
The Effect of Social Support, Gender and Years of Immigration on Immigrants' Depression

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ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT: The aim of this study was to examine the effect of social support, gender and years of immigration on immigrant's depression. Researchers have shown that there is an impact on depression state depending on years of immigration. Also, research has shown that there are individual differences in terms of how the immigrants perceives the social support and the interaction that has in the quality of life. Interestingly was that important factor being the social support that perceived immigrants. The design of this study was a parametric correlation and multiple regression were used to examine the results. Three independent variables the first is social support which measure the total support and more specific family support, friends support and significant others support. The second is gender with two levels males or females. Third variable is years of immigration with two levels less 5 years or more 5 years. Dependent variable is depression scores. The participants will be asked to complete two tests. The first was Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support has 12 items about social support on significant others, family and friends' support. The second questionnaires were CES- D with 20 items about depression with the higher scores indicating the presence of more symptomatology. The number of participants was 124 by which 62 they were male immigrants and 62 they were female immigrants. From the results of research, it was found that the years of immigration, the age of immigrants and significant others support associated with the presence of depression of immigrants. Theoretical contributions and future research directions are discussed in the concluding section of the paper.

KEYWORDS: Depression, social support, immigrants

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INTRODUCTION

In our days, there is a large wave of immigrants. This is mainly due to political, economic reasons. Many people leave our countries with the prospect of a better quality of life. Every immigrant has inherited their own experiences and their own principles. The immigrant raises the culture of the country of origin and as well as the family and social network commitments. The isolation that characterizes the lives of immigrants generally aggravated by the experience of migration and cultural conflicts that often follow.

Immigrants are people who have abandoned their country to gain new opportunities and better prospects for living. Immigration is the movement of people in one country in order to have a better quality of life and to settle. Research has studied the difficulty faced by migrants in their effort to

restore their lives in a new cultural framework. An important factor in migration seems to be a culture that has the person, which is in direct connection with development of the individual's behavior. Furthermore, argue that the integration of an immigrant depends on the social framework. (Berry, 1997) Migration as a phenomenon inherent of human evolution affects directly or indirectly ever deeper key aspects of modern social, economic and political life and requires various forms of social intervention. There is a strong presence of immigrants in our days and there are many difficulties that they face in the social and workplace environment because of the weak social position. By the immigration, we mean the permanent or temporary change of location of an individual or social group. The main reason for migration is the job search, better quality of life or the family

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reunion. (Berry, 1997) According to Boas (1940) support that cultures it's one of the most important factor in the social sciences and the people are the motive force for development based on culture. Also, Boas defined culture as the habits that has a society within everyday life and as an interaction of common meanings. (Boas, 1940) Moreover Wundt mentions that social psychology is based on a collective piece of human beings as the culture affects directly the behavior. (Cole, 1998) Cultures differ significantly from how they attribute social behavior. People they are even different in the style of performance and the way of socializing. Social support motivates migrants to integrate more easily and to respond to the new realities of life.

According to Taylor (2011) mention that social support is the perception of the person who receiving assistance through other people. More specifically it is the creation of a supportive social network. Social support may have various as can be emotional, counselling or to have as a primary aim of companionship. Moreover, social support may be the perception when the person has the need to accept help from people who love and care for, in whatever can be addressed when he needs it. Support can be come from many sources, such as family, partners, friends, organizations who listen and give advice. (Taylor, 2011) To the experience of immigration observe emotional and mood changes. Also, loss of personal growth has negative effects on relocation. (Berger & Weiss, 2003) According to Stewart et al., support that immigrant facing many difficulties on social support. Also, immigrants faced other difficulties such as dwindling social networks, social insecurity and family conflicts. Social isolation triggers the emotional changes and depression. (Stewart et al, 2008) Social support is being studied by the field of psychology and argues that there are significant benefits for the individual as for the physical and mental health. (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991)

According to Schaefer, Coyne, and Lazarus (1981) mention that there are four types of social support. The first type of social support is the emotional support in this type of basic feature is the love, the offer of sympathy. The emotional support covers the fields of concern and trust. The person accepts emotional coverage and care and this way there is encouraging. This type of support mention also as esteem support and appraisal support. The second type of social support is the tangible support is a kind of instrumental support. The tangible support encompasses there isa specific way that people assist others. The companionship support is the third type of support in this type the person who needs support accept the presence of companions to engage in shared social activities. Finally, the fourth types of social support are the informational support have the guidance character. The person accepts suggestions and advice. Informational support gives the opportunity for useful information and advice for problem solve. There is also been found that there are gender and cultural differences in social support. All these different types of social support relate

differently to health personality and personal relationships. The perceptual support can give better mental health. (Schaefer, et al. 1981)

In America in their efforts to integrate immigrants used the term of assimilation. The assimilation sets the passageway for the integration of immigrants in accordance with the cultural model of society that will accept him. More specifically the immigrant is invited to integrate with society and become similar to the group that belongs. (Abramitzky et al. , 2014) According to Abercrombie , Hill and Turner (1991) mention that the social integration associated with the preservation and cohesion of society need to coexist different ethnicities. In addition to the social incorporation of the individual associated with the groups and society. The individual in society share the same convictions and beliefs and may have common goals. (Robertson, 1991) This is the main reason of social support that will be given in a host country.

Beyond the culture an important role in humans inside the society is the identity. According to the identity that supports, participates in the social context and interacts. According to Brewer (2001) there are different types of self and identity. Social Identity is the self- concept within social groups. More specifically the four types of how react the people inside society. At first have the group properties which are gaining from other members of society. A relational social identity defines the person and position in society in terms of relations. Group social identities define the person in relation to how to participate in the group context. Finally, are the collective identities in which the person sharing characteristics of the group and called to action based on these characteristics. (Brewer, 2001)

The immigrant often faces the emotional consequences because that depends from communication. Language is the key factor in which immigrant connected with the culture that it carries. In addition, the immigrant when arrives in a country a primary goal is finding a job. In case that they have not access of languages created many difficulties. The linguistic weakness prevents dialogue and accurate information from the employer. A research in America showed that the money that they receive immigrants is directly related to linguistic ability. More specifically immigrants had linguistic fluency had the highest salary. For these reasons are called to deal with the emotional stress based on the difficulties that faced and causes depressed the person. (Wrigley & Strawn, 2002) Moreover, cultural differences exist in social support because of different experiences and individual differences.

On the other hand, there is exist gender differences in social support. Woman often are those seeking social support and give more social support to those who are in their social network. The difference between gender is that seeking emotional support. (Shumaker, & Hill, 1991) Although, Shelley Taylor et, al. (2000) support that gender differences in social support has as a background biological difference that have women and men about how they respond and manage situations. Researches have shown that married men as they

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can share with their partners the sentimental concerns tend to have less presence of depression. In contrast, unmarried men have higher levels of depression. Women are the ones who interact more in social context with social support. Also, are those who experience more and more intensely negative feelings such as for example feelings of depression and anxiety. There is a difference in how they manage the situations of women and men and how they experience their feelings. (Hobfoll et al., 1996)

Another research examined the quality of the support and the amount of different types of women and predictive of quality and quantity of social support on well-being. The findings of this research showed that women have a larger social network and receive support from different social groups. In contrast, the men receiving social support and rely more on their wives. More specifically, women are the ones who accept quantitative strengthening social support than men. The quality of support is the most important for the gender is the one that has the greatest impact on the well-being of the individual. However, both parameters are those that affect women more than men. (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987).

Moreover, based on these researches social support, gender is directly linked to depression. People who are depressed mood tend to be sad, to have the feeling of being helpless and frustrated. Depression is a state of low mood and low energy functionality in everyday life. Furthermore, the depression tends to make the person has changes in thoughts, behaviors and emotions with no functionality. People who are in a depressed state often have a tendency for inertia and low mood for activities as observed and nutritional disorder. (Sandra, 1997)

The separation anxiety is the first feeling experienced intense during the stay in the host country. The distance of the closer person is the first step for loneliness of the immigration. This feeling can create negative effects on immigrant. (Hovey et al., 1996) However a key element of migration and the changes that accepts the person both in social and in personal level are the year's immigration that has. (Chiswick & Miller, 1994). Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health problems faced by migrants in the country of migration. Immigrants were examined in cross-cultural Psychiatry and found that immigrants have emotional disorders most notably depression. The research showed that there was a 31% psychotic disorder and 2% in personality disorders. It also showed that people suffering from depression related to their performance in everyday life as well as on issues of slavery and seems to have supportive interaction system in that regard to the family, friends and the social environment. (Tzika, 2015)

The phenomenon of migration may arouse different concerns such as depression. The migration itself is not a cause of mental disorder. According to Karen et al. (2002) who examine 2 years' immigrants about depression found that there are significant differences after 2 years in scores. After from the two years it seemed that there was an improvement

in the levels of depression. Important factors are the existence of relatives and support they receive from the family as it is an important factor for preventing depression. Additionally, argues that depression must be treated immediately and not considered a transient event. (Aroian & Norris, 2002) Moreover, Silove et al. (1998) support that there are significant higher scores in immigrants who have the presence of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. The depression state in immigration associated with the insecure situation. (Silove et al., 1998)

Bengi-Arslan et al. (2002) in their research mention that there is a presence of mental illness, and is a particularly the existence of depression to migrants in the Netherlands which is visible even to physical symptoms. Also mention as an important factor in the relationship of the family of the immigrant as they pose and the financial rate of immigrants. (Bengi-Arslan et al., 2002) From the researches that have been carried out concludes that there is in specific migrant groups which are highly vulnerable to psychological hazards. In therefore depends on the reasons for migration either of these reasons are emotional or is economic. Because the groups facing difficulties and have no social support are more vulnerable to depression symptoms. The characteristics of migrants in terms of social networks associated with emotional support and emotional state of the immigrant. It seems that friends and family are those who interact and enhance the emotional state during the migration period. Also, high levels of communication with friends give increased emotional support. On the other hand, stronger social support when social networks interact and observed low presence of depression as there is strengthening and support. (Vega, Kolody, Valle & Weir, 1991).

However, an important factor for the emotional changes of immigrant over the social support and the gender and migration in recent years. As it seems that there are changes according to researches regarding the psychology of immigrant by leveraging the different factors. According to Lerner et al. (2005) they studied the effect of migration time in relation to the psychological effects it has on immigrants. Studied the changes there have been in 5 years after immigration. Interviews were made at 600 people and examined the psychological distress and the results were compared with samples of the same group of immigrants during the first year of the migration. The findings of this research showed that there is difference in psychological state of immigrants. Several years after the immigration of social and psychological factors have an important role in the psychology of the immigrant. (Lerner, Kertes & Zilber, 2005). Another research was initiated to examine if the experiences of migration affect the psychological discomfort of immigrant during initial installation period. In addition, they examined the differences between different ethnic groups and psychological variations respectively. The results showed that both cases were statistically significant results. Ethnicity and the years of migration in recent related to the

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psychological discomfort which feels the immigrant. Specifically mentioned in this research that the 5 or more years of migration provide differences within groups that belong to. Apart from the different ethnicity and how they experience situations research also showed that women are more vulnerable to experience discomfort in relation to men. (Chung & Kagawa-Singer, 1993)

Similarly, Suarez - Orozco et al., (2002) mention that the migration of families accepts radical changes. The research findings show that when they are separated from the family are more likely to show symptoms of depression. (Suarez - Orozco et al., 2002) About the residence time of the migrant in one country has observed that directly affect the socio-cultural and psychological distress. In accordance, the Ward & Kennedy (1999) the effect in relation to the year of immigration seems to be different. The psychological effects of the adjustment of immigrant can make months or years to manifest. More specifically, the first time it seems that immigrants are in a denial and there is the procedure of cancellation of what they experience. The immigrant with a longer migration it seems that is most receptive and morbidity. (Tousignant, 1992) Similar researches have shown corresponding results. The research of Dunn and Dyck (2000) had studied the socio- economic data and found that impact directly on the health of migrants. This evaluation was in immigrants and the results showed that immigrants have poorer health. (Dunn & Dyck, 2000) Additional findings showed respectively Ritsner et al., (2000) where risk factors studied in physical disorders. High risk levels detected were related to the time spent. More specifically, the more years that have an immigrant increased symptoms. (Ritsner et al., 2000)

However, as shown by the researches of the social support to immigrants helps the negative factors that are either emotional and psychological factors. Koreans residing in America and accept supportive networks seem to exhibit lower levels of depression. (Triandis et al., 2005) Corresponding findings show that social support reduces the negative effects on mental health. This is reinforced when the immigrants have adapted and network in the country you reside. (Lee et al., 2004) The concepts of racism, of anxiety and depression seem to decrease when there is strengthening of social support. In the context of social support as mentioned above there are some variation on that of attracting women and men in terms of social networks. Important role is the quantity of social networks whether it relates to friends or acquaintances. More specifically, women tend to owe their mental well- being in social network where they give more importance. As is emphasized and the frequency of contacts with friends, acquaintances and family. In addition, relate the age and social support seems to affect mental health, respectively. People in older age feel satisfaction from the social support and the people the larger so more seeking support. (Kafetsios & Sideridis, 2006)

According to the previously researches we see that there are variables that affect immigrant for this reason doing the specific research is done, in order to see the interaction, have on immigration. The current study aims to examine the social support and depression in immigrants. Furthermore, we will test the relationship among the gender of the immigrants, their social support system the years since migration and depression. Findings may be impacted by social supports. At this point we do hypothesis testing. The null hypothesis (H0) is: There won't be a significant difference on the presence of depression and immigrants depending of social support, gender and years of immigration. The alternative hypothesis (H1) is that there will be a significant difference on the presence of depression and immigrants depending of social support, gender and years of immigration.

METHOD

Design:

The design of this study was a parametric correlation and multiple regression were used on this study. The participants for this study was N=124. Three independent variables the first is social support which measure the total support and more specific family support, friends support and significant others support. The second is gender with two levels males or females. Third variable is years of immigration with two levels less 5 years or more 5 years. Dependent variable is depression scores.

Participants:

The participants in this research were occasional sample of immigrants from the N. G. O. "Apostoli". The range of their age was 18- 55 years. The average age of participants was 30,06 and standard deviation was 7,720. The participants in this research were 124. The 62 of immigrants who participated were female and the 62 were male immigrants. The participation in this research was voluntary.

Materials:

For conducting the research two questionnaires were used. The first was Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support has 12 items about social support on significant others, family and friends support. (Theofilou, 2015) Participants are required to select the word which best describes their current state from the options. The scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The reliability of this measure for total scale was .88. For the significant other was .91, Family support was .87 and Friends support was .85. The second questionnaires were CES- D with 20 items about depression with the higher scores indicating the presence of more symptomatology. (Radloff, 1977). Participants are required to select the word which best describes their current state from the options are "Rarely or None of the time" (less than 1 Day), "Some or a little of the time" (1-2 Days), "Occasionally or a Moderate Amount of time" (3-4 Days), "Most or All of the time" (5-7 Days). The reliability of this measure was about .85. Participants were

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complete questionnaires after the briefing that they had. The questionnaires are weighted in Greek.

Procedure:

The conduct of the research was in N. G. O. "Apostoli. During the research were given the questionnaires to the participants and asked them to complete it. When they completed questionnaires became debriefing and data used only for the research and was confidential.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Median	SD
Depression Scores	1.40	1	.493

In the above table, we see that participants in the depression scores have mean 1.40 and standard deviation 0,493.

Correlation analysis was undertaken to assess the relationships between depression, social support, gender and years of immigration. There were three significant correlations. The first was between depression and the age of immigrant ($r=-.41$, $p<.05$) showing that the depression depending of the age of immigrant. The other showed a

RESULTS

The results were collected from the participant's answers to the multidimensional scale of perceived social support test and the CES-D test. The test that used was multiple regression which can predict which of two categories a person is likely to belong. Below are the Mean, Medium and Standard deviations of gender and depression scores with $N=124$ from the statistics. See Appendix 2 for statistical calculations.

significant correlation between depression and years of immigration ($r= -.34$, $p<.05$) showing that depression depending by the years of immigration. The third was between depression and the friends support ($r=-.17$, $p<.01$) showing that depression depending by the friend's support. Table displays correlations coefficients between all variables. See Appendix 3 for statistical calculations.

Table 2: Correlation between gender, social support, years of immigration and depression.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Gender							
2.Age							
3.SignOthers Support	-.20*	-.04					
4.Friends support	.01	.09	.52**				
5.Total Support	-.06	.04	.80**	.83**			
6.Years of Immigration	-.11	.49*	.19*	.26**	.21*		
7.Depression Scores	-.33	-.41**	.11	-.17*	-.07	-.34**	

Standard multiple regression has been employed to predict the presence of depression of migrants, using measurements of social support, years of immigration and gender. The overall model was significant [$F(6) = 6.46$, $p<.01$] showing that these three variables significantly predict the presence of depression in migrants with the model explained 28% of the variance in depression scores. ($R^2 = .28$; Adjusted $R^2 = .23$). Of the three predictors, two were significant years of

immigration ($B= -.22$, $t =-2,28$, $p<.05$) indicating that less years of immigration were associated with presence of more symptoms of depression, and age of immigrant ($B=-.017$, $t=-2,88$, $p<.05$), showing that the age of immigrant associated with presence symptoms of depression. Total Social support was not able to predict depression ($B=-.916$, $t=-,856$, $p<.39$) but significant others support gave us different results ($B=.455$, $t=1,26$, $p<.05$). See Appendix 4 for statistical calculations.

Table 3: Standard Multiple Regression of Depression

Variables	Beta	t	Sig	R^2	Adj R^2
Years of Immigration	.034	-2.881	.024		
Age	-.268	-2.881	.005		
SignOthers Support	.455	1.262	.210	.28	.23

DISCUSSION

In this research examined the social support and depression in immigrants with two different tests. The first was Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support about social support on significant others, family and friends support. The second questionnaire were CES- D about depression with the higher scores indicating the presence of more symptomatology. Furthermore, we will test the relationship among the gender of the immigrants, their social support system, the years since migration and depression. According to the statistical results we see that there was an impact by a kind of social support in psychological mood of immigrants. Moreover, we see an impact by the years of immigration and the age of immigrant. Seems to support the hypothesis in the specific social supports networks and in years of immigration that has an immigrant. The research studied immigrants in an attempt to clarify the factors that lead to depression. Immigrants are groups of people which are vulnerable to psychological concerns. Every immigrant has inherited their own experiences and their own principles. The immigrant raises the culture of the country of origin and as well as the family and social network commitments. For these reasons, we see in this research study to relate the years of immigration with the depression state of the immigrant. This is observed because of the immigrants who are separated from their social network and their families are invited to address everyday difficulties through an emotional confusion. In the early years of immigration, we found that there are more pronounced symptoms of depression. Instead immigrants with more years of immigration seems to have fewer symptoms of depression. At this point connects also the second finding of research which wants immigrants to accept support from significant others who enhance the everyday life of immigrants with the supportive character.

However, the research showed an unexpected finding where sets as an important factor the age of migrants. Its seems to play an important role the age, because as migrants tend to experience different experiences and perceive differently the information that they receive to the new data in quality of life as immigrants. Moreover, the findings showed that the presence of depression among men and women is similar and that depends of the years of immigration and the age of migrants. The separation anxiety is the first felling experienced intense during the stay in the host country. The distance of the closer person is the first step for loneliness of the immigration. This feeling can create negative effects on immigrant. (Hovey et al., 1996) For this reason immigrants will be faced at the same way the presence of depression.

According, Vega et, al. (1991) studied the characteristics of migrants in social networks and the correlation in emotional support and the feeling of being unhappy. The results showed that the social support from friends and family is important. Interact support from friends as it seems that the support of friends remains stable over the years. Instead the family

support grows with the years. The major source of emotional support is the family. Additionally, argue that the most frequent contacts with friends increases emotional support. All social networks are not associated with depression because important role is the presence or absence of social support. (Vega et, al. ,1991) In this research seems to have statistically significant result for the influence of support from significant others in immigrants.

However, findings showed that the years of immigration is an important factor for the presence of depression. More specifically findings showed that immigrants with less than 5 years of immigration have predicted probability to experiencing depression. On the other hand, immigrants with more than 5 years are less likely to experiencing depression. According to Lerner et, al. (2005) mentioned that there is difference in psychological state of immigrants. Several years after the immigration of social and psychological factors have an important role in the psychology of the immigrant. (Lerner, Kertes & Zilber, 2005). In addition, similar findings have showed Chung & Kagawa-Singer, (1993) with statistically significant results about the experiences of migration affect the psychological discomfort of immigrant during initial installation period. Moreover, support that the 5 or more years of migration provide differences within groups that belong to. (Chung & Kagawa-Singer, 1993)

Another finding of the present research was about Total Social support was not able to predict depression but significant others support gave us different results. Significant others support seems that helps immigrants to cope with the presence of depression as the support helps them to cope with everyday life and to handle various situations which can be depressing. Corresponding findings show that social support reduces the negative effects on mental health. This is reinforced when the immigrants have adapted and network in the country you reside. (Lee et, al., 2004) In addition, another research findings show that when they are separated from the family are more likely to show symptoms of depression. (Suarez - Orozco et al., 2002) For this reason the absence of family support can bring the presence of depression.

When conducting a research, there are practical limitations to control all possible factors that can affect the values of the variable. The existence and importance of different exogenous variables which can impact the results of the research. In this research one factor which can affect the values of the variables. Since the society does not accept directly the diversity immigrant because of different society model, often experiencing decline and racism. This can affect the psychology of the individual negatives if there has been any incident leading to feelings of depression. Thus, can influence the research. Moreover, another important factor that can affect the research will be a significantly high levels of education cause can perceive a situation with differential

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way. Finally, if there has been some nasty event before the research can be given some wrong information. It could be performed a mini interview with the participant, concerning social elements, so as the external factor to be confronted.

The research was conducted due to understand the influencing factors of the psychological distress of migrants. The research strengths were that addressed different cultures so immigrants had different experiences. Additionally, the data were collected was from different gender of immigrants and from different age groups. All these helps to have an holistic image of results for the factors affecting the psychological state of the immigrant.

In the present research, we observe that there is an impact on immigrants in relation with depression. It would be interesting to study new researches whether impact the psychological mood of immigrants when the migration has not been done individually but however with the family. It seems that depression and anxiety may be associated with the financial strain in the country of immigration. What kind of support accept and which difficulties faced immigrants when must protect their families. In the future research interest would have to study more specific the immigration and the impact of different cultures in relation of the presence of depression.

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