

**Embodied Cultural Adaptation for International Dance Movement
Psychotherapy Students: A Phenomenological Study**

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Abstract

The objective of this paper has been to garner insights on the integrated relationship between the body and the culture influencing the impact of cultural transition on the international students. It presents the readers with the lived experiences of the use of the body as one of the effective resources for cultural adaptation in a new environment. To conduct the research, phenomenological research methodology was used wherein a total of three participants were interviewed – two international dance movement psychotherapy (DMP) trainees and a recent graduate. The interviews were conducted online using semi-structured schedules consisting of six questions related to the study. The interviews were analyzed systematically using thematic analysis. The key findings of the research reflect the participants' experiences of facing the unknown, leading to a negative impact on their health (somatic/psychological) and their attempts of modifying their own cultural identities in order to navigate through the changed atmosphere. It calls attention upon participants' use of symbolic and creative body movement to facilitate a connection between their self, body and the changed environment (host culture); ultimately leading to the adaptation. The study also provides another paradigm on DMP as a multicultural therapy that considers embodied expression of an individual and their intersubjective relatedness with the constantly changing environment. Thus, making it accessible and suitable for cultural adaptation. Findings highlight a model that puts up DMP as an effective approach for adaptation in a psychotherapeutic set-up. It also recognizes the benefits of bringing embodied practices like DMP within and across global educational institutions. The research holds implications for collaborations between institutions and embodied therapy networks to facilitate a unique, creative and a gradual adaptation of the students embarking on their overseas journeys of higher education.

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