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# Life Skills and Acculturative Stress among Students

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## **Abstract**

*Acculturative stress is the psychological impact of adaptation to a new culture. Immigrant students might face number of significant stressors that are likely to be pervasive, intense, and lifelong. This may occur due to adapting new languages, new climate, experiencing racial discrimination, homesickness or general lack of comfort with the other culture. To avoid acculturative stress emphasis should be given to anti-bullying policies and global peace. Students can cope up with this situation by integrating few life skills in their daily life. This paper defines and describes some life skills which are essential for immigrant students.*

## **Introduction**

In this era of globalization world is a global village where distance between states and countries is not a matter of concern. The effect of globalization can well be observed in the field of education. To pursue higher education many students from one part of the country migrate to another or many migrate from one country to another. Moving from one place to another is quite challenging as one have to make adjustment according to their present culture. These adjustments may include social, intercultural communication and unfamiliarity with the surrounding.

While making these adjustments in the new culture immigrant's students have to face many challenges as well as pressure. It's been stated by Berry (1980) that the time period of adjustment during which immigrants understand and incorporate the values, beliefs and behaviors of their new host culture into the context of values, beliefs and behaviors of their culture of origin is known as the process of acculturation.

Students who go through the process of acculturation might experience stress due to adapting new culture which include new language, new climate, or new food culture. The stress which an individual encounters in the process of acculturation can be termed as acculturative stress as it is associated with cross cultural transition.

According to Nestor (2001) there are various predictors of acculturative stress i.e. difference in language, cultural traditions, education (academic styles) and socio-economic status. So it can be concluded that acculturative stress occur because an individual finds difference between the new culture and his original culture, difference in social values, norms, customs etc.

To reduce the impact of acculturative stress one should be very optimistic in approach as well as the respective institution should also take initiatives in order to deal with the problems of individuals who is going through the process acculturation. It is the responsibility of the institution to attend those students who are

migrants as if they are left unattended adjustment will be quite stressful as well as difficult for them which might decrease their academic performance as its been proved by many researchers that academic provocation are of main concern to international students (Hashim & Zhiliang, 2003; Misra et al., 2003).

The stress emerged from the acculturation can constructively channelized by the institution either by integrating various life skills programs in the existing curriculum or by conducting separate programs especially for the immigrants students.

Life skills are capabilities for adaptive and constructive behavior that enable individuals to deal efficiently with the demands and challenges of daily life which include psychosocial competencies as well as interpersonal skills which helps an individual to resolve problems, think critically and innovatively, make informed decisions, communicate efficiently, construct healthy relationships etc in order to shape their lives in a healthy and productive way. There are ten core life skills suggested by W.H.O are self awareness, critical thinking, empathy, decision making, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

Considering the above life skills which have been suggested by W.H.O, institutions can frame programs accordingly which will equip students in negotiating and mediating challenges and jeopardy in their lives which will enable them to be productive participants of society. Life skills are those vehicles which enable an individual for optimistic behavior towards

dealing with the challenges and difficulties of cross cultural adjustment.

To minimize the acculturative stress so the students be able to adjust in new environment and adopt the alien land as their future home, students should use life skills. Some of the suggested life skills which can help them to get adjusted in the new place are as follows:

1. **Communication Skill:** This is the most important skill which students must learn to survive in the host land. Students themselves should arrange some books or reference to learn new land language words or phrases so that they do not encounter problems in their daily lives.

To overcome communication barriers institution can help students by providing them with booklets of words and phrases used frequently in the host land or can also help students by organizing communication workshop.

Institution should also promote peace education and should be firm in bullying policies to make the immigrant students comfortable in alien land. Meanwhile students should also be confident and should stand up for themselves by making such friends who can stand up for them when required.

2. **Teamwork Ability:** Teamwork ability is one of the essential skills which one should develop and institution should also find out ways to develop this skill among immigrant students. An individual with this skill allows oneself to get adjusted in the new environment as it include qualities like taking responsibility for ones actions, contributing to a group

without expecting anything in return, being honest and encouraging others for the same and being a part of the solution rather than the problems.

3. **Coping with emotions:** Coping with emotion is the life skill through which one can identify one's own feeling as well as the feeling of the others. With the development of this skill immigrant students will get to know how feelings can manipulate one's own acts and conduct and this will help them to react to those feelings aptly so that they can settle well in new host land.
4. **Coping with stress:** Coping with stress is a skill through which immigrant students can find out the sources of stress in their lives, will be able to recognize how this affects them so that they can perform in the ways that will help them to manage their level of stress in the host land. With the development of this skill they will be able to reduce sources of stress for example they can make changes in their physical environment or in their lifestyle according to the new culture. Institutions can help students with the in the development of this skill through workshop.
5. **Presentation Skill:** This skill includes delivering presentation in a positive and confident way. It enable the students with the ability that how they can convince others what they actually want to convey. This skill will prevent the students from being aggressive as they can easily convey their feelings to the listeners

Apart from the above skills institutions should also try to provide

workshops for their native students to develop the positive attitude towards immigrant students so that they can feel comfortable in the host land as well as the institutions should also promote peace education and should have strict attitude towards bullying

### Conclusion

An individual experiences acculturative stress at least ones in his life. Acculturative stress among immigrant students can generate devastation in their life but sometimes is good as it give better results by encouraging students to perform better by developing competitive spirit.

In order to overcome unexpected consequences of acculturative stress one should develop the above mentioned life skills. Institutions also play a constructive role in minimizing stress in the process of acculturation by taking proper care of immigrant students so that they can take right decisions which directly or indirectly may affect their future.

### Reference

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