

Critical Precip:

How Acculturation Affect Peer Relationships in Middle School

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The peer-reviewed journal article “A Longitudinal Study of Immigrants’ Peer Acceptance and Rejection: Immigrant Status, Immigrant Composition of the Classroom, and Acculturation” was written by Jens B. Asendorpf, and Frosso Motti-Stefanidi in 2017, and was published in *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. The goal of this research was to study the effects of immigrant status, classroom composition, the opportunity for intergroup contact, and acculturation on immigrants’ peer acceptance or rejection in a multiethnic classroom over their three years in middle school in Athens, Greece.

The study included 1,057 students from 12 middle schools from 49 classrooms (starting with sixth grade at the beginning of the study to eighth grade at the end of the study). 532 students were immigrants (316 first generation, 216 second generation). Depending on the classroom, immigrant students were mainly of Albanian, or Pontian-Greeks root, while the other immigrants would be from six different countries. The measures were conducted through peer nominations where every year, each student write down the name of three classmates that they liked most and three classmates that they liked least. Immigrant status was coded with 1 for immigrant, and 0 for nonimmigrant. For acculturation, the researchers used an adaptation of Nguyen and von Eye’s bi-dimensional measure of acculturation to test the involvement of immigrants with their native culture and Greek culture. The immigrant proportion was measured by keeping a headcount of immigrant students and native students for each classroom every year. Classrooms were separated into categories such as immigrant dominated, native dominated, or balance. The result for immigrant status indicated that in a balanced and native dominated classroom, immigrants are significantly rejected by native peers compare to the immigrant dominated classroom. As for classroom composition, the higher the immigrant proportion in class, the more immigrants are accepted, corresponding to the classroom with high native ratio.

Through the middle school system, most students have the chance to stay with the same classmates throughout all three years. Thus, increasing the opportunities for intergroup contact. In immigrant dominated classroom, acceptance of immigrant students did not change. In native dominated and balance classroom, immigrant acceptance greatly increased throughout their time in school. Lastly, for acculturation, immigrants who are more involved in Greek culture compare to their native culture are more accepted in the classroom.

The results of this study indicated that immigrant status, classroom composition, the opportunity for intergroup contact, and acculturation are risk factors for immigrants' peer acceptance. The strength of this study included its large sample of students and classrooms from different neighborhoods in Athens. The study did have a loss of 41 percent of the original cohort throughout the study. However, the authors controlled the missing values and attrition effects by using multilevel longitudinal analyses.

Reference

Asendorpf, J. B., & Motti-Stefanidi, F. (2017). A longitudinal study of immigrants' peer acceptance and rejection: Immigrant status, immigrant composition of the classroom, and acculturation. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 23(4), 486–498.
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