Research Paper

Acculturation, Social Support and Life Satisfaction Among the Students of Northeast India

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to learn about the relationship between acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction among the students of Northeast India. The study also aims to find the impact of acculturation on social support and life satisfaction. The study employed a descriptive research approach, utilizing data collected from 204 participants aged between 18 and 25 through an online survey. The data was obtained using three standardized measures: the Cultural Congruity Scale, Provision of Social Relations measure, and Satisfaction with Life Scale. A Pearson correlation test was conducted to explore the relationship between acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction, while Regression Analysis was employed to evaluate the effect of acculturation on social support and life satisfaction. The findings revealed that acculturation had a significant negative correlation with social support, but a positive correlation with life satisfaction. Additionally, social support had a negative correlation with life satisfaction. The study further concluded that acculturation had a negative impact on social support but a positive impact on life satisfaction. The outcomes of the research are important for future studies and understanding of acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction among the youth in Northeast India.

Keywords: *Acculturation, Social Support, Life Satisfaction, Northeast India.*

It has been clearly seen that the majority of students from India's North-eastern regions leave their hometowns to pursue higher education in India's major cities. When students move to a new city where the culture is vastly different from their own, they frequently face difficulties. It is important to understand the within-nation acculturation experiences of a little-studied ethnic group. Current research indicates that students from minority groups may belong to groups at risk of low social support, and relatively little is known about changes in social support over time. Given the geographical location, there are few studies on the aforementioned topic in Indian settings. As a result, an in-depth investigation is required to shed light on the challenges faced by the students from Northeast India.

Acculturation

Acculturation is a multifaceted phenomenon where individuals undergo cultural and psychological transformation when they come into contact with a new community or culture

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that differs from their own. The process of acculturation involves embracing and adjusting to the dominant culture's customs, beliefs, and behaviours while still retaining some aspects of their original cultural identity. (Berry, 1997) Acculturation is a process that occurs through interactions between two culturally distinct groups.

Social Support

Social support refers to the connections with family, friends, neighbours, and other community members that can offer emotional, physical, and financial help during challenging times. It is a comprehensive concept that refers to an individual's perception of having access to social resources. The social network is built on the principles of reciprocal aid, guidance, and acknowledgement concerning personal experiences and decisions. To comprehend social support, it is necessary to examine its various categories, with the most significant being structural and functional support, as noted by Sęk (2004).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to a sense of contentment and acceptance with one's life circumstances and the extent to which one's needs and desires have been fulfilled throughout their lifetime. Essentially, it is a subjective evaluation of the overall quality of one's life. Life satisfaction is based on an individual's self-assessment of their quality of life according to their own criteria, as stated by Shin and Johnson (1978). The perception of one's personal circumstances is a crucial factor in determining life satisfaction. People who view their life circumstances positively and as fulfilling often report higher levels of life satisfaction.

In a study by Kovacev and Shute (2004), the effects of different modes of acculturation and perceived social support on the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent refugees in Australia were examined. Results showed that those with positive attitudes towards both cultures had the highest scores on measures of psychosocial adjustment, while those with negative attitudes towards both cultures had the lowest scores. The study supported the hypothesis that the impact of acculturation on adjustment is mediated by peer social support.

Another study by Cheng et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between social support and life satisfaction among older adults in Hong Kong. Results showed that social support was positively correlated with life satisfaction, with emotional support being the most significant factor in predicting life satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Alipoor et al. (2018) found that social support, particularly emotional support, had a significant positive impact on life satisfaction among Iranian women with breast cancer.

In a study of African immigrants in Australia conducted by Gebremariam et al. (2017), higher levels of acculturation were associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. The study also showed that social support played a mediating role in the relationship between acculturation and life satisfaction, indicating that social support is an essential factor in the acculturation process.

METHODOLOGY

The research conducted on the topic of Acculturation, Social Support, and Life Satisfaction among the Students of Northeast India is a quantitative study. The study investigates the relationship between acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction. The study also seeks to identify whether acculturation has any impact on social support and life satisfaction.

Aim

To determine the relationship between acculturation, social support and life satisfaction among the students of Northeast India.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between acculturation and social support.
H02: There is no significant relationship between social support and life satisfaction.
H03: There is no significant relationship between acculturation and life satisfaction.
H04: There is no significant impact of acculturation on social support and life satisfaction.

Samples

The study sample consists of 204 students from Northeast India, including both males and females, who were residing in Bangalore and within the age range of 18-25 years. The non-probability convenience sampling method was used for collecting data.

Measures

In 2000, Gloria and Robinson-Kurpius developed the Cultural Congruity Scale, which consists of 13 items and measures how well Chicano/a student's fit culturally in their college environment. The scale has a high level of internal consistency, with a combined sample alpha of .81.

The Provision of Social Relations Scale was created in 1983 by Turner, Frankel, and Levin to measure different aspects of social support using 15 items. The scale has a strong level of internal consistency, with alphas ranging from .75 to .87.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin in 1985 and consists of 5 items that assess a person's overall satisfaction with their life. Participants rate their level of agreement on a 7-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Procedure

The current research selected a sample of 204 students from Northeast India who were between 18 and 25 years old and resided in Bangalore. The participants were provided with a Google form and were informed about the purpose of the data collection. The study obtained the participants' consent to participate and ensured the confidentiality of their personal information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was analysed using SPSS. It was further tested for Pearson Correlation test and Regression Analysis.

Table 1: Socio-demographic details of the participants

		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	91	44.6%
	Female	113	55.4%
Age Group	18-20	54	26.5%
	21-23	110	53.9%
	24-25	40	19.6%

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic features of the participants in the study. The sample involved 204 students hailing from Northeast India, with 91 of them (44.6%) being male and 113 (55.4%) being female. The age distribution indicated that 54 participants (26.5%) were aged 18 to 20, 110 participants (53.9%) were aged 21 to 23, while 40 individuals (19.6%) were aged 24 to 25.

Table 2: Correlation between Acculturation, Social Support and Life Satisfaction among the students of Northeast India.

	N	M	SD	1	2	3
Acculturation	200	59.70	9.72	-	-.437**	.184**
Social Support		34.79	9.11	-.437**	-	-.292**
Life Satisfaction		21.33	5.98	.184**	-.292**	-

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 shows the Correlation between Acculturation, Social Support, and Life Satisfaction among the students of Northeast India. The study found that there was a significant negative correlation between acculturation and social support (r = -.437, p < 0.01), indicating that as acculturation increased, social support decreased. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between acculturation and social support. Similarly, there was a significant positive correlation between acculturation and life satisfaction (r = .184, p < 0.01), indicating that as acculturation increased, life satisfaction also increased. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between acculturation and life satisfaction. Also, there was a significant negative correlation between social support and life satisfaction (r = -.292, p < 0.01), indicating that as social support increased, life satisfaction decreased. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between social support and life satisfaction.

One possible explanation for the negative correlation between acculturation and social support in the first hypothesis could be that as individuals become more acculturated to the dominant culture, they may experience a loss of their cultural identity and a disconnection from their cultural roots, leading to a decrease in social support. This could result in feelings of detachment from their cultural roots and a decreased sense of belonging, ultimately leading to lower levels of social support. Similarly, a study conducted by Kim et al. (2015) shows a negative correlation between acculturation and social support. A study carried out by Kim et al. (2015) revealed a negative relationship between acculturation and social support, indicating that as Korean immigrants in the United States became more acculturated, their social support decreased, leading to higher levels of depressive symptoms. In contrast, the second hypothesis proposes a positive association between acculturation and life satisfaction, meaning that greater life satisfaction is predicted by higher levels of acculturation. One possible explanation for this relationship is that increased exposure to and participation in the new culture may lead to a sense of belonging and integration, which in turn can enhance overall life satisfaction. As individuals become more familiar with the new culture, they may feel more comfortable and confident in their interactions, leading to greater social and personal fulfilment. Similarly, in a study conducted by Aycan Kapucu (2019) showed a positive correlation between acculturation and life satisfaction among immigrants in Sweden. This means that as immigrants become more acculturated to the Swedish culture, they are more likely to experience higher levels of life satisfaction.

One possible explanation for the negative correlation between social support and life satisfaction in the third hypothesis could be cultural values and expectations around social support, as well as the potential burden that social support can place on individuals, may play a role in this relationship. It is important to keep in mind, however, that this study looked specifically at one population and context. Similarly, a study was conducted by Li et al. (2019) on Social Support and Life Satisfaction among Elderly Chinese People. The study found that, among the elderly Chinese population, the level of social support was negatively associated with life satisfaction. Specifically, the study found that those who had lower levels of social support reported higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who had higher levels of social support.

Table3: Regression Analysis predicting Acculturation on Social Support and Life Satisfaction among the Students of Northeast India.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized β	t-value	Model Summary
Acculturation	Social Support	-.437	-6.90**	R^2= .191 F= 47.72 Sig= .000
	Life Satisfaction	.184	2.66*	R^2= .034 F= 7.11 Sig= .008

Note. N=204. The impact of Acculturation on Social Support and Life Satisfaction is examined in the above table.

Table 3 shows the impact of Acculturation on Social Support and Life Satisfaction among the Students of Northeast India. The results indicate that the predictor variable explained 19% variance in the outcome variable, with F=47.72, p<0.05, indicating a good fit for the data. Acculturation was found to have a significant negative influence on social support (β=-.437), indicating that for every one-unit increase in acculturation, there is a decrease of .410 units in social support. Similarly, the results showed that acculturation has a significant positive influence on life satisfaction (β=.184), with every one-unit increase in acculturation leading to an increase of .114 units in life satisfaction. The R² value for this relationship was 0.034, indicating that the predictor variable explained 3.4% variance in the outcome variable, with F=7.11, p<0.05, indicating a good fit for the data. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant impact of acculturation on social support and life satisfaction.

A study conducted by Birman et al. (2002), immigrants from the former Soviet Union who were more acculturated reported higher levels of life satisfaction. This indicates that individuals who adapt more to the new culture may experience greater satisfaction and ease in their new environment. The present study also shows the prediction of acculturation on social support and life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between Acculturation, Social Support, and Life Satisfaction among the students of Northeast India. The study found that there was a negative correlation between Acculturation and Social Support in the students of Northeast India. As the level of acculturation increased, the level of social support decreased. On the other hand, the study also found a significant positive correlation between Acculturation and Life Satisfaction among the students. As the level of acculturation

increased, the level of life satisfaction also increased. Furthermore, the study found a significant negative correlation between social support and life satisfaction. In other words, if social support increased, then the level of life satisfaction decreased. The study's results also showed that acculturation has a significant impact on the social support and life satisfaction of the students of Northeast India.

Implications
The study highlights the scarcity of research on the northeast region of India, indicating the need for more research in this area. Future research could focus on addressing the limitations mentioned in this study. The findings of the study have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of acculturation at a national level. Additionally, future studies could investigate the same or different variables in a different population to gain further insights into the relationship between acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction. To improve the generalizability of the findings, it would be useful to conduct the study on a larger sample size, if feasible. These suggestions could enhance the knowledge base on acculturation and its impact on social support and life satisfaction in the context of Northeast India.

Limitations of the study
The study had some limitations which need to be taken into account when interpreting the findings. One major limitation of the study was that the sample only included students from Northeast India who were studying in Bangalore. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to students from Northeast India who are studying in other parts of India. The limitations suggest that further research is needed to explore the relationship between acculturation, social support, and life satisfaction among a more diverse sample of students from Northeast India.

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