

## **Acculturation and Life Satisfaction of Yi Villagers in China: A Survey Based on Different Yi Ethnic Branches**

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### **Abstract**

There are many Yi branches with different cultural characteristics in China. In this study, the researchers chose by stratified sampling a total of 522 Yi villagers from different branches to investigate their acculturation and life satisfaction. The results showed that: (1) the acculturation strategies of Yi villagers were mainly integrated, followed by separation, and a small part of assimilation and marginalization; (2) the acculturation of different Yi branches showed a trend from separation to integration, and then assimilation and marginalization after complete contact; (3) the acculturation of Yi villagers is significantly related to individual gender, age, education, income, and marital status; and (4) both the Yi acculturation attitude and the mainstream acculturation attitude have a significant positive predictive effect on life satisfaction. Therefore, the government should adhere to and strategically adjust the policy of regional autonomy, increase the investment in primary education, develop the economy, and break down the within-group marriage habits to improve the acculturation of the Yi villagers.

**Keywords:** *Acculturation, life satisfaction, Yi ethnic, Yi branch*

### **1. Introduction**

China is a multi-ethnic country, and ethnic minority residents often appear as culturally disadvantaged groups in cross-cultural contact. When the original culture collides with the mainstream culture, they will generally face acculturation due to the differences between different cultures (Liu, 2020). Among the numerous studies on the acculturation of ethnic minorities, there is almost no study on the adult villagers of Yi. Yi is an ancient ethnic group in China. Despite the long historical changes in the past, Yi still has retained its unique traditional culture and religious belief. However, with the rapid development of China's economy, especially in recent years with poverty alleviation and new rural construction, these traditional Yi societies are undergoing rapid changes. In the process of contact with the mainstream ethnic group, the traditional Yi residents are not

adapted to it, which is reflected in the separation or marginalization of the Yi individual and the mainstream group, the opposition and contradiction between the Yi group and the mainstream group, and the disappearance of the Yi traditional culture (Lin, 2019). Therefore, the study of Yi villagers' acculturation contributes to the stability and unity of the Yi region, the inheritance and the development of Yi traditional culture, and can provide feasible decision-making suggestions for the government and relevant decision-makers.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 *The Yi Ethnic***

The Yi ethnic is the sixth-largest ethnic minority in China, with a large population and numerous branches, mainly distributed in the southwest of China. There are independent Yi autonomous prefectures in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, which are the main areas where Yi people live in compact communities. Due to the historical changes, the Yi branches in these two areas have produced different cultural characteristics and formed two representative Yi factions in China: Sichuan Yi and Yunnan Yi. Sichuan Yi is the most primitive representative. Due to their closed geographical environment, they lived in a closed, autonomous, and slave society before the 1950s, known as the living fossil of the slave age (Liu, 2019). The Yi area in Yunnan began to be under the jurisdiction of the central dynasty more than 600 years ago and came into contact with the mainstream (the Han ethnic). Although it is under the jurisdiction of the Han ethnic, it has always been the implementation of the policy of regional autonomy of the Yi ethnic. Therefore, the characteristics of the Yi ethnic are still quite remarkable. This study will take the villagers of Lipo branch in Yunnan, Nuosu branch in Sichuan, and other branches of the Yi ethnic who live in mixed communities as the research objects and analyze their acculturation and life satisfaction.

### **2.2 *Acculturation***

Acculturation is a controversial concept, which has different views in the field of sociology and psychology. Sociologists believe that acculturation means that immigrants accept the cultural model of the host country and then gradually abandon the cultural values and customs of their own (Gans, 1997). Psychologists add processes of psychological adjustment, including elements of mental health, such as life satisfaction, stress, or depression (Berry et al., 2006; Ward et al., 2011; Bulut & Gayman, 2020). Berry is a representative scholar in acculturation psychology who proposed a two-dimensional model of acculturation, including four types of acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Acculturation strategy can be considered as a pluralistic phenomenon composed of a series of traditional or mainstream cultural ways that individuals can choose. Assimilation is represented when ethnic minority members accept the practices and values of the dominant culture and abandon the traditional culture. The integration will occur when ethnic minority members accept two different cultural value systems simultaneously, and individuals obtain the new society while maintaining the original cultural characteristics. When individuals adhere to the traditional culture and abandon the mainstream culture, it represents separation. Finally, marginalization occurs when individuals are neither loyal to traditional culture nor accept mainstream values

(Berry, 1997). Berry's acculturation model discussed individuals' psychological adaptation based on their adherence to the mainstream culture and traditional culture.

A considerable number of studies had shown that Berry's two-dimensional acculturation theory has theoretical guidance and universal applicability for the study of acculturation in China ethnic minorities (Yue et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2018). Therefore, this study assumed that the acculturation of the Yi villagers has a two-dimensional structure. They maintain their original cultural identity and cultural characteristics and hope to establish and maintain a positive and good relationship with members of the mainstream society. The division of these two different cultural attitudes can be further divided into four different types of acculturations: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization.

### **2.3 Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction, namely a person's evaluation of his life quality, is a cognitive judgment component of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1999). Another component of well-being is emotion, both positive and negative. Diener believed that life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions should be assessed separately to understand the overall components of subjective well-being better. In this study, the life satisfaction of the Yi villagers was investigated to confirm the relationship between life satisfaction and acculturation.

Life satisfaction is an important index to measure the degree of acculturation. Good acculturation is predicted by cultural knowledge, exposure, and positive life attitudes (Berry & Hou, 2019; Ryou et al., 2019; Mancini et al., 2018). Individuals satisfied with their lives have a positive attitude towards life and experience more happiness and joy. Previous studies have shown that culture can significantly influence individuals' values and beliefs, thus influencing their evaluation of life quality (Kjell & Diener, 2021). People from individualistic cultures tend to rely on individual emotions to determine how satisfied they are with life. In collectivist cultures, behavior that follows social norms predicts greater life satisfaction (Krys et al., 2019). Hu & Xun (2016) on Chinese Hani adolescents showed that acculturation has a positive effect on life satisfaction. Guinn et al. (2011) found in his study that the acculturation of Mexican-American women did not affect life satisfaction. The differences in the results may be due to differences in the target population.

The Yi villagers in this study mostly live in the poor mountainous areas of southwest China and are in the lower social and economic class. For example, the Sichuan Yi ethnic area is one of the deep poverty areas in China, and it is a national key poverty alleviation area. Poverty often makes culturally disadvantaged minorities face tremendous pressure, which in turn affects their life satisfaction. In addition, the traditional Jiazhi culture (a unique family culture of the Yi) of the Yi is also different from that of other ethnic minorities. The powerful family support system of the Yi ethnic can help individuals cope with external pressure and solve various life problems (Zhang, 2020), thus effectively improving individual life satisfaction. Therefore, this study assumed that identifying with traditional culture helps the Yi villagers gain more family support and enhance personal life satisfaction. Identifying with the mainstream culture helps the Yi villagers solve the

problem of poverty and gain more life experience, which has a positive impact on personal life satisfaction.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Subjects

Nuosu came from Sichuan Province in China, while the Lipo came from Yunnan Province in China. The researchers chose Nuosu and Lipo, for both groups mostly live in Yi area (all living areas are Yi people). In addition, some other Yi branches that lived with the mainstream were randomly selected. A stratified sampling method was used to distinguish the branch, region, gender, and age features. A total of 650 questionnaires were sent out from eight representative Yi villages, and 522 valid questionnaires were recovered. The demographic information of the sample is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The specific composition of the sample (n=522).

Variable	Statistic	N	%	Variable	Statistic	N	%
Branch	Nuosu	207	39.6	Occupation	Farmer	189	36.2
	Lipo	192	36.8		Self-employed	159	30.5
	Others	123	23.6		Regular worker	98	18.7
Gender	Male	227	43.5		Others	76	14.6
	Female	295	56.5	Monthly income	<1000¥	87	16.7
Age	18-29	125	23.9		1000-2000¥	95	18.2
	30-39	144	27.6		2001-3000¥	154	29.5
	40-49	119	22.8	>3000¥	186	35.6	
	≥50	134	25.7	Residential area	Yi area	324	62.1
Education	Primary school	122	23.4		Mix area	198	37.9
	Junior school	120	23	Marital status	Unmarried	109	20.9
	High school	149	28.5		Married	380	72.8
	University	131	25.1		Divorce	33	6.3

#### 3.2 Measurement Scale

*Acculturation Scale.* Ryder and his colleagues (2000) argued that there was no "absolute best" model of acculturation. The social scientist must choose the most appropriate acculturation model and scale to best match the subject and group of study (Tsai et al., 2000). According to the previous review results, Berry's two-dimensional acculturation model is proved to apply to ethnic minorities in China. The two Acculturation Questionnaire (QAQ) of Han & Berry (2016) was adopted to construct the two Acculturation Questionnaires. According to the actual situation of the Yi people, the ethnic Acculturation problems were adjusted. The project is related to each specific ethnic-cultural group, and finally, the Yi Acculturation Questionnaire is constructed.

The original questionnaire in this study consisted of 23 questions, including two sets, one about the mainstream culture (Han culture) acculturation attitudes, and the other about the original (Yi culture) acculturation attitudes. It was rated on the seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with 4 being neutral. The original

questionnaire was first distributed to 30 Yi people in Panzhihua for initial testing. After the initial test, the distinctiveness test was carried out, and the items with low distinctiveness were deleted.

The final questionnaire has 18 questions, including original acculturation attitudes (11) and mainstream acculturation attitudes (7). The questionnaire has good reliability and validity after testing. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of original acculturation attitude, mainstream acculturation attitude, and the total questionnaire were 0.903, 0.887, and 0.938. The results of confirmatory factor analysis and exploratory factor analysis showed that the combined reliability of the two principal components were 0.924 and 0.913, and the extracted mean-variance values were 0.526 and 0.601, respectively. The revised scale had a good fitting degree.

*Life Satisfaction Scale.* The Life Satisfaction Scale (SWLS) of Diener (1999) was adopted. SWLS measures a person's overall assessment of their life, such as "In many ways, my life is close to what I want it to be." The scale has five items, graded on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). SWLS is a widely used measurement method that has been proven to be reliable and effective. The Alpha value of the scale in this study was 0.921.

*Demographic Variable.* This study will analyze the demographic variables of Yi branch, age, education, gender, living area, marriage, and income, and analyze the impact of these variables on acculturation.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 The Acculturation Strategy of Yi Villagers**

According to Berry's Acculturation Model, when people face the identification and adaptation of ethnic culture and mainstream culture, there will be two problems: whether they retain their own culture; or whether they are willing to accept and develop their relations with mainstream culture members. Answers to these questions will lead to four modes of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1997). In this study, the median value of four was selected as the intermediate point across dimensions. The results (Table 2) showed four acculturation types, which were assimilation type (low value of Yi cultural attitude, high value of mainstream cultural attitude), integration type (double high value of Yi cultural attitude and mainstream cultural attitude), and separation type (high value of Yi cultural attitude, Low value of mainstream cultural attitude) and marginalized (low value of Yi cultural attitude and low value of mainstream cultural attitude). Yi people adopt the *integration* type most, accounting for 75.9%; The second is the *separation* type, accounting for 14.9 %; *assimilation* and *marginalization* were the least, accounting for 5.7% and 3.4%, respectively.

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Yi Acculturation Strategies and Life Satisfaction

Dimension	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization	F
N(%)	30 (5.7%)	396 (75.9%)	78 (14.9%)	18 (3.4%)	
YA	3.38±0.55	5.47±0.75	6.13±0.72	2.97±0.63	166.54***
MA	5.42±0.77	5.33±0.83	3.12±0.61	3.07±0.78	205.78***
LS	5.02±1.27	5.48±1.17	5.28±1.52	3.46±1.28	16.32***

*Note.* YA, MA and LS in the table represent Yi acculturation attitude, mainstream acculturation attitude and life satisfaction. \* represents  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* represents  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* represents  $p < 0.001$ , the same as below.

The mean analysis of acculturation strategy and life satisfaction showed that the *integration* strategy's people have the highest satisfaction, followed by the *separation* and the *assimilation*. The satisfaction of *marginalization* is the lowest, which is lower than the median level. It confirms that integration is the best acculturation strategy and marginalization is the worst.

#### 4.2 Differences in Demographic Variables of Acculturation

Many studies have found that demographic variables will have a significant impact on acculturation. But some literature draws the opposite conclusion. It indicates that the relationship between demographic variables and acculturation has not formed a unified conclusion. In this study, the Chi-square test of SPSS software was used to analyze the two dimensions of Yi villagers' acculturation under different demographic characteristics. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Analysis of Variance of Acculturation Orientation on Demographic Variables (n=522)

Variable	OAA			MAA		
	Chi-Square	df	sig	Chi-Square	df	sig
Gender	79.952	50	<b>.278</b>	69.331	37	.011
Branch	217.589	100	.000	136.346	74	.004
Age	217.325	150	<b>.514</b>	152.691	111	.008
Education	238.076	150	.000	193.957	111	.000
Living area	134.887	50	.000	79.861	37	.000
Marital Status	124.145	100	<b>.111</b>	81.282	74	.001
Income	234.989	150	<b>.05</b>	239.114	111	.000
Occupation	286.411	200	.000	259.799	148	.000

*Note.* OAA and MAA in the table represent original acculturation attitude and mainstream acculturation attitude.

**Table 4:** Analysis of Variance of Acculturation Orientation on Demographic Variables (n=522)

Variable	Item	OAA	MAA	Variable	Item	MAA
Area	Yi area	5.71±0.90	4.66±1.30	Gender	Male	4.78±1.13
	Mixed area	5.10±1.04	5.13±1.02		Female	5.04±1.19
Branch	Nuosu	5.79±0.82	4.77±1.33	Marital status	Unmarried	5.18±1.06
	Lipo	5.39±1.00	4.95±1.01		Married	4.90±1.16
	Others	4.60±0.96	5.16±1.08		Divorce	4.44±1.42
Work	Farmer	5.60±0.94	4.67±1.17	Monthly income	<1000¥	4.30±1.28
	Self-employed	5.31±0.89	4.88±1.18		1000-2000¥	5.04±1.16
	Stable job	5.16±1.19	5.37±1.17		2001-3000¥	4.91±1.16
	Others	5.18±1.13	5.15±1.10		>3000¥	5.18±1.03
Education	Primary	5.64±1.03	4.33±1.16	Age	18-29	5.09±0.99
	Junior	5.40±0.94	4.96±1.07		30-39	5.00±1.03
	High	5.30±0.96	5.22±1.10		40-49	4.88±1.31
	University	5.14±1.13	5.12±1.17		≥50	4.73±1.31

*Note.* OAA and MAA in the table represent original acculturation attitude and mainstream acculturation attitude.

The chi-square test results showed that there were significant differences in the original acculturation attitudes among the Yi branch, education, living area, and occupation (sig <0.05), while there were no significant differences in the original acculturation attitudes among gender, age, marital status and income (sig ≥0.05). All population variables in the above statistics were significantly different from the mainstream acculturation attitude (sig<0.05).

To further analyze the changes between the original acculturation attitude and the mainstream acculturation attitude of the significant variables, the researchers adopted the descriptive analysis method of SPSS to list the mean value and standard deviation of the different significant variables (Table 4).

#### 4.3 Acculturation and Life Satisfaction of Yi Villagers

A regression analysis was conducted on the two cultural attitudes and life satisfaction, and the results (Table 5) showed that the two attitudes of acculturation had a significant positive prediction effect on life satisfaction. The linear regression equation of the model is Life Satisfaction = 0.302×YA+0.27×HA+1.864. The determination coefficient is 0.166, indicating that independent variables can explain a 16.6% deviation in acculturation. After correction, the determination coefficient is 0.163, which suggests that the equation's goodness of fit is good. In the model, the influence of the Yi cultural attitude is more significant than the mainstream cultural attitude.

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis of Yi Villagers' Life Satisfaction (n=522)

Independent variable	UC		SC	T	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	Durbin-Watson B
	B	SE	Beta				
(constant )	1.864	.348		5.355	0.166	0.163	1.593
YA	.378	.050	.302	7.521***			
MA	.298	.044	.270	6.740***			

*Note.* YA and MA in the table represent Yi acculturation attitude and mainstream acculturation attitude

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 The Overall Acculturation Strategy of Yi Villagers

The statistical results of acculturation based on quantitative analysis show that the acculturation degree of the Yi villagers is generally high, and their acculturation strategies are mainly integrated, followed by separation, and a small part of assimilation and marginalization. The acculturation strategies of most villagers are integrated, which indicates that individuals have integrated two cultures and are the ideal type of acculturation. It is consistent with the results of acculturation studies of other ethnic minorities in China, indicating that mainstream cultural groups in China have a high degree of acceptance and respect for ethnic minority cultures (Guan et al., 2019). This result also confirms that Berry's two-dimensional model of acculturation applies to Yi society. It is found that Yi people do not give up their traditional culture in the process of accepting the mainstream culture, which is a two-dimensional phenomenon. The two-dimensional model is the most widely used model in current studies on acculturation, which can better explain various characteristics in the process of acculturation of ethnic minorities (Yoo, 2021).

### 5.2 Dynamic Acculturation Development Trend of Different Yi Branches

The Yi ethnic of different branches have formed a unique cultural form as the unique characteristics of history and regional environment, and its acculturation has also presented a dynamic development trend. The history of their contact with the mainstream society is a dynamic development process from far to near and then to complete contact. Similarly, their acculturation strategies also showed a trend from separation to integration, and then to assimilation and marginalization after complete contact, as follows:

*The separation strategy of the Nuosu in Sichuan Province.* The separation strategy of Nuosu is significantly higher than that of other branches, which is related to their history and geographical location. The Nuosu people have lived in remote mountainous areas since ancient times, and the traffic is extremely inconvenient. In the past, they were isolated. It was not until the 1950s that they began to accept the unified jurisdiction of the mainstream society, which is known as the "leap of the millennium" from the slave society to the socialist society (Xiao et al., 2018). Therefore, the Nuosu was the most recent to contact the mainstream society and was the representative of the traditional Yi branch. Since ancient times, they have had less contact with the outside world and are less influenced by the mainstream society. They follow the beliefs and customary law rules of the ancient Yi

society and highly identify themselves with the traditional culture. When they experience mainstream culture in modern society, many people cannot accept it at the moment due to immense cultural differences. While passively accepting it, they do not recognize the mainstream culture and have a negative attitude against it. They are often not well prepared for culture shock, prone to conflict and contradiction with the mainstream society, and cause various social problems.

*The integration strategy of the Lippo from Yunnan province.* There are many Yi branches in Yunnan, but due to the common historical background, they have experienced similar historical and cultural changes. Different Yi branches have similar cultural characteristics, and their differences in acculturation are mainly reflected in different living areas (Yi area or mixed area). The Lipo people in this study mostly lived in the pure Yi area. These villagers have a long history of contact with the mainstream, and they have had a deep understanding of the mainstream culture. Meanwhile, due to living in a relatively independent area of the Yi ethnic group, individuals experience less pressure of mainstream culture shock and can also get much support from people of the same ethnic group around them, with higher life satisfaction. They generally identify with their original culture and mainstream cultures, which is the best state of acculturation.

*The assimilation and marginalization of other Yi branches in the mixed area.* Although the Yi individuals living in the mixed areas have a deep understanding of the mainstream culture, they will feel the impact of the mainstream culture directly because they are living among the mainstream groups. The pressure of acculturation may change their attitude towards different cultures. The Yi individuals who migrated from the Yi area first may have an integrated attitude, but after living in the mixed area, some felt inferior and resistant due to the gap between them and the mainstream group. They could not integrate into the mainstream group, and there was no intra-ethnic support around them, which quickly led to the marginalization trend. Some people think that they are no different from the mainstream people. They adapt entirely to and identify with the mainstream culture, and their behavioral characteristics are consistent with the mainstream group, forming a trend of assimilation. Individuals in the assimilation state can adapt to the mainstream culture, but abandoning their original culture is likely to cause the loss of traditional culture, and individuals may also face some deep-seated adaptation problems.

### **5.3 Individual Differences in Acculturation**

Previous studies on the relationship between demographic factors and acculturation have not drawn consistent conclusions, and some results even have quite a few contradictions (Cao et al., 2017). Based on the research results of this paper, the impact of demographic factors on acculturation can be summarized as follows:

*The gender difference.* The acculturation degree of the Yi women is significantly higher than that of men, and this gender difference reflects the uniqueness of Yi's acculturation. In the patriarchal society of the Yi ethnic, the social status of women is generally lower than that of men, especially in the traditional Nuosu. As subordinates of men, women have to undertake more work than men and are placed on the high expectation of reproductive inheritance but do not get the due status. However, the Yi women of lower status have higher acculturation ability, which may be related to the industriousness and

optimism of the Yi women. In Yi society, women play a more important role than men, and they are often more industrious than men. There are many myths of Yi people that praise Yi women's diligence, kindness, and bravery. These traditional virtues make them more confident and optimistic than men, so they are more likely to adapt to the changes of modern society.

*The age difference.* The influence of age on the acculturation of Yi ethnic reflects the commonness of the development of modern society. The results showed that the value of the Yi culture attitude increases with age, whereas the value of the mainstream culture decreases with age. The older Yi villagers tend to be more traditional and conservative in their thinking and less willing to accept new things. Young people in the new generation are full of passion and dare to challenge new things. To improve their living standards, they will take the initiative to contact mainstream groups. Therefore, the acculturation of young people under 30 years old is better than that of middle-aged and older adults over 30 years old.

*The difference in educational background.* Education is an essential influencing factor in acculturation (Li & Yao, 2019), which is consistent with previous research results. The acculturation of the Yi villagers with a high school education or above is significantly higher than those below. Among them, the acculturation of the primary school group is the worst, and the acculturation of the high school group is the best. The acculturation of college individuals is not as good as that of those with high school education, which may indicate that individuals have more extensive contact with the mainstream society and face more competition and pressure after entering college. It may also show that education received before adulthood can shape the individual's values, while education received after adulthood has limited influence on the individual and is not enough to change the individual's acculturation attitude.

*The difference in occupation and economic income.* The Yi villagers mostly live in economically backward mountainous areas, and their family income is mainly based on farming. However, poor land in mountainous areas cannot bring more income, so rural villagers often have low income and live in poverty, which in turn challenges the key objective of the state's poverty alleviation work. In the modern competitive society, poverty will make individuals face more life pressure, become inferior and feel marginalized. Those who can improve their family income through work or doing business are more open-minded and can adapt to social changes more quickly. Therefore, the lower the income, the worse the acculturation of the Yi villagers, among which the agricultural group has the worst adaptability, and the stable working group has the best adaptability.

*The difference in marital status.* Marriage acculturation difference is one of the cultural characteristics of the Yi ethnic. Yi people follow the traditional concept of marriage. Although it has changed with the development of modern society, most of them still insist on marriage within the ethnic or branch and forbid intermarriage among different ethnic groups or even different branches to ensure the purity of ethnic descent. Such internal marriage rules of the Yi people tend to make their thoughts more conservative, which is not conducive to a larger society. The results showed that the acculturation of the unmarried Yi villagers is significantly higher than that of married individuals, and divorced

individuals are the worst acculturation. Therefore, the rules of intermarriage may limit further development of the Yi villagers, and unhappy marriages may easily lead to individual cultural misfits.

#### **5.4 Acculturation Positively Predicts Life Satisfaction**

The study shows that the vast majority of the Yi villagers are satisfied with their lives, with those who adopt the integration strategy having the highest satisfaction, followed by those who adopt the separation and assimilation strategy, and those who are marginalized having lower satisfaction than the median level, indicating dissatisfaction with their lives. Life satisfaction is significantly positively correlated with the two cultural attitudes. The positive attitude towards both the original culture and the mainstream culture can promote the improvement of individual life satisfaction. The more the Yi villagers identify with the two cultures, the more positive they will be to face life and adapt to modern society, thus improving their life satisfaction. In fact, acculturation and life satisfaction influence each other. Individuals with high levels of acculturation are more likely to obtain high life satisfaction (Fang, 2020), and in turn, life satisfaction will also have a significant impact on acculturation. Therefore, good acculturation ability can improve life satisfaction of the Yi villagers, and to improve their acculturation is closely linked to their life satisfaction.

### **6. Suggestions on Improving Acculturation of Yi Villagers**

#### **6.1 Adhere the Policy of Regional Autonomy**

The research results of the Yi villagers from different branches and regions showed that the acculturation of Lipo villagers living in Yi areas is the best, and the marginalization rate of the Yi villagers living in mixed areas is the highest. It further confirms appropriateness of the policy of Regional Autonomy. The Yi villagers who have lived in the autonomous region for a long time identify with their ethnic culture and highly identify with the mainstream culture. They are bicultural by integrating themselves into the two cultures and are in the best state of acculturation. Therefore, when faced with different cultural shocks, the vast majority can actively face and cope with cultural conflicts to ensure the stability and unity of ethnic areas. The acculturation practice of China has proved that the policy of Regional Autonomy of ethnic minorities plays a vital role in safeguarding ethnic unity, promoting the development of ethnic areas, and enhancing ethnic cohesion.

#### **6.2 Strengthen Primary Education in Minority Areas**

Primary education is generally at the stage of individual growth. The growth stage is the vital period to form individual values. Therefore, primary education can help minority individuals establish correct cultural values and learn to live in harmony with the mainstream group in a multicultural environment. Current education pays more attention to mainstream society, and it is often difficult for students in minority areas to obtain equal educational conditions with mainstream society. Due to remote geographical location, backward economy and rather unstable teaching quality, education conditions in minority areas are much lower than those in the mainstream society. It makes the minority teenagers who are at a cultural disadvantage feel inferior and maintain a solid defensive mentality towards the mainstream culture. Therefore, the government needs to increase support and investment to solve the primary education problems in minority areas. Primary education

can serve as a means to enhance the local people's sense of cultural identity, improve the knowledge and ability of cross-cultural adaptation, and fundamentally promote Yi villagers' acculturation.

### **6.3 Increase Income Sources for Ethnic Minority Villagers**

The acculturation of Yi villagers is significantly related to occupation and income. Individuals with agricultural production had the lowest income and the worst cultural adaptability. Farmers have a single source of income, and farmers in ethnic minority areas get less income from crops due to their remote and harsh geographical location. Therefore, the government should support and help farmers in minority areas to increase their income. They can develop e-commerce for agricultural products through the development of ecological leisure agriculture. Farmers can be supported in starting businesses, increasing their income, and establishing agricultural enterprises with the support of government venture capital funds. They can be helped to adjust and optimize the structure of agriculture, develop various forms of appropriately scaled operations, and increase revenue from operations. The existing preferential policies for ethnic minorities should be implemented without delay to improve the living standards of ethnic minorities, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and better promote the positive cultural adaptation of ethnic minorities.

### **6.4 Strengthen the Abolition of Bad Marriage Habits and Advocate Free Marriage**

Yi ethnic's customary marriage law is an integral part of Yi ethnic's traditional culture, which is deeply rooted in Yi society and their traditional thoughts. Therefore, in today's advocacy of marriage freedom, the contradiction between the traditional marriage customary law and the national law has not been effectively coordinated. Traditional marriage habits and internal engagement are still prevalent in the Yi area, which hinders the area development and affects the acculturation of individuals. Therefore, the government needs to strengthen the governance of marriage rules, adopt reasonable rules, abandon bad marriage habits, realize the freedom of marriage, and promote the localization of the national marriage law in the Yi area.

## **7. Conclusions and Limitations**

This study explores the acculturation and life satisfaction of the Yi villagers from different branches. So far, there have been no other similar reports on Yi villagers' acculturation. This study showed that the acculturation strategies of the Yi villagers were mainly integrated, different Yi branches have transformed from primitive to modern society, and their acculturation has also experienced a trend from separation to integration, followed by assimilation and marginalization after complete contact. The acculturation of the Yi villagers is in line with Berry's Acculturation Model. The results also showed that acculturation is significantly related to individual gender, age, education, income, and marital status. Both the Yi acculturation and mainstream acculturation attitudes have a significant positive predictive effect on life satisfaction.

The study on the acculturation of the Yi villagers will help the government strengthen social governance in the Yi area and improve their acculturation ability. The researchers

noted that the study has some limitations. First, the sample in this study is limited to the adjacent region. The limitation of the sample will affect generalizability of the research results. It is not conclusive that the patterns found in this study can be applied to the Yi villagers in other different regions or individuals in similar cultural contexts. Future work should attempt to obtain samples from other regions with different contexts, such as the Yi people from Guizhou and Guangxi Province to examine the invariance or variability of the research results.

Secondly, most of the data in this study are from cross-section data. The data collected at a time node may deviate from the analysis results. A longitudinal approach could be used in future studies to further examine the causal relationship between related variables.

## 8. The Authors

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