

Acculturation of Iranian Students in Europe

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Abstract : The number of people, particularly university students, migrating from Iran and applying for American and European universities has been rising during recent years. Different people may have various reasons and goals for migration, but one of the common issues among all these people is the cultural challenges they experience when living in the adopted society. Immigrants usually confront obstacles during the Intercultural transition and adaption process. Different variables such as age, religion, gender, education, knowing the spoken language in destination country, financial condition, interactions with natives, and using social media can affect the cultural challenges people face after migration and how they conquer issues appearing due to intercultural differences and conflicts. In this research we have interviewed a sample consisted of 15 Iranian students living and studying abroad found by using snowball sampling technique via video call to realize what cultural challenges they have experienced in the new society, how the mentioned variables above eased these challenges or made them harder and what approaches and solutions they adopted to adjust themselves to the new society and its cultural dimensions. Based on John Berry's acculturation theory of migrant-host relationship, we have classified these 15 people in five different categories: Assimilation, Separation, Marginalization, and Integration. In addition we have considered Y.Y. Kim's communication-based theory of cross-cultural adaption to explain how communications helped migrant populations in adaption process. Based on the findings of this study, 12 of 15 interviewed members of the study used the integration strategy to adapt to the new cultural environment, 3 of them used the assimilation strategy, and none of them used marginalization or separation strategies. Communicating with natives, knowing the language, and education were the factors that helped all the interviewed members of the sample to overcome the difficulties of intercultural transition.

Keywords : acculturation, culture, intercultural transition, migration

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