

**ACCULTURATIVE STRESS AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF FOREIGN STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS TO COUNSELING**

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**Abstract**

Overall, this study attempts to bring light to the understanding of foreign students' acculturative stress and its relation with their help-seeking behavior. It also ascertained other sources of difficulty contributory to the acculturative stress experienced by the foreign students. Three measures, namely, the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS), and modified versions of the Socio-cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) were administered to 432 foreign students enrolled at Cagayan State University, Philippines. Aside from the standard questionnaires, interview and documentary analysis were also used to educe the data needed in the study. Results of the study accentuated the prevalence of a moderate level of acculturative stress experienced by the foreign students and with a high level of help-seeking tendency. Bivariate correlations indicated that the overall level of acculturative stress is significantly related to help-seeking behavior. These findings resulted in recommendations for improving the efforts of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the country admitting foreign students particularly in designing, advocating, implementing and evaluating institutional policies that affect the welfare of their foreign enrolees. Further, implications pointed to the importance of honing the multicultural competencies of counselors and educators as this is necessary when relating with the foreign student population.

**Keywords:** Acculturative Stress, Help-Seeking Behavior, Foreign Students, Counseling Implications

**1. Introduction**

Like many of its neighboring countries, the Philippines indeed had its eye on becoming a study destination of choice for students from the Asia-Pacific region. While a small player in the race for international students, the Philippines' geographic location, educational opportunities, affordability, the use of English as medium of instruction, its climate and culture make it a very appealing study destination (World Education News and Reviews, 2009). In fact, the Philippine Bureau of Immigration reported in January 2013 that of the two

hundred three thousand seven hundred fifty-three (203,753) foreigners in the country, forty-seven thousand four hundred seventy-eight (47,478) are studying in schools and universities across the country, which is fourteen percent (14%) higher than the forty-one thousand four hundred forty three (41,443) foreigners who applied in 2011. With the influx of foreign students in the country, institutions of higher education admitting foreign students are challenged not only to make its academic offerings and services responsive to the demands of internalization and globalization but also to provide quality educational experiences to the concerned students. HEI's in the country should not only recognize the cultural and academic diversity among the foreign student population but should also look unto their needs and expectations so as to effectively assist them in achieving their goals. The need to establish mechanisms designed to deal on the vulnerabilities of the foreign enrollees particularly those that concern their cross-cultural adaptation is increasingly indubitable. Moreover, education providers should consider the variety of issues and concerns the foreign students may have regarding their adjustment. If the country desires to maintain its foreign populace then efforts to ensure their well-being should also be prioritized.

These entail the necessity of determining the various difficulties, challenges and stressors the foreign students might be experiencing relative to their acculturation, that is, the sociological and psychological adaptation demanded from them as they face a new educational system and social environment. International students are challenged to cope with physical, cultural, and psychological changes as they undergo acculturation. Hence, they are prone of experiencing "acculturative stress", a phenomenon characterized by difficulties and stressors that arise as a part of acculturation and adaptation process (Berry, 2005).

Literature has consistently suggested that foreign students are highly susceptible to stress derived from cross-cultural adjustment (Liao and Wei, 2014; Han, Han, Luo, Jacobs and Jean-Baptiste, 2013; Tochkov, Levine, and Sanaka, 2010; Nilsson, Butler, Shouse and Joshi, 2008). Research findings suggest that due to difficulties in adapting to a new social and cultural environment, international students may be at a high risk of developing physical, psychosocial, and behavioral problems, (Li et al., 2013; Sicat, 2011; De Jesus 2009; Pan, Wong, Joubert, & Chan, 2008). Their acculturative stressors come from issues with the language barrier, the academic stress brought about by the desire to make good grades, education stressors such as a new and different education system, socio-cultural stressors, discrimination, and practical stressors, including issues with food, health and religious practices, accommodation and transportation.

Acculturative stress may lead into an accumulated pressure which may put a significant demand on the individual. When acculturative stress accumulates or fails to find a way to be released, it may exert an adverse effect on one's psychological well-being (Lin & Yi, 1997).

Hence, the development and promotion of effective adaptation among the foreign students in the country is increasingly important to achieve desired educational outcomes. The purpose of the HEI's should not only be to recruit international students. Rather, to educate these students for cross-cultural knowledge and to develop communicative competence for them to become more capable and competitive in the international professional market.

This study aims to examine the level of acculturative stress these students experience in their attempt to adapt with the Philippine culture. Moreover, it determines the prevalence of other sources of difficulty which may be contributory to their acculturative stress level. It looks further unto how likely the respondents manifest help-seeking tendencies and their dominant source of help. The correlation between these constructs was also investigated.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. It endeavors to establish association between the foreign students' acculturative stress and help-seeking behavior. It also endeavors to identify other sources of difficulty contributory to their experience of acculturative stress.

The study was conducted mainly at Cagayan State University, Philippines. Among the campuses of the University, CSU-Andrews and CSU-Carig are the campuses accredited by the Philippine Bureau of Immigration and Commission on Higher Education to admit foreign students. Hence, the locale of this study is at the Tuguegarao City Campuses of Cagayan State University, Philippines.

A total number of 432 officially enrolled foreign students took part in the study; 19 were from CSU-Andrews Campus who are enrolled under the Ph.D in Language Education program, while 413 were from CSU-Carig Campus composed of 354 who are enrolled in the BS in Biology (PREMED) program and 59 presently enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine program. Purposive sampling was applied to select the samples.

The major data collecting instruments for this study include three (3) sets of standardized test – the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) which determines the data on the level of acculturative stress experienced; and modified versions of the Socio-

cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) which serves as a basis in looking unto the sources of difficulty experienced by the foreign students; and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) which is used as a basis to determine the students' intentions to seek help from different sources. Aside from the standard questionnaires, interview and documentary analysis were also used to educe the data needed in the study.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Level of Acculturative Stress Experienced by Foreign Students**

Results indicate that the foreign students experience an average level of acculturative stress, with a mean of 119.11 and a standard deviation of 20.36. This finding accentuates the prevalence of acculturative stress among the foreign students enrolled in the University. It affirms that stress caused by acculturation is a common phenomenon which can be experienced by the sojourners. Any life change, whether welcomed or unwelcomed, is likely to result in stress and requires coping strategies to be brought into play. Foreign students are not exempted of this reality. They are likely to face a series of environmental, cultural, social, and psychological changes on a daily basis in their acculturative experience, which can have a significant impact on their psychological well-being. At the same time, their help-seeking behavior will determine to a large extent whether or not they can cope with their adjustment struggles.

As can be gleaned from the data in Figure 1, the respondents scored average in homesickness, perceived hate/rejection, culture shock, guilt, and miscellaneous/other significant factors.

This result affirms that indeed, living away from family and close friends is challenging for foreign students. According to Yi, Giseala Lin, and Kishimoto (2003), homesickness is one of the most frequently reported concerns of international students and this is affirmed through this finding. Looking at the result, it could be determined that the respondents miss their home country particularly the family and friends they left behind. As further revealed, homesickness arises when students are far away from home, family, friends and environment that they are used to. Researchers have encapsulated homesickness in five factors: missing family, missing friends, feeling lonely, adjustment problems, and home ruminations (Willis, Stroebe, and Hewstone, 2003, as cited in Kegel, 2009). Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) stated that these students often think about what family and friends are doing in their home countries. These students particularly miss their ethnic foods, clothes, newspapers,

entertainment (e.g., music, TVs, movies, books), and natural climates found back home.

The data however indicates that they are able to withstand to new and unfamiliar environment amidst missing their family and country of origin. The finding accentuates the adaptation concerns and experiences typical to any individual – be it foreign or local. It is indubitable that when one is exposed to a new environment with different cultural values, beliefs, and practices, there can be a high risk for stress. The respondents are not exempted from feelings of homesickness and sadness especially with the thought that their family and relatives are geographically away from them. Such stress can even be aggravated with the thought that support systems like family, friends and people in the home country are not readily accessible. However, anyone who is into such situation may be compelled to adapt. Just like any other functioning organism, they will surely do all that they can just so to adapt. They have their own means of motivating themselves and of ensuring that they can get through despite homesickness. The result is therefore suggestive of the respondents' inclination to cope and thrive outside their comfort zones.

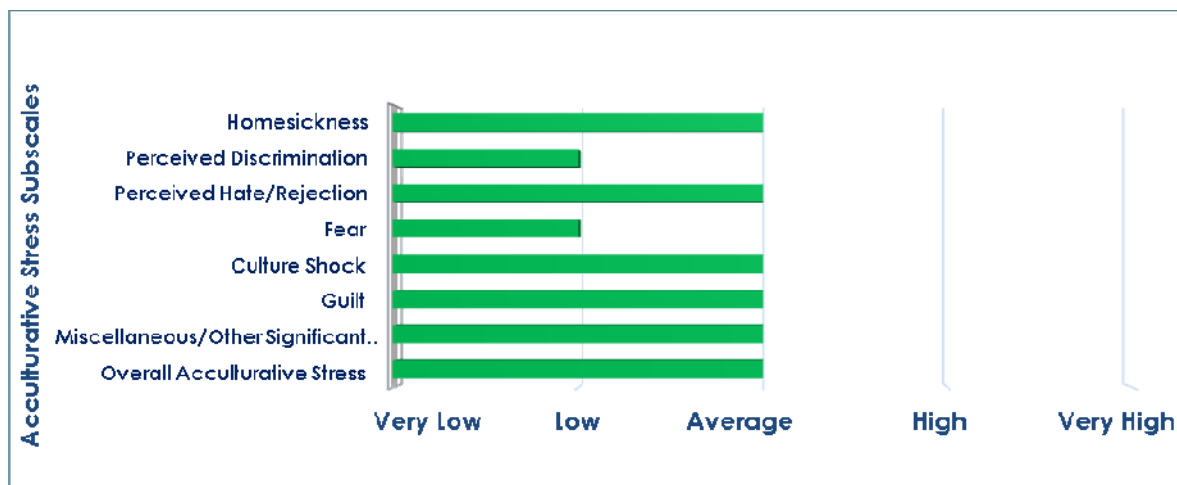
The finding also elucidates that the respondents scored average in perceived hate/rejection and guilt. In this study, perceived hate happens when the foreign students feel that the environment is too uncomfortable for them to live. It refers to the perceived negative attitudes that the host nationals have toward the foreign students. Thus, hate can result when a student feels that he/she has been rejected by the people of the host nation. Students may also experience fear of the unknown because of insecurities and worries, (Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994). Sometimes, even the decision to integrate more with the host nation may lead to guilty feelings as a betrayal to their own culture, (Sandu and Asrabadi, 1994). Adopting the cultural values of the host culture may be perceived as being not sincere to their own culture. Hence, these factors could aggravate the level of acculturative stress experienced by the foreign students.

It can also be inferred from the data that culture shock typically instigates acculturative stress. The moderate result proves that it is more difficult for foreign students to adapt to a host society which they find unfamiliar. In fact, according to Furnham&Bochner, (1986) as cited in De Araujo, (2011), culture shock is a psychological reaction to unfamiliar cultural norms encountered in unfamiliar environments. Not all values and behavioral practices in the host culture are compatible with those in the home countries of the international students. Differences in mannerism and communication may cause culture shock for foreign students, which consequently may bring about if not elevate levels of acculturative stress.

On the other hand, the result shows that the respondents scored low in perceived discrimination and fear. Pedersen (1991) mentioned that greater levels of discrimination and prejudice are likely to occur among international students who are from cultures that are the most different from the host countries. This probably accounts for the respondents' low score on the aforesaid subscale which consequently implies that they don't really feel discriminated in the country. It should be noted that majority of the respondents came from neighboring Asian countries, hence cultural values and practices are relatively similar. And besides, the amiability and hospitality of Filipinos reduces the likelihood of discriminations. The non-rejecting attitude of the locals and their emphasis on Filipino values like *pakikisama* and *pakikipagkapwa-tao* justifies why the foreign students scored low in this subscale. In fact, the host nationals as observed may even resort into euphemism just so not to hurt others particularly the foreign.

Figure 1

*Level of Stress Experienced by Foreign Students*



### 3.2 Other Sources of Difficulty Encountered by Foreign Students Contributory to their Experience of Acculturative Stress

This study aimed to establish a comprehensive analysis on the acculturative stress experienced by the foreign students enrolled in the University. Other than those integrated in the acculturative stress subscales, other sources of difficulty encountered by the foreign students which were deemed contributory to their acculturative stress were determined and

categorized in terms of academic problems, personal issues, financial pressures, relational/social concerns, and other problems.

As shown in Figure 2, among the identified sources of difficulty, financial problems rank first with a category mean of 3.49, interpreted as “great difficulty”. Financial pressure is a common phenomenon observed not only among the local students of the University but also to its foreign student populace. It is evident that the foreign students themselves encounter fiscal difficulties.

Specifically, they find great difficulties managing unexpected increase in school fees, dealing with financial stress, and dealing with documentary and processing fees. These data could probably account for the prevalence of promissory note applications by the foreign students. Moreover, the number of foreign students who quit though not significant is still indicative of some problems of which finances can be one. Looking unto the students’ profile would justify such findings. It must be noted that majority of the respondents seek financial support from their parents/family. It is equally important to consider that as shown in their Individual Record File at the Campus Guidance Center, most of the students’ parents are average earners, though there are some who really came from well-off families. Moreover, it was also indicated in the result that a significant number of the respondents rely on loans. These factors aggravate the financial pressure experienced by the foreign students especially when financial support from parents/family are delayed or when problems occur regarding terms and conditions of their loans. Not to mention poor budgeting on the part of the foreign students themselves. Unexpected increase in school fees and in the costs of living while in the Philippines can also add up to their financial difficulties.

Academic problems and other problems emerged as sources of moderate difficulty as indicated by the category mean of 2.78 and 2.59, respectively. It is very apparent that foreign students, pending their personal and cultural background, experience varying types and levels of academic adjustment problems in a foreign educational environment. The medium of instruction, pedagogical techniques, class schedules, instructional focus and classroom interaction are academic-related factors which may bring about difficulties to the foreign students.

It is noticed that the respondents find great difficulties adapting with class schedules. Moreover, they disclosed moderate difficulties coping with academic demands and course requirements, understanding lectures and, expressing ideas in class. These academic difficulties can be exacerbated by variables such as their English language competency. In



fact, language limitations among the foreign students in the University are highly perceptible. Though majority of them can understand and speak in English, which is the medium used for instruction, the problem lies on their difficulties understanding the English accent used by the professors. Because of their minimal English language competency, it is not easy for the foreign students to fully understand what the professors say or what the professors want at the beginning, not to mention participating in class discussions. This result corroborates with that of Johnson (2008) who finds that international students are not able to comprehend lectures because they come across different English accents and teaching styles from lecturers.

In addition, this finding shows that the respondents find moderate difficulties in reading and understanding materials recommended by professors and in getting used to their professors' teaching methods. Pedagogical styles and expectations for learning approaches that differ from those to which the international students are accustomed in their own cultures may also be a source of difficulty (Andrade, 2006). This is often credited to the fact that the culture of education differs from country to country. For instance, students from collectivist Asian cultures in particular are more accustomed to a lecture style of teaching and may lack familiarity and comfort with the requirement for participation in small group discussions, tutorials and seminar sessions and the interactive teaching and learning styles of many Western classrooms (Chapman Wadsworth, et. al., 2008). Since the foreign students find difficulties along this area, this may imply that the way they get used to for study may not be appropriate for studying in the Philippines. Further, and the educational approach in the country may look unfamiliar to them, thus, they may lack knowledge of how to find and use information necessary for them to accomplish their purposes. The result further illustrates that the foreign students encounter difficulties to a moderate extent in terms of adjusting to the availability of professors, obtaining school records and documents, and adjusting to the physical environment of the University.

On the other hand, personal problems with a category mean of 2.32 are identified as sources of slight difficulty. So is with relational/social problems, as revealed by the category mean of 2.10. The foreign students regard personal issues and concerns as causing them "slight difficulty". Under this particular source of difficulty, the result specifically shows that the respondents find moderate difficulty in "Coping with feelings of isolation and worthlessness."; "Coping with family problems, (i.e. hospitalization or death of a family member.); "Living away from family members overseas/independently from your parents."; and "Dealing with loneliness and homesickness." These findings are consistent with the



previously presented data particularly on homesickness, perceived hate/rejection, and guilt. Moreover, the decreased availability of social and family support and a greater family expectation of success and accomplishment add more personal challenges to their overseas experience, (Han et al., 2013).

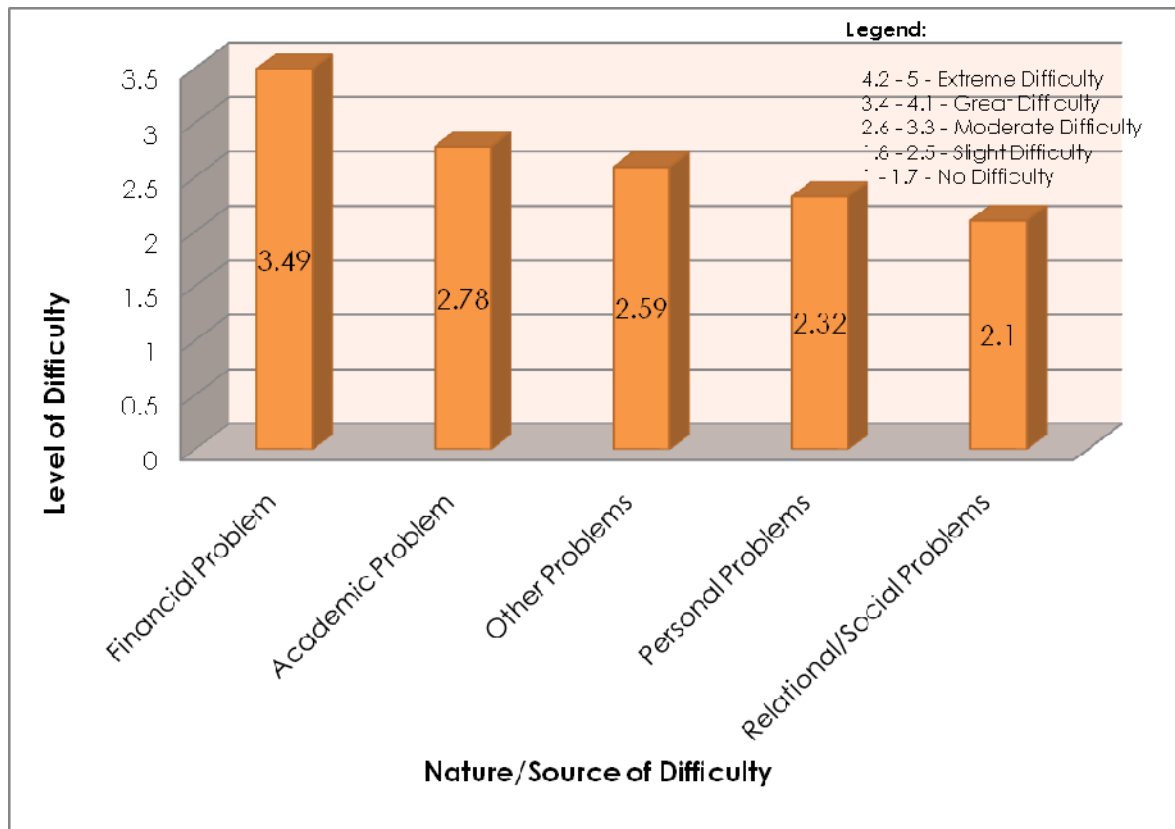
The finding also illustrates that a fraction of the difficulties encountered by the respondents are attributed to relational/social problems as manifested by the category mean of 2.10, interpreted as “slight difficulty”. This gives the impression that the foreign students seemingly struggles with how they relate and interact with the people around them. This is very apparent in their responses in the items “Adjusting to new social/cultural customs, norms and regulations.”; “Making friends with Filipino students.”; “Going to social events/gatherings/functions.”; “Accepting personal help from professors.”; “Dealing with landlord/landlady”; “Making friends with other foreign students.”; and “Working effectively with other students.”.

The foreign students find moderate difficulty in “Expressing your concerns to the administrators of the University, esp. foreign student coordinator/s.” and “Dealing with the administrators of the University.” This may be suggestive of the apprehension that foreign students feel toward the administrators of the University. Consequently, such hesitancy may curtail the respondents from disclosing their concerns to the University administrators, not to mention their lack of English language competency. Language limitations as emphasized in the preceding data account for the difficulties of the foreign students to interact and build connections with people in the host country. According to Wright and Schartner (2013), students’ inability to communicate effectively in the host culture complicates their ability to socialize and integrate with the locals. English proficiency influences social interaction and adjustment and that international students who have higher confidence in communicating in English adjust more quickly and make friends easily, thus mitigating the concern of loneliness and homesickness (Sampasivam and Clement, 2014).

These data implies that the respondents, just like any other students of the University, encounter typical issues and concerns which may have significant impacts in their adjustment. Financial pressures and problems on academics are likely to be a communal concern among the students of the University.

Figure 2

*Other Sources of Difficulty Encountered by Respondents Contributory to their Experience of Acculturative Stress*



### 3.3 Level of Help-seeking Behavior Manifested by Foreign Students

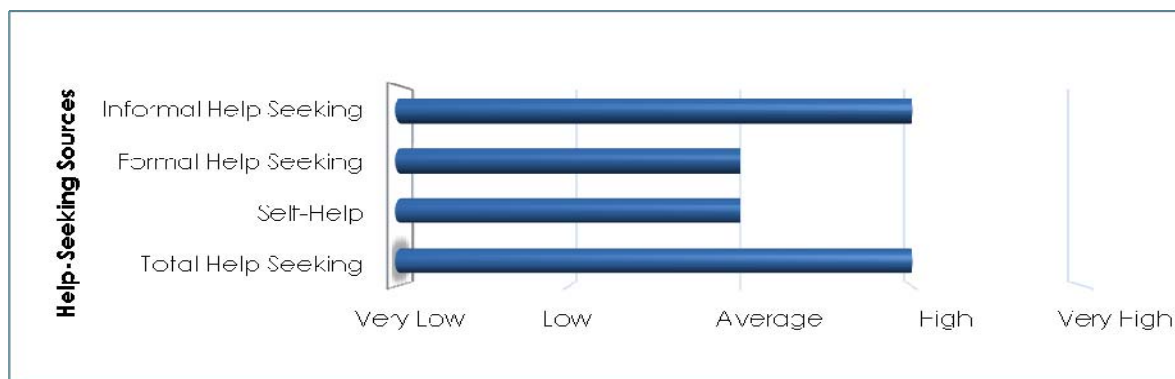
Figure 3 presents the level of help-seeking behavior manifested by the foreign students. The result obviously shows that the respondents' total help-seeking tendency is high, as indicated by the category mean of 71.31 and the standard deviation of 11.59. With the numerous challenges faced by the foreign students concerning their adjustment exacerbated by the stresses and difficulties they encounter while studying in the Philippines, it is not surprising that their likelihood to seek for help is high.

This only accentuates that just like any other individual, the foreign students are in need of social support thereby making them resort into help-seeking. According to Helgeson (2003), when individuals are overwhelmed with difficulties, they are inclined to seek help from anyone who could extend them emotional support (i.e. care, love, sympathy) and instrumental support (i.e. tangible assistance and resources). By doing so, they may have a greater chance of coping with their vulnerabilities and overcoming their stresses.

As can be deduced from the data, the foreign students in the University subscribed more to informal help seeking. Evidently, with a weighted mean of 25.68 and a standard deviation of 7.21, interpreted as “high”, the respondents prefer seeking help from informal sources. This means that the foreign students approach their informal social networks such as family and friends for advice and/or assistance regarding their concerns and issues. This study appears to lend further support to studies conducted by Schneider and Spinier (1986) and Johnson (1993) where they found that friends, parents, and relatives were consistently preferred help sources for personal issues.

The data also illustrates that in terms of formal help-seeking and self-help, the respondents are on the average. This presumably implies that depending on the nature, severity and complexity of their concerns, the respondents may resort into formal help sources like teachers, University administrators, counselors, foreign students’ coordinators, religious leaders and the like. In cases though where respondents find formal sources unavailable and intimidating, coupled with some personal constraints like reluctance and hesitancy to disclose their problems and their lack of language competency, the foreign students may prefer not to rely on others but themselves when confronted with difficulties.

Figure 3 *Level of Help-seeking Behavior Manifested by Respondents*



#### 4. Bivariate Correlations between Acculturative Stress and Help-Seeking Behavior

Having analyzed the data using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, it was found that majority of the acculturative stress subscales correlated with the respondents’ help-seeking behavior. Generally, the overall level of acculturative stress is significantly related to help-seeking behavior as indicated by its correlation coefficient of -0.177 and a probability value 0.000, which is less than 0.01 level of significance. This data specifically denotes that

the respondents' level of help-seeking is negatively associated with their acculturative stress level.

Data from the foregoing table shows that the respondents have high tendency for help-seeking which is an apparent manifestation of their need for social support. Foreign students are in greater need of social support due to the fact that most of them if not all are faced with several adjustment challenges like leaving away from their loved ones; learning to speak a new language; adjusting with the local food, accommodation and transportation; and learning new customs and social manners. With these, social support operates by providing the foreign students with the resources available to cope with the stress and by giving them empathy and care (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsay, 1981). The social support networks such as friends, family, significant others, teachers and advisers, the foreign students' organization, the University administrators, and even the foreign students themselves, are potential sources of help/support.

It should be noted however that accessibility to social support depends on the likelihood of the respondents to seek support or help. The result already established that the respondents' level of help-seeking is high. Concomitantly, this may imply an adequacy on the help/support received by the respondents thereby accounting to the possibility of experiencing a minimal or an average acculturative stress level. Hence, the higher is the help-seeking tendency, the greater is the possibility to receive relevant and adequate help/support from the identified help sources or social support networks. Consequently, adequate social support mitigates stress levels.

The result of this study corroborated with the studies of Thomas and Choi (2006) and Yeh and Inose (2003) who emphasized that among international students, their perceived social support or help-seeking behaviour is negatively associated with acculturative stress. Thomas and Choi (2006) conducted a study focusing on Indian international students and found students who had less perceived social support were more likely to experience higher levels of acculturative stress than their counterparts. Yeh and Inose (2003) believed that higher levels of social support satisfaction and social connectedness predicted lower levels of acculturative stress. As Apker and Ray (2003) stated, when individuals were experiencing a stressful event during acculturation, supportive communication as a dimension of social support could help them to reduce their perception of uncertainty and help them to develop a sense of control over stressful situations.

It is also transparent from the data in Table 4 that the total acculturative stress level of the respondents is negatively correlated to informal help-seeking while positively associated with self-help. This implies that when the respondents are helped or supported by the informal help sources such as family, friends, and significant others, their experience of acculturative stress is lessened or the impact of the stress to them is at minimal.

Looking specifically on the relationship of the different acculturative stress subscales with the help sources as illustrated in Table 1, it reveals that homesickness is significantly related to informal help-seeking. This finding depicts the propensity of the respondents to establish connection with informal help sources like their family, friends and significant others when they feel homesick.

The table also shows that perceived discrimination and perceived hate/rejection are negatively correlated to informal help-seeking while positively correlated to self-help. This indicates that when respondents experience discrimination and rejection, they rather handle it themselves and they likely would not disclose or seek help from informal help sources.

Feelings of guilt, fear, and culture shock are revealed to be significantly related to self-help. This finding implies the preference of the respondents not to disclose such experiences to anyone and that they rather handle it themselves. Apparently, among these three subscales, fear is significantly related to the total help-seeking which suggests that the respondents would likely seek help only if the fear becomes so intense.

Table 1

*Bivariate Correlations between Acculturative Stress and Help-Seeking Behavior*

Variables	Informal Help-Seeking		Formal Help-Seeking		Self-Help		Total Help-Seeking	
	R	Prob	R	Prob	R	Prob	R	Prob
Homesickness	.103*	.033	.066	.172	.042	.380	.081	.092
Perceived Discrimination	-.159**	.001	-.079	.102	.140*	.003	-.222**	.000
Perceived Hate/Rejection	-.133**	.006	-.061	.206	.117*	.015	-.153**	.001
Fear	-.077	.108	.055	.252	.166**	.001	-.098*	.042
Culture Shock	-.046	.336	-.001	.992	.116*	.015	-.082	.089
Guilt	-.004	.928	.025	.579	.194**	.000	.000	.140
Miscellaneous/ Other Significant Factor	-.159**	.001	-.054	.260	.210**	.000	-.211**	.000
Total Acculturative Stress	-.121*	.012	-.029	.546	.186**	.000	-.177**	.000

\* - Significant at .05

\*\* - Significant at .01

## **5. Conclusions**

The foreign students enrolled in the University are not exempted of experiencing negative emotions and stressful life events. Their moderate or average level of acculturative stress indicates that they face a series of environmental, cultural, social and psychological changes on a daily basis in their acculturative experience. This may not only have a significant impact on their psychological well-being but in their help-seeking behaviour as well.

Their difficulties understanding the local language; problems on adapting with the local food, accommodation, transportation, and climate, and their struggle to overcome homesickness, culture shock, loneliness and discriminations are just but few of the manifestations that indeed, stress caused by acculturation is a common phenomenon encountered by the sojourners.

Moreover, the prevalence of some stressors such as financial, academic, and other problems which were deemed to be sources of difficulty to the foreign students contribute to their acculturative stress.

Consequently, the foreign students manifest high tendency to seek help from others particularly from informal help-sources, which evidences that despite geographical distance, their preferred source of comfort is still their family and friends in their home country.

It can also be concluded that the acculturative stress experienced by the foreign students greatly impacts their help-seeking behavior. The evidence warrants that a relationship between the variables exists. This implies that the tendency of the foreign students to seek help is high when they are likely to experience acculturative stress.

## **6. Implications to Counseling**

Results of this study point to the importance of strengthening the student support services for international students in pursuant to Memorandum Order No. 09, Series of 2013 issued by the Commission on Higher Education. Article IX, Section 31 of the said issuance mandates the provision of an integrated service program that caters to the socio-psycho-cultural, academic and non-academic needs of the international students. The guidance and counseling services is one of those that should be activated and maintained to ensure the adaptability of the foreign students. Moreover, the following points should be considered by counselors, educators and other student service providers:

1. Counselors and educators can aid in addressing difficulties associated with acculturative stress by helping students develop more diverse social networks; adapt

- to local academic norms and expectations; and develop additional ties and connections to the campus and local community;
2. When relating with foreign students, cultural sensitivity and competence are necessary. It is therefore indispensable for educators and counselors to develop and enhance their multicultural competencies through attendance to relevant trainings and workshops and pursuit for higher education;
  3. Accredited organizations in the helping profession should constantly provide opportunities for professional upgrading through the Continuing Professional Education program. Sessions and workshops designed to develop and enhance the multicultural competencies of counselors especially in counseling are necessary;
  4. Maintain the implementation of an effective orientation program, stressing about the Philippine culture and overall academic culture in the country. Special orientations may also include information regarding ethnic food choices, scholarship opportunities, legal status regulations, language training sessions, academic tutoring services, mentoring services, and the like;
  5. Tutoring and counseling are expected because international students need guidance to succeed in their academic learning, and support in handling acculturative stress;
  6. Programs that offer information about the money and time management are also needed when dealing with the economic/financial stressors;
  7. Educators should note that the acculturation process is an individualized one and that the degree of acculturation can vary as a function of personality. These should be taken into account when advising and educating the students;
  8. Academicians and educational managers should adopt teaching strategies and devise learning materials which are within the cultural context of international students.

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