

**The Effects of Self-Set Goal-Attainment and Self-Set Goal-Importance on Acculturation
in First Generation Migrants**

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PSB3E-BT15: Bachelor Thesis 1a
Group number 36

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January 21, 2021

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Abstract

Self-initiated migrants most commonly leave their home country to expand their goal possibilities and research has shown that the achievement of important goals facilitates stronger feelings of adjustment in migrants. Present research aims to generate different goal content categories from migrants' responses to gain a more in-depth understanding of what type of goals facilitate acculturation. We study the interaction of goal attainment and goal importance on acculturation through different goal content categories. We hypothesized that goal attainment would predict acculturation and, further that the relationship between self-set goal attainment and acculturation is stronger when goals are perceived as highly important. We asked migrants (N=288) to state three life goals and to rate those according to their perceived level of importance and to rate the extent of goal attainment. In addition, migrants' level of acculturation was assessed. With the use of grounded theory, we categorized a total of 864 goals and arrived at seven categories. Except for the category of relationship goals, goal attainment did positively predict acculturation throughout the categories (achievement, basic human striving, migration, personal development, professional, security). We found a moderation of goal importance and goal attainment on acculturation from professional goals. If the achieved professional goals were perceived high in importance, these facilitate acculturation even better. The benefits of goal pursuit on acculturation are helpful for many types of goals and professionals could keep in mind that goal pursuit can help migrants with challenges to adapt.

Keywords: migration, goal pursuit, goal attainment, goal importance, acculturation, goal content

The Effects of Self-Set Goal-Attainment and Self-Set Goal-Importance on Acculturation in First Generation Migrants

In 2020, the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020), released a current global estimate of about 281 million migrants, which are about 3.60 percent of the population worldwide. Although the percentage seems to be small, a positive trend towards migration can be seen, with increasing global population projections (IOM, 2020). Even though these rates are rising, the process of migration is accompanied by many challenges, which include poverty, separation from families, or language difficulties, to name a few (Shin et al., 2017; Sirin et al., 2019). Certainly, migrants need to adapt to overcome the challenges and a lot of research has focused on ‘acculturative stress’ (Berry, 2006), the negative impact on migrants physical and mental health, resulting from difficulties to adapt (Shin et al., 2017; Sirin et al., 2019). Causes of acculturative stress are for example the challenge to deal with a changed language, navigating through novel systems, or taking on minority status in the new country (Sirin et al., 2020), and researchers found a connection between acculturative stress and depression (Castillo et al., 2015; Mui & Kang, 2006).

Current research aims to identify factors that facilitate successful acculturation. In the past, determinants of successful acculturation were explained from a personality or social identity perspective (Dion & Dion, 2006; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Recently, researchers brought the role of motivation and goal pursuit perspective up to attention (Toth-Bos et al. 2020). Still, little research is done on the effects of goal pursuit on acculturation, and thus we aim to expand research in this field. Because migrants usually leave their home country to fulfill their dreams and goals in another country (Kruglanski et al., 2002), we want to explore how the attainment of self-set goals affects the process of acculturation in first-generation migrants. We also consider that especially the attainment of those goals, which are personally important, might impact the acculturation process to a greater extent. In addition,

we aim to explore what types of goals matter to aid migrants' acculturation process. Therefore, we will study the interaction of goal attainment and goal importance on acculturation through different goal content categories. To explore different goal content categories, we take on an exploratory view and use the methodology of the grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1965).

Acculturation

The process of migration unavoidably leads to intercultural contact between the migrant and the receiving country. The continuous contact of two cultural groups results in mutual changes of both parties, which are summarized in the theory of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Changes take place on a cultural and psychological level (Berry, 1997). Most research focused on the psychological processes, the different ways people adapt to, and think about the host country, also known as acculturation attitudes. (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2010; Samnani et al., 2013). Searle and Ward (1990) distinguish between psychological and sociocultural adjustment in psychological acculturation. The former refers to the migrants' state of being concerning the changed culture and can be either satisfied and happy, or anxious and unsettled (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). On the other hand, the behavioural and practical parts of adjusting to the new culture, like navigating daily activities, are described in sociocultural adjustment (Demes & Geeraert, 2014). As a major determinant for migrants' well-being, both psychological as well as sociocultural adaptation need to be reached to ensure successful acculturation (Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Marsiglia et al., 2013).

Indeed, research found that acculturated migrants show higher levels of life satisfaction and better mental health outcomes, compared to non-acculturated migrants (Marsiglia et al., 2013). As acculturation serves as a predictor for migrants' well-being, importance should be placed on the mechanisms that underlie effective acculturation. Factors that have been studied to predict acculturation are for example demographic characteristics,

like language proficiency (Marsiglia et al., 2010), personality differences, like coping styles (Kuo, 2014), and social determinants, like social support (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). However, little research examined the role of goals in the acculturation process even though many migrants decide to migrate because they are pursuing certain goals in another country (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Present research is focusing specifically on migrants, who voluntarily chose to leave their home country and have the desire to realise specific goals in the new host country.

Goal Pursuit

Goals can be defined as internal representations of desired future outcomes, such as events or processes, which guide behaviour toward the achievement of that goal (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Chekola, 1974). Many goal theories look at the organisation of different goals to each other (Kruglanski et al., 2002; Milyavskaya & Werner, 2018). Kruglanski et al. (2002) suggest that goals are hierarchical constructs, which are interrelated. For example, a short-term goal to pass an exam can be necessary to fulfil the higher goal to have a good career (Milyavskaya & Werner, 2018; Toth-Bos et al., 2020). Another way of organising these constructs comes from Austin and Vancouver (1996), who distinguished between different goal facets: goal structure, goal process, and goal content. Goal structure is concerned with the hierarchical organization and the proportions of goals within and between persons. Such dimensions are goal importance, the level of difficulty, and specificity (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). Goal process refers to the creation, planning, accomplishment of a goal and may further help the individual to revise a goal if necessary (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). During the first phase of the goal process, the goal content develops. It describes to which category of life a goal belongs to (e.g., finances, work, or family) and shows the underlying motives like for instance power, or affiliation (Beach & Mitchell, 1990; Winell, 1987). In the present paper, we investigate the goal content of migrants' current life goals.

The beneficial influence of goal attainment on well-being has been widely researched (Niemiec et al., 2009; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2007; Toth-Bos et al., 2020). However, not every goal attainment contributes to well-being to the same degree. Especially the completion of personally important goals (Brunstein, 1993; Emmons 1986), or self-concordant goals, positively influences individuals' well-being, as those are in line with the person's developing values and interests (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Progressing on personally important goals enhances the chance to attain those goals and positively affects well-being. If a goal is perceived as highly important, the individual is motivated to put sustained energy into achieving the goal. In order to realise the goal, the individual voluntarily engages in meaningful behaviour and feels especially competent if the important goal is achieved (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Toth-Bos et al. (2020) studied the interaction of intrinsic goal attainment and goal importance on well-being, mediated by acculturation, and indeed found an interaction effect, which indicates that fulfilling important goals facilitates stronger feelings of cultural adjustment and well-being. Having this in mind, the present study considers that the level of perceived importance of self-chosen goals, influences the relationship of goal attainment and acculturation. We propose that goal importance strengthens the link between goal attainment and acculturation.

Another perspective must be considered when studying the beneficial effects of personally important goals. Some personal goals, seem more meaningful than others, and the self-determination theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000a) explains why certain goals are more beneficial for human functioning. SDT proposes that humans possess inherent growth tendencies and that innate psychological needs build a foundation for self-motivation. Three such needs were identified: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. If fulfilled, these facilitate optimal functioning for the innate drive to grow, support social development, and promote well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Goals can be divided into extrinsic or intrinsic in

nature (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Intrinsic goals are understood to arise from innate personal growth tendencies, like the longing for connectedness, greater self-understanding, health, or community service. They are expected to be in line with the core human needs. Examples are goals for self-acceptance, health, and interpersonal relationships (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Toth-Bos et al., 2020). In contrast, extrinsic goals depend on the reaction and praise of others and do not evolve out of an inherent drive or satisfaction for the activity itself. They are considered to be less in line with basic human needs and are more shaped by culture. Instances are financial success, outer appearance, and good reputation. These types of goals are commonly more concerned with social status or the achievement of a positive evaluation by others (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Toth-Bos et al., 2020).

Realising intrinsic goals helps migrants to feel more adjusted. If, for instance, migrants' goals are to strive for new relationships in the host country, this could help those to feel connected and to achieve social support, which further helps to adapt better (Toth-Bos et al., 2020). Indeed, Toth-Bos et al. (2020), found that attaining intrinsic goals helps migrants to feel adapted to the new culture and supports them in tackling the challenge to acculturate well. In similar vein, Chirkov et al. (2008) found that international students' autonomous motivation to study abroad, positively predicted students' adjustment outcomes. Others found that when self-concordant goals fulfil inherent needs, these facilitate students' adjustment (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001).

Goal Categories

The distinction of extrinsic and intrinsic goals helps to understand that different motives of goals have a different effect on the process of acculturation. A great deal of research is using this distinction (Kasser & Ryan, 1993;1996; Ryan et al., 1999; Schmuck et al., 2000). The present research focuses on the goal content categories, but not on the

underlying motives. We aim to explore how different categories of goals influence acculturation.

In a literature review, Toth-Bos et al. (2019) give an overview of various goal content categories migrants which have been found to predict acculturation. One example of a category that fosters acculturation are learning goals. Gong and Fan (2006) examined learning goals (focusing on increasing ability or mastery), performance goals (focusing on showing adequacy), and cross-cultural adjustment in international students and discovered that learning goals, as opposed to performance goals, are characterized by positive cognitive processing of setbacks and that those goals facilitate students' social adjustment because it increases their feeling of self-efficacy. Unexpectedly, performance goals were also positively influencing academic adjustment (Gong & Fan, 2006). Another example comes from Zhang and Zhang (2017), who investigated international students in New Zealand, and interestingly, they found a positive relation between students' intrinsic goals and their spiritual values. Spiritual values (e.g., conformity, tradition, and security; see Schwartz, 1996) are seen to be advantageous for migrants because these help individuals to find meaning in life and protect against self-destructive behaviour (Palfai & Weafer, 2006). Further research on goal categories comes from Recker et al. (2017), who studied how the motivation for cultural maintenance and the motivation for cultural exploration would affect acculturation in migrants, living in New Zealand. They revealed that when migrants were interested in maintaining their home culture, they were more likely to connect with people from their native country, which positively influenced their psychological adaptation. Furthermore, they found that when migrants were more motivated to explore the new cultural, this positively influenced their level of sociocultural adaptation (Recker et al., 2017).

In the formerly mentioned findings, migrants had to choose between pre-fixed goal categories. In present research, however, open-ended questions are posed, where migrants

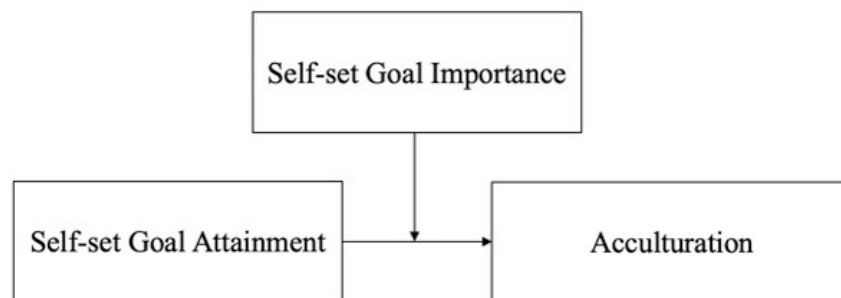
had to report their own goal in mind. We aim to generate different goal categories out of migrants' responses to further explore, which of these will especially help facilitate acculturation. We, therefore, examine the interaction of self-set goal importance and self-set goal attainment on acculturation, within each category. In line with our argumentation, we hypothesize (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between self-set goal attainment and acculturation, where self-set goal attainment positively predicts acculturation.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between self-set goal attainment and acculturation is moderated by self-set goal importance, in such that the relationship is stronger to the degree that goals are perceived to be important.

Figure 1.

Predicted Moderation Model



Method

Participants and Procedure

In total, 334-first generation migrants, who are currently living in the United Kingdom, took part in our online survey study. From the original dataset, 46 participants were removed because of missing responses. The final sample consists of 288 participants ($N = 288$; 70 % female, $M_{\text{age}} = 34.6$, $SD = 10.43$). Participants were from Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., 61% from Poland, 11.8% from Hungary, 6.3% from Czech Republic), and are

now living in the United Kingdom for about 10 years ($M = 9.62$, $SD = 6.43$). Fifty percent of the participants had lived in a foreign country already before moving to the United Kingdom. Regarding the level of education, 57.3% of participants obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 83.7% had a paid job at the time. Respondents were recruited online via the Qualtrics Panel platform and were paid for their participation. They first had to answer questions regarding their demographic details. Next, they were asked to list three current life goals, which afterward had to be rated regarding the level of importance and the extent to which those goals were attained. A total of 864 goals were gathered for our analysis. Furthermore, the level of acculturation was assessed. We received ethical approval from the ethics committee (ethic approval number: 17444-P).

Measures

Self-Set Goal Importance

Participants were asked to indicate three of their current life goals by completing given sentences (e.g., "I want to..."; "My goal is to..."; and "I aspire to...") and were further supposed to indicate the perceived importance on a scale from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*very important*). A composite score for self-set goal importance was computed from the average of the importance of the three self-set goals. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is rather low ($\alpha = .585$), which is probably due to the little number of items on the scales and the nature of our open assessment (Wanous & Hudy, 2001).

Self-Set Goal Attainment

After participants had done the importance rating, they were asked to specify the extent to which they had attained each goal on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). A composite score for self-set goal attainment was computed from the average of the attainment of the three self-set goals. Again, the Cronbach alpha for this scale is relatively low ($\alpha = .698$) which is perhaps also due to the earlier mentioned reasons (Wanous & Hudy, 2001).

Acculturation

To assess the degree to which participants feel acculturated, a composite scale of the psychological (BPAS) and the sociocultural (BSAS) adjustment scale by Demes and Geeraert (2014), was used. Participants rated how much they agreed with each statement (e.g., feeling “... excited about being in the United States” or “... sad to be away from the home country”), on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Furthermore, they rated the perceived difficulty of adapting to specific situations in the foreign country (e.g., climate, food, social environment) on a scale from 1 (*very difficult*) to 7 (*very easy*). An average score for acculturation was computed from the total number of 22 items. The Cronbach’s alphas for the scales are .75 for BPAS and .89 for the scale BSAS.

Tool of Analysis

To structure our exploratory research, we used the grounded theory, by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory provides a flexible, non-linear research structure, which allows revision throughout the research process (Chun Tie et al., 2019). The methodology starts with purposeful sampling and generating data. In line with this, our sample exists of self-initiated migrants. Three coding stages follow, which are used to identify concepts and similarities in data: initial coding, intermediate coding, and advanced coding. During these coding stages, comparisons of structures and revisions are constantly applied. This should generate a theory, grounded in data (Chun Tie et al., 2019). During the process, memo writings should be applied. Memo writing, or memoing, is the documentation of ideas, which arise during the coding process (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Our research used former strategies to lighten up conceptual reoccurrences of our data. We structured the coding of our goals into small-, mid-, and broad categories. We started with the initial coding of 50 goal statements, to get an overall sense of goal contents. In small steps, we recognized a pattern and tried to apply these throughout the 864 goals. We categorized small-, and mid-categories first. Small

categories were very close to the original goal, whereas the mid categories express the goal in a more general term. We applied colour codes and memo writings to highlight insecurities and irregularities. Throughout the process, we reviewed the given mid-categories and revised them if necessary. Lastly, we coded the mid categories into broader categories.

Results

Goal Categories

With the use of grounded theory, we derived a total of seven broad categories and 26 mid categories. The category, *Achievement* includes 70 reported goals and three mid-categories, which are “financial”, “success” and “achievement”. Common items of this category are “make more money” and “be successful”. *Basic Human Striving* makes up our second category and consists of 128 reported goals, divided into two mid-categories (state of being and health). Representative of this category are items like “be healthy” and “be happy”. Participants almost exclusively alternated between these two aspired goals. The third category, *Migration*, comprises 24 goals and three mid-categories (move, integration, staying in UK). Participants reported goals concerning integration (e.g., “fit in culture”), moving (e.g., “move abroad”), or staying in UK (e.g., “stay in UK after Brexit). The largest of all our categories, *Personal Development*, consists of 235 reported goals and seven mid-categories (travel, skill, impact, personal development, career, independence, and freedom). Items such as “have a successful career”, “be the best version of myself”, “improve my English” or “travel more”, was predominant in the respondents’ listed goals. The fifth category, *Professional*, consists of 106 reported goals and three mid-categories (educational, occupational, professional). The content of this category is expressed by items like “have a good job”, or “getting a degree”. The sixth category, *Relationship*, consists of 121 reported goals with three mid-categories (family, relationship, friendship). Items such as “have a family”, “be a good mom” and “have good friends” are exemplary. The last category,

Security, includes 146 reported goals and five mid-categories (material achievement, living comfortably, retirement, security, financial security). Security goals can be summarized by items like “have a comfortable life”, “buy a house” and “retire comfortably”.

Preliminary Analysis and Hypothesis Testing per Category

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the model variables are provided in a table for each category (see Table 1-7). To test our hypothesis, we used Hayes’ Process macro model 4 (Hayes & Little, 2018) to conduct a moderation analysis. Self-set goal attainment was entered as our independent variable, the dependent variable was acculturation, and self-set goal importance was the moderator variable.

Achievement

The results (see appendix, Table 8) revealed a significant positive relationship of goal attainment on acculturation ($b = 0.17, p = .02$), which supports the first hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation, where the attainment of achievement goals positively predicts acculturation. Further, a significant negative main effect for goal importance on acculturation was found ($b = -0.26, p = .04$). However, we did not find a significant interaction effect of goal attainment and goal importance ($b = 0.05, p = .48$), which disconfirms our second hypothesis: The positive relationship between the attainment of achievement goals and acculturation is not stronger if these goals are perceived as important.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Achievement

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	5.02	0.94		-.19	.22
SSG_IMP	6.27	1.07	-.19		.24*
SSG_ATT	3.19	1.63	.22	.24*	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Basic Human Striving

We found a marginally significant main effect for goal attainment on acculturation ($b = 0.09, p = .09$). This indicates support for our first hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation, where the attainment of basic human striving goals predicts acculturation. However, no significant main effect for goal importance on acculturation was found ($b = 0.08, p = .57$). No interaction effect of self-set goal attainment and goal importance was found either ($b = -0.01, p = .91$), which disconfirms our second hypothesis: The positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation is not stronger if goals of this category are perceived as important.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Basic Human Striving

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	5.05	.87		.09	.17
SSG_IMP	6.78	.60	.09		.20*
SSG_ATT	4.31	1.58	.17	.20*	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Migration

We found a marginally significant main effect for goal attainment on acculturation ($b = 0.02, p = .09$), which supports our first hypothesis: The attainment of migration goals positively predicts acculturation. However, no significant main effect of goal importance ($b = -0.05, p = .83$) on our outcome variable acculturation was found. No significant interaction effect is present ($b = 0.11, p = .64$), which disconfirms our second hypothesis: The positive relationship of goal attainment and acculturation is not moderated by goal importance for goals belonging to this category.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Migration

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	4.64	.89		-.01	.37
SSG_IMP	6.29	.81	-.01		.07
SSG_ATT	4.00	1.50	.37	.072	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Personal Development

Results (see appendix, Table 8) revealed a significant positive relationship of goal attainment on acculturation ($b = 0.09, p = .01$), supporting our first hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation, where the attainment of personal development goals positively predicts acculturation. No significant main effect of goal importance on acculturation was found ($b = -0.06, p = .41$). We did not find a significant interaction effect between goal attainment and goal importance ($b = 0.02, p = .61$), which disconfirms our second hypothesis: Goal importance does not strengthen the positive relationship of goal attainment and acculturation for goals related to personal development.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Personal Development

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	5.07	.83		-.05	.17**
SSG_IMP	6.44	.89	-.05		.08
SSG_ATT	3.67	1.63	.17**	.08	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Professional

The results (see appendix, Table 8) discovered a marginally significant positive main effect of goal attainment ($b = 0.11, p = .06$), which supports the first hypothesis: There is a positive relationship and goal attainment positively predicts acculturation. No significant

main effect of goal importance ($b = 0.03, p = .82$) on acculturation was found. Further, we found a marginally significant interaction effect (see Figure 2) of goal attainment and goal importance on acculturation ($b = 0.12, p = .08$). Professional goal attainment predicted acculturation for people with high goal importance (effect = 0.17, 95% CI [0.04, 0.29]), but not for people with low goal importance (effect = 0.05, 95% CI [-0.08, 0.18]). The results indicate that specifically when the importance of the goal is rated high, goal attainment predicts acculturation (see appendix, Table 8, and Figure 2). This supports our second hypothesis: The positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation appeared to be stronger to the extent that goals were perceived as more important.

Table 5

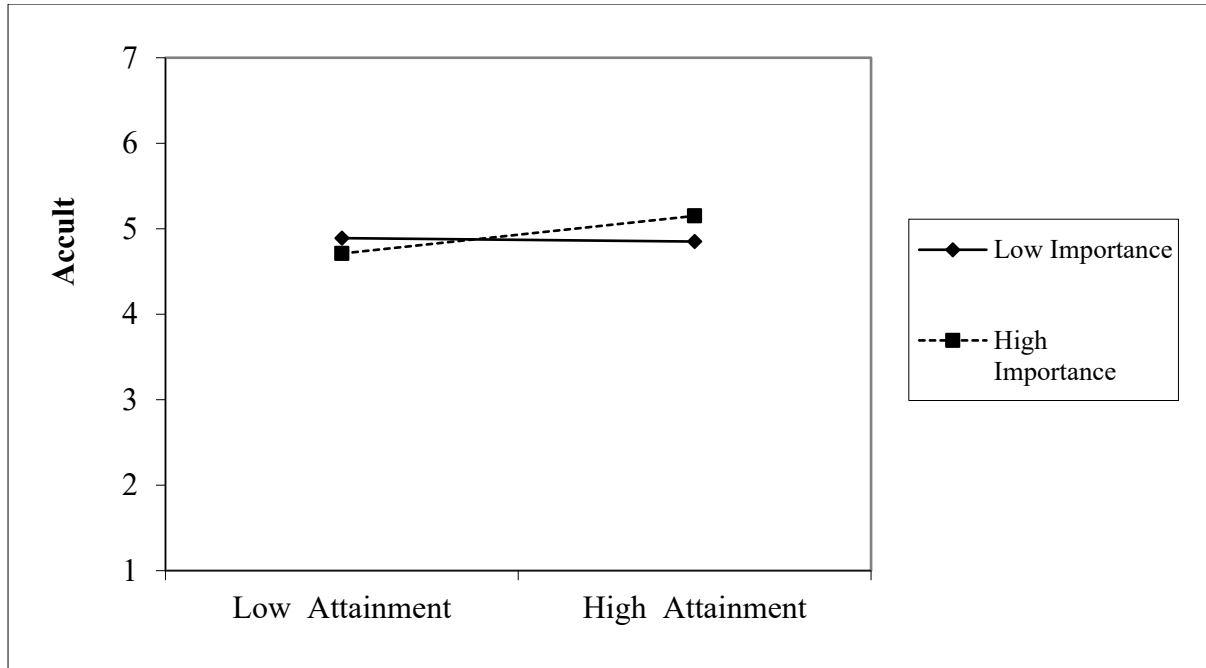
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Professional

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	4.97	.93		.013	.19*
SSG_IMP	6.47	.78	0.13		.21*
SSG_ATT	3.88	1.64	.19*	.21*	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Figure 2

Acculturation as a function of the importance and the attainment of 'Professional' goals.



Relationship

For this category, no significant main effect for goal attainment on acculturation was found ($b = 0.07, p = .12$). This disconfirms our first hypothesis: There is no positive relationship between goal attainment and acculturation. Further, we did not find a significant main effect of goal importance on acculturation ($b = -0.05, p = .76$). No significant interaction effect is present ($b = -0.04, p = .52$), which disconfirms the second hypothesis that goal importance moderates the relationship between goal attainment and acculturation.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Relationship

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	5.12	.81		.05	.15
SSG_IMP	6.72	.64	.05		.30**
SSG_ATT	4.29	1.84	.15	.30**	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$ (two-tailed significance).

Security

A significant positive main effect was discovered for security goal attainment on acculturation ($b = 0.11, p = .00$), which supports our first hypothesis that goal attainment

positively predicts acculturation. No main effect was found for goal importance on acculturation ($b = -0.13, p = .12$). Also, no significant interaction effect for goal attainment and self-set goal importance was found ($b = 0.06, p = .27$), which disconfirms our second hypothesis: Goal importance does not moderate the positive relationship between the attainment of security goals and acculturation.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables for the Goal Category of Security

	Mean	SD	ACCULT	SSG_IMP	SSG_ATT
ACCULT	4.95	.90		-.122	.24**
SSG_IMP	6.54	.86	-.12		.051
SSG_ATT	3.29	1.90	.24**	.051	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed significance)

In sum, we found that six (achievement, basic human striving, migration, personal development, professional, security) of our seven categories support the first hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between self-set goal attainment and acculturation, where self-set goal attainment positively predicts acculturation. The category relationship did not reveal any results. Only the category professional supports our second hypothesis: The relationship between self-set goal attainment and acculturation is moderated by self-set goal importance, such that the relationship between acculturation and the attainment of professional goals is stronger, to the extent that these goals are perceived as important.

Discussion

Factors that underlie successful acculturation have been studied by a great number of researchers (Kuo, 2014; Marsiglia et al., 2010; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015), however, the influence of goal pursuit on acculturation is still understudied. Building on latest research (Toth-Bos et al., 2020), the present paper examined the effect of goal attainment on

acculturation in different goal content categories. Furthermore, we tested the interaction of self-set goal attainment and self-set goal importance on acculturation across different goal-content categories. While previous research relied on pre-fixed goal content categories (Doerschler, 2006; Gong & Fang, 2006; Srivastava et al., 2001), our study aimed to develop goal content categories out of migrants' responses to gain a more in-depth understanding of what type of goals facilitate acculturation.

We proposed that the attainment of self-set goals would positively affect acculturation, and we can confirm this hypothesis in six of our seven categories (achievement, basic human striving, migration, personal development, professional, security). Unexpectedly, the category of relationship goals disconfirms our first hypothesis. Attaining goals concerning friendship and family does not help migrants to adapt better. Contrary to this, research on intrinsic goal attainment assumed that having and maintaining loving relationships would be essential for acculturation as it helps to identify with host-country nationals (Toth-Bos et al., 2020; Ward et al., 2001). Attaining goals that belong to the category of security most commonly address the wish to have a stable and well-settled life, which was found to be a common reason to migrate (Andresen et al., 2014). Realizing the wish to have a stable life might reduce the uncertainty, which comes along with migration (Brett, 1980), and could therefore help migrants to adapt well. Our smallest category migration (N=24) mostly concerns the wish for political and societal integration into the host country, and Doerschler (2006) found that migrants with the wish for political integration in the new country were related with reduced ambitions to return to their home country, and with increased political engagement. This gives meaning to our results: Perhaps, by exhibiting political engagement, migrants actively engage with their host environment, which could make migrants feel better adapted. The achievement of goals belonging to the category of personal development were also found to have a positive influence on acculturation.

Similar results were found by a lot of researchers (Chirkov et al., 2008; Gong, 2003; Gong & Fan, 2006; Pinto et al., 2012; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001; Yang et al., 2018; Zhou, 2014; Zimmermann, et al., 2017). Many goals in this category concerned identity development and self-actualization and it was found that migrants are often confronted with identity challenges in the new country (Liebkind, 2006; Phinney et al., 2001). Realizing these goals suggests that migrants are open to overcome obstacles of identity challenges and are able to reflect on their identity, and, if necessary, can change personally relevant information (Ozer, 2017). This process increases functioning in the new environment, which could further aid migrants' acculturation process. The category basic human functioning shows that attaining goals for happiness and health, helps migrants to adapt better in the host country. By attaining health goals, migrants engage with the social context in the host environment, which could explain their helpful effect. Interestingly, it has been shown that there is a positive effect of acculturation on well-being as well (Marsiglia et al., 2013; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), which indicates that this relationship is highly intertwined. Goals of the category achievement most often express the longing to be successful in life, or to be financially secure (e.g., "Making money", "Being successful"). Similarly, goals of the category professional are work and career-related (e.g., "Having a good job") and, indeed, the most common motivations for self-initiated migrants are to find a better job, expand career opportunities, or get a higher income in the host country (Andresen et al., 2014). Achieving goals of these categories could enhance the feeling of being a valued member of the society (Wassermann et al., 2017) which could further influence their acculturation level.

In addition, we also found support for the moderating effect of self-set goal importance between self-set goal attainment and acculturation from goals belonging to the category of professional goals. We can confirm our second hypothesis for this category. All remaining categories (achievement, basic human functioning, migration, personal

development, security) disconfirm our second hypothesis. The attainment of professional goals stimulates acculturation especially well if these goals are perceived as high in importance. Our result is in line with findings of Toth-Bos et al. (2017), who found that perceived career success mediates career importance and sociocultural adaptation in migrants who are high in self-efficacy.

Interestingly, the category of achievement goals revealed a negative effect of goal importance on acculturation, which indicates that too much importance on specific goals can negatively influence the acculturation process. If migrants strive for achievement goals and fail to realize them, this could raise the feeling of longing for these goals, which further highlights that these needs are not fulfilled (Mayser et al., 2008). It seems that this hinders the process of successful adaptation and similarly, to our results, Toth-Bos et al. (2017) found a curvilinear relation of intrinsic goal importance to well-being, suggesting that higher goal importance can harm well-being.

All our goal content categories have in common that migrants need to interact with their host environment, in order to fulfil the goals. The person-environment fit theory (see Theory of Work Adjustment, Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, 2005) can give additional insight to our findings. If migrants could fulfil their needs and wishes in the host country, apparently, the host environment was able to offer migrants the opportunity to fulfil their specific goals. This congruence between migrants' needs and the environment could explain the positive effect on migrants' acculturation level. However, if there is no match between migrants' needs and the environment, they may experience an incongruence between their goals and the environment, which results in an unsatisfactory state.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

Present research aimed to generate goal content categories from migrants' responses and used those to study the role goal pursuit plays on acculturation. The qualitative aspect of

our mixed-method study should be clearly highlighted as a strength. Only a limited number of studies examine the role of migrants' goals in facilitating acculturation, and if so, research was done using pre-fixed goal categories (Kuo, 2014; Marsiglia et al., 2010; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). With the use of grounded theory, we got to know the innermost goals of nearly 300 migrants. We examined these to develop an accurate understanding of how different types of goals influence acculturation, which is, so far, a unique approach. On the other hand, our exploratory research also posed difficulties. A recurring problem was that we had no information about migrants' underlying motivation to pursue their goals. Because of this, the categorization had to rely on our subjective perspective. For example, the goal "Buying a house", expressed the urge to settle and to have a safe retreat, which could however also be a goal to symbolize social status. We tried to increase the accuracy of categorization, by looking at all three answer statements of the migrant, which helped to enhance the understanding of the individual meaning of the goal. However, we consider the missing information regarding the goals motive as a drawback of our method, and future research could profit from assessing this.

Our research benefits from the high sample of 288 working-age and self-initiated migrants. Self-initiated migrants are rarely tested in scientific research (Dickmann & Doherty, 2008), and are usually low represented in paid online sampling panels (Qualtrics, 2018). The study is high in external validity, as we gathered this large sample of the population of our interest. Furthermore, we enhanced validity by sampling one specific migrant group, namely migrants of Central and Eastern European origin (e.g., from Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic) living in the United Kingdom. Future research could enhance the field of migrant-goal-pursuit by studying different types of migrants. Also, important to mention is the language barrier, which was noticeable while evaluating the assessment. Some of the statements seemed to lack language accuracy, which made it sometimes difficult to

grasp the correct meaning of the goal while categorizing. This could have weakened the validity of our quantitative research, and further studies could benefit from making sure that an online translator is assessable while doing the assessment.

The present study found interesting findings regarding specific goal content categories and their influence on acculturation, and most of our categories were indeed related to acculturation. Since we were employing a new method of generating goal content categories, we highlight the importance to replicate this research. Future studies could benefit from including measures of migrants' implicit motives for pursuing a goal.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

The present study investigated whether goal pursuit would help migrants to adjust to their new country. The leading aim was to unveil whether specific types of goals help migrants better to adjust to the changed environment and we found that many types of goal pursuit benefit the acculturation process. The benefits of goal pursuit are helpful for work, or career-related goals. Also, goals for financial betterment and the wish to have a stable life, seem to foster migrants' acculturation process. Furthermore, goals related to improving oneself, striving for happiness and health, and the wish for political integration help to adapt well. Realizing these goals might help migrants to structure their life and to navigate in their new environment, which could reduce uncertainty and lower stress (Brett, 1980). Attaining the goal to get a better-paid job could further give migrants the feeling of control and security. Moreover, realizing career and self-development goals could fulfil the need for personal growth. Particularly achievement and professional goals revealed interesting results: If the fulfilled professional goals were seen as very important, these facilitate acculturation even better, on the other hand, if too much importance is placed on achievement goals, this seems to hinder successful acculturation. Professionals (e.g., Psychologists or social worker) could assist migrants in keeping this specific goal pursuit perspective in mind. Migration

often goes along with existential difficulties (Ward et al., 2001), and especially, when such challenges arise, it might be beneficial to align migrants' specific goals with the opportunities the environment has available. Possible actions to increase the congruence between the environment and the migrants' aspirations could for example work towards altering the environment according to migrants' skill-level, or at skill improvement, in order to meet the requirement of the environment (Bandura & Cervone, 1986; Eggerth, 2008). Furthermore, it is important to consider that if migrants place too much importance on unattainable goals this can worsen the adaptational process.

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Appendix**Table 8**

Model Estimation Results for Assessing Moderation Wherein Self-Set Goal Attainment and Self-Set Goal Importance Interact to Influence Acculturation for the different Goal

Categories

Achievement (N=70)						
Predictor	B	SE	t (66)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.06	.11	45.55	.00	4.83	5.28
Self-set goal Attainment	.17	.07	2.46	.02	.032	.31
Self-set goal Importance	-.26	.12	-2.16	.04	-.49	-.02
Int. GoalAtt x GoalImp	-.05	.07	-.70	.49	-.19	.09
Basic Human Striving (N=128)						
Predictor	B	SE	t (124)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.05	.08	63.98	.00	4.90	5.21
Self-set goal Attainment	.09	.05	1.73	.09	-.01	.19

GOAL ATTAINMENT AND GOAL IMPORTANCE ON ACCULTURATION

36

Self-set	.08	.15	.56	.57	-.21	.38
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goal

Importance

GoalAtt x	-.01	.11	-.12	.91	-.22	.20
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GoalImp

Migration (N=24)

Predictor	B	SE	t (20)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.64	.18	25.76	.00	4.26	5.01
Self-set	.22	.12	1.79	.09	-.04	.47
goal						
Attainment						
Self-set	-.05	.23	-.22	.83	-.53	.42
goal						
Importance						
Int. GoalAtt	.11	.23	.48	.64	-.37	.58
x GoalImp						

Personal Development (N=235)

Predictor	B	SE	t (231)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.07	.05	94.70	.00	4.97	5.18
Self-set	.09	.03	2.76	.01	.03	.16
goal						
Attainment						

GOAL ATTAINMENT AND GOAL IMPORTANCE ON ACCULTURATION

37

Self-set	-.06	.07	-.82	.41	-.19	.08
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goal

Importance

Int. GoalAtt	.02	.04	.51	.61	-.06	.10
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x GoalImp

Professional (N=106)

Predictor	B	SE	t (102)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.93	.09	54.55	.00	4.76	5.12
Self-set	.11	.06	1.89	.06	-.01	.22
goal						
Attainment						
Self-set	.03	.12	.23	.82	-.21	.27
goal						
Importance						
Int. GoalAtt	.12	.07	1.78	.08	-.01	.25
x GoalImp						

Conditional effects of Goal Attainment at values of Goal Importance for Professional

Predictor	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
GoalAttof	.05	.06	.76	.45	-.08	.18
GoalImp						
low						
GoalAtt if	.17	.06	2.65	.01	.04	.29
GoalImp						
high						

Relationship (N=121)						
Predictor	B	SE	t (117)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	5.13	.08	66.60	.00	4.98	5.28
Self-set goal Attainment	.07	.04	1.58	.12	-.02	.15
Self-set goal Importance	-.46	.15	-.30	.76	-.34	.25
Int. GoalAtt x GoalImp	-.04	.07	-.65	.52	-.18	.09
Security (N=146)						
Predictor	B	SE	t (142)	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.95	.07	68.49	.00	4.80	5.09
Self-set goal Attainment	.11	.04	2.89	.00	.04	.19
Self-set goal Importance	-.14	.09	-1.54	.13	-.31	.04
Int. GoalAtt x GoalImp	.06	.05	1.11	.27	-.044	.157

