

# "Acculturative Stress Experiences And Coping Approaches Among First-Year Undergraduate Students And Fresher Working Professionals From Bangalore"

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## ABSTRACT

Many participants experienced acculturative stress during their transition to the Bangalore campus, in part due to conflicting cultural values and different coping strategies. This stress often led to depressive symptoms. Over the year, participants built stronger support networks. The relationship with academic advisors seemed to positively influence participants' emotional wellbeing. It was found that social support was better observed in collectivistic groups rather than individualistic groups. The resolution of the research is to examine the effects of associated factors of acculturation -sociocultural adaptation on acculturative stress of first-year students and fresher employees in Bangalore. The study implemented a theoretical model framed by Berry's acculturative framework on acculturative stress and scrutinized the association amid the variables. The researchers theorized that socio-cultural self-efficacy would envisage lower levels of acculturative stress among pupils. To estimate the role of acculturative stress and related factors secondary data analysis was done. The findings of the secondary data are discussed in relation to enhancing international students' acculturative experience when relocating to a new environment. Both independent variables (socio-cultural self-efficacy) exhibited a significant, relationship with acculturative stress. Results describe that socio-cultural self-efficacy suggestively predicted acculturative stress. Many members experienced acculturative stress throughout their shift to the Bangalore campus, in part because of inconsistent cultural ideals and diverse coping approaches. This stress is repeatedly directed to depressive symptoms. Over the year, members made sturdier sustenance networks.

**Keywords** – Acculturation, Acculturative Stress, cultural efficacy, social support, first-year students and fresher employees, psychological adaptation, and socio-cultural adaptation.

## INTRODUCTION

Acculturation occurs when individuals join new institutions or workplaces that they witness to be diverse in cultural terms, ensuing in the growth of dissimilar grades or heights of acculturative stressors. The measure of acculturative stress fluctuates depending on different types of factors, together with the individual's' financial and cultural circumstances, their educational stages, their topographical roots, and the type of institution or workplace they demand to link. People pursue relationships with reference groups to

decrease the stress that ascends consequently to interaction with a new institutional culture. Persons categorize with reference groups that are inclusive sufficient to decrease professed social isolation stress to deal with the acculturation process, interpreting to research (Bhattacharyya and Arun, 2021)

The outcome of social support on the relationship among acculturative stress and depression among first-year students and young employed professionals from Bangalore is reviewed in this study through secondary data analysis. This section releases with an elucidation of the issue statement, the planned

study's relevance to social work, and the study's significance in the greater body of scholarly literature. The definition of terminology, the study's background, and the proposed theoretical model are discussed. The section concludes with the research's purpose, the quantitative portion's particular goals and hypotheses, and the qualitative portion's research question.

### **Problem Statement**

First year students and fresher employees come from different cultural backgrounds and it becomes difficult for them to adapt to the new environment. They can be either from collectivistic or Individualistic backgrounds since in Bangalore it is a blend of both the cultural backgrounds it might not be difficult for the fresher crowd to adjust in here. But during the course of adjustment, they tend to be stressed in their initial encounters and they will have difficulty coping with the culture and which leads to psychological symptoms further leading to acculturation. Two sorts of Adaptation i.e.; psychological and socio-cultural adaptation is required for an individual to escape the Acculturation and their experiences in a new environment. (Shields, R., & Edwards, R. M. 2010)

### **Significance of the study**

This is the foremost research of its kind to look into the acculturative stress that first-year undergraduate students and fresher working professionals face from Bangalore. This secondary research will have worldwide allegations since the arena of acculturative stress amongst fresher students or employees is little examined. The current study can be a useful tool for Bangalore campuses and workplaces to precisely quantify the requirements of its fresher's, recognize new policies to aid them make effective changes, and take an active method to report any mental health complications among them. The answers of this research will most surely have an influence past the Bangalore campus; they will deliver data to added campuses and workplaces that host fresher's, allowing them to figure effective services and agendas that benefit fresher's familiar with their new atmosphere.

### **Relevance of Research to Social Work**

This study is noteworthy to social employees for two motives. Primary, the results of this

study will fill in data gaps so as to progress educators', mental health practitioners', and social workers' cultural competence when employed with Bangalore international students.

The significances of this research will support in the empowerment of the international pupil community by hovering mindfulness of the consequence of acculturative stress on these students' well-being and university experience. (Ma, K. 2017). (Schwartz, S. J., et al., 2010)

### **Definition of Terms**

First-year young undergraduates are demarcated as "fresher students (Shafaei, A et al., 2016). with precise academic goals in mind who enter Bangalore campuses. Young working professionals are the fresher employees who enter into a workspace for the first time. People in collectivist cultures are more anticipated to have robust emotional attachments. In individualist culture endorses self-reliance, self-sufficiency, insistence, and individual success. Individualism declines the associations between in-groups. That is, it is more inclusive. Sociocultural adaptation is defined in terms of behavioral skills. as an ability to ~fit in" or effectively interact with members of the host culture. A psychological adaptation is a physical, cognitive or emotional trait that benefits an organism in its environment. Cultural self-efficacy is the confidence and belief in one's own ability to interact with and treat individuals of various cultural backgrounds adequately and properly. (Kim, B. S. et al., 1999)

### **Background Study**

Acculturative stress is demarcated as the psychological, somatic, and social difficulties in familiarizing with a new culture, which is typically knowledgeable when the acculturating individual and the new context cannot fit (Berry, 2006). First-year Students and employees usually experience acculturative stress during the acculturation process (Berry, 1997). Acculturation stress, which is demarcated as psychological hitches, ascends throughout the progression of multicultural shifts when persons experience challenges that surpass their accessible coping resources. Acculturative stress may negatively distress mental and physical wellbeing. An examination of works has exposed that mental hitch occurs among first-year students and young fresher

employees shortly after their onset in Bangalore, campuses and workplace (Behara et al., 2018) Adapting to a new educational system and a new social environment is difficult to drain inner incomes, and may attest mostly inspiring to international students who are impermanent residents and have not recognized permanent social support networks (Berry et al., 1987). Maladaptive coping can unpleasantly affect mental and emotional comfort besides academic performance. A positive acculturation process in a novel culture could be pertinent to one's ability of adapt. Those who were new to the college and workplace culture had complex heights of psychological discomfort and clinical depression, but the association was removed when acculturative stress was considered. Although acculturation can be used to identify at-risk groups or people, it is the ongoing experience to acculturative stress that directly correlates to psychological maladjustment. Aside from psychological adaptation, another result of acculturation is social adaptation (Berry, 2003). The acquisition of suitable information, social skills, and behavioural competence that influence people's capacity to negotiate effectively in a new cultural setting is referred to as sociocultural adaptation. The concepts of sociocultural adaptation and psychological adjustment are distinct, with the former referring to the ability to acquire the social skills required to "fit in" or negotiate effective interactions in the host culture and the latter referring to mental health and psychological well-being (Berry & Sam, 2006). Previous research has indicated that sociocultural adaption is positively connected to psychological adjustment (Ward & Kennedy,

1994). Acculturative stress and psychological suffering can be reduced when people learn how to adjust to their new culture by means of cultural efficacy. (Tseu, A. 2021).

In this study, we argued that sociocultural adaptation, which accounts for the degree of "fitting in" in varied intercultural exchanges, through cultural efficacy can bridge the gap between acculturation and acculturative stress. Sociocultural adaptation is a measure of how many difficulties individuals have with people from the host culture on a sociocultural, behavioural, and linguistic level. Because many acculturative stressors are psychological stressors caused by unfamiliarity with new customs and social norms (Lin & Yi, 1997), the amount of acculturative stress will be lowered when individuals experience fewer sociocultural challenges and, as a result, less psychological anguish. (Du, H. et al., 2015)

### Conceptual Model

The conceptual model for this paper study is presented beneath in Figure 1. This theoretical model follows Berry's study in 2005 concedes individuals' psychological adjustment. Furthermore, extra apparatuses of the acculturation process, like social-cultural efficacy, were encompassed to emphasize the multifaceted nature of students' and young professionals' coping strategies

The model is meant to unfold the relationship between acculturation and its mental health outcomes by parcelling out the mediating role of sociocultural adaptation and acculturative stress using a longitudinal design.

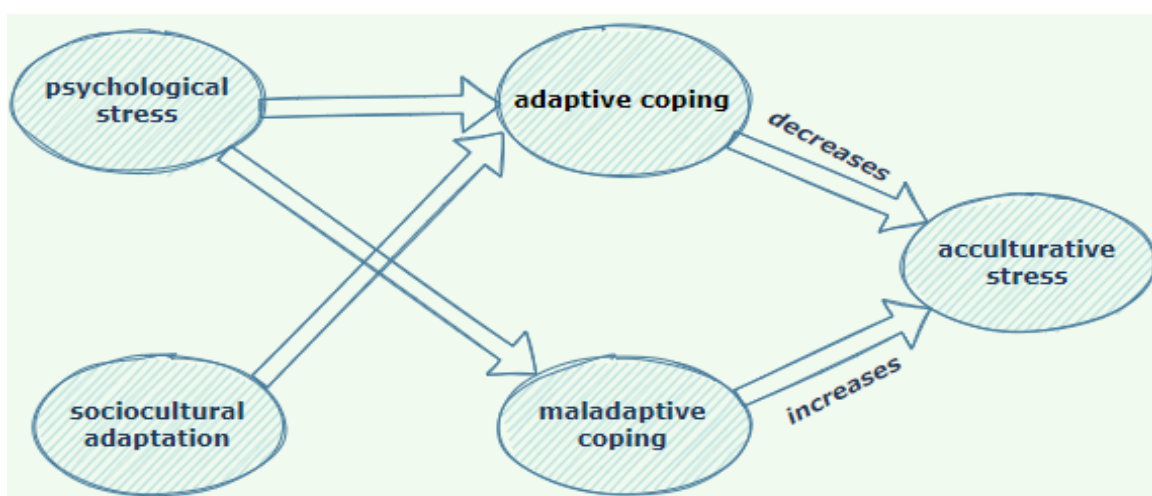


Figure 1 – Conceptual model

In a new cultural situation, psychological welfare is levied through psychological adaptation and social ability to mingle, and has successful conduct is levied through socio-cultural adaptation. In this setting, fresher students and employees who have not recognized social support and lack cultural efficacy may agonize from seclusion from their chief sustenance groups. These specific individuals are often confronted with extreme stress, which would overpower their coping aptitude. In the present study, we hypothesized that

H1: There will be a positive association between acculturative stress and depression among first-year international graduate students and employees in Bangalore

H2: The relationship between acculturative stress and depression will differ depending on the availability of social support.

H3: There will be decrease in acculturative stress and depression symptoms with increase in Cultural efficacy.

## OBJECTIVES

This study has the subsequent aims and Hypotheses:

(1) Discover the association between acculturative stress and depression amongst first-year international graduate students and employees in Bangalore.

(2) Survey the effect of social support on the association between acculturative stress and depression; and

(3) Survey the effect of Cultural efficacy on Acculturative stress among fresher Students and employees in Bangalore

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Acculturation and Acculturative Stress during the First Year of College

Acculturation involves “the relocating of culture from one group of individuals to another group in retort to communication with one another” (Amason et al., 1999, p. 312). Initially conceptualized as a course by which new settlers become combined into the leading culture (Padilla & Perez, 2003), in the 21st century, the unidimensional nature of acculturation has been condensed, with organizations observing international students as bases of both revenue and diverse cultural contact slightly than as those to be assimilated.

Acculturative stress is a specific kind of stress resulting from the course of acculturation (Berry et al., 1987). It denotes to slightly compulsive and unsettling behaviours and experiences generally created throughout acculturation. Indications may comprise depression, anxiety, physical complaints, anger, identity confusion, substance abuse, and family conflict.

Berry (2006) claimed that the notch to which an individual sense able to cope with the stress familiarized via the acculturation process impacts the degree of acculturative stress skilled. International students with tolerable resources and policies to overcome acculturative stress tend to experience it less sturdily than those deficient adequate coping mechanisms or exploiting maladaptive coping strategies. (Koo, K., et al., 2021), (Lerman, S. et al., 2018),

### Social Acculturation

Social acculturation is a psychological process by which an individual or group of people obtain, alter and acclimatize to a new way of doing things. Social acculturation arises when an individual discovers themselves in a place where the culture and mode of undertaking things are dissimilar from those they are used to. Acculturation can also happen when a novel culture is familiarized in a community or at an individual's work place (Sam & Berry, 2010). At work, social acculturation befalls when an employee finds a job in a place where the culture and ways of doing things vary from that of the place they come from. Thomas, T. N. (1995). (Amason et al., 1999, p. 312)

### Social acculturation and work place incivility

Workplace discourtesy is the uncivilized behaviours of staffs within the work grounds; they may comprise insolence, malingering, vandalism, destruction of work apparatus, burglary work equipment, imbibing at the workplace and threatening other employees, among others. These are behaviours that are measured discourteous, and employees who display these behaviours are accountable for penalty. However, employees don't just wake up and decide to be incivil; most employee incivility results from an underlying



psychological issue: stress, pressure from work, and problems at home, among others. Social acculturation has been documented as the leading cause of stress among employees and immigrants who finds themselves in a new culture. (Sam & Berry, 2010)

### Acculturative Stress Theory

Acculturative stress is the psychological reply of immigrants or workers in a new setting because of their acculturation experiences (Dow, 2011). Numerous aspects can inspire acculturative stress. Some of these aspects comprise the incapability to acclimatize to the new culture. The language barrier, alterations in behaviours, and changing food makes them worried for months, affecting their academic performance and association with other students. This designates how social acculturative stress can negatively influence an individual (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Yakunina, E. S et al., 2013 on a multicultural analysis of employee work ethics in a worldwide company supported this view. Their study found that the US, which is a proto-individualist culture, is self-oriented, while most Asian countries are situated in a contrasting collectivist dimension that is categorized by group affiliations. This important cultural alteration can extant solemn adjustment problems when scholars move to dissimilar places to further their education. Understanding conflicting cultural orientations is perilous to evolving insight into international students' psychological adjustment and coping approaches during their initial shift to sojourn campuses. Coping strategies used to manage acculturative stress among Asian overseas students include task-oriented, avoidance-oriented, and emotion-oriented coping strategies for lowering acculturation and acculturative stress. Among the numerous coping strategies, emotion-oriented coping was found to be the most effective in reducing acculturative stress (Ra et al 2015). Acculturative stress and depressed symptoms are two issues that university undergraduate

students confront. Acculturative stress will lead to depressive symptoms. Students who were separated from their family members were more likely to experience acculturative stress than students who stayed with their family members (Cano, 2014).

### METHODOLOGY

This study uses the secondary data analysis using existing data collected for the purposes of previous studies to pursue various research interests than the original study. This could be an alternative perspective to the new research or original questions. The secondary analysis includes the utilization of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative datasets. This approach can be used by researchers to reuse their data or through independent analysis using previously creates qualitative data. However, secondary data analysis is the use of data collected by another person from another purpose. In this case, the researchers pose a question by analysing the dataset was not involved in the collection. The data was collected for other purposes, not to answer the researcher's specific questions, but for other purposes. Therefore, the same dataset can be a primary dataset for other researchers and secondary data for another researcher. The secondary data used in this study are collected from the various published research articles. The data collected from the various secondary sources related to this study area were analysed using statistical tools like MS Excel and SPSS.

### RESULTS

#### A. The effect of the perceived social support and cultural efficacy on acculturation stress.

The key interaction between the constructs is depicted in Table 1. The participants in this study had lower levels of acculturative stress and higher levels of perceived social support and cultural self-efficacy, according to the ASSIS, CSE-A, and MSPSS mean scores.

**Table.1 Descriptive Statistics of ASSIS, CSE-A and MSPSS.**

	Mean	SD	N
.			

Acculturative Stress	78.71	22.28	76
Cultural Self-Efficacy	4.18	.43	76
Perceived Social Support	5.57	.96	76
SOURCE- <a href="https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/18.01.091.20180602.pdf">https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/18.01.091.20180602.pdf</a>			

The results show a reasonably high relationship between the explanatory variables and the criterion variable (Multiple  $R = .49$ ). Statistically significant contributions were made by cultural self-efficacy and perceived social support,  $F(2, 73) = 11.6$ ,  $p < .001$ , accounting for 22 percent of the variance in acculturative stress (adjusted  $R^2 = .22$ ). The standardised regression coefficients show that cultural self-efficacy was a greater predictor of acculturative stress than perceived social support ( $\beta = -.37$ ,  $p < .01$  vs.  $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ). When the component correlations were examined, it was discovered that cultural self-efficacy explained 13.18 percent of the overall variance in acculturative stress, whereas perceived social support explained 6.86 percent.

The findings support the hypothesis that cultural self-efficacy and perceived social support predict lower levels of acculturative stress. However, the data contradicted hypotheses 3, which predicted that perceived social support would be more important than cultural self-efficacy determining fresher students' acculturative stress.

#### B. Predicting the Demographic Predictors on Acculturation stress

The demographic profile of the population Simple regression analysis was used to investigate the effect of demographic characteristics in predicting acculturative stress among participants, using questions about their age, gender, and acculturation experience (i.e., length of stay in sojourn).

**Table. 2 - Result of Simple Regression analysis Predicting Acculturative stress from Demographic variables**

Predictors	r <sup>2</sup>	F (1, 217)	b	SE-b	t	95 % CI
Acculturation experience	.04	8.22**	- 1.80	.63	-2.87 **	- 0.30 – 0.56
Gender	.03	8.19**	.26	.09	2.86**	0.08 – 0.44
Age	.00	.55	-.10	.14	.74	- 0.37 – 0.17
Friendship	.06	12.81**	-.32	.09	-3.58 **	-0.50 – 0.15
Family type	.00	.11	.03	.10	.33	-0.16 - 0.23

Fathers' education	.00	.03	-.01	.03	-.18	-0.06 – 0.05
Mothers' education	.02	5.98*	-.09	.04	-2.44*	-0.16 – -0.02
Family occupation	.00	1.84	.02	.06	.43	-0.09 – 0.13
Living experience outside Kashmir	.00	.23	-.04	.09	-.47	-0.23 – 0.14
Studying experience outside Kashmir	.03	6.97**	-.69	.26	-2.64**	-1.20 – -0.17
Course of study	.00	.97	-.08	.08	-.99	-0.23 – 0.08
Monthly income	.00	.75	-.07	.08	-.86	-0.22 – 0.09
Source - Ayoub, Mohammad (2011)						

Table 2 shows the results of the regression analysis, as well as this demonstrates that data analysis participants with prior experience studying outside in the sojourn are more likely to succeed. To evaluate the study's research hypotheses, descriptive (mean, has minimal acculturative stress compared to those with a standard deviation) and multivariate (simple regression) participants with little prior experience studying outside homeland were used. It was decided to apply statistical approaches. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the data. None of the other demographic characteristics, such as family type or fathers, accurately characterise participants' responses to the study's assessments. Education, occupation of family, age, course of study, and monthly income Simple linear regression analysis was used to see how much of the variance explained by

demographic variables in the discovered significant predictors of acculturative stress among scores on acculturative stress was explained by income and previous experience of residing outside homeland.

### C. Estimation of Cultural intelligence for understanding its association with acculturation stress

Face-to-face interview with some overseas students was conducted for a better understanding of the issues they faced in the country and how they overcame them, among other things. Each person brought up a distinct issue that they were dealing with in their social and academic lives. The Likert Scale was used to assess the cultural intelligence of all of the participants. A score of less than 3 indicates a need for improvement, while a score of more than 4.5 indicates a high CQ strength.

**Table. 3 – Cultural, Emotional and Physical CQ of different Participants**

Student Name	Place of Origin	Acculturative stress involved	Cognitive CQ	Physical CQ	Emotional CQ
AyonjanSaha	Saudi	communication problem	3.5	3.5	3.75

Rattiya Dacanay	Thailand	communication problem, Food Culture, Social Life	3.25	2.5	5
Coreana,	Germany	language and food problem and overcome cultural differences	4	2.5	3.5
Jael	Congo	language and the food problem	4.25	4.5	4.5
Mayank Agarwal	Nepal	social and academic problems, mocked for looks	4	4.25	4.75
Source - Khyati, K., Joel Johnson, and Vandita Mohta. (2020)					

For the above data S.D and mean values were determined

	Mean	S. D
Cognitive CQ	3.8	8.506982
Physical CQ	3.45	7.771744
Emotional CQ	4.3	9.636843

Results of the Cultural intelligence test for each candidate in the study shows that, Ayonjansaha's cognitive and physical CQ indicates he can relate to the culture with less issues. His Emotional CQ was, indicating that he is comfortable dealing with individuals from other cultures. Taking the average of his cognitive, physical, and emotional CQ. he has fewer issues working and relating to a new culture.

Rattaya's Cognitive CQ indicates that she still has to work on this. She is capable of dealing with new surroundings. Her Physical CQ indicates It's difficult for her to adjust her body language in order to communicate with people from the new culture. Her Emotional CQ indicates that she has a high level of CQ. She is self-assured enough to cope with people from other cultures if the need arises. She is confident in her ability to handle the foreign cultural environment.

Coreana's cognitive CQ indicates that she is able to work and relate in a new cultural setting. She is capable of dealing with new surroundings. Physical CQ necessitates quick improvement. It's challenging for her to adjust her body language in order to communicate with people from the new culture. Emotional CQ indicates that she is less confident in

dealing with individuals of a different culture than in adapting to a new culture's lifestyle.

Jael's Cognitive CQ indicates that he can work in a new environment and relate to it. His Physical CQ indicates that he may easily adjust his behaviour when confronted with fresh cross-cultural changes. Her Emotional CQ indicates that she has a high level of CQ. She is self-assured enough to cope with people from other cultures if the need arises. She is confident in her ability to handle the foreign cultural environment.

Mayank has a Cognitive CQ indicates which is above normal, indicating that he is capable of confronting himself in a new context. His Physical CQ and Emotional CQ is 4.75, indicates that if he ever has to interact with people from a different culture, he is confident in himself.

### LIMITATIONS

There are certain limitations to the study that should be acknowledged.

Less or very little acculturative stress research is perceived for international migrants living in Bangalore. Multiple assessment methods may be used in future studies to improve the validity of the findings. Larger sample size could be used to reinforce the results even more.



### FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS –

- The sample size can be raised to improve the findings' validity and generic character.
- Students from a variety of universities could be considered.
- Having a diverse demographic would improve the accuracy of the results.

### CONCLUSION

It was established through the secondary data analysis that there exists a link between psychological factors, sociocultural adaptation with Acculturation stress

The major findings of the study are as follows –

- Both variables, i.e., sociocultural adaptation, psychological adjustment with acculturative stress are correlated to one another.
- Fresher students and employees with complex social associations shows a negative association with depression thus display negative association with acculturation stress.
- There is a significant difference in depression levels with levels of social support and cultural efficacy.

Bangalore is rich in diverse cultures they have a blend of Collectivistic and Individualistic cultural views. It is therefore easy for the International Candidates flocking from different places to get along and survive in the new environment. But in most of the situations the feeling of belonging, language hurdles, academic differences, Stereotyping, racism, discrimination etc., tends to make individuals

feel left out. From this paper, we conclude that the host countries need to understand the Acculturation effects on the foreign individuals and implement certain measures that could prevent them from such experiences. Counselling sessions must be normalised and must rigorously be implemented in the workplaces and campuses. Inclusion of Foreign Individuals in the cultural activities and campus activities is important.

### APPENDIX

**Interview questions-** [Source - Khyati, K., Joel Johnson, and Vandita Mohta. (2020)]

- Describe the educational learning environment in your country.
- How is it different from the learning environment in our country?
- What are the similarities which you found in both the educational systems?
- Did you face cultural shock? How did you overcome this?
- What are the current problems you are facing in terms of cross-cultural differences?
- How did people around you make a difference, either good or bad?
- Did you face any problem related to your academic life?

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) Very Strongly Disagree = 1 Strongly Disagree = 2 Mildly Disagree = 3 Neutral = 4 Mildly Agree = 5 Strongly Agree = 6 Very Strongly Agree = 7

**Table A1 MSPSS Scale**

	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.							
2	There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and							
3	My family really tries to help me.							
4	I get the emotional help and support I need from my family							
5	I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.							
6	My friends really try to help me.							
7	I can count on my friends when things go wrong.							
8	I can talk about my problems with my family.							
9	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.							
10	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.							
11	My family is willing to help me make decisions							
12	I can talk about my problems with my friends.							

[SOURCE - <https://ijip.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/18.01.091.20180602.pdf>]

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