

The Effects That Being a Second Generation Migrant Has on Mental Health in Ireland



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Introduction:

Little is known about the challenges facing young people growing up in Ireland today. However, we do know that mental health problems are on the rise and young people are seeking help. The willingness to seek help for mental health difficulties is related to the understanding of what mental health is. If that understanding is based in the culture and society you are living in it is easier to make sense of your experiences and to know what help is out there. This may not be true for people growing up in a different culture to the one they were born in, namely second generation migrants. Second generation migrants are influenced by, their parents cultural background, whilst also integrating the culture of their own country of birth. This may lead to confusion and complexity in their beliefs and understandings. Add to this a life stage which is characterised by seeking to understand the self, and to start on one's adult life and it is clear that we need to know more about the mental health understanding of second generation immigrants.

Research questions and objectives:

Are there quantitative differences in emotional or mental health literacy in second generation immigrants from different societies? This will mainly focus on second generation immigrants from Romania and Africa, and will compare this to Irish young people.

How does Ireland's second-generation youth population understand mental health and how do they develop coping strategies to protect their mental well-being and develop resilience?

Are there differences among the second-generation youth cohort in terms of their ethnic backgrounds? For instance, are those from an African second-generation background more prone to mental health difficulties than, say, those from an Eastern-European second-generation background? And if so, why?

Theories & My World Survey

Assimilation – focuses on how people interact and become acquainted with the culture of the country they are residing in (1).

Many studies point to the fact that discrimination raised the possibility of developing mental health issues (2,3).

The My World survey conducted by Jigsaw and UCD, was a great resource for youth mental health in Ireland (4).

Primarily it focused on the triggers the youth of today feel, this was beneficiary for me to structure my survey on those findings.



Testing & Methodology

Psychometric tests
A standard method to measure individual's mental capability and understanding.

- Survey contained:
- Rosenbergs self esteem scale
 - EOD (experiences of discrimination)
 - Perceived day to day discrimination scale
 - Perceived social support (MSPSS)
 - Mental Health literacy (MHLS)

The data was collected using Qualtrics. 94 participants. These participants were found online.

Findings and feelings

"I am so glad that I got help to help me navigate my way through life and past these experiences easier".

"I'm black and I look very easy to pick on - in the stereotypes black people are "scary" so when they see me, I'm an easy target in a way".

"I always had the thought that I have to prove I'm good enough, that I deserve to be here".

- References:
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 3. Doyle, G., Cafferkey, K. and Fullam, J., 2012. The European health literacy survey: results from Ireland. *UCD: HLS EU*.
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Conclusion and future research

Overall, much can be said for the mental health difficulties that second generation migrants face. It is important to note that not all the problems faced can be attributed to their ethnicity. Further research is needed to delve deeper into the intricate nature of mental health difficulties. Surprisingly, socioeconomic status, and age was a huge feature in perceived discrimination.

One cannot simply attribute the rise in mental health difficulties in Ireland to only one issue, however it is clear that the discrimination and perceived discrimination levels in Ireland are a cause of concern for young peoples mental health.

