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### Психологическая адаптация иностранных студентов в российском вузе

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**Аннотация.** В статье представлены результаты эмпирического исследования процесса психологической адаптации иностранных студентов в условиях российских вузов. Целью статьи является выявление особенностей психологической адаптации иностранных студентов, представителей различных этнических групп к условиям российских вузов. В настоящем исследовании приняли участие 400 студентов Пензенского государственного университета и Пензенского государственного аграрного университета (этнический состав респондентов: арабы (100 чел.), индийцы (100 чел.), народы Средней Азии (100 чел.) русские (100 чел.); возрастная структура респондентов: от 18 до 28 лет, средний возраст – 21,6; гендерный состав респондентов: муж. – n = 200, жен. – n = 200). С целью выявления психологических особенностей адаптации иностранных студентов авторами реализован комплекс диагностических методик: «Тест смысложизненных ориентаций» (Леонтьев); «Анкета для выявления выраженности самоконтроля в сфере, деятельности и эмоционального поведения» (Никифоров); «Формализованная модификация диагностики самооценки» (Дембо–Рубинштейн); анкета по ряду социально-демографических характеристик респондентов, а также уровню удовлетворенности условиями пребывания в новой социокультурной среде и образовательной среде российского вуза. Авторы пришли к выводу, что эффективность процесса адаптации иностранных студентов зависит от ряда психологических характеристик: социального самоконтроля, смысложизненных ориентаций, ОД-диспозиции личности, комплекса волевых качеств личности. В результате исследования выявлены специфические проявления психологической адаптации у студентов различных этнических групп. Полученные в исследовании результаты могут быть использованы для разработки программы психологического сопровождения иностранных студентов в процессе адаптации к новой социокультурной и образовательной среде в российских вузах.

**Ключевые слова:** психологическая адаптация; иностранные студенты; социальный самоконтроль; смысложизненные ориентации; диспозиция личности; волевые качества; самооценка

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Original article

### Psychological adaptation of foreign students at russian universities

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**Abstract.** The scientific article deals with the results of an empirical research within the process of socio-psychological adaptation of international students under Russian universities conditions. The paper aims to identify the features of socio-psychological adaptation of international students from different ethnic communities to the conditions of Russian universities. The current research involved 400 students from Penza state University and Penza state agrarian university (ethnic composition of the respondents was represented by Arabs (100 ppl.), Indians (100 ppl.), peoples of Central Asia (100 ppl.); Russians (100 ppl.); age structure of respondents: from 18 to 28 years old, the average age was about 21,6; gender composition of respondents: men - n = 200, women - n = 200). In order to identify the psychological characteristics of adaptation of foreign students, the authors implemented a set of diagnostic techniques: «The Meaning-in-Life Orientations test» (Leontiev); «Questionnaire for identifying the severity of self-control in the sphere, activity and emotional behavior» (Nikiforov); «Formalized modification of the self-assessment diagnostic technique» (Dembo-Rubinstein); a questionnaire for many socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, and the level of satisfaction with conditions in a new socio-cultural environment, and educational process at the university. The authors came to the conclusion that the effectiveness of the adaptation process of international students depends on several psychological characteristics: social self-control, life-meaning orientations, OD-personality disposition, and a complex of strong-willed personality traits. Furthermore, they noticed specific socio-psychological adaptation manifestations in students of different ethnic groups. The results obtained could be implemented in developing programmers of psychological support for international students in the frame of their adaptation to a new socio-cultural and educational environment of Russian universities.

**Key words:** psychological adaptation, foreign students, social self-control, life-meaning orientations, personality disposition, strong-willed personality traits, self-assessment

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## Introduction

The special interest of modern researchers in the problem of adaptation of international students to the conditions of Russian universities is raised due to the constant growth in the number of foreign people who intend to study in our country. In the 2022–2023 academic year, the total number of international students at Russian universities reached a record of 315 thousand people, which is about 8% of the total number of students in Russia.

Although the practice of teaching students abroad has existed for several centuries, it has just recently become a subject of scientific interest. Difficulties of international students associated with the national traditions and mentality of the host society, including social and everyday problems (living conditions, changes in social status and state, etc.) [Babiker, Cox, Miller, 1980], and problems associated with the psycho-emotional sphere of loneliness (stress, depression, nostalgia, hypochondria, etc.) were touched upon in the research of foreign scientists [Still, Singh, Tajfel Dawson, 1964].

Having analyzed foreign studies, the authors identified the main groups of problems that chase international students in the process of their adaptation to a new socio-cultural environment: common

problems for students of all cultures (difficulties in understanding others caused by insufficient knowledge of the language [Furnham, Bochner, 1982]; financial problems; every day and social difficulties; problems connected with a psychological perception; food preferences; separative moods) [Anumonye, 1970]; problems of all young people (doubts about the correct choice of a future profession; misunderstanding of older people and the opposite gender) [Klineberg, Hull, 1979]; problems and difficulties inherent to all students (stress due to study; excessive academic load; non-compliance with the regime; material and everyday difficulties) [Furnham, Bochner, 1986]; problems caused by cultural distance [Tajfel, Sheikh, Gardner, 1964].

Socio-cultural, academic, everyday aspects of adaptation of international students were also described by the Russian scientists. The analysis of their scientific papers allows us to use objective factors that mainly determine the peculiarities of the adaptation process of international students to the conditions of a Russian university (counteraction to information isolation [Galai, 2020]; the desire to get an education in a foreign educational institution [Shmeleva, 2021]; multicultural groups of students at Russian universities [Kuts, Lygina, 2020]; features of the educational system in a host country;

proficiency in a foreign language; inability to interact on an intercultural level) [Arkatova, 2019], and many factors of a subjective nature (ethnopsychological characteristics of students [Ivannikov, Shlyapnikov, 2019]; academic progress and socio-psychological conditions in a student group [Arsenyev, Zinkovsky, Ivanova; 2003]; situational factors: the level of political and economic stability in the country [Andreeva, 1973], the presence of the crime rate, the level of security, etc.) [Ananyeva, Demidov, 2021].

The theoretical analysis of the problem made it possible to state the lack of data on the comparison of psychological characteristics of students with different ethnic backgrounds in adapting to the conditions of a Russian university.

Since the lack of information on the research problem does not indicate precise research hypotheses and determine contextual variables, the current study is exploratory research [Ivannikov, Gusev, Barabanov, Eidman, Shulga, 2020].

In this regard, the purpose of the scientific paper is to expand the geography of the current study, clarify the contextual numbers for further research, and test the hypothesis about the presence of specificity in the process of socio-psychological adaptation among students from different ethnic groups [Asmolov, 2007].

The results of the research are presented below.

### Materials and methods

The study involved 400 students from the two largest universities of the Penza region: the respondents from the Arab countries – 100 people, respondents from India – 100 people, the respondents from the neighboring countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan) – 100 people, the Russian students (to find significant differences in social and psychological indicators that determine the success of adaptation in the conditions of a Russian university) – 100 people. The samples are balanced by gender, age, and other socio-demographic characteristics. The study was organized and carried out in the Institute of International Cooperation at Penza State University.

To achieve the goal of the current research, identifying the socio-psychological characteristics of adaptation of international students to the conditions at Russian universities, the authors set up the following tasks:

- to conduct a theoretical analysis of concepts and approaches to understanding the socio-psychological aspects of adaptation in psychological and pedagogical sciences;
- to compile a diagnostic questionnaire and identify the features of the socio-psychological adaptation of international students from different ethnic communities;
- to diagnose the indicators of socio-psychological adaptation of international students and identify specific features in the representatives of various ethnic communities.

To develop a diagnostic questionnaire for the current research, the authors took into consideration: (1) Questionnaire for identifying the severity of self-control in the sphere, activity and emotional behavior (Nikiforov et al.); (2) Formalized modification of the self-assessment diagnostic technique (Dembo-Rubinstein); (3) «The Meaning-in-Life Orientations test» (Leontiev); (4) questions concerning many demographic characteristics of respondents, and assessing the level of satisfaction with conditions and education in a Russian university (<https://psytests.org>).

We used the U Mann-Whitney test to analyze the relationship between the groups of students (of different ethnic communities) by many socio-psychological indicators that determine the success of the adaptation process in a Russian university. Statistical processing of the obtained data was carried out using the SPSS Statistics v. 23.

### Results

In the course of the correlation analysis, according to the indicator of life-meaning orientations in the groups of students from different countries, the authors found no positive correlations. This indicator points out whether the person perceives the process of life as interesting, emotionally rich, and full of significance. In addition, the research showed that the indicator is not related to the ethnicity of the respondents and the peculiarities of the socio-psychological adaptation process in the conditions of a Russian university.

According to the descriptive statistics results and the results of the nonparametric U Mann-Whitney Test, the authors noted 3 positive aspects in the emotional sphere, activity, and behavior (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

**Descriptive statistics results and the nonparametric U Mann-Whitney Test results in the emotional sphere, activity, and behavior.**

Self-control indicators		Russian students	Students from Arab countries	Students from India	Students from neighboring countries	U Mann-Whitney
ESC	M	10.47	13.34	12.78	12.34	17,425 **
	SD	0.51	3.25	2.31	3.68	
	Midrank	26.25	55.54	52.5	48.85	
BCS	M	19.82	17.08	18.26	16.86	18,913 **
	SD	1.64	3.51	2.75	2.09	
	Midrank	65.34	38.26	47.24	34	
SSC	M	13.17	17.34	16.34	16.17	30,471 **
	SD	0.38	3.26	3.08	1.94	
	Midrank	20.61	59.80	53.43	52.15	

Note: \* - the level of statistical significance is 0.05; \*\* - the level of statistical significance is 0.01; ESC - emotional self-control, BSC - behavioral self-control, SSC - social self-control.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Emotional self-control among the students from the Arab countries (55.54) is higher than students from other ethnic communities. The lowest level of emotional self-control was found among the students from Russia (26.25). This scale assesses a person's tendency to self-control their state and their behavior in activity and communication.

Behavioral self-control is higher among the students from Russia (65.34). The lowest level in this indicator was demonstrated by the students from the neighboring countries (34). This scale assesses the personality's tendency to self-control in the process of implementing various types of activities at the stages of forecasting, planning, monitoring performance, and evaluating results.

The students from Arab countries are more inclined to social self-control (59.8), while the results of Russian students are the lowest here (20.61). This scale assesses a person's tendency to self-control their behavior, including communicative, in the process of interpersonal and intergroup interaction.

The revealed correlations allow us to state that the highest indicators of self-control in the emotional sphere and behavior are among the students from the

Arab countries and in activities among the students from Russia.

Using the Dembo-Rubinstein self-assessment technique, an empirical analysis of data made it possible to determine the structure of personal qualities, the most pronounced traits in students of various ethnic groups.

Towards the personality structure of students from India, the following qualities prevail: energy (70.37), efficiency (67.59), will (65.46), patience (63.80), courage (63.37).

In the structure of personal qualities of the students from the Arab countries, the most pronounced ones are energy (55.43), initiative (48.00), will (47.37).

The students from the neighboring countries rated themselves highly in terms of such qualities as confidence (56.50), integrity (53.39), efficiency (52.33).

Among the Russian students, the most significant qualities are persistence (70.50), purposefulness (68.50), perseverance (66.00), independence (65.00). Furthermore, the Russian students have the highest level of self-esteem.

At the last stage of the research, the authors assessed student satisfaction with the living and learning conditions at the Russian universities (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

**Descriptive statistics results and the nonparametric Test results in assessing satisfaction with living and learning conditions.**

Satisfaction indicators		Russian students	Students from Arab countries	Students from India	Students from neighboring countries	U Mann-Whitney
Ud1	M	3.04	3.13	3.69	3.6	9,822 *
	SD	0.36	1.05	0.01	1.3	
	Midrank	36.24	41.33	53.93	54.74	
Ud2	M	3.21	3.69	3.95	3.21	17,430 **
	SD	0.59	0.92	0.92	0.99	
	Midrank	32.5	55.04	58.87	39.59	
	M	3.82	4.04	3.34	3.73	

Satisfaction indicators		Russian students	Students from Arab countries	Students from India	Students from neighboring countries	U Mann-Whitney
Ud3	SD	0.38	0.7	0.93	0.75	<b>9,396 *</b>
	Midrank	49.98	56.04	34.65	45.33	
Ud4	M	4.17	3.73	3.30	4.17	<b>18,319 **</b>
	SD	0.38	0.96	0.92	1.4	
	Middle rank	52.74	42.67	30.37	60.22	
Ud5	M	4.65	4.17	3.86	4.04	<b>10,599 **</b>
	SD	0.48	0.93	0.96	0.97	
	Midrank	59.78	46.65	37.07	42.5	
Ud6	M	4.56	4.34	4.00	3.82	<b>18,773 **</b>
	SD	0.58	0.58	0.67	0.83	
	Midrank	61.09	52.93	37.72	34.26	
Ud7	M	3.65	2.52	3.39	3.17	<b>18,803 **</b>
	SD	0.48	0.99	0.83	1.11	
	Midrank	60.52	29.43	51.83	44.22	
Ud8	M	4.08	3.73	4.04	4.04	2,986
	SD	0.51	0.91	0.82	0.56	
	Midrank	51.61	40.0	47.41	46.98	

Note: \* - the level of statistical significance is 0.05; \*\* - the level of statistical significance is 0.01; Ud 1 - satisfaction with the climate, Ud2 - satisfaction with culture, Ud3 - satisfaction with learning conditions, Ud4 - satisfaction with food quality, Ud5 - satisfaction with student life, Ud6 - satisfaction with living conditions, Ud7 - satisfaction with leisure time, Ud8 - satisfaction with life in general. Source: Compiled by the authors.

The highest satisfaction rates with the climate are among the students from the neighboring countries (54.74) and India (53.93). Russian culture was highly rated by the students from India (58.87) and the Arab countries (55.04). The students from the Arab countries were most satisfied with the conditions of education (56.04). Least of all learning conditions for the students from India (34.65). The food quality was rated mostly by the students from Tajikistan (60.22). Student life is highly rated by Russian students (59.78). The lowest marks were noted by the students from India (37.07). In general, the Russian students are satisfied with the conditions (61.09), less satisfied with the data on an indicator of the students from India (37.72) and the neighboring countries (34.26). The Russian students mostly noted the free time (60.52), but the students from the Arab countries are less satisfied with their free time (29.43). The indicator of satisfaction with the way of life is generally the same for the students from all countries.

Thus, the Russian students are satisfied with their student life, living conditions, and free time. The students from the neighboring countries are most satisfied with the climate and food quality. The students from India are most satisfied with the culture, and the students from the Arab countries are most satisfied with the conditions of the educational process. Next, we are intended to present the interpretation of the results obtained.

## Discussion

The results obtained allowed us to use some of the features of socio-psychological adaptation in the studied groups of students that we should consider in detail.

The students from the Arab countries demonstrated average scores on the scale of behavioral self-control. However, at the same time, they demonstrated high scores on the scales of emotional and social self-control. It points out that respondents of this group are more capable of controlling their emotional states and behavior in activity and communication during interpersonal and group interaction. However, at the same time, they are less able to predict, plan, and monitor the assessment of their results. These conclusions could be confirmed by the fact that the results show on the scale of «meaningfulness of life».

The Indian students showed the highest scores on the control scale and fairly high scores on the scales of emotional, behavioral, and social self-control. The Indians can control emotional states and behavior in activities and communication in interpersonal and group interactions. Moreover, they can predict, plan, and monitor the implementation and multiple outcomes in contrast to the respondents from the Arab group. These conclusions could also be confirmed because the Indian students are currently at the very beginning of their studies. However, unlike the Arab students, their ideas about the future are more realis-

tic, as evidenced by the results on the scale of «meaningfulness of life» and «behavioral self-control» and high ratings of personal qualities such as energy, efficiency, will, patience, courage. The group of the Indians showed great isolation in intercultural communication and was wary of their surroundings. The students from India are most satisfied with Russian culture than other students.

The students from the neighboring countries showed average indicators on the scale of control and average indicators on emotional and social self-control scales and the lowest indicators on scales of behavioral self-control. The respondents from this group can manage the implementation of interpersonal states and their behavior in interpersonal and group interaction at the intermediate level. At the same time, it is difficult for them to predict, plan, and monitor the implementation and assessment of results. This group of students is characterized by the severity of such qualities as adherence to principles, efficiency, confidence. The results obtained are correlated with the results of other researchers.

The lowest indicators were found in the group of Russian students on the scale of emotional and social self-control. However, on the scale of behavioral self-control, the Russian students showed the highest results. This fact points out that respondents from this group are more than ready for forecasting, planning, and evaluating their results. However, they poorly control their states and behavior in activity and communication during interpersonal and group interaction. They understand what they want to achieve in life and what direction to move. They are more purposeful than others, persistent, independent, and perseverant. This situation is due to the fact that Russian students are on the territory of their country, immersed in their native culture, and it is easier for them to adapt to different living conditions during their student days. This fact is confirmed because respondents of this group are satisfied with their student life.

The current research results allow us to conclude the correlation between the national culture and the peculiarities of the adaptation process of international students due to the presence of significant differences in the indicators of volitional regulation state among the representatives of various ethnic groups. This conclusion is consistent with the recent research results of Russian psychologists.

The presented analysis is the first attempt to determine the role of national culture in the process of socio-psychological adaptation in the conditions of a Russian university. After all, each ethnic group has a

unique historical fate and cultural identity, which determine the characteristics of socio-psychological adaptation to a foreign cultural environment.

### Conclusion

During the diagnostics of foreign students, adapted versions of the tests, translated by the specific translators, were used. In addition, professional translators took part in the research, so there were no difficulties in communication.

In general, the results obtained confirm the hypothesis put forward about the presence of specificity in the psychological adaptation process among the students-respondents of different ethnic communities.

The process of psychological adaptation of international students under conditions of a Russian university is associated with restructuring the socio-cultural norms and values system, which makes high demands on volitional regulation. The initial system for the development of volitional regulation in adapting to a foreign cultural environment is a need to organize activities according to new requirements of the socio-cultural and educational environment, which leads to the emergence of new forms of volitional regulation and personality development.

The students from India and Arab countries obtained the most significant results. The results of current research confirmed this: the representatives of these groups demonstrated significant differences in the scale of control over behavioral and emotional self-control to varying degrees. They can manage their emotional control and behavior in activity and communication, in interpersonal and group interactions. They could also predict, plan, and control the implementation and assessment of personal results.

Interestingly, all groups of students showed the observed results on the «meaningfulness of life» scale.

The discovered regularities of development in volitional regulation could be used to improve programs for the adaptation of students in a foreign cultural environment and create practical recommendations for academic and university staff, working with international students to force the efficiency of the educational process.

Disclosure of ethno-cultural mechanisms of socio-psychological adaptation of international students could become a promising and relevant area of research in psychology.

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