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Understanding immigrant information acculturation: perspectives and recommendations for information behaviour research

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Abstract

Introduction. The study explores the relationship between information and acculturation in the lives of immigrants living in the United States, with consideration given to immigrants' information assets as well as bidirectional dimensions of acculturation whereby immigrants inform US-born neighbours.

Method. Initially intended as a mixed-method explanatory study, this preliminary insight is based on survey data. As the researchers discuss, recruitment was disrupted due to factors including sweeping US legislation that culminated in federal research defunding, punitive measures toward higher education, and especially threats to immigrant communities.

Analysis. The preliminary survey findings offer a glimpse into how immigrants adjust informationally. Respondents prefer speed and accuracy of resources and ranked educational/career, health/wellness, and entertainment as top information reasons, while friends and family are the premier information sources. Many respondents share cultural information with US-born neighbors. Yet barriers such as the lack of recent, accurate, or accessible information impact acculturation.

Results. Based on available data, immigrant information acculturation is hardly straightforward and reflects a myriad of decisions related to information seeking, finding, using, sources, problem-solving, and contributions.

Conclusion. Information decision-makers who partner with immigrant groups should account for how community members navigate US acculturation, information ecosystems, and their own self-perceptions. Knowledge of immigrant information acculturation can further both the study and provision of information, particularly in rapidly changing information and political landscapes.

Introduction

How do immigrants transition from one culture to another, especially as it relates to their information norms? The concept of cultural adjustment has been copiously explored within psychology and migration studies scholarship, but to a substantially lesser extent within information behaviour research. As of October 2025, there are fewer than 20 articles specifically linking immigrants, information behaviour, and immigrant acculturation. While concepts such as ‘immigrant consumer acculturation’ (Peneloza, 1989) and ‘immigrant health information-seeking acculturation’ (Wang & Yu, 2014) have been examined, the fundamental idea of ‘immigrant information acculturation’ (Ndumu, 2020, 2021; Ndumu & Park, 2025) remains underexplored.

This study anchors acculturation as an aspect of immigrant information behaviour research by first articulating how information behaviour and acculturative constructs relate and, secondly, conveying what immigrants themselves express about their information acculturation. It adds to scholarship that contests the premise of immigrants as wholesale digitally alienated, technologically beleaguered, and information-deprived (Villa-Nicholas, 2022). Understanding immigrant information behaviour through the lens of acculturation might shift prevalent (mis)conceptions of immigrant information capacities. Reductionist conclusions may not hold entirely amid both record-breaking migration and/or displacement, plus advanced global digital technologies. Immigration and information are increasingly intertwined, particularly as ‘technologies of government’ (Inda, 2020) are used to conceptualise, categorise, and so-called manage immigrants.

Knowledge of the vastness and complexity, rather than the lack, of information in migration can bring information science scholarship closer to immigrants’ real-life encounters. Information is critical to successful resettlement (Caidi et al., 2010); those able to access and act upon information with few or no restrictions are more apt to achieve greater well-being and stability in their new surroundings. Operational definitions of acculturation range from relatively simple descriptions such as a ‘normative process that occurs when a person from one culture is exposed to another culture’ (D’Alonzo et al., 2019). Other definitions are assimilationist, for example, ‘the sociocultural process by which individuals adopt the attitudes, customs, beliefs, and behaviours of another culture when they migrate’ (Lee et al., 2020). Entire literature reviews have been dedicated to the domain (Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009; Rogler et al., 1991). What, then, can acculturation research tell us about how immigrants adjust to new information environments, the challenges or stressors they encounter in new systems, and how immigrants are understood informationally within the psychology and migration studies domains?

Our field must draw attention to the intrinsic links between cultural plurality, normative information, and the politics of immigration. Librarian and law professor, Sarah Lamdan (2023) highlights that ‘[t]he US government encourages immigrants to assimilate’ (p. 34) while simultaneously relying on mechanisms like Immigration and Customs Enforcement to ensnare even those who follow government rules and exhibit model ‘American lives’, as coined by Funk (2019). It is, therefore, crucial to turn the lens—that is, to invite immigrants to express how they self-determine, navigate, and even contribute to the US information ecosystem as they acculturate. We must attend to the comprehensive nature of immigrant information behaviour that encompasses more than merely functional and task-centered interactions. Researchers must thus uncover the elements of simply existing and acculturating as an immigrant in the United States—indeed, ‘life information’ or ‘the information needed for daily living’ (Bates, 1974, p. 51, as cited in Hartel et al., 2024), ‘everyday life’ (Savolainen, 2023), and ‘everydayness’ or all that is quotidian (Ghisleni, 2017). Our research questions are thus:

- RQ1: What are the characteristics of US immigrants' everyday information acculturation?
RQ2: To what extent do US immigrants experience information challenges as they acculturate?
RQ3: To what extent do US immigrants assist US-born neighbors with information acculturation?

Here, immigrants are understood as permanent US residents who were born in another country, regardless of their immigration status. Likewise, in this study, we operationalise immigrant acculturation as adjusting from one culture to another upon relocating to a new country, while information acculturation represents an immigrant's transition to a new information environment (Ndumu & Park, 2025). The researchers identify as information researchers, two of whom identify as immigrants, who focus on the evolving and vital subfield of immigrant information behaviour as well as the flow of information across boundaries. This work emanates from a multi-part research project at the intersection of immigrant acculturation and information environments. The project was impacted by several challenges, including federal research defunding and the return of a markedly anti-immigration political administration. The researchers thus reflect on ethical and methodological adaptations. The aim is to shift the discourse on immigrant information behaviour away from digital or information novice framings (Ndumu & Park, 2025). Relatedly, population and migration research supports that acculturation is bidirectional or reciprocal in that both immigrant communities and new societies culturally adjust; we probe this notion in this study, as put forward in research question three.

Information behaviour, acculturation, and immigrants: A literature synopsis

Few things convey our humanity like culture. All of our human experiences are shaped by our cultural heritage, and emigrating from one nation to another is no exception. Well-known acculturation theorist Rudmin (2009) argues that information should be examined against the backdrop of second-culture learning or acculturation. Rudmin's theoretical counterpart, John W. Berry, concurs that 'cultural knowledge' is a form of information that is interwoven with successful immigrant adaptation. This study gleans from Berry's (1992, 2005) prominent four-fold typology of immigrant acculturation. Berry postulates that newcomers to a society go through one of four stages: 1) integration, where they retain their original culture while learning about the new one; 2) assimilation, where they gradually replace their cultural norms with the new ones; 3) separation, where they never feel like they belong in either culture; or 4) marginalisation, where they do not feel included in either culture.

The acculturating immigrant not only relocates to a new place, but they must also sort through large amounts of information that may be in unfamiliar formats, locations, or even languages. In one of the earliest theories on acculturation, Kim (1977) posited that the immigrant acculturative process involves 'curiosity, searching out of necessity, and going beyond the customary information' (p. 9). Some scholars suggest a relationship between knowledge of mainstream culture, controversially portrayed as 'cultural literacy' (Hirsch, 1987; Bizell, 1990) and acculturation (Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011). Although Hirsch and others convey a unicultural America, US society transcends a homogenous or Eurocentric cultural template.

Information leaders, especially those who are non-immigrants, can support immigrants in the acculturative process by mediating between those who have recently arrived, long-established immigrants, and local support organisations. In their research on immigrants' engagement with information, Beretta et al. (2018) suggest that culturally appropriate information is just as important as information types and access.

Other core works substantiate that immigration is a complex undertaking that cannot be separated from myriad cultural and systemic factors. Lloyd et al. (2010) and Kennan et al. (2011) establish that settling in is a multi-phased process where information literacy acts as a prerequisite for citizenship, yet refugees, specifically, often reach a point of divergence where their prior knowledge is misaligned with the complex systems of their new country. Oduntan and Ruthven (2017) further illustrated this information acculturation, especially how a matrix of information needs becomes a must for successful integration. Acculturation can be jeopardised by gaps in decision-makers' service provision or immigrants' service knowledge. Kainat et al. (2022) added a more recent lens; they examined gender-based sociocultural barriers in the acculturation process. In this regard, information behaviour must consider culturally sensitive information practices that are rooted in traditional gender roles, and linguistic isolation, especially for refugee women. They mention the role of personal information mediators and information sites, the latter of which coincides with Fisher's (2004, 2006) examinations of information grounds as key information behaviour locales in the process of trust-making among immigrant and non-immigrant leaders.

Further, acculturation transcends time; it can last decades according to longitudinal studies (Meca et al., 2018). However, the most 'sensitive acculturative period' (Cheung et al., 2011) is within the first five years, which coincides with what is known as the 'immigrant health paradox', also known as the healthy immigrant effect, whereby recent immigrants often exhibit better health outcomes than long-standing residents. This initial health advantage deteriorates to the point of falling below their counterparts within the 5 to 10 years post-migration (Markides & Rote, 2015). Acculturative stress, or 'the negative reaction to intercultural contact or the cultural adaptation process' (D'Alonzo et al., 2019) is a leading contributor. Berry (2006) defines acculturative stress as 'a negative response to life events that are rooted in new intercultural contact'. Information overload, too, is an extension of acculturative stress (Ndumu, 2021), and immigrants can feel the strain of voluminous, complex, or pressure-inducing resources as they need, seek, use, or process information. Other research reveals connections between acculturative stress and external forces, including a lack of trust in governing officials (Bekteshi & van Hook, 2015) and anti-immigrant sentiment (Viruell-Fuentes et al., 2012). Twenty-five years ago, Roysicar-Sodowsky and Maestas (2000) explained that researchers in this domain collectively recognise that visible ethnoracial minoritised immigrants face four unique challenges: 1) experiences of racism and discrimination due to their immigrant and minoritised status, 2) interactions with the dominant culture, 3) preservation of ethnic or cultural heritage, and 4) acculturative stress relating to any of these. It stands to reason that these challenges persist today. While the preliminary study herein does not explicitly explore harms such as racial nativism and xenophobia (especially after the unpreventable suspension of the planned follow-up qualitative study), the researchers acknowledge that discussions on immigration and adjusting to the United States culture cannot ignore US race-making and social inequities (Bernstein et al., 2021; Black Alliance for Justice in Immigration, 2023).

In addition to what happens when immigrants arrive in the US, pre-migration information access, mainly distilled through social media, also determines one's acculturation. Prior knowledge or contact with the host society is a key acculturative factor, according to Cabassa (2003). It seems plausible, then, that information is elemental to pre-migration preparation; those with relevant, trusted, and accessible interpersonal and documented resources can embark on informed emigrations. However, pre-migration information can also be counterproductive to a successful journey when there are disconnects between positive portrayals and negative experiences. The reality for most immigrants is that they will face a mixture of satisfactory and unsatisfactory encounters (Negy et al., 2009). Misinformation, in the form of either nativist, racist, and anti-immigrant views on the part of US-born groups or distorted, inaccurate, and even positive

embellishments of life in the United States on the part of those in diaspora, influences eventual emigrants in other countries (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004).

There is a storytelling aspect to acculturation in that cultural stories can promote a positive image throughout media and other community information sources, according to Bekteshi & van Hook (2015). Bekteshi and Kang (2020) similarly write that climate—interpreted as perceived discrimination, immigrant depictions, and one's overall quality of life and happiness in the US—also relies on information ecosystems. The fear of identification, tracking, and deportation is very real among those existing with fluid immigration status and can prompt reluctance to rely on service providers. Those who face legal and penal systems are susceptible to information stress and, thereby, systems avoidance (Brayne, 2014). Consequently, a critical aim of this study is to convey immigrants' accounts of adjusting to labyrinthine and polarised information environments like that of the United States.

Method

Study design

The researchers set out to employ an explanatory mixed-methods, survey-to-interviews study to garner evidence and characteristics of immigrant information acculturation. The questionnaire incorporates literature-derived acculturation constructs based on a synthesis of acculturative scales. The scale emanates from a previous work on immigrant information overload (Ndumu, 2020). The initial tool, encompassing behavioural, qualitative, and quantitative aspects, did not account for acculturative indicators. The researchers conducted a bibliographic search, thematic review, and thematic annotations to uncover 56 scales across 128 articles that measure immigrant acculturation or acculturative stress (Appendix A). They examined areas of congruence and divergence within the corpus, including the prevalence of proxy measures, the absence of bidirectionality or reciprocity, and the incorporation of stereotypical and essentialist depictions of immigrants. Following the elimination of defective scales, four scales were chosen to serve as the foundation for a refined, comprehensive scale aimed at investigating the influence of information in the acculturation process. The constructs were integrated into this study's questionnaire. Appendix B includes the original and revised instruments. Key improvements include:

1. avoiding indicators that conflate immigrants' life circumstances with acculturation. Although family composition and statuses, including immigration, socioeconomic, and employment, these indicators are often presented as causals of various maladies. Rather than requiring participants to disclose sensitive or personally identifiable information, the researchers included the following question: *We invite you to share any other details about your background (e.g., language spoken, city in which you reside, level of education, etc.)*
2. avoided asking respondents to categorise themselves according to Berry's four-part typology of integrated, assimilated, separated, or marginalised. Immeasurable fixed parameters cannot describe real-world immigrant assimilation.
3. included questions on bidirectionality after heeding expert guidance that acculturation is necessary among both newcomers and long-standing residents.
4. adapted to various contexts by offering a Qualtrics language translation feature. The researchers are themselves multilingual, which was significant, especially for the planned interviews.

Data collection

Data collection began in the fall of 2023, subsided in 2024, and was again boosted in the summer of 2025. The study relied on snowball sampling in conjunction with convenience sampling. It was distributed nationally by email, followed by social media, with the support of immigrant non-profit organisations along with the library and information science community. The 2023 wave garnered 33 responses; the 2025 wave yielded another 38 responses, totaling 52 usable responses after filtering for US-born and incomplete survey responses (N value). Where appropriate, item and weighted *n* scores are included. Throughout the data collection process, the researchers considered ways of increasing participation by, for example, utilising Amazon MTurk. Ultimately, Amazon MTurk presented a myriad of risks pertaining to bots, data validation, and information breaches and was thus eliminated as an option.

Data analysis

The data comprised of respondent demographics like country of birth, year moved, age, language, and a wide range of questions about information sources, information-seeking behaviour, perceived importance of information facets, and experiences with information overwhelmed. Aggregated or cross-tabulated data (e.g., country-level counts and age ranges) were analysed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive data were presented primarily in tables, and participant countries of origin were displayed on a map to illustrate the geographical range of representation. Inferential statistics was used to analyse the relationships between length of residence and experiences with information sources and overload.

Disruption and limitations

The study findings are thus limited in that a GPower analysis indicated that 74 responses were needed for statistical power. Consequently, the study findings are not generalisable, and the degrees of freedom are slightly lower, hindering the detection of the extremes of values. The was impacted by changes to the research team, heightened anti-immigrant policies starting (i.e., hardline political rhetoric, Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids, and close to twenty nationalist 'America First' executive orders such as Executive Order No. 14,160 (2025): Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship and Executive Order No. 14,159 (2025): Protecting the American People Against Invasion, along with the dismantling of the government agency that funded the study. Widespread political changes threatened many immigrants' sense of safety, which impacted their participation in US society. It stands to reason that these forces also influenced the research herein, and this manuscript thus concludes with methodological reflections. The researchers felt that it was important to publish in light of direct and indirect disruptions.

Findings

Descriptive statistics

Participants (N= 52) were born in 32 different countries across six continents. The most represented continents were Africa and Asia, followed by Europe, North America, South America, and Australia. Their ages ranged from 18 to over 65, with the average age being 33 years. The majority of participants (*n*=39) arrived in the United States between 2000 and 2025; twenty-four immigrated to the United States after 2010. The average length of stay was 17.4 years. Table 1 displays participants' backgrounds.

Age	n
18-24	12
25-34	23
35-44	7
45-54	6
55-64	2
65+	2
Year of Immigration	
1980-1989	5
1990-1999	5
2000-2009	15
2010-2019	18
2020-2025	6
Incorrect input	3

Table 1. Participant demographics

Note: N=52

In response to the optional question on personal backgrounds, some participants shared additional aspects of their intersectional identities. Among those who opted in, four shared that they hold bachelor's degrees, one a master's degree, and a middle school-level education. Most respondents expressed that they were fluent in English and also shared their heritage languages, including: Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, Punjabi, Nepali, Hindi, French, Tagalog, Japanese, and Danish. US states of residence were, although few in number, widely represented, spanning the West Coast (Washington, Las Vegas, California), the Midwest (North Dakota), and the East Coast (Maryland, Massachusetts, Florida).



Figure 1. Geographical distribution of respondents by continent
(Note: North America in this map excludes the United States)

RQ1: Acculturation and information behaviour

When it came to information behaviour, the acculturating immigrants who participated in the study shed light on the extent to which needing, seeking, and using information is an aspect of their everyday lives. Of the 52 total respondents, 49 responded to this survey item. Among them, 63% ($n=31$) indicated that they need information daily; and 14% indicated four to six days per week ($n=7$). They also regularly sought information; 55% ($n=27$) sought information daily, while 23% ($n=11$) indicated that they sought information four to six times per week. 67% ($n=33$) reported using information daily. The respondents were also asked to select their top three reasons for needing, seeking, and using information. A total of 51 respondents participated in this survey item. Since multiple responses were permitted for this survey item, the percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents to each selection, and the total may exceed 100%. In ranking the top three reasons for needing, seeking, or using information in everyday life, respondents ranked education/career information ($n=37$; 73%), health/wellness information ($n=22$; 43%), and shopping/entertainment ($n=18$; 35%) highest. Among the lowest-ranked reasons for needing, seeking or using information were parenting/marriage/dating ($n=10$; 20%), religion/spirituality information ($n=8$; 16%), and politics/current events information ($n=7$; 14%). Legal/immigration information featured moderately, and 25 percent of respondents ($n=13$) ranked it among their top reasons.

When asked about their preferences when seeking, needing, or using information, 52 participants responded. Among them, 42 respondents (81%) indicated that they placed significant importance on speed and accuracy. However, with respect to the ease of getting an answer ($n=33$; 63%), familiarity with resources ($n=31$; 60%) and the currency of those resources ($n=32$; 62%), responses slightly varied. There also appeared to be some variation in the type of resources and sites that respondents used to gather information. When asked to rank their top three sources of information, family and friends, including household members and social media contacts ($n=39$; 75%), internet reference tools such as Google and Wikipedia ($n=42$; 80%), and their employers or coworkers ($n=18$; 35%) were chosen at the top. Responses ebbed thereafter; however, television/radio/news channels ($n=16$; 31%), school/university ($n=13$; 25%), and public library ($n=10$; 19%) ranked lower. Church/temple or community centre ranked last ($n=8$; 15%).

Ultimately, the findings reify what information behaviour suggests about immigrants' information-seeking: acculturating immigrants, whether recently arrived or long-residing as per migration scholarship, perpetually seek information as they navigate a new society. Almost all study participants require daily information. This constant need for information, and the breadth of information that respondents engage with, suggests that immigrants must bridge cultural nuance while also navigating their new information environments. The prioritisation of education and career information highlights that economic and professional integration are key drivers of acculturation. Interestingly, legal and immigration needs ranked as moderately important, indicating that initial immigration status management may later shift toward long-term socioeconomic stability in the process of acculturation, as will be discussed further on. Strong reliance on family, friends, and social media reflects the importance of sociocultural or ethnic networks in easing the transition. Furthermore, the preference for speed and accuracy in information demonstrates a pragmatic approach to overcoming the uncertainties of living in an unfamiliar culture. These information behaviors support that acculturation involves a practical, daily effort to master the informational landscape of the country to which an immigrant relocates.

RQ2: Adjusting to information challenges

Of 49 who responded, 13 respondents (27%) selected *online/digital information* to be overwhelming most often, followed by *the lack of recent information* ($n=12$; 24%). Similarly, 24%

(n=12) reported being *very often* overwhelmed by *deadlines and appointments*. Reflecting a similar trend, 14 respondents (22%) indicated that they are *often* overwhelmed by *the lack of information* in general, while 13 respondents (28%) reported feeling *often* overwhelmed by *excess information and difficulties in obtaining information*.

In response to the question about how immigrants *navigate* information challenges ($\bar{n}$ or weighted $n=47$), the highest percentage of respondents ($n=21$; 45%) expressed strong agreement with doing research on their own, followed by 40% of respondents ($n=19$) strongly agreeing with the statement that they seek help within their personal networks, for example, friends, loved ones, and community. More nuanced responses were observed regarding a statement about making a quick decision based on available information. Approximately 28% ($n=13$) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 32% ($n=15$) indicated that they somewhat agreed. While most respondents ($n=13$; 28%) somewhat agreed with postponing a task when faced with information challenges, 15% ($n=7$) strongly disagreed. This represents the highest number of respondents who selected the *strongly disagree* option among all response options.

When asked about how immigrants *overcome* information challenges, the open-ended questions corroborated the results from the information challenge navigation tendencies. Most respondents indicated that they seek help from community networks, including community centres, trusted bilingual services, and cultural organisations. Some indicated that they engage in independent research by using Google or listening to the news. Reliance on personal and professional connections, including coworkers and 'information-savvy' field/subject experts, was another recurring information source. Additional strategies included developing language fluency and digital literacy skills as well as increasing familiarity with the host country's government systems and cultural orientation.

When asked about specific ways to *improve* the difficulties of getting information, several prominent themes emerged. Respondents emphasised that offering information services for free or at a low cost increases access to information. Another prominent theme was language accessibility. Several respondents expressed a preference for having multiple language options and translation services. Relatedly, respondents also stated that having various modes of access, via print, in-person, or online, can increase information accessibility by tailoring to the information user's preferences. In addition, the provision of technology devices, as well as Wi-Fi access ('internet for all'), was suggested. Several respondents emphasised the importance of creating a welcoming and hospitable information environment that provides accommodation. In this context, it is worth noting that 'library' was specifically mentioned as a way to address information challenges. Additional responses included a one-stop resource hub where immigrants can access multiple services at once, the provision of culturally relevant resources, and community outreach programs.

Regarding how leaders can improve information quality and access for immigrants, responses leaned toward establishing a systematic approach to enhancing information quality and accessibility. Suggestions included providing acculturation services through support agencies and educated workers, improving existing governmental information infrastructures by keeping information on official websites up to date, and establishing oversight of information for immigrants, including vetting search engines for transparency, accuracy, and fairness.

Assessing how often information overwhelms or burdens respondents, on average, 31% reported that they are sometimes overwhelmed by all 18 categories of information stressors (see Table 2). Most participants ($n=17$; 35%) indicated that they are sometimes overwhelmed by *the required attention*, followed by *excess information* ($n=16$; 33%) and *the required action* ($n=16$; 33%).

Several items either rarely or never overwhelmed respondents. The largest number ($n=15$; 31%) reported that they are *rarely* overwhelmed by *print information*, while 11 respondents (22%) selected the same about *the authority or formality of information*. Seven respondents shared that they are never overwhelmed by *visual information* (e.g., posters and advertisements), which represents the highest number of *never* response options. Consistent with this pattern, the fewest respondents ($n=1$; 2%) reported that they are never overwhelmed by either *a lack of information* or *excess information*. Across all response categories, the degree of overwhelm was most evenly distributed for *visual information* ($SD = 0.06$), followed by *the lack of recent information* ($SD = 0.07$). Responses related to *deadlines or appointments* were also moderately evenly spread ($SD = 0.8$).

Field	Very often		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Identifying a need for information	11	22%	11	22%	15	31%	7	14%	3	6%
Searching for information	10	20%	10	20%	15	31%	10	20%	2	4%
Selecting information	10	20%	10	20%	14	29%	11	22%	2	4%
Using or applying information	11	22%	9	18%	16	33%	8	16%	3	6%
Print information (e.g., print dictionary)	5	10%	7	14%	14	29%	15	31%	6	12%
Online/Digital information (e.g., online dictionary)	13	27%	10	20%	11	22%	10	20%	3	6%
Verbal information (e.g., radio)	10	20%	5	10%	12	24%	15	31%	5	10%
Visual Information (e.g., posters, advertisements)	10	20%	6	12%	13	27%	11	22%	7	14%
Excess information (i.e., too many resources)	8	16%	13	27%	16	33%	8	16%	1	2%
The lack of information (i.e., too few resources)	12	24%	14	29%	11	22%	10	20%	1	2%
The lack of recent information (i.e., age of resources)	12	24%	8	16%	12	24%	10	20%	4	8%
The variety of information (i.e., too many kinds of resources)	10	20%	11	22%	15	31%	7	14%	3	6%
Difficulty in getting information (i.e., accessibility of resources)	8	16%	13	27%	15	31%	9	18%	2	4%
The authority or formality of information (e.g., government, university, or other "official" resources)	8	16%	11	22%	16	33%	11	22%	1	2%
The required attention (i.e., reading or understanding resources)	8	16%	11	22%	17	35%	8	16%	3	6%
The required action (i.e., processing or submitting resources)	10	20%	8	16%	16	33%	8	16%	4	8%
Deadlines or appointments (i.e., urgency of the resources)	12	24%	10	20%	14	29%	7	14%	4	8%
Visiting places that provide information (e.g., libraries, government offices, community centers)	11	22%	10	20%	14	29%	7	14%	4	8%

Table 2. Immigrants' Information Overload Scale

RQ3: Reciprocal acculturation

The respondents also shared that they support their non-immigrant neighbours' acculturation. Some respondents indicated that they share information with their US-born counterparts. The types of interactions listed ranged from news to sports. Several specifically listed 'cultural events', 'community gatherings', 'community updates and cultural events', 'local event updates', community safety, and music as the type of information that they offer. One survey participant noted, 'Yes, I have shared information with US-born neighbours, such as local community events, safety alerts, and helpful services, often through conversations, social media groups, or neighbourhood apps to keep everyone informed and connected'.

Others provided knowledge of their heritage or birth country with their US-born neighbours. Examples include 'history, music, and politics of my home country'. A similar account is demonstrated in this anecdote, 'I have shared information about my culture and my country'. News is a crucial area of cross cultural exchange, and one respondent indicated 'Yes. I discussed news about Shohei Ohtani going to the LA Dodgers'. Another pinpointed, 'Yes, I have shared community event details and health-related alerts that I learned from immigrant networks with my neighbours'. Similarly, safety was listed in 10 of the 32 open-ended responses.

Survey respondents also appear to provide neighbours with references and resources. One explained that they recently 'shared educational information with my neighbour whose son is about to resume college'. Several other open-ended resources reified that immigrants share guidance on navigating local networks with non-immigrant neighbours. This insight captures this dynamic: 'Being an immigrant, there are places I know which some of my friends don't know, so I share some information to them when needed'.

Discussion

The study highlights the pivotal role that information plays in the daily lives of acculturating immigrants. Many of the respondents are under the age of 34. At the same time, the sample included relatively recent arrivals who migrated in the last 20 years. The average age was 33, while the average length of time in the United States was 16.7 years. Likewise, respondents represented 32 countries and spoke 10 languages. Despite this remarkable variance, the respondents felt that they were still acculturating to US society. Their accounts were consistent in some instances.

Preferences and daily habits

Some of the data aligns with information scholarship, particularly studies exploring immigrants' financial or employment realities, in that survey participants ranked career, education, and employment as top reasons for needing seeking or using information. These patterns align with the work of Williams (2024) on immigrants' financial information-seeking, Mabi's (2020) studies on highly skilled immigrants, and Shuva's (2022) research on immigrants' employment-related information-seeking. Immigrants turn to trusted sources such as family and friends. Indeed, family and friends continue to be primary sources, as firmly entrenched in the information behaviour scholarship (Chu, 1999; Grossman et. al, 2022).

There were counterintuitive results, however. Despite prevalent research indicating that immigrants rely substantially on diasporic media such as television, radio, and news sources, only 16% of respondents appeared to turn to media. Even so—and as explained further on—when asked how they help non-immigrant neighbours acculturate, many respondents included news-sharing as an example. Apropos, although immigrants are thought to want primarily legal and political information, the respondents herein did not rank these as preferred information resources. In fact, only seven, or 4%, of respondents regularly need, seek, or use politics/current events in their

everyday lives. At the same time, 18% sought legal and immigration information. It must be noted that this relatively lower percentage does not equate to a lack of information needs. Immigrants require varied legal information and services, particularly depending on their time of arrival and financial circumstances (Bach, 1994). It is possible to infer that, with an average length of stay of 17 years since arrival, the majority of respondents have moved beyond the settlement phase. However, there are significant barriers to immigrants seeking legal information, including language, cultural, and immigration status-related factors (Ahmed et al., 2016). Consequently, the reported ranking of legal information seeking may not representatively reflect the actual realities of immigrants' legal information needs. The findings might suggest that, although immigration dominates the current US sociocultural landscape, some immigrants attend to legal or immigration matters while also avoiding current political events. This might coincide with the need to safeguard against nativist, anti-immigrant sentiment while navigating immigration and acculturating.

Another paradoxical finding lies in that, while health and wellness were noted as an information priority from the aspect of acculturation, few respondents ($n=8$; 5%) sought religious or spiritual information. Few turned to religious leaders and places of worship ($n=8$; 5%) as essential information grounds, at least according to the participants in this study. Yet, for decades, social science research has illustrated how immigrants often deepen their faith or spirituality upon migration (Croucher & Kramer, 2017; Sharp, 2010; Stephen & Merrill, 2011). These divergences might enhance what we know about immigrant wellness; religious participation is not the only facet of well-being. The participants in this study listed other outlets—for example, entertainment, which constituted the second highest-ranked information preference. In other words, everyday or quotidian immigrant information behaviour can span from serious pursuits to respite and personal interests.

Respondents prefer both seeking information on their own and consulting with community members. This duality again affirms the breadth of immigrant information behaviour. Most respondents indicated that they seek help from community networks, including community centres, trusted bilingual services, and cultural organisations. There is an important element of collective knowledge and mutual aid. However, they also shared that they search and get information on their own. Some indicated that they engage in independent research by using Google or listening to the news.

Barriers and overwhelm

Acculturative stress and overwhelm coincide with specific information features, according to respondents. Both the scarcity of information and, conversely, an abundance of information appeared to prompt stress. Similarly, the required attention and action prompted stress. This coincides with the data point that 33% of respondents ($n=16$) expressed a certain level of overwhelm when it comes to information use while 14 respondents (29%) reported having a somewhat similar overwhelmed experience visiting information-providing organisations. In this context, incorporating immigrants' suggestions on improving information accessibility might shed light on potential ways to reduce information barriers and overwhelm.

Furthermore, respondents expressed varying levels of overwhelm regarding information stressors. Notably, 31% reported feeling overwhelmed by information demands, with specific challenges including *online information* and *deadlines*. In other words, temporal limits along with internet-based information induce barriers or stress. The respondents offered key suggestions for improvement, all of which are important to information leaders. Examples include enhancing language options and offering affordable information services.

It is also worth noting what does not overwhelm, according to the respondents. Visual, print/analog, and audio information were ranked least overwhelming, which might suggest that resources are best when they not rely solely on online and traditional access. Offline and straightforward information may facilitate information acculturation. In other words, some immigrants prefer formats that are simple and familiar, possibly to their cultural contexts.

Respondents expressed varying levels of overwhelm regarding information stressors. Notably, 31% reported feeling overwhelmed by information demands, with specific challenges including *online information* and *deadlines*. In other words, temporal limits along with internet-based induce barriers or stress. The respondents offered key suggestions for improvement, all of which are important to information leaders. Examples include enhancing language options and offering affordable information services.

What immigrants contribute

Acculturation is reciprocal or bidirectional. The data adds unique details regarding how immigrants see themselves contributing to their US-born neighbours' information. The primary influence, according to respondents, is cultural awareness. Respondents shared that they offered a variety of knowledge to non-immigrants, whether local developments, nearby resources, safety tips, or even the latest updates about a baseball team. Again, these findings align with acculturative research in that positive information encounters are also essential to acculturation (Mercado, 1997), and the lack of information is not the only possible circumstance. The data supports that acculturation can also be seen as bidirectional information-sharing whereby immigrants exchange information. This, too, coincides with Bektashi and van Hook's (2015) point that cultural stories promote positive acculturation. Crucially, positioning respondents as information providers rather than recipients changes the view of immigrants as high-need and information novices. The findings demonstrate that other members of society benefit when immigrants are informed and knowledgeable throughout their acculturative journeys. Ultimately, positioning immigrants as knowledgeable contributors challenges prevalent misconceptions of one-way exchanges and highlights how positive information encounters facilitate successful integration for the entire community.

Thoughts on ethics in immigrant information behaviour methods

This study gleans from literature to tie immigrants' acculturation, their ordinary responses to information, and broader societal forces. In keeping with the thread of understanding and affirming immigrants' culturally situated information behaviour, this study builds on previous work (Ndumu, 2021) exploring immigrants' experiences with information overload, specifically behavioural (information need, seeking, use), qualitative (print, digital, verbal, visual), and quantitative (excess, scarcity, timeliness, spatial, urgency, treatment, complexity, authority) dimensions.

The survey development was itself a deeply contemplative and deliberately slow process, but the even more difficult work of caring for respondents came afterward. The researchers learned valuable lessons on, ironically, adjusting or acculturating to fraught and uncertain social and political times. Throughout this initiative, they reflected on how best to and/or whether to collect more data. It was imperative to remain sensitive and thoughtful of vulnerabilities when immigrants opt into research, no matter their backgrounds. Foregoing interviews and weaning survey questions to the necessary while also making room for agency and open responses are among the various ways that this study espoused beneficence.

Conclusions

Although the accounts from this small sample do not represent all US immigrants, the evidence offers a glance at immigrant information acculturation—a promising and timely information science subfield in need of expansion. Here, the researchers explore the experiences of US-based immigrants with information during acculturation primarily through immigrants' perceptions. The study identifies characteristics of their everyday information behaviours, information challenges, and cultural information-sharing with US-born neighbours, or bidirectionality. By analysing preliminary data on immigrants' perceptions of information challenges, strategies to overcome them, and the mutual benefits of bidirectional acculturation for both US-born non-immigrants and immigrants, the study findings shift the current notion of immigrants as mere recipients of information services to potential providers of rich, multicultural acculturative information. The current anti-immigrant US political climate in addition to the consequential defunding of federal research led to methodological disruption, prompting us to analyse quantitative data primarily. Adaptations were necessary to prioritise immigrant participants' safety. To the extent possible, the researchers plan to collaborate on future discussions and convenings on external factors that must be considered when conducting immigrant-centred empirical research, especially ways to practically and ethically mitigate impact. Information behaviour researchers have an opportunity to uncover evidence of what happens when immigrants adjust to labyrinthine and polarised information environments in countries like the United States. These reflections on the methodological adaptations and the ethical considerations around the choices highlight what is required to continue the commitment to accurately and multidimensionally representing immigrants' acculturative information behaviours, including seeking, stressors, and assets.

While the current study focuses on gauging the extent of immigrant acculturative experiences through a survey, future research focusing on their narratives on how they engage in acculturative information seeking is recommended. Hopefully, there will be more studies on the acculturative dimensions of information norms—that is, the ways in which people remain rooted in their culture while navigating US information environments. Information acculturation involves not only immigrants' knowledge of US culture and infrastructure, but also institutional and societal responsibility. There is promise in a line of immigrant-related information behaviour research that adds to ongoing migration studies scholarship on acculturation by underscoring information as a cornerstone of successful acculturation as well as an antidote to acculturative stress.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Revised Information Overload Scale

Section 1:

For this research study, an immigrant is defined as a person who:

- and was not born in the United States or its territories
- but permanently resides in the U.S., whether documented or undocumented.

Q1. Are you an immigrant?

- Yes
- No → Skip Pattern to Section 6

Q2. Which country were you born in? _____

Q3. What year were you born in? _____

Q4. What year did you move to the U.S.? _____

(Optional) We invite you to share any other details about your background (e.g., country in which you were born, language spoken, city in which you reside, level of education)

Section 2: Information Behavior

Information is described as knowledge that is necessary to manage one's daily life. Information can be used for any reason (for example, education, health, entertainment/recreation, etc.). Information resources can be formal or informal, verbal or print, digital or hard copy, and can be obtained in many ways (such as friends, family, books, online search engines, libraries, news outlets, and more).

Q4. In your everyday life, how often do you:

	Daily	4-6 times a week	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Rarely
NEED information to answer a question or complete a task?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SEARCH FOR information to answer a question or complete a task?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
USE information to answer a question or complete a task?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5. Which of the following resources and/or places do you use most? Please select the top three.

- Family or Friends (Household members, Facebook contacts)
- Internet reference tools (Google, Wikipedia)
- School/University
- Television/Radio/Newspaper
- Employer or Coworkers
- Church/Temple or Community Center
 - Public Library

- Other (Please specify) _____

Q6. In the past week, which have been your top three reasons for needing, seeking, or using information in your everyday life:

- Education/Career
- Legal/Immigration
- Community/Housing
- Parenting/Marriage/Dating
- Religion/Spirituality
- Shopping/Entertainment
- Social/Recreation
- Health/Wellness
- Finance/Employment
- Politics/Current Events
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q7. How important are these factors when gathering information?

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Unimportant
How quickly I get an answer	☐	☐	☐
The accuracy of the answer	☐	☐	☐
The ease of getting an answer	☐	☐	☐
Familiarity with sources	☐	☐	☐
Obtaining the latest sources	☐	☐	☐

Section 3: Information overload

Information overload is described as a general feeling of frustration or anxiety as a result of needing, seeking or using information resources.

Q8. Do you ever feel overwhelmed or burdened by the following?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Identifying a need for information	•	•	•	•	•
Searching for information	•	•	•	•	•
Selecting information	•	•	•	•	•
Using or applying information	•	•	•	•	•
Print information (e.g., print dictionary)	•	•	•	•	•
Online/Digital information (e.g., online dictionary)	•	•	•	•	•
Verbal information (e.g., radio)	•	•	•	•	•
Visual Information (e.g., posters, advertisements)	•	•	•	•	•
Excess information (i.e., too many resources)	•	•	•	•	•
The lack of information (i.e., too few resources)	•	•	•	•	•
The lack of recent information (i.e., age of resources)	•	•	•	•	•

The variety of information (i.e., too many kinds of resources)	•	•	•	•	•
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Difficulty in getting information (i.e., accessibility of resources)	•	•	•	•	•
The authority or formality of information (e.g., government, university or other "official" resources)	•	•	•	•	•
The required attention (i.e., reading or understanding resources)	•	•	•	•	•
The required action (i.e., processing or submitting resources)	•	•	•	•	•
Deadlines or appointments (i.e., urgency of the resources)	•	•	•	•	•
Visiting places that provide information (e.g., libraries, government offices, community centers)	•	•	•	•	•

Q9. Do you agree or disagree with the following?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I deal with information challenges by asking my friends, loved ones, or community for help.	•	•	•	•	•
I deal with information challenges by doing more research on my own.	•	•	•	•	•
I deal with information challenges by deciding quickly based on the information I have.	•	•	•	•	•
I deal with information challenges by postponing the task.	•	•	•	•	•

Section 4: Solutions

This section asks questions about ways to improve information systems and processes in the U.S. Your answers can be 1-2 sentences. There are no right or wrong answers.

Q.10 In your opinion, how do immigrants overcome information barriers in the U.S.?

Q. 11 In your opinion, what are way to determine reliable sources of information in the U.S.?

Q. 12 In your opinion, how can leaders improve information quality and access for immigrants living in the U.S.?

Q.13 In your opinion, what are ways to improve the difficulty of getting information (e.g., cost, time) for immigrants living in the U.S.?

Section 5: Expertise

This section asks questions about your information habits prior to migrating to the U.S. We are interested in what others can learn from immigrants and how immigrants' information skills can be used to help those born in the US The term "U.S.-born neighbors" here refers anyone born in the U.S., whether they are relatives,

coworkers, or those in your community. Your answers can be 1-2 sentences. There are no right or wrong answers.

Q. 14 Have you ever shared information (e.g., news, alerts, community) with your U.S.-born neighbors? If so, please describe?

Q. 15 Have you ever explained the way information resources (e.g., government, educational, faith) work in your birth country? If so, please describe.

Q. 16 Have you ever given your U.S.-born neighbors any tips about information resources (e.g., apps, websites, books)? If so, please describe.

Q. 17 Have you ever helped your U.S.-born neighbors find information?

Q. 18 What are aspects of information resources from your birth country that have helped you adjust to living in the U.S.?

Q. 19 Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experiences with information since immigrating to the U.S.?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Section 5: Follow-up Study

You are eligible to earn a \$25 Tango gift certificate by participating in a follow-up research activity that asks you to draw your information world. The gift card is sent in 2-4 weeks. Are you willing to take part in a 5-10 minute follow-up activity?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Please provide your contact information:

Name :

Email :

Phone # :

Appendix B: 56 Scales Identified to Enhance Immigrant Acculturation Constructs

Scale	Author, Year
A Short Acculturation Scale for Filipino Americans (ASASFA)	Cruz, F. A. D., Padilla, G. V., & Agustin, E. O. (2000).
Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation	Zea, M. C., Asner-Self, K. K., Birman, D., & Buki, L. P. (2003)
Acculturation Attitudes Scale	Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Power, S., Young, M., & Bujaki, M. (1989)
Acculturation Attitudes Scales (Latin and Canadian acculturation attitudes)	Don & Berry (1994)
Acculturation Index	Ward & Kennedy (1994)

Acculturation Questionnaire for Children	Van de Vijver, F. J., Helms-Lorenz, M., & Feltzer, M. J. (1999)
Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA)	Cuellar, I., Harris, L.C., & Jasso, R.(1980).
Acculturation Scale	Ghuman (1991)
Acculturation Scale American-International Relations Scale (AIRS)	Sodowsky & Plake (1991)
Acculturation Scale for Southeast Asians	J Anderson, M Moeschberger, MS Chen, P Kunn, ME Wewers, R Guthrie (1993)
Acculturation Scale for Vietnamese Adolescents (ASVA)	Nguyen, H. H., & von Eye, A (2002)
Acculturation Strategies Scale	Kosic (1998)
Acculturative Stress Index	Noh & Avison (1996)
African American Acculturation Scale	Landrine & Klonoff (1994)
African American Acculturation Scale Revised (AAAS-R)	LKlonoff & Landrine (2000)
American and Puerto Rican Cultural Involvement Scales	Cortés, D. E., Rogler, L. H., & Malgady, R. G. (1994)
ARSMA-II (30-item)	Cuellar, I., Arnold, B., & Maldonado, R. (1995)
Asian American Acculturation Inventory (AAI)	Flannery, W. P. (1996)
Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS)	Gim Chung, R. H., Kim, B. S., & Abreu, J. M. (2004)
Asian Value Scale (AVS)	Kim, Atkinson & Yang (1999)
Behavioral and Value Acculturation Scale	Szapocznik, J., Scopetta, M. A., Kurtines, W., & Aranalde, M. D. (1978)
Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire (BIQ)	Szapocznik, J., Kurtines, W. M., & Fernandez, T. (1980)
Bicultural Stress Scale (BSS)	Romero & Roberts (2003)
Biculturalism/Multiculturalism Experience Inventory	Ramirez (1983)
Bidimensional Acculturation Scale	Marin & Gamba (1996)
Brief Acculturation Scale (A)	Norris, Ford & Bava (1996)
Brief Acculturation Scale (B)	Meredith, Wenger, Liu, Harada & Kahn (2000)
Campisi's 1947 Scale	Campisi (1947)
Chief's 1940 Scale	Chief (1940)
Children's Acculturation Scale	Franco (1983)
Cultural Adjustment Difficulties Checklist (CADC)	Shim, Y. R., & Schwartz, R. C. (2007)
Cultural Attitudes Scale	Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh (2001)
Cultural Lifestyle Inventory	Mondoza (1989)
Cultural Values Conflict Scale (CVCS)	Inman, A. G., Ladany, N., Constantine, M. G., & Morano, C. K. (2001)

Enculturation Measure for Native American Youth	Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter, and Dyer (1996)
European American Value Scale for Asian Americans (EAVS-SS)	Wolfe, M. M., Yang, P. H., Wong, E. C., & Atkinson, D. R. (2001)
Evaluation of acculturation stress (EBEA)	Urzúa, A., Henríquez, D., Caqueo-Úrizar, A., & Smith-Castro, V. (2021)
Greek-American Acculturation Scale	Harris & Verven (1996)
Hazuda Scale	Hazuda, Stern & Haffner (1988)
MASALA Scale	Needham, B. L., Mukherjee, B., Bagchi, P., Kim, C., Mukherjee, A., Kandula, N. R., & Kanaya, A. M. (2017)
Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI)	Rodriguez, N., Myers, H. F., Mira, C. B., Flores, T., & Garcia-Hernandez, L. (2002)
Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF)	Cuellar, Arnold, & Gonzalez (1995)
Na Mea Hawai'i Scale American	Rezentes (1993)
Nagaraj biculturalism measure	Nagaraj, N. C., Vyas, A. N., McDonnell, K. A., & DiPietro, L. (2018)
Native American Acculturation Scale (NAAS)	Garrett & Pichette (2000)
Psychological Acculturation Scale (PAS)	Topp, L., Hando, J., Dillon, P., Roche, A., & Solowij, N. (1999)
Scale of Acculturation	Rissel (1997)
Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (SASH)	Marin, G., Sabogal, F., Marin, B. V., Otero-Sabogal, G., & Perez-Stable, E. J. (1987)
Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental (SAFE)	Negy, C., Schwartz, S., & Reig-Ferrer, A. (2009)
Sommerlad 1968 original Likert measure	Sommerlad, E. A. (1968)
Stephenson's (2000) Multigroup Acculturation	Stephenson, M. (2000)
Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation Scale (AKA SL ASIA)	Chun, K. M., Kwan, C. M., Strycker, L. A., & Chesla, C. A. (2016)
Taiwan Aboriginal Acculturation Scale (TAAS)	Cheng, A. T., & Hsu, M. (1995)
The Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI-I)	Cervantes, R. C., Padilla, A. M., & Salgado de Snyder, N. (1991)
The Revised Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI-II)	Cervantes, R. C., Fisher, D. G., Padilla, A. M., & Napper, L. E. (2016)
Traditional Behavior Scale	Solomon, T. G. A., & Gottlieb, N. H. (1999)
Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)	Ryder, A. G., Alden, L. E., & Paulhus, D. L. (2000)