



# Mental Health: A Cross-Cultural Review

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**Abstract:** *Mental health is widely seen as global influential factor for effectively human working approaches. Cross-cultural immigration entails intake and leaving of differences in values, customs, linguistic challenges, financial problem, social pressure and many more. Present piece of work puts emphasis on how immigration, acculturation strategies and related factors influences mental health of the immigrants.*

**Key Words:** *Mental health, culture, acculturation, distress, migration*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Mental health is the preeminent appeal of effective human functioning, momentous at each particular phase of life, demonstrating an individual's psychological, emotional and social well-being. As mentioned by World Health Organization (WHO) mental health is one of the needed facades of general health for an individual. The term mental health has been cast-off since the 11th century, which encompasses of two constituents: state of mind and competence [1]. It is such a state of well-being where each and every individual become fully acquainted of his/her potential and dormant qualities or abilities which may lead them to cope with the usual and day to day stresses of life as well as work efficaciously and turn out to be productive member of his/her community. Henceforth, it also primes a person to have noble choices in life and knob the natural ups and downs of life effectively.

### Culture- a theoretical outline:

Culture influences our goals and values, contributes to how we think about desirable and undesirable individual characteristics and behaviors, and sets normative expectations concerning the meaning and achievement of a successful life. Culture comprises of conjoint denotation structures that deliver the principles for observing, believing, appraising, interactive and acting amid those individuals who share a dialectal, a notable period and a geographical locality [2]. Culture also influences the sources of distress, the form of illness experience, the interpretation of symptoms, help-seeking and it sets the limit of tolerance for specific emotions.

### Factors influencing mental health of immigrants:

Cross-cultural evidences specify that different psychological, social and behavioral aspects protect physical health and support positive mental health as well. Such protections facilitate resistance (resilience) to disease, minimize and delay the emergence of disabilities and promote more rapid recovery from illness [3]. Mental health is affected by a wide range of factors like biological, psychological and social. Sometimes, these factors may develop and precipitate symptoms and behaviors that negatively affect mental health, interpersonal relationships and also the potentials to cope with daily life stressors.

Earlier the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder- IV) and in recent development of DSM-5 have placed ample emphasis on culture and gender as a notable constituent towards mental health. Hence, it was thought pertinent to systematically study the behavior and experiences of migrants. The present piece of investigation has taken into account the cross-cultural perspective to understand the distress and well-being of citizens and acculturation strategies used by them, who got migrated to one another countries and decide to reside and earn livelihood there.

Although immigration and migration are a phenomenon throughout history but from the last two decade of 20th century it has reached to a prodigious amount. As per the projection by United Nation [4] [5], there would be 350 million immigrants by 2025 as compared to 191 million in the year 2005. The cross-cultural researches with immigrants typically focused on two types of factors (i.e., push factors and pull factors) for taking the decision to migrate or actually



do the same. Fleeing from the country of origin or home country to procure ease and comfort from the critical and hostile conditions like poverty, human rights violations, famine, natural disasters or wars are push factors. However, the pull factors may be the favorable conditions that assure a preferable financial and commercial future as well as promise personal and civic freedom in the host country [6].

### **Impact of extent of immigration:**

The disillusionment model has suggested that the psychological adaptation to immigration take place in predictable manner [7]. This model of disillusionment has clearly suggested that when an individual migrates from one culture to another, learning about the host culture usually takes time. It is likely that after a preliminary introduction to the new culture, the perceived and felt confusion arises regarding norms and aspects of both cultures. It can be that the new culture feels too different to immigrant because he/she didn't understand the culture and customs. It is often the daily stuffs, or an accretion of little things that creates a sense of not being able to be effective in the new environment. Perceived distress and the ability to cope and recover from problems and challenges may vary with cultures. This may influence mental health and well-being of them. The researches have showcased the diverse effects of culture and society on mental health, mental illness and also mental health services. As stated earlier during the first phase of the arrival to host culture, the mental health of immigrants is equal or even better than host country people. The second phase i.e., disillusionment and nostalgia for the past begins after sometime and then mental health deteriorates and finally the adaptive phase starts when people regain mental health [8]. An individual experiencing cultural transition is likely to experience significant changes in language, behaviors, cognitions, personality, identity, attitudes, psychological well-being; he or she is confronted with stress that demands coping to respond to the instability of changes in daily life [9] [10] [11].

### **Different acculturation strategies and its effect on immigrants:**

The reflections of cultural adaptation introduced by Berry [11] represent the groundbreaking and the momentous opus on acculturation. As a repercussion of acculturation, immigrants are foreseen to acclimatize the ideals, ethnicities, values, practices and principles of the host culture and give out the culture of their origin [12]. According to Ward [13] there are two different dimensions of adapting to the host society-psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation states about an individual's well-being and noble mental health. Socio-cultural adaptation refers to the individuals' social competence in managing their daily life in the intercultural setting.

### **Persistence of distress amid immigrants:**

The occurrence of a specific psychological symptom may depend on how salient it is to members of that particular culture. For example, Pang [14] used semi-structured interviews to study the experience of depression in elderly Korean immigrants. It was established that numerous depressed immigrants did not account of feeling depressed; instead, they elucidated and conversed their distress in other forms such as loneliness, family dynamic or somatic grievances.

Variations in prevalence rates of depression are typically attributed to cultural factors. Several studies have found that rates of depression are generally lower in Asian cultures than in Western cultures, which may be due to different perceptions of mental illness in these cultures [15] [16] [17] [18]. In a study Pernice et al., [19] found that post-migration factors are more likely to be interrelated to depression and anxiety than demographic distinctiveness. Such factors include host country discrimination, isolation and loneliness, unemployment and the detachment of ethnic community exaggerated by anxiety and depression. Those immigrants who had arrived within six months beforehand expressed symptoms of anxiety or depression, sometimes both. While those immigrants who are inhabitant of the host country for longer than six years emerged to experience lower levels of depression, suggesting that mental health may improve over time. Similarly, in one of the studies on interstate migration of students in India showed that in Kashmiri students who migrated to Bhopal (the capital of Madhya Pradesh) for their higher education, the length of stay was predicted for acculturative stress [20].

## **2. CONCLUSION:**

Immigrants moving from one to another nation entails changes in many forms such as linguistic changes, financial challenges, change in social support system and many more impacting their daily life. Duration of leaving in host country and the acculturation strategies being adopted by them moreover impact their level of well-being and life satisfaction and thereby their mental health.



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