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An Integrated Dual-Pathway Model of Multicultural Experience and Creativity

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Abstract

In this chapter, we present the dual-pathway multicultural experience and creative knowledge (MEACK) model, depicting how multicultural experience influences creative performance through the building of two types of knowledge: content knowledge (the *what* of creativity) and normative knowledge (the *how* and *why* of creativity). The MEACK model also takes into account the role of multicultural identity integration (MII), an individual difference in the levels of integration among multiple cultural identities, by showing that MII moderates the two pathways. We posit that high MIIs, who see their identities as more compatible than low MIIs, are better able to experience creative conceptual expansion (i.e., the expansion of a concept's boundaries to fit new situations) from their content knowledge sets and norm elaboration (i.e., the flexible application of normative knowledge across different contexts) from their normative knowledge sets. Theoretical implications and future directions with the MEACK model are discussed.

Keywords: multicultural experience, multiculturalism, creativity, knowledge, multicultural identity integration, creative conceptual expansion, norm elaboration

Multiculturalism is a ubiquitous phenomenon in today's global world. Culturally diverse societies provide opportunities where people from different cultural groups come together to exchange knowledge and information. Thus, multiculturalism is often touted as a seedbed for creativity. The research on multiculturalism and creativity has well documented the evidence that individuals who are exposed to more than one culture for various reasons can potentially exhibit higher creativity (e.g., Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, & Lee, 2008; Leung & Chiu, 2010; Maddux, Adam, & Galinsky, 2010; Tadmor, Galinsky, & Maddux, 2012).

This line of research generally conceptualizes multicultural experiences in three different ways, which was consistently corroborated to associate with creative benefits. First, multicultural experience defined as the experience of having lived abroad for a period of time was found to positively associate with individual creativity. For example, Maddux and Galinsky's (2009) research showed that individuals who have lived abroad (vs. merely traveled abroad) exhibit significantly higher creativity in problem-solving and idea-generation tasks. In addition, research also showed that bringing intercultural learning experience to the fore enhances individuals' creative performance among those who have spent an extensive amount of time in foreign countries (Maddux et al., 2010).

People who have acquired multicultural experience through living abroad for a prolonged period of time could have adhered to a multicultural identity if they identify with or see themselves as part of their exposed cultures (Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, 2007).

Second, existing research provides support for the idea that individuals with multicultural identities exhibit higher creative benefits.¹ These multicultural individuals are defined as people who have been exposed to two or more cultures for an extensive length of time (e.g., 5 years in each culture) and, more specifically, those who adopt an integration acculturation strategy toward their home and host cultures according to Berry's (1990) acculturation model (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). Their higher level of creativity is likely to reflect higher cognitive complexity as a result of constantly negotiating between the multiple cultural knowledge systems (Tadmor et al., 2012; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009). Furthermore, research drawing upon the concept of identity integration (II) has shown that different levels of identity integration explain different levels of creative performance among multicultural individuals (e.g., Cheng et al., 2008). These findings underlie the concept of bicultural identity integration (BII) or multicultural identity integration (MII), which refers to the degree to which individuals with two or more cultural identities perceive their cultural identities as compatible or in conflict.² For example, Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) showed that multicultural individuals who see their different cultural identities as compatible and not in conflict (i.e., high BII) tend to be better at accessing the multiple cultural knowledge systems simultaneously than those who see their different cultural identities as incompatible and in conflict (i.e., low BII). Importantly, multiculturals with higher BII are better at integrating ideas from various cultures when performing in creativity tasks as compared to multiculturals with lower BII (Cheng et al., 2008).

Third, multicultural experiences can be simulated in lab settings by presenting stimuli that juxtapose cultural images from two cultures to monocultural individuals who have had limited exposure to cultures other than their own. These images could involve different cultural aspects, including apparel, architecture, arts, cuisine, entertainment, landscape, movie, scenery, and political icons. Research showed that monocultural individuals who were exposed to a slideshow presenting a juxtaposition of two cultures (vs. only one culture) exhibit higher creativity, as reflected in, for example, the generation of a more creative Cinderella story for Turkish children (Leung & Chiu, 2010) and coming up with a more unconventional use of a garbage bag (Cheng, Leung, & Wu, 2011).

A common thread running through the three conceptualizations of multicultural experience is the involvement of knowledge sets. Cultural knowledge sets could be acquired through contacts with diverse cultures or activated through multicultural primes. According to Amabile (1983), there are two main types of knowledge needed for creative performance. The first type is "knowledge about the domain" and the second is "implicit or explicit knowledge of heuristics for generating novel ideas" (pp. 362–365). The former refers to the *what* of creativity—content knowledge that forms fundamental building blocks of the ideas to be used for the creativity task, whereas the latter refers to the *how* and *why* of creativity—normative knowledge that encompasses guides and rules used in the process of the creativity task. In this chapter, we have distinguished between content and normative knowledge to further our understanding of how these two types of knowledge can influence creative performance separately.

In particular, content knowledge refers to the different ideas and representations of people, objects, and events in different cultures that can be used as the contents of creative ideas, that is, content knowledge is the domain knowledge specifically applicable to the creative problem. Adopting the definition from Chiu and Hong (2007), content knowledge involves a network of associations connecting a referent concept (e.g., an object) to other related concepts. For example, when thinking about a concept (e.g., food ware), having multicultural experiences

¹ Following Hong et al. (2007), individuals with multicultural identity are fluent with and identify with more than one culture, and this includes bicultural individuals (i.e., those who are fluent and identify with two cultures).

² This should be distinguished from another similar concept, multiracial identity integration, which has been used to capture individual difference among individuals with multiple racial identities (Cheng & Lee, 2009).

may lead to the activation of a wider range of associated content knowledge (e.g., chopsticks and hand). The possession of different sets of content knowledge can potentially expand the range for creative ideas.

On the other hand, normative knowledge refers to the different rules, routines, principles, and the like that are shared among members within a culture (i.e., norm representations) that can be used to regulate creative processes and outcomes. Norm representations can be understood as behavioral and thought guidelines, which consist of three elements: the antecedent circumstances, the norm itself, and the consequences of the norm (Chiu & Hong, 2007). In other words, there are specific situations where a norm is applicable and, depending on how wide the social acceptance of the norm is, would generate a certain set of consequences (e.g., it is appropriate to use one's hands when eating in India, to use chopsticks in Mainland China, and to use knife and fork in the United States). The knowledge of different norms in different cultures may challenge individuals' beliefs in norms and behavioral routines of their own culture and potentially expand their range for acceptable creative activities and outcomes. For example, when thinking about a concept (e.g., food ware), having multicultural experiences may lead to the activation of a wider range of associated normative knowledge as well as more flexibility in the application of normative knowledge (e.g., it is acceptable to use both hands and chopsticks when eating Indian-Chinese fusion food in the United States).

Drawing upon the accumulative findings of the link between multiculturalism and creativity, we propose an integrative model to account for the distinctive applications of content and normative knowledge sets on creative performance. The understanding of how content and normative knowledge are used during the creative process is important because recent research has shown that perceived cultural norms could influence the way individuals apply their cultural content knowledge (e.g., Zou & Leung, 2015; Zou et al., 2009). Because researchers have repeatedly found that knowledge influences creative performance without specifying the difference between content and normative knowledge (e.g., Amabile, 1983; Batey, Furnham, & Safiullina, 2010; Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2007; Weisberg, 1999), there is much value in addressing the differing effects of content and normative knowledge on creativity.

Although the overall creative process is believed to consist of five steps, namely, problem formulation, preparation, idea generation, idea evaluation, and idea selection (Amabile, 1983), most researchers have focused on the last three steps as the critical components for creative performance (e.g., Chiu & Kwan, 2010). Idea generation plays an important early step toward creative performance, with existing creativity literature demonstrating a positive correlation between the number of ideas generated and creativity (e.g., Diehl & Stroebe, 1987). With idea generation providing the preliminary pool of ideas, these ideas are to be evaluated and selected based on their utility and potential acceptance by the audience (Chiu & Kwan, 2010). Although the three processes are presented sequentially, it is important to note that they may not progress in a linear manner (Chiu & Kwan, 2010). For example, one may have to revisit the idea generation stage if ideas are not deemed acceptable during idea evaluation or if the audience did not accept the selected idea.

In the sections that follow, we will introduce the multicultural experience and creative knowledge (MEACK) model (Figure 10.1). This model depicts how multicultural experience affects the two types of knowledge (i.e., content and normative knowledge) and how these two types of knowledge will in turn influence creative performance that encompasses the processes of idea generation, idea evaluation, and idea selection. The moderating role of MII, an individual difference in the levels of integration among multiple cultural identities accrued from multicultural experiences, will also be discussed.

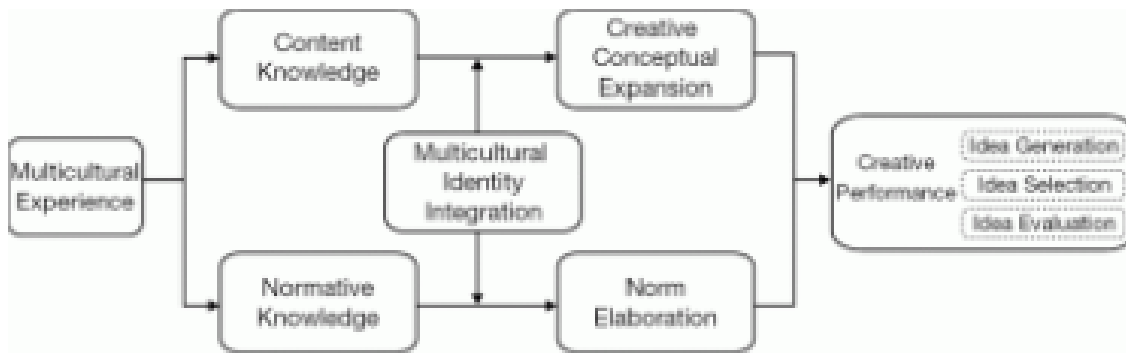


Figure 10.1. The multicultural experience and creative knowledge model (the MEACK model) with dual pathways relating multicultural experience to creative performance.

The First Pathway: The Content Knowledge Expansion Pathway

Drawing from the research evidence on the positive relationship between multiculturalism and creativity, the first pathway examines how multicultural experience leads to the acquisition of more content knowledge sets, which in turn can influence creative performance. Coupled with the influence of MII, we explain how content knowledge facilitates creative conceptual expansion to benefit creative performance.

Multicultural Experience and Content Knowledge

According to Chiu and Hong (2007), culture can be operationalized as knowledge networks which encompass learned routines and conventional knowledge that people in the culture frequently use as a lens to frame their daily experiences. Both noncultural knowledge (e.g., technical knowledge of a musical instrument) and cultural knowledge (e.g., knowledge of popular music styles in the Singaporean culture) constitute content knowledge for individuals (e.g., a song writer) to start the creative generation process (Amabile, 1983; Brown, Tumeo, Larey, & Paulus, 1998; Nijstad & Stroebe, 2006), with a greater amount of content knowledge increasing the likelihood of novel combinations (Weisberg, 1999). Rietzschel and colleagues (2007)'s work offered direct support for the contribution of content knowledge toward creativity. By manipulating the accessibility of creativity-related domain knowledge, they found that participants primed with relevant knowledge were largely more creative (in originality) as compared to participants who were either not primed or primed with irrelevant knowledge. Similarly, Andrews and Smith (1996) found that product managers with greater knowledge of the marketing environment generated more creative marketing programs as compared to those with less knowledge. Thus, the acquisition of content knowledge is the starting point for incubating novel and useful ideas.

It is reasonable to argue that people who are exposed to different cultures possess different content knowledge sets, thus having access to a greater pool of ideas and concepts (Chiu & Hong, 2005; Hong et al., 2007; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009). Although there is no direct evidence supporting the notion that multicultural people have a greater creative advantage over monocultural people due to their multiple sets of content knowledge, existing research indicates the importance of availability and accessibility of multiple content knowledge sets for promoting creativity. For example, Cheng and colleagues (2008) found that multiculturals were more creative when presented with a creativity task that tapped into multiple content

knowledge sets (i.e., presented with both Asian and American cooking ingredients) than when presented with a creativity task that tapped into only one content knowledge set (i.e., presented with Asian or American cooking ingredients). Although indirect, Chua (2015) provided greater support for the notion by demonstrating the importance of a culturally heterogeneous social network for facilitating creative performance. He found that individuals who had access to a greater variety of culturally novel ideas, through their culturally heterogeneous social network, were more likely to be creative in a task that required multiple content knowledge sets (e.g., ideas to advertise a juice at a global sporting event). In short, being multicultural greatly expands an individual's content knowledge, thereby contributing to higher abilities to access ideas and concepts from multiple cultures (Leung et al., 2008).

Content Knowledge, Creative Conceptual Expansion, and Creative Performance

The idea that being multicultural could potentially expand an individual's content knowledge is congruent with a cognitive process put forth by earlier creative cognition theorists. Ward, Smith, and Vaid (1997) described creative conceptual expansion as a cognitive process where people "construct, stretch, extend, modify, and refine single concepts to fit new situations" (p. 10). For example, when college students were asked to imagine and draw animals that might live on another planet, Ward (1994) found that the creations were extremely similar to the Earth animals. That is, the creations were mostly bilaterally symmetric, with ordinary appendages (e.g., limbs) and sensory organs (e.g., eyes). Here, we can see that the characteristic properties of a concept (i.e., Earth animals) have been expanded and applied to novel situations (i.e., animals on another planet).

There is preliminary support for the presence of this creative conceptual expansion process among multicultural individuals. In a series of six studies, Tadmor, Hong, Chao, Wiruchnipawan, and Wang (2012) showed that having multicultural experience resulted in an expansion of the boundary of the racial categorizations and further resulted in lower intergroup bias and stereotyping (also see Chao, Kung, & Yao, 2015). This effect of conceptual expansion effect on racial categories may have important implications on creativity. Indeed, the research by Tadmor, Chao, Hong, and Polzer (2013) showed that individuals who perceived that racial groups were fixed (vs. malleable, arbitrary social constructions) were also less likely to show high creative performance. In other words, having a fixed view of racial groups (i.e., a nonexpandable boundary of the concept of race) was associated with lower creative performance.

Based on these findings, we argue that multicultural individuals are more adept at retrieving seemingly unrelated ideas from each culture to produce novel combinations through engaging in the creative expansion process (e.g., Chiu & Hong, 2005; Leung et al., 2008; Leung, Qiu, & Chiu, 2014). This effect is consistent with what Leung and Chiu (2010) demonstrated: Participants who had more extensive multicultural experiences were more likely to sample foreign sayings in order to prepare for a creative expansion essay task, as compared to those with fewer multicultural experiences.

The Moderating Role of Multicultural Identity Integration in Content Knowledge and Creative Conceptual Expansion

Although having a variety of knowledge sets is generally beneficial to individual creativity, extant research indicates that the different sets of knowledge relevant to the creativity task may be managed differently, depending on how individuals negotiate their multiple cultural identities. In the introduction, we briefly mentioned Berry's (1990) work on the strategies people use to deal with multicultural experiences. There are four such strategies that can be recategorized to three main themes: (a) low identification with all exposed cultures

(marginalization), (b) high identification with only one of the cultures (separation and assimilation), and (c) high identification with all exposed cultures (integration; multiculturalism). Hence, when people highly identify with the multiple cultures that they are exposed to, they are classified as adopting the multiculturalism strategy.

Research has shown that the type of acculturation strategy adopted by multicultural individuals is related to creativity (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). Specifically, individuals who had extensive exposure (i.e., 5 years or more) to multiple cultures and acculturated with the multiculturalism strategy were found to exhibit higher creativity, presumably as a result of enhanced integrative complexity through their simultaneous practice with applying multiple cultural meaning systems (Tadmor et al., 2009; Tadmor, Galinsky, et al., 2012). We suppose that higher integrative complexity induced by constantly comparing, contrasting, and integrating multiple cultural knowledge systems can promote creative conceptual expansion.

Even though Berry's taxonomy categorizes people with high identification with all of their exposed cultures as adopting the multiculturalism strategy, Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) contended that there is variation in how these people perceive and manage their identities. This is especially true when multicultural individuals constantly face the challenge of negotiating between different and sometimes conflicting sets of cultural norms, practices, and values (David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009). As a result, although multicultural individuals identify with, and have extensive knowledge of their associated cultures, there are individual differences in the way they manage their multicultural identities. In particular, the differences arise in response to their different perceptions of compatibility between those cultures. Building upon the research on BII, we term this individual difference as multicultural identity integration (MII) to capture the psychology of possessing multiple cultural identities.

Specifically, MII measures the extent to which multicultural individuals perceive their multiple cultural identities as being compatible or in conflict. Whereas multicultural individuals with high MII see the identities as compatible and harmonious, those with low MII see the identities as oppositional and in conflict (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Therefore, multicultural individuals with high MII are less likely to experience difficulty in associating themselves with all their cultural identities simultaneously. In contrast, their low-MII counterparts would prefer to keep their cultural identities separate and not be able to associate with all their cultural identities at the same time (see Cheng, Lee, Benet-Martinez, & Nguyen, 2014, for a review). For those with low MII, it is also possible that they only identify with one cultural group in particular contexts, and another cultural group in other contexts.

If multicultural individuals with high (vs. low) MII could sample ideas from a broader set of content knowledge when engaging in creativity tasks, the creative conceptual expansion process is more likely to ensue. Although existing research has demonstrated the importance of recognizing differences or contradictions between concepts in order to stimulate the creative combination process (e.g., Crisp & Turner, 2011), this does not mean that high-MII individuals who tend to see different cultures as compatible with each other do not recognize discrepancies between these cultures. This is evident when multicultural individuals with high MII exhibit cultural frame switching, which requires them to differentiate different sets of cultural knowledge and to apply the one that is culturally appropriate in the corresponding context (i.e., cultural assimilation effect; see Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Cheng, Lee, & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Therefore, we argue that high-MII individuals are able to sample ideas from various cultures because they are able to recognize the applicability of these ideas instead of failing to recognize their differences.

Research offers preliminary evidence for creative conceptual expansion to account for higher creative performance among multicultural individuals with high MII. For example, Cheng and colleagues (2008) showed that multiculturals with high MII were more likely to generate creative ideas as compared to those with low MII. Importantly, the difference in creative performance only differed between high- and low-MII individuals when the creativity task involved multiple cultural elements, but not when the task involved only elements from one

culture. This implies that high-MII individuals would have sampled ideas and concepts from different knowledge, thus indirectly supporting the moderating role of MII in facilitating conceptual expansion of content knowledge.

Additional indirect but congruent support can be found in Saad and colleagues' (2013) work, in which they sought to understand the mechanism behind the superior creative performance of multiculturals with high MII. Specifically, they found that multiculturals with high MII were able to generate more alternative, expanded uses of a common object in a domain-general unusual uses test (Guilford, 1967) as compared to those with low MII, when they had all their associated cultural identities activated through priming. The heightened ability to expand on the alternative uses of a commonplace object provides indirect support that high-MII individuals are more adept at creative conceptual expansion when multiple cultural identities are activated.

Consistent results were observed among high-MII individuals with compatible gender-professional identities (as opposed to national cultural identities). Cheng and Clerkins (2015) found that senior female engineering students who have high levels of gender-professional identity integration were able to access both of their female and engineer identity-related knowledge sets and performed better in selecting creative product ideas that require knowledge tapping onto the dual identities (i.e., video games designed for middle and high school girls). In contrast, this ability to identify creative video games for schoolgirls was not found among female engineering freshman students who claimed to have high levels of gender-professional identity integration. It is possible that freshmen participants had not accumulated enough engineering-related knowledge; thus, their conceptual expansion may have failed to utilize ideas from both the female and engineer identities to benefit the idea selection process.

We identify at least one boundary condition that limits high-MII individuals' ability to reap the benefits from creative conceptual expansion. Drawing from Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez (2000)'s work on frame switching, researchers have suggested that when high-MII individuals are primed with cues from a certain culture, they react in an assimilative manner to the primed cultural cues (e.g., Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Mok & Morris, 2010a; Zou, Morris, & Benet-Martinez, 2008). Hence, although high MII affords higher creative conceptual expansion to benefit creativity, the presence of a cultural prime may direct high-MII individuals to only rely on the content knowledge related to the primed culture, but not the wider sets of content knowledge that are characteristic of diverse cultures.

Past research also distinguished between assimilative and contrast response toward cultural frame switching. Whereas high-MII individuals tend to exhibit an assimilative response to cultural primes, low-MII individuals tend to exhibit a contrastive response (e.g., low-MII Asian Americans behave in a more American way in response to Asian primes). The underlying psychological mechanism for the contrast effect was related to a greater need among low MIIs to protect the unprimed identity from perceived threat and neglect (Mok, Cheng, & Morris, 2010; Mok & Morris, 2010a).

It follows that high-MII individuals who are primed with a given cultural cue may exhibit similar or lower levels of creativity in comparison to low-MII individuals, depending on what kind of cultural cues are made salient in the situation and how they react to the cues (e.g., Benet-Martinez et al., 2002; Mok & Morris, 2010a). For example, it is possible that Chinese American people with high MII who are primed with Chinese culture would perform similarly as their low-MII counterparts who are primed with American culture, with the former group assimilating to the Chinese primes and the latter group contrasting against the American primes. In addition, in cases where both high- and low-MII people are primed with the same culture, it is possible that those with low MII would use the content knowledge of another culture that is *not* primed due to the contrast effect. More

important, if the use of content knowledge of the other unprimed culture is more beneficial to the creativity problem, then low-MII people might outperform high-MII people in their creative generations.³

Taken together, the aforementioned arguments suggest that in the absence of specific cultural primes, high-MII people are expected to have higher creative performance than low-MII people. However, the relationship between MII and creative performance might not be straightforward when a specific cultural identity is made salient through the use of cultural primes. We can expect that cultural primes will influence multicultural individuals' activation of the corresponding cultural identity, and the cultural knowledge set used for the creative task may not be the same for those with different levels of MII.

The Second Pathway: The Elaboration of Normative Knowledge Pathway

In the second pathway, we argue that multicultural experience can influence creative performance through the use of another type of knowledge—normative knowledge. Next, we will describe this second pathway in detail.

Multicultural Experience and Normative Knowledge

Culture has been thought of as systems comprising social norms that are widely shared among its constituents (Chao & Chiu, 2011; Medin, Unsworth, & Hirschfeld, 2007). Norms can be thought of as *knowledge representations* consisting of rules, theories, models, worldviews, principles, and the like that are shared among members of a collective (Chao & Chiu, 2011; Medin et al., 2007; Sripada & Stich, 2006). Cultural norms inform members of the conventions that are widely shared and accepted in the culture (Leung et al., 2008), including those governing the domain of creativity (e.g., Erez & Nouri, 2010; Rudowicz, 2003). Since creativity is shaped by social and cultural norms, practices, and values (Morris & Leung, 2010; Runco & Johnson, 2002), it is expected that people who are exposed to different cultures will apply different normative knowledge when performing in creativity tasks, which will lead to downstream consequences on creative performance.

Indeed, various researchers have suggested that different cultures imbue their members with different cultural normative knowledge related to creativity. For instance, Bechtoldt, De Dreu, Nijstad, and Choi (2010) showed that Western cultures value originality more than appropriateness, whereas the reverse is true for Eastern cultures. As Western cultures value individualism, lower power distance, and lower uncertainty avoidance, it is likely that these orientations encourage creative exploration that goes beyond social norms and conventions, such that novelty and uniqueness are widely pursued (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Erez & Nouri, 2010; Kim & Markus, 1999; Mok & Morris, 2010a). On the other hand, Eastern cultures value collectivism, higher power distance, higher uncertainty avoidance, and conformity to social norms, with these orientations putting a greater emphasis on pursuing creative ideas within boundaries of existing norms, such as ideas that are deemed more typical or practical (Erez & Nouri, 2010; Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Westwood & Low, 2003). Importantly, as people with multicultural experience have a broader set of cultural knowledge (Tadmor, Hong, Chiu, & No, 2010), including creativity-related normative knowledge, they are more likely to reduce their reliance on the norms of a single culture (Saad et al., 2013).

³ Potentially, this could benefit team-level creative performance if low-MII team members can provide an alternative voice or perspective (e.g., see Mok & Morris, 2010b).

The Moderating Role of Multicultural Identity Integration in Normative Knowledge and Norm Elaboration

Similar to the first pathway, we posit that MII also moderates the use of different cultures' creativity-related normative knowledge among multicultural individuals. To elaborate, we expect that people with lower MII will mainly apply the normative knowledge of one culture at one time, depending on which culture is made more accessible in the context (Saad et al., 2013). Conversely, individuals with higher MII are better able to access and apply different sets of normative knowledge simultaneously (Cheng, Sanders, et al., 2008). As researchers also suggested that high-MII individuals may even possibly see themselves as part of a combined emerging culture from the various cultures they are exposed to (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005), it is possible that their creativity-related normative knowledge grows as it encompasses and intermixes the different sets of normative knowledge associated with the different cultures they are exposed to. We predict that this expanded set of normative knowledge can broaden the range of acceptable creative ideas. We will discuss this point further in the following section.

Regardless of whether high-MII individuals access different sets of normative knowledge simultaneously or from an expanded set of normative knowledge, we suppose that they can arrive at a better understanding of the creativity criteria and goals valued in different cultures and are able to apply this knowledge in a flexible way. We call this capability to flexibly apply a given set of normative knowledge or a combined set of normative knowledge that is deemed applicable in the context to guide creative activities as *norm elaboration*.

Norm Elaboration, Multicultural Identity Integration, and Creativity Performance

As prior research suggested that rules and norms restrict people's brainstorming or idea generation (e.g., Bechtoldt et al., 2010; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993), we argue that high-MII individuals can become less restricted in their generative thoughts than low-MII individuals because they can engage in higher norm elaboration and utilize a wider range of creativity-related normative knowledge. Using the gift idea generation task as an example, an Asian American with low MII may rely on normative knowledge of the Asian culture that values appropriateness as opposed to novelty (Erez & Nouri, 2010; Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Mok & Morris, 2010a; Westwood & Low, 2003), thus generating more typical gifts that tend to be more appropriate (e.g., gift vouchers). Conversely, Asian Americans with high MII may use normative knowledge of both the Asian and American cultures in generating gift ideas, thus focusing on both novelty and appropriateness norms. For example, they may come up with ideas such as gifting American newlyweds with gift vouchers from their favorite furniture store, placed within a traditional Chinese red packet printed with the word “囍” (“Xi,” meaning double happiness). Hence, high-MII individuals who have greater norm elaboration can perform better in idea generation.

Similar creative benefits in terms of idea evaluation and selection should be observed for high-MII individuals. When a creative idea is generated, people may consciously or unconsciously evaluate the ideas to retain the best ideas (Campbell, 1960; Simonton, 1988). People may employ the evaluation processes on their own accord (i.e., internally) or based on the task requirements (i.e., externally; Lubart, 2001), so as to judge the candidate ideas in order to optimize the chance to attain high creative performance. After evaluation, they will then select the ideas that are best for the task. As norms play a vital role in influencing people's assessments of what is considered creative (Lubart, 1999), what is considered best for the task depends on the norms that people refer to.

For example, the norms in the Asian culture will deem appropriate ideas as the preferred solution for the creativity task, whereas the norms in the American culture will deem novel ideas as the preferred solution (Erez & Nouri, 2010; Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Mok & Morris, 2010a; Westwood & Low, 2003). Asian Americans with high MII and greater norm elaboration should be able to consider ideas that optimally epitomize both the novelty and

appropriateness normative expectations. This also means that they will be more receptive to a wider pool of creative ideas. However, Asian Americans with low MII and lower norm elaboration may only use one set of normative knowledge associated with one of the cultures (e.g., appropriateness as the Asian normative knowledge for creativity) to guide their idea evaluation and selection processes. This practice will lead to a narrower range of creative thoughts.

Basing our example on wedding gifts again, an Asian American with high MII may think of gifting the newlyweds with the paper currencies of different countries, each folded into tiny paper money hearts. In this example, we can appreciate how this Asian American navigates through two sets of cultural norms to arrive at this gift idea. Whereas the norm of the American culture perceives that it is rude to give cash to newlyweds as a wedding present, the Asian culture perceives that cash is the usual form of a wedding present. By creating tiny paper money hearts with different currencies, the Asian American successfully meets the demand of both cultures by giving objects made from money. The high MII individual is receptive to a wider pool of creative ideas that still fall within the norms of appropriateness (for the idea of giving money) and novelty (for the idea of making paper money hearts). For Asian Americans with low MII and guided by the creativity-related normative knowledge of the Asian (American) culture when evaluating and selecting ideas, they may deem the paper money hearts idea as inappropriate (not novel). Thus, high-MII individuals show higher capability to integrate different sets of normative knowledge associated with the respective cultures, thus reaping more creative benefits in terms of idea generation, idea evaluation, and idea selection to contribute to greater creative performance.

Similar to the content knowledge pathway, the boundary condition of cultural primes also applies to the normative knowledge pathway. Under cultural priming, high-MII individuals are expected to employ the normative knowledge of the primed culture, as opposed to making use of the integrated set of normative knowledge of different cultures. Notably, it is also important to take into account high-MII individuals' assimilative responses and low-MII individuals' contrastive responses toward the cultural prime and how that implicates their creative performance.

Finally, it is important to recognize that it is usually the audience, but not the producer of the creativity work, who judges the work's creativity level (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Sternberg & Kaufman, 2010). Hence, it is crucial to consider the content knowledge and normative knowledge adhered to by the audience. For example, if the audience is from a monocultural group (e.g., Asians), they may rely on the knowledge associated with that culture (e.g., Asian culture) during idea evaluation. This implies that the creative performance of multicultural individuals (e.g., Asian-Americans) with high MII is not necessarily more favorable than that of multicultural individuals with low MII or of monocultural individuals (e.g., Asians) when the audience is a group of monocultural individuals (e.g., Asians), who only apply creative norms in their culture to the assessment of creative performance.

Theoretical Implications

By examining the use of creativity-related content knowledge and normative knowledge by multicultural individuals, our model sheds light on a number of implications in the field of creativity research. First, by addressing how the dual pathways of content knowledge sets and normative knowledge sets impact multicultural individuals' creativity, the model provides new insights for the psychological mechanism(s) that underlie the relation between multicultural experience and creative performance. For example, future research can explore the content knowledge pathway by providing direct support for the higher likelihood of engaging in the creative conceptual expansion process by multicultural individuals and by observing how such cognitive mechanism impacts different phases of the creative process (i.e., idea generation, idea evaluation, and idea selection).

Second, we acknowledge the moderating role of MII in the dual pathways, and its potential interaction with the nature of activated cultural cues in the context. Multicultural individuals do not uniformly receive and use the cultural knowledge sets they acquire from their multicultural encounters. Instead, their idiosyncratic multicultural experiences shape the way they perceive and manage their multiple cultural identities and the corresponding knowledge sets. This also opens up a research avenue to examine how different levels of identity integration result in assimilative or contrastive reactions toward the salient culture in the given context, thus possibly producing boundary conditions on whether multicultural individuals will employ a broader set of content and normative knowledge in approaching a creativity task.

Third, our model suggests the importance of considering the audience of the creative work. As mentioned earlier, it is the audience, not the creator, who judges whether a product or idea is creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Sternberg & Kaufman, 2010). For example, the American audience, who tends to have a stronger individualistic orientation and a higher need for self-expression, may not appreciate the need for “Otohome” (a.k.a. “Sound Princess”), a commonly used toilet device in Japan that creates a loud flushing sound similar to a toilet being flushed in order to mask the sound of bodily functions, especially for women. This implication is especially relevant for multinational companies as their products face a global audience. In this regard, multicultural individuals with high MII are more likely to enjoy a competitive edge in these companies, as they are at an advantageous position to develop a product or idea that could appeal to audiences coming from different cultural backgrounds. This advantage is due to them being better able to sample ideas from diverse knowledge systems and to take into consideration an integrated set of creativity norms so as to generate ideas more readily accepted as being creative by the global audience (see also Chua, Roth, & Lemoine, 2015). For example, the worldwide coffee chain Starbucks (originated in the United States but with an international audience) produced coffee-flavored moon cakes that combine coffee with the traditional Chinese confectionary served during the Mid-Autumn festival. It is likely that the audience coming from either the American or the Chinese cultural background will evaluate the product as being creative. Thus, we propose that multicultural individuals have the advantage of producing creative ideas that can be appreciated and accepted by a larger audience. Future research can explore whether this implication is true for the idea selection and idea evaluation stages of creative performance.

Future Directions

As creativity is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, the proposed model has much potential to be expanded to incorporate many other components that are involved in the creative process (e.g., Amabile, 1983, 1996; Eysenck, 1993, 1995; Furnham, Batey, Anand, & Manfield, 2008; Guilford, 1950; Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989). In this section, we address some of these components in relation to the existing constructs in our model.

First, although both content knowledge and normative knowledge have significant influence on each stage of creative processes, including idea generation, selection, and evaluation, it is plausible that these knowledge sets influence some stages of the creative processes more than others. Specifically, we posit that content knowledge might be more important than normative knowledge in the idea generation stage because generating and brainstorming ideas is driven more by creative conceptual expansion than norm elaboration. The opposite could be true for normative knowledge to be more important in the stages of idea selection and evaluation. Future research could investigate the differential influence exerted by content and normative knowledge on different stages of the creative processes and explore their related psychological mechanisms.

Second, it is possible that differences in how people attain their multicultural experience can result in differences in the levels of acquiring content knowledge and normative knowledge. “Multicultural experience” is a general term that encompasses many ways through which an individual gets to learn or experience more than one culture.

Specifically, people may be born and raised in a culture and may be legitimately recognized as a member of that culture (i.e., prescribed cultural affiliation) or choose to engage in diverse cultural experiences out of their own choice (i.e., ascribed cultural affiliation). It was argued that people with prescribed cultural affiliation have a legitimate relationship with the cultural group (Ferenczi, Marshall, & Bejanyan, 2015) because such cultural affiliation is usually determined by uncontrollable factors (e.g., by birth). Chances are that these individuals' developmental years are spent within the culture; thus, they usually have extensive experience with the knowledge of the shared cultural history, values, and behavioral norms out of daily practice (Hall, 1990). In contrast, individuals with ascribed cultural affiliation may be exposed to the culture in the later phase of their lives. For example, these people could be first-generation immigrants who chose to acquire a new cultural affiliation for themselves or cultural sojourners such as expatriates or international students who work or study in another culture for an extensive amount of time. Their normative knowledge of the ascribed culture is acquired through effortful learning. It would be interesting to study the effects of prescribed and ascribed multicultural identities on the acquisition of content knowledge and normative knowledge and on subsequent creative performance, as well as how MII moderates such relationships.

Last, prior research showed that individuals' level of identity integration could be understood as a stable individual difference, as well as a malleable variable. For example, Cheng and Lee (2009, 2013) found that recalling positive cultural experiences such as gaining privilege by having connections with multiple cultural groups induced multicultural individuals' levels of MII. The opposite is true when they recalled negative cultural experiences such as being discriminated against due to one's multicultural status. This finding suggests that identity management can be subjected to external interventions. It is noted that all multicultural individuals are likely to have both positive and negative experiences related to their multiple identities. By bringing their positive (negative) experiences to the fore, MII can be enhanced (decreased) momentarily. Future research could investigate the moderating effect of MII on the dual paths of our model by experimentally manipulating multicultural individuals' level of MII.

Furthermore, prior findings about the malleability of MII shed light on the significant impact of intercultural relations on personal management of multiple identities. It seems likely that the degree of cultural inclusion in a social environment can enhance perceptions of cultural compatibility for multicultural individuals (Cheng & Lee, 2009, 2013), and this suggests the possibility for the change in the level of identity integration in real life. When an inclusive representation of multiculturalism is perceived to be valid in a new environment, multicultural individuals have the opportunities to adopt the new representation and interpret their affiliated cultures as more compatible, thereby enhancing their MII. Future research can employ field studies and longitudinal studies to capture the relationship between cultural inclusion and the development and change of multicultural individuals' levels of MII, as well as how that impacts individual creativity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we propose an integrative model that outlines the process of how multicultural experience may lead individuals to acquire two types of knowledge (content knowledge and normative knowledge) for enhancing creativity and how their level of MII moderates this process. Given today's globalized world and workplace, the need to understand how multicultural experience contributes to creative performance is unprecedentedly important (e.g., the decisions to hire prospective applicants with global learning or living experiences). We hope that this model would help ignite research on the multicultural experience and creative performance link and bring this research to a novel direction, so that a greater understanding of the phenomenon's underlying mechanisms and its interrelations with other related variables can be achieved.

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