

Family Separation and Academic Stress: Mental Health Challenges for Sri Lankan Students in Singapore

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Abstract:

This research explores the role of family separation on the academic stress and mental health challenges of Sri Lankan students in Singapore. Annually, many Lankan students migrate to other countries for education and stay away from their families' homes and loved ones for years. Long separation could lead to severe psychological and emotional distress for those students. It enquires how the lack of direct family backup affects the students' mental health, their studies, and their capacity to handle the challenges of tertiary education in a foreign land.

This study takes a mixed-method approach and will combine qualitative interviews with students and quantitative surveys to gauge the extent of academic stress, anxiety, depression, and levels of feeling of isolation related to academic life challenges among Sri Lankan college students in Singapore. This perspective is corroborated by research in migration mental health that also addresses the cultural factors, such as collectivist family structures and expectations, that contribute to migrant students' mental health experiences. Results underscore how family separations produce more emotional distress through cultural pressure to succeed, limited social support networks and difficulty fitting into the new life.

This research supports the call for enhanced mental health services directed at vulnerable international students, who in some countries may come from cultures built on solid family unity as a base of their lives. The research also calls for institutional responses in Singapore, including culturally appropriate counselling for Sri Lankan students. These findings will hopefully provide a foundation for more effective coping techniques and support to assist migrant students in dealing with the mental health implications of family separation.

Keywords:

Family Separation, Academic Stress, Mental Health, Sri Lankan Students, International Education.