

Personality Psychology

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IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF ADAPTATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR STUDYING AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONSBorysenko T.V., Shakhova O.G.
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The article highlights results of the most topical problems study in international students, which complicate their social and psychological adaptation. Typical ways of solving these problems, by students are revealed. Negative social phenomena which are common among students are determined. The level of need among international students in psychological support and the degree of its awareness was studied, the most important and interesting forms and methods of work in carrying out psychological support for them are determined.

Key words: adaptation, maladjustment factors, negative phenomena, international students, psychological support, training.

У даній статті висвітлені результати дослідження найбільш актуальних проблем іноземних студентів, що ускладнюють їх соціально-психологічну адаптацію. Виявлені типові шляхи вирішення студентами власних проблем. Визначені й описані негативні соціальні явища, що є розповсюдженими в студентському середовищі. Вивчено рівень потреби іноземних студентів у психологічному супроводі й ступінь її усвідомленості, визначені найбільш важливі й цікаві для них форми та методи роботи при здійсненні психологічного супроводу.

Ключові слова: адаптація, фактори дезадаптації, негативні явища, іноземні студенти, психологічний супровід, тренінг.

В статье освещены результаты исследования наиболее актуальных проблем иностранных студентов, осложняющих их социальную-психологическую адаптацию. Выявлены типичные пути решения студентами этих проблем. Определены негативные социальные явления, распространённые в студенческой среде. Изучен уровень потребности иностранных студентов в психологическом сопровождении и степень её осознанности, определены наиболее важные и интересные для них формы и методы работы при осуществлении психологического сопровождения.

Ключевые слова: адаптация, факторы дезадаптации, негативные явления, иностранные студенты, психологическое сопровождение, тренинг.

These days, the number of young people receiving higher education outside the country is constantly growing. The success of studying of international students and their level of professional training to a large extent depend on adaptation in the receiving country [4], which main directions are social and cultural, social and psychological and pedagogical adaptation [2, 5, 7, 8].

Social and cultural adaptation is an active process of interaction of other culture representatives and the environment, the process of acquiring work skills and knowledge necessary for life, mastering the basic rules by the student and samples of new environmental reality, so-called phenomenon of "entering the culture" [3].

Social and psychological adaptation is the entry of international student into the system of interpersonal relations, building relationships in the group, formation of personal behavior in it [5, 7].

Pedagogical aspect of adaptation is connected, first of all, with learning rules and regulations of professional environment, adaptation to nature, content and conditions of educational process, formation of skills of independent study and research work among students.

There is a strong interrelation between the nature of adaptation evaluation to the student life and social well-being of a student: as difficult and long was the process of adaptation for students, so lower will their social well-being be [1].

The success of adaptation to a new cultural environment is largely dependent on the achievement of effective interpersonal relationships with representatives of other nation. A necessary condition for such relationships is a mutual understanding between people, which depends on the success of intercultural communication.

Under the conditions of escalation of interethnic conflicts, it becomes particularly relevant to search for ways to optimize social and cultural and social and psychological adaptation of international students to learning environment in Ukraine. An important role in this work on the part of higher education institution can be played by psychological service of the university, the aim of which is the selection and creation of the most effective methods of individual and group work with students and teachers, which should be "focused on self-development, self-actualization and self-realization of personality, which will contribute to the process of social and psychological adaptation of students" [6, p.39].

In order to identify characteristics and problems of social and psychological adaptation of international students and determine the presence and specificity of their needs in psychological support of educational and scientific psychological service of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University in cooperation with the Department of Language Training for foreign citizens, a research was conducted on adaptation of international

students of different University Schools (of Medicine, Geology and Geography, Philology, Sociology, History, Law, Economics, Foreign Languages, International Economic Relations and Travel Business).

Objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the most topical problems of international students as potential factors of social maladjustment and typical ways of their solving.
2. To determine the prevalence of negative social phenomena among students and their structure.
3. To investigate the presence of need of international students in psychological support and the degree of its awareness.
4. To determine the most preferable for international students forms and methods of work in the carrying out psychological support.

As research methods in the work there were used: questionnaire method to collect empirical data, mathematical methods (Fisher's angular transformation, U-Mann-Whitney test) for statistical data processing.

The questionnaire, used in the study, was divided into two substantive parts: 1) topical problems of international students, basic ways of their solution, and the prevalence among students of certain negative phenomena; 2) the presence of need of international students in psychological support and the desired forms of psychologists' work.

Task was performed anonymously, respondents indicated name of the university, course, age and gender. During questionnaire 227 international students were interviewed of 1, 2, 3 and 4 courses of nine schools of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University.

Research results

Data analysis of the first substantive part of questionnaire - topical problems of international students, basic ways of their solution, and the prevalence among students of certain negative phenomena - has allowed to reveal structure and nature of problems in life and study of international students, and to determine the main possible solutions. Below are quantitative indicators of problem relevance of international students of five schools in which the number of respondents was statistically valid for mathematical analysis. Results of data processing for other schools, where the number of respondents was insufficient, were included in the total sample.

Group of the most topical problems, according to the estimation of international students constitute issues relating to areas such as everyday life in Ukraine, educational process, interpersonal relations with Ukrainian students. So, based on a sample as a whole, a significant majority of students consider the most relevant problems for them such as conflicts with police – 48% (Fisher's ratio test: $\varphi=3,924$; $p\leq 0,1$), understanding of educational material at the lectures – 43% ($\varphi=3,21$; $p\leq 0,1$), understanding of educational material in textbooks – 33% ($\varphi=1,754$; $p\leq 0,05$), communication with Ukrainian friends – 32% ($\varphi=1,656$; $p\leq 0,05$) of respondents.

Among topical problems international students point out problems such as organization of educational process (22%), financial problems (22%), problems of domestic nature in a hall of residence (20%) and social and cultural adaptation and personal adjustment to a new city and country (19%).

Less relevant for the total sample of international students are the following problems related to mutual relations with roommates, interaction with professors and administration of a hall of residence, etc.

A comparative analysis of topical problems of international students in schools discovered that indicators of presence of topical problems of international students from different schools have unequal distribution. The level of relevance of some problems of international students from different schools is similar (there are no significant differences between indicators): it concerns such issues as relationships in parental family, relationships in their own family, interaction with professors and social and cultural adaptation and personal adjustment to a new city and country. All other mentioned problems for international students from different schools have different levels of relevance.

Thus, the problem of conflicts with the police is significantly more important for international students in Geology and Geography School - 70%, than for international students of Medicine School – 49% ($\varphi=3,048$; $p\leq 0,1$) and the School of Foreign Languages ($\varphi=3,472$; $p\leq 0,1$). For students of the School of Law, this problem is less relevant – 12% ($\varphi=9,016$; $p\leq 0,1$).

A significant majority of international students in Geology and Geography School consider understanding of educational material at the lectures as the most topical problem – 70% ($\varphi=9,016$; $p\leq 0,1$) and in the School of Foreign Languages – 71% ($\varphi=9,171$; $p\leq 0,1$), compared with international students of the School of Law (12%), for which this problem is not significant.

The lowest level of problem relevance of understanding of educational material in the textbooks, seminars and practical classes found among international students of the School of Law (6%), while for students of Economy and Geology and Geography Schools the problem of understanding of educational material in textbooks is – 44% ($\varphi=6,76$; $p\leq 0,1$) and 40% ($\varphi=6,18$; $p\leq 0,1$) respectively, and the problem of understanding of educational material at seminars and practical classes is – 63% ($\varphi=9,468$; $p\leq 0,1$) and 65% ($\varphi=9,758$; $p\leq 0,1$) respectively are significantly more relevant and included to the most important problems of international students of these schools.

International students from the School of Medicine consider communication with Ukrainian friends as the most topical problem – 40% of respondents, a significant minority of students from Economy School – 19% ($\varphi=3,302$; $p\leq 0,1$) and Geology and Geography School consider this problem important for them – 15% ($\varphi=4,059$; $p\leq 0,1$); according to estimation of international students from the School of Law this problem does not exist at all (0%).

Thus, international students from different schools have determined a range of problems, some of which are common to most foreigners, some of which are not.

The next step of research was to study typical ways of solving existing topical issues for international students. Among the major means of solving own problems of international students, according to the general sample, the top place is independent solution of problems (70%) emerging both in learning process and in social interaction.

Significantly more international students from Law School – 94% ($\varphi=5,897$; $p\leq 0,1$), School of Foreign Languages – 92% ($\varphi=5,339$; $p\leq 0,1$) and the School of Economics – 81% ($\varphi=3,019$; $p\leq 0,1$) try to solve their problems independently than international students from the School of Medicine, where this rate is significantly lower in comparison to other schools, but is also generally high – 62%.

The next place according to the general sample as a whole are such means of solving problems as asking for help from friends from their country (65%) and from professors (63%); there are no significant differences between rates of international students in different schools.

Quite popular way to solve own problems among international students is asking for help from parents (55% of respondents according to the sample). Major quantitative indicators of asking for help from parents are determined among international students of the Law School – 76%, the lowest – among international students of the School of Foreign Languages – 54% ($\varphi=3,302$; $p\leq 0,1$).

Large majority of international students are more likely to ask for help from friends from their country – 65% than from Ukrainian friends – 52% ($\varphi=1,867$; $p\leq 0,05$), but it's nice to note that the percentage of asking for help from Ukrainian friends also is not low. Most often international students from the School of Economics ask for help from Ukrainian friends – 88% ($\varphi=6,527$; $p\leq 0,1$), the lowest number of asking for help from Ukrainian friends is at the Law School – 47%.

Also very popular among international students according to the sample as a whole, were attempts to find ways to solve problems through literature and the Internet (52%); significant differences between rates of different schools were not found.

International students were asked to identify by 10-point scale the structure of widespread negative social phenomena among students.

The most common negative phenomena among students, according to respondents, are the Internet addiction (4.7 points), tobacco smoking (3.9 points), regular drinking of low-alcohol drinks (3.7 points) and strong alcoholic drinks (3.4 points) and problem gambling (3.2 points).

It should be noted that all prevalence indicators of negative phenomena among international students in general are not high, because assessment was held by ten-point scale.

According to the second substantive part of a questionnaire – the need of international students in psychological support and desirable forms of psychologists for them – the following results were obtained: 29% of international students find necessary the work of a psychologist at the University and in hall of residence, 35% of respondents answered in the negative, 36% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

These results probably reflect rather the degree of awareness of international students of need in psychological support than unwillingness to cooperate with a psychologist or negative attitude towards any type of psychological work. This is evidenced by the following results of the study of desirable forms of a psychologist at the university, according to many international students (50% and more), they noted almost all proposed in the questionnaire forms of work as useful and interesting for them. Thus, interviewed students consider necessary and interesting forms of a psychologist's work with students: group practical classes (trainings) – 59%, individual psychological counseling – 53%, seminars – 52%, lectures – 51% conferences – 46% of respondents.

Analysis of the research results allows the following conclusions:

1. International students consider the following own the most topical problems: conflict with the police, understanding of educational material at lectures and in textbooks, and communication with Ukrainian students.

2. Among key ways to solve topical problems most common for international students were attempts to independently solve them, asking for help from friends from their country, from teachers and parents.

3. The most common negative phenomena among students, according to respondents, are Internet addiction, tobacco smoking, regular drinking of low-alcohol drinks and strong alcoholic drinks and problem gambling (computer games, slot machines, casino), but in general all indicators of negative phenomena among international students are low. It is worth emphasizing the prevalence of Internet addiction among student and youth, but it should be noted that the results of our study do not allow to differentiate Internet avocation and Internet addiction, which has to become the object of special studies.

4. A low level of awareness among international students of need in psychological support was found.

5. Together with preliminary results the high level of readiness among international students to participate in various psychological activities was determined. Thus, interviewed students considered for themselves nearly all proposed in the questionnaire forms of work necessary and interesting forms of a psychologist's work with students: group practical classes (trainings), individual psychological counseling, seminars, lectures and conferences.

Results of the study show that the majority of international students on arrival in Ukraine faced difficulties of social and psychological nature (adaptation to environmental conditions and requirements of educational activities) and require psychological and pedagogical attention and support.

Discovered in the study desirable forms of work in carrying out psychological support claim possibility of practical classes (trainings) for international students aimed at adapting to learning process in the new country for them. Trainings in common groups with Ukrainian students are able to help international students to get to know better fellow students, features of culture and life of Ukrainian students, adapt to the foreign student group, improve their spoken Russian, acquire new friends, and, in general, create favorable conditions for further education at the University.

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