

Culture Shock amongst Foreign Nationals Studying at a Local University in Guyana has impacted their Mental Health in a Negative Way

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Abstract

Introduction: *The world is quickly becoming a global village thanks to advancement in technology. As much as similarities might exist within cultures across continent the differences when experiences on the ground by a foreigner could be frustrating. Important life skills such as communication, among others, is very important in navigating across cultures.*

Anthropologist Kalervo Oberg first used the term 'culture shock' in a short descriptive article based on his personal observations of expatriates Americans (Oberg 1960). Culture shock was linked by him as an occupational disease of people who have been transported abroad. Some people make a good recovery and rapidly adjust to the new environment; in others the condition can become chronic and debilitating. To adjust to a new culture one must be able to understand, interpret and translate so as to navigate smoothly. Often time's behavior practices differ, body language and approaches that are already defined culturally and assigned by gender may be evident. There are four known stages of culture shock;

Aim: *To evaluate the impact of culture shock and mental health among foreign Nationals in TAU.*

Objectives:

- *To identify the challenges and difficulties faces by foreign students and workers.*
- *To evaluate their mental health status.*
- *To understand their coping mechanism.*
- *To identify the effects of culture shock on their mental health.*

Honeymoon phase: *this is the arrival into the new culture, it usually last for a few days to weeks. There's a fascination upon exposure to the new culture, there's a peak of interest among what exist and there is to offer.*

Crisis phase: *there's an enhancement of the negative perception, by the foreigner, of the new culture. The difficulty in maneuvering the new culture becomes evident by the foreigner these include communication and daily activities. These contributes to hostility, stress and anxiety. The consequences of this all is alienation and withdrawal by the foreigner. This period is dependent on one's ability to integrate into the host culture.*

Recovery phase: *here the visitor begins to learn how to function, they begin to assimilate appropriate ways on how to behave and interact. Culture perceptions of the host country is altered.*

Adjustment phase: *individual begins to accept what the new culture has to offer and begins to embrace it. There are six aspects of culture shock that that has been identified (Taft 1977):*

The researcher would like to measure this phenomenon using standard approach already outlined by our predecessor. The idea is to understand the risk factors that predisposes one to such occurrences and its impact on their mental health and understanding their coping mechanisms.

Keywords: *culture shock, Culture perceptions, foreign Nationals.*