the cultural and psychological changes individuals undergo while interacting with the local community, individually or in a group. The acculturation process may be particularly complex for refugees and asylum seekers, as they leave their home country in search for a better and more secure life while also carrying the unpleasant experiences from their past They experience multiverse differences coming in contact with the host culture in many forms, including religion, food habits, language, and other celebrated cultures in the host community. Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh have also experienced these differences. The study aims to understand the acculturation experience and process of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This paper addresses John Berry's model of acculturation to understand how Rohingya refugees adapt to the host community. This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with 40 Rohingya refugees. The research findings highlight six key stages of acculturation that these Rohingya refugees go through while adapting to the host culture. The identified stages are i) hope, ii) fear of acceptance and uncertainty, iii) trust issues, iv) cultural differences, v) shared value, and vi) interest in the host culture. Despite the cultural and language differences, immediate access to basic needs, food and shelter, safety, and security provided by the Bangladeshi government and the humanitarian workers, including the selfless community support from the host community, facilitated the acculturation process for the Rohingya. This study suggests that sustainable social cohesion can accelerate the acculturation process of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Acculturation; Rohingya refugees; Bangladesh; integration; social cohesion; cultural exchange

Introduction

Acculturation is the process individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds undergo when they come into contact with one another (Redfield et al., 1936). Cultural differences can cause challenges due to people from distinct cultural backgrounds sharing the same environment. For refugees and asylum seekers, adapting to life in a new country can be challenging, especially without prior understanding of the host culture and the differences that exist between them. The interaction between refugees and host populations has become a key topic in the study of intercultural communication (Anderson, 2017). Although acculturation involves mutual influence, it often impacts one culture more significantly than the other (Berry, 1990). It encompasses both cultural and psychological transformations, as migrants adjust to the norms and practices of the host society (Fathi et al., 2018). These changes can be displayed in various aspects such as behaviour, language, values,

beliefs, social structures, technology, and how refugees adapt to it (Berry, 1994; Ward, 2004; Sam & Berry, 2010). Consequently, they go through different challenges including cultural shock and discrimination in the host country (Bi et al., 2024).

The difficulties and challenges remain the same for the Rohingya refugees in the host country, Bangladesh. However, in their study, Jiang et al. (2024) argued that integrating to the host community and learning the local language help the migrant to adapt better and faster to accommodate in the host community. In 2017, Rohingya refugees fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh in search of safety and security, as they were subjected to violence and systemic discrimination by the Myanmar government. Bangladesh is now hosting more than 1.35 million Rohingya refugees (UNICEF, 2024). The Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh is known as one of the world's largest refugee settlements (Concern Worldwide, 2023; World Vision, 2023). A body of researchers has conducted an in-depth examination of the living conditions and coping strategies of Rohingya refugees residing in camps in Bangladesh (Sultana et al., 2023)

Previous research has primarily focused on the Rohingya crisis from a historical, peace and justice, psychology, medical, and other relevant fields of study (Islam, 2020; Farhana & Ahmad, 2024). Efforts by UN agencies and NGOS have primarily addressed the lack of livelihood opportunities, the challenges faced during natural disasters in Bangladesh, and the physical and mental health struggles encountered by Rohingya refugees during resettlement (UNHCR, 2025; AP, 2024; Refugees International, 2022). However, limited research has explored the specific challenges related to the acculturation process that the Rohingya refugees go through while integrating into the host community, Bangladesh (Chowdhury et al., 2020). A significant gap exists in the literature concerning refugee experiences from an intercultural communication perspective. Researchers have studied other refugee crises worldwide, as well as the adaptation processes and challenges faced by their host countries. However, further research is essential to explore how intercultural dynamics shape the Rohingya refugees' adaptation, identity formation, and interaction in the host country, Bangladesh. Henceforth, this study moves forward with the objective to understand the experiences of Rohingya refugees during their acculturation process in the host country culture, Bangladesh.

Literature Review

One of the most challenging choices individuals may face is leaving their homeland for a better future. While some migrate for improved job prospects or higher education, others are compelled to escape due to armed conflict, crises, or violence (Amnesty International, 2016). Refugees and asylum seekers often leave their countries in pursuit of safety and a more secure life in a host nation (Anderson, 2017), fleeing from threats such as war, persecution, natural disasters, or violence. Many of them feel endangered in their home countries because of fundamental differences such as race, religion, nationality, political views, gender identity, sexual orientation, or affiliation with a specific social group that set them apart from the dominant population (Amnesty International, 2016; World Population Review, 2023; Bonyan Organization, 2023). The duration of displacement can vary, sometimes lasting for years or even decades, a situation referred to as Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) (Opono, & Ahimbisibwe, 2024).

Refugees undergo acculturation as they move and settle into new countries, adapting naturally to the surrounding culture and environment. With the urge to co-exist with the environment and culture, they adapt organically to the new changes. However, adjusting to an entirely different culture poses significant challenges. It is difficult to adapt and adjust to a new culture, coming from a completely different culture. Refugees face various issues and challenges while adapting to the host culture and the community (Fathi et al., 2023). Early-stage resettlement experiences, including the initial services received upon arrival, significantly influence refugees' acculturation and adaptation processes (Song et al., 2024). Moreover, the dynamics of mutual adaptation between migrants and locals, influenced by factors such as tolerance levels and network formation, play a crucial role in the acculturation outcomes (Paolillo & Jager, 2020).

Acculturation is a multifaceted process involving the social, psychological, and cultural transformations that occur when individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds come into continuous first-hand contact. Individuals experience a change collectively through social activities, including daily behavioural changes due to these intercultural contacts. This process can lead to changes in cultural patterns of either or both groups involved (Redfield et al., 1936). Berry (1990) further elaborated on this by

identifying four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, which individuals or groups may adopt during their adaptation to a new cultural environment. The changes that migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers experience in the host country, along with the process of accommodating these cultural shifts, are known as 'Acculturation'. According to Berry's acculturation strategies as shown in Figure 1, individuals undergo four stages while accommodating the new culture: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation (Kang & Hwang, 2021; Berry, 2005).

Figure 1. The two-dimensional acculturation model of Berry
Source: Kiylioglu & Wimmer (2015)

Assimilation occurs when individuals intentionally distance themselves from their original culture and fully adopt the new culture in daily activities. In contrast, integration involves maintaining one's cultural heritage while actively engaging with the dominant culture in everyday life. The separation, on the other hand, reflects a preference for preserving one's heritage culture while avoiding interaction with the new cultural environment. And finally, marginalization arises when individuals disengage from both their original and the host cultures, often as a last resort for coping. According to Gurieva and Kinunen (2019), and supported by Berry's model of acculturation, individuals who adopt integration strategies tend to achieve the highest levels of cultural adaptation. This makes integration the most effective and desirable approach, whereas marginalization is seen as the least effective, resulting in poor adaptation outcomes.

The Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, too, go through these four stages of the acculturation process while accommodating and adjusting to the host community and their culture. In August 2017, more than 725,000 stateless and forcibly displaced Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh to escape long-standing persecution and violence in Myanmar (Minar, 2021). As of 2025, the Rohingya refugee crisis has entered its eighth year in Bangladesh and remains one of the world's most prolonged and complex humanitarian emergencies (Sida, 2024). Currently, over 1.35 million displaced individuals from Myanmar's Rakhine State now residing in the Kutupalong and Balukhali camps within the Cox's Bazar district (Rohingya Refugee Response, 2024). These refugees live in 33 designated camps, forming one of the largest and most densely populated refugee settlement globally (Papri, 2025).

Due to the legislative framework, social cohesion and integration with the local community has been complex for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh (Siddiqi, 2022). A body of researchers have highlighted the challenges these stateless individuals go through while adapting to the host culture including movement restrictions, increasing criminal activities within the camps, access to basic needs, specifically health and education supports (Salehin & Hossain, 2025; Prodip, 2023; Parven, 2021; On the contrary, Hosain et al. (2022) in their study have shown concerned on their pre-existing psychological health deterioration post Covid-19 crisis. Nonetheless, many studies have noted the warm reception from the Bangladeshi host community, which has a long history of sheltering Rohingya refugees. The shared Muslim faith has fostered

solidarity, with the host population offering humanitarian support upon their arrival (Tay et al., 2019; Uddin, 2024). Despite this support, the struggle to integrate extends beyond basic needs. The Rohingya experience a profound identity crisis, having been labeled "Illegal Bengali Immigrants" by Myanmar and "Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals" by Bangladesh (Brown et al., 2025; The Daily Star, 2017). This dual rejection fosters feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging, (Mistry et al., 2021; Sultana et al. 2023).

Given their past experiences, refugees may hesitate to engage with the host culture, fearing rejection or dismissal, which can foster hostility and psychological fragility (Sudheer & Banerjee, 2021). Conversely, the host community's positive social support and empathy can significantly ease the resettlement process. Anderson (2017) underscores the importance of intercultural competence, social support, and empathy as key factors in fostering constructive interactions between refugees and host societies, recommending strategies to facilitate successful communication and address mutual challenges. Previous studies have drawn attention to the individual challenges the Rohingya refugees come across and the strategies they implement to adapt to the host culture, e.g., issues in social integration, barriers to dignified repatriation, lack of proper support to fulfill basic needs. However, a very few studies have addressed their acculturation process, factors influencing and facilitating or delaying their integration to the host community and their culture.

Methodology

This study has adopted a qualitative approach by conducting in-depth interviews to understand the acculturation process of the Rohingya refugees living in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. A semi-structured, in-depth interview was conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of the Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. A purposive sample method was used for this study. A formal permission to conduct research at the Rohingya refugee camps was obtained before the data collection process from the RRRC (The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner), Bangladesh. In addition, field officers from the DSK (Dushtha Shashthya Kendra), a partner NGO to the UN, supported in the data collection process as they have the detailed list of the refugee with necessary information. Based on the reviewed literature and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 40 Rohingya refugees, 20 were males and 20 were females.

Based on an extensive research study conducted by Monique Henink and Bonnie N. Kaiser (2022) to identify the sample sizes for saturation in qualitative studies, a narrow range of interviews between 9 and 17 has been idealized to reach the saturation point. The adaptation process can be different for males and females based on their age, gender, and experiences. Therefore, we conducted interviews with both males and females to gain a deeper understanding of their adaptation and acculturation in the host country. The informants of this study were aged between 18 and 45. This age range was determined to get insights from different generations living under the same circumstances in the refugee camps. The duration of processing an experience and interpreting the experience from different perspectives may differ among different generations. Therefore, we chose this age range when selecting our informant.

Table 1. Demographic information of the informants

Variables	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	20 (50%)
Female	20 (50%)
Age Groups	
18-24 years' old	15 (37.5%)
25-34 years' old	5 (12.5%)
35-45 years old	20 (50%)

The in-depth interview allows the informants to explain and interpret the phenomenon based on their experience and understanding, and demonstrate their role in actions (Knott et al., 2022). One of the prime objectives of conducting an interview is to generate data that portrays an authentic insight into people's lived experiences. Researchers tend to assess people's meanings of the social world and their experiences with the social world (Silverman, 1997). We conducted the interviews in the registered refugee camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Written consent was obtained from the informants to comply with the study's ethical guidelines. We went through a research ethics review process to obtain approval from the

Research Ethics Committee of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. we have received a written approval from the committee and the Ethics Reference Number is JEP-2024-271. We ensured that all informants' written informed consent was obtained before we conducted the survey. The spoken language of the Rohingya refugees is not similar to the official language of Bangladesh. We translated and transcribed all data before coding it through the ATLAS-ti software. Themes for this study were retrieved following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach which included being familiarized with data, generate initial themes to searching, reviewing, defining and producing finalise themes to study. Inter-coder reliability test was also conducted to assess the consistency and trustworthiness of the finalised themes.

The Findings and Discussion

1. Hope
One of the most common factors influencing the acculturation process among the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh was 'hope'. They came to Bangladesh with the hope of a new life. They wanted to save their lives, and therefore, they fled to Bangladesh for a safe and secure life. They chose Bangladesh to escape the years-long persecution they were experiencing in Myanmar.

> *"...we came to Bangladesh with the hope of a better life as a Muslim country."*
>
> *(Informant-7, Male, 22 years old)*

Contrary to existing literature on the Rohingya refugees and their acculturation challenges in Bangladesh, all 40 informants have shown their gratitude towards the host country and the local communities in the adjacent areas of the refugee camps. Some came to Bangladesh walking for months, whereas some came by boat, which took weeks, depending on the distances from their places to Bangladesh. However, coming to Bangladesh relieved them as they hoped to have a better life there. As informant 24 (Female, 42 years old) said, "We succeeded in saving our lives, and that was the most important thing at that moment." This sense of freedom helped the Rohingya refugees to accept the host community. They began to open themselves, and their support was offered during their arrival. This stage can be addressed as 'assimilation' as at this stage, the Rohingya refugees began to accept the help of the host community with gratitude.

2. Fear of Acceptance and Uncertainty
On the contrary, the foreseen threat from the host country, combined with the anxiety of being accepted by the host country, fogged their wishful hope of saving their life, leading to insecurity and identity crises. Where 'hope' led them to assimilate and integrate to the local communities, fear of acceptance and uncertainty led them to separate themselves on the contrary. Contrary to expectations and compared to previous studies, our research findings did not find any significant struggle or challenges the Rohingya refugees had to face in the host country Bangladesh. However, as Bangladesh is not a part of the Refugee convention 1957 and its protocol, Bangladesh cannot offer these Rohingya people a legal 'refugee' status. The Bangladeshi government addresses them as the FDMN (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals). Being disowned by both the government, it is very inevitable to feel lost for these stateless people. A body of researchers in their previous studies have brought these issues to their studies. A similar conclusion was reached by Khuda (2020), Mistry (2021) and Sultana (2023) in their studies where they addressed the issues of dealing with an identical crisis in the host community for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Based on their studies, the majority of the Rohingya refugees go through the 'to belong or not to belong' dilemma in the host country.

3. Trust Issues
Many of these individuals endured unexpected experiences in Myanmar, resulting in deep-seated trust issues upon their arrival in Bangladesh. This psychological burden often manifests in chronic anxiety and depression, potentially leading to various health complications. Despite these challenges, the warm reception and continued support from members of the host community have played a significant role in easing their transition and fostering a sense of optimism throughout their acculturation journey. Based on the collected data, the Rohingya refugees revealed the stages of processing their acculturation experiences in the host country,

Bangladesh, which appeared in a few cycles to them. As mentioned above, a strong hope for a safer and improved future emerged as a crucial factor in their adjustment to the new cultural environment. However, this hope is often overshadowed by fear of acceptance and uncertainty, contributing to distress and helplessness within the refugee camps. The struggle to trust the local community or the newly encountered culture also slowed their acculturation process in Bangladesh. Informant 34 (Female, 40 years old) revealed how they struggled to trust the new environment, "we also had trust issues. We were happy but could not trust anyone, as we suffered a lot." This is the stage where they were often seen to separate themselves from the host community as they were unsure whom to trust and whom not to trust.

4. Cultural Differences

Despite some visible similarities between the Rohingya refugees and the neighbouring host communities, there are significant cultural differences between these two communities. This Rohingya community was away from the light of modern culture and practice in their country, Myanmar. They lacked internet access and the opportunity to attend educational institutions for higher studies. Therefore, they were not updated on many things happening around the world. Alongside, religion plays an important role in determining their daily life. Their culture and lifestyle are navigated through the lens of religion only. The Rohingya community determines good and bad based on their experiences and knowledge about the religion. The most significant number of the Rohingya are Muslim, with a minority group of Hindus and Buddhists. Post-arrival in Bangladesh, these Rohingya individuals have gone through some cultural differences, too. From the entertainment industry to food habits, everything they had experienced upon arrival in the host country, Bangladesh, was new to them. For some, watching drama and celebrating cultural festivals was considered 'sinful', whereas others viewed them as stress relievers.

> *"The practice of drama and other cultural activities in radio and television are very new to us. We are not used to these. Sometimes, they help us relieve our stress, though."*
>
> (Informant-19, Male, 40 years old)

These cultural differences often led them to separate themselves from the host community, specifically for the aged group, it was difficult to adjust to in the beginning.

5. Shared Values

Surprisingly, many of these stateless people from Myanmar were not aware of the country they were moving to while escaping their country. On the other hand, some came because of the shared values and faith that the people of Bangladesh carry. They firmly believed that practising the same religion would bring them closer and help them get all the required support. "We came to Bangladesh with the hope of a better life as a Muslim country, said informant 7 (Male, 21 years old). While shared values encouraged them to integrate with the host community, the cultural contradiction was a cultural shock that eventually made them choose to separate from the host community. This Rohingya community are not used to seeing girls and women working outside or working with men equally in the workforce.

Besides a few participants, most of them shared their discomfort regarding women working outside and talking to men in Bangladesh. Informant 3 (Male, 23 years old) shared his experiences in Myanmar and Bangladesh during the interview, "we are not used to seeing girls and boy's chit chatting or working together in Burma, which is quite new in Bangladesh. Girls in Burma do not go out much or work outside the home." Initially, the humanitarian workers on the field had to face challenges in working with the refugees of the opposite gender. Female Rohingya were not open to male ground workers; on the contrary, male Rohingya did not show any interest in listening to the female humanitarian workers.

6. Interest in the Host Culture

The first couple of years, these Rohingya refugees kept dwelling between integration and separation. However, they also proved themselves as quick learners and adopted the host culture easily by observing them. Informant 21 (Female, 35 years old) shared her journey to adapt to the host culture in Bangladesh, "We have been here for the last seven years. We see and communicate with Bangladeshi NGO people here. We observe them,

listen to them. So slowly we have learnt the language. We understand the language and speak too." There are some similarities between the local dialect and the Rohingya people's language. Therefore, it was not that difficult for them to pick some common words.

However, Bangladesh's official language, Bengali/Bangla, is quite different from the Burmese language. Nevertheless, they have mastered the local and official language of Bangladesh and picked up English very well as humanitarian workers from international NGOs visit the refugee camps frequently. Subsequently, the young Rohingya people are very fond of Bangladeshi festivals and clothing. They have adapted the host culture well and expressed how to maintain it equally with their own culture. The majority of the informants (50%) were aged between 34 and 45, who came to Bangladesh in their early thirties. They have witnessed life in both Myanmar and Bangladesh. These people were seen more active in preserving their home culture along with practicing the host culture. On the contrary, the second highest population, the young generation (37.5%), was more keen on practicing the host culture, tradition, fashion, and other lifestyles.

The elements impacting the acculturation process of the migrants differ for forced migration or displaced people in the host country. When the migrants move to a new country with a sense of excitement and go through the 'honeymoon' period in their initial settlement period in the host country, the displaced refugees flee their country to save their lives from violence. These forcibly displaced Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh with the hope of saving their lives from decades-long violence and persecution. In spite of feeling 'the butterfly in the stomach,' the fear of uncertainty and the grief of leaving the homeland prolonged their acculturation process in Bangladesh.

Moving into Bangladesh was not easy for these stateless people. A few of them walked for months to reach the border of Bangladesh. They came to Bangladesh by crossing the river Naf, which connects both countries. Refugee settlement and integration are critical focus areas for scholars, researchers, and humanitarian organisations aiming to help refugees achieve lasting social cohesion and overcome intercultural difficulties in their new environments. In refugee studies, "integration" refers to how refugees adapt to their host country by undergoing changes and developing the ability to communicate and adjust effectively. Scholars often describe integration challenges as one of the most significant concerns that requires immediate and proactive attention (Benton & Selee, 2022).

Based on the retrieved themes from the collected data, we can see that (see Table 2) the Rohingya refugees went through the stages of acculturation as mentioned by Berry (1997) like a circle. Hope led them to assimilate into the local community. However, fear of acceptance, trust issues, and cultural differences slowed the acculturation process, often leading them to separate themselves from integrating. This is where they chose separation over integration to the host culture. Studies conducted on the Afghan refugees in Pakistan aligns to the research findings of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Cultural shock, sense of loss of identity, anxiety, contradictions in culture and disorientation upon arrival have led them to separate themselves from the host community despite some insignificant effort to mitigate these cultural gaps (Murtaza & Kiran, 2024). On the other hand, shared faith and values, and newly explored cultures made them interested in the local culture, and ultimately, integration took place effortlessly. We have not found anyone marginalising or alienating themselves from integration though. Table 2 below showcases the factors that influence their decision to assimilate separate and or integrate to the host community and its culture.

On the contrary, a body of researchers have found Syrian refugees in Turkey to be dwelling between separation and integration in their host country, Turkey as they are more comfortable in practising and preserving their home culture in the resettled location (Arslan & Daghan, 2022). In contrast to the previous studies, Ukrainian refugees in the United States were seen to assimilate more than to separate themselves from the host culture with an equal rate in integration and marginalization (25% each) to the host community and its culture (Andrushko & Lupei, 2025). However, like the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, none of these refugee groups were seen to be following marginalization as one of their acculturation strategies, as they believed they had the freedom to choose either one. In contrast to the previous study, research findings conducted by Bayram & Eryılmaz (2025) offer a different perspective to the literature. While the previous study on the Syrian refugees in Turkey emphasized that marginalization was the least used strategy of acculturation, the present findings show assimilation as the least preferred strategy among the Syrian refugees in Turkey (Bayram & Eryılmaz, 2025).

Table 2. Stages of the acculturation process of the Rohingya refugee based on their shared experiences

Acculturation Process	Supporting Comment/ Quotes	Stages of Acculturation
Hope	*We were really happy. Bangladeshi people respected us a lot.* *The locals have taken care of us. They have protected us. They have given us food and shelter. (Informant-31, Male, 36years old)*	Assimilation
Fear of Acceptance, Uncertainty	*Initially we had the fear of unknown as we were in a new place, in a new country, within a total unknown environment. (Informant-32, Female, 38 years old)*	Separation
Trust Issues	*It was difficult to trust the local in the beginning*	
Cultural Differences	*We didn't like the biriyani rice. We eat rice and meat separately. They look like left-over rice. (Informant-25, Male, 44 years old)*	Separation
	Our programs and celebrations are mostly religion related. We don't have cultural celebrations like Bangladeshis. (Informant-13, Male, 23 years old)	Separation
Shared Faith & Values	*We knew there was a country named Bangladesh across the border. We also knew that it is a Muslim country. So this motivated us a lot. We knew the Muslim country and the people of a Muslim country would take care of us. (Informant-34, Female, 40 years old)*	Integration
Interest in the Host Culture	*Bangladeshi dresses are more covered and better compared to Burmese dresses. I like the three-piece suits Bangladeshi girl's wear. I also like the girl wearing a saree with full coverage. They look good and better Muslim. (Informant-33, Male, 35 years old)*	Integration

Conclusion

The acculturation experience of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh reflects a dynamic and ongoing process shaped by the need to adapt to a vastly different cultural environment. While acculturation is theoretically a mutual process between the host and the arriving communities, in practice, it is often the migrants who undergo the majority of the adaptation. The Rohingya, in particular, have had to make significant cultural adjustments to facilitate their continued survival and integration in Bangladesh. Many have embraced the local language, customs, and social norms to ease their lives and reduce cultural barriers. Like other migrants and refugees to other host countries, these Rohingya refugees have also had to go through endless dilemmas, trust issues, fear of being accepted, and uncertainty as they are unsure of their future. Despite experiencing cultural shock, religious and cultural contradictions, and the hope for a better and safer life, mutual religious values and practices have also encouraged them to integrate into the host culture.

A generational difference is evident in the Rohingya refugee's acculturation process. The younger generation of Rohingya refugees demonstrates a higher level of engagement with the host culture, showing a willingness to learn, integrate, and identify themselves as part of the Bangladeshi community. In contrast, older individuals are less inclined to participate actively in the adaptation process, often due to deep-rooted attachment to their original cultural identity and trauma from forced displacement. This generational difference highlights the varying capacities and motivations for cultural integration, influenced by age, psychological resilience, and future outlook. Despite the efforts by the refugees to integrate, the acculturation journey remains complex and fraught with emotional and psychological challenges. Feelings of cultural dislocation, identity crisis, and the uncertainty of a permanent future continue to weigh heavily on the Rohingya population, particularly the older demographic. However, the host community's generally supportive attitude and the adaptive strategies adopted by the refugees, especially the youth, offer hope for gradual social cohesion and mutual cultural understanding.

To support the ongoing acculturation of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, it is essential to implement inclusive and culturally sensitive strategies that address the diverse needs of different age groups.

Programs should be designed to support younger refugees through education, language learning, and social integration activities, while also providing older individuals with emotional support, language assistance, and community engagement opportunities. Strengthening mental health services, particularly trauma-informed care, is vital to address the psychological impact of displacement and cultural dislocation. For an effective practical implementation, the localised version of successful acculturation models that have been implemented in other refugee settlements can be introduced to smooth their integration in Bangladesh. At the policy level, promoting intercultural dialogue between the stakeholders and refugee communities can help foster mutual understanding and reduce social and psychological tensions. Efforts to improve language skills, vocational training, and youth leadership development will empower the Rohingya population to participate more fully in the host society. This study contributes to the existing body of literature to understand the acculturation process of the Rohingya refugees in the host country, Bangladesh. Future research should adopt comparative studies across different host countries, and in-depth investigations into intercultural communication, identity negotiation, and belonging will further enrich our understanding of refugee acculturation dynamics.

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