

Multi-Dimensional and Functional Approach to the Intercultural Adaptation Study

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Abstract

We believe it is important to do holistic, systematic study of intercultural adaptation. Our approach is based on the theoretical proposition of the multi-dimensional and functional organization of behavioral acts and human activities developed by A.I. Krupnov. It allows investigating not only separate aspects but the whole system, considering hierarchy and interaction of the components constituting the adaptation. According to this theoretical model six most important areas of psychological adaptation to a new culture were identified: operational and dynamic, motivational, cognitive, emotional, regulatory and productive aspects. In addition, since the intercultural adaptation is inextricably linked with the concept of ethnic tolerance, we investigated the relation of this personality trait with the selected aspects of intercultural adaptation. Our empirical research involved 351 first year students of Russian university arrived from different regions of the world (40 countries). According to our theoretical model, for each aspect of intercultural adaptation special psychodiagnostic techniques we picked up. In total 14 techniques were used. This research made it possible to reveal the ratio of the intercultural adaptation various aspects. Factorial analysis in general approved our theoretical model. It showed that in the intercultural adaptation general psychological structure all studied aspects of intercultural adaptation are relatively independent. Central place in this structure belongs to the emotional intelligence and communicative tolerance. The intercultural adaptation peculiarities of the students from different regions are determined not only by the level of the analyzed adaptation aspects development, but also by their specific correlations.

Keywords: intercultural adaptation, migrants, adaptation styles, social distance, stress coping strategies, life goals, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, ethnic tolerance.

1. Introduction

Active migration processes have become an integral part of the modern world. Psychology and allied sciences are actively exploring problems of intercultural adaptation. In this area has been accumulated a lot of knowledge, although often only certain aspects of this phenomenon studied.

We believe it is important to do holistic, systematic study of intercultural adaptation. Multi-dimensional and functional approach we propose to study the problem of cross-cultural adaptation was developed by the Russian psychologist Alexander Krupnov (2006, 2009) for the analysis of personality traits and activities. The approach has been actively tested and developed by Krupnov's Scientific School and proved its effectiveness in exploring not only separate aspects of the considered phenomenon but a holistic and an integral system considering its hierarchy and interaction of its component parts (Bojko, 2013; Volk & Akimova, 2010; Kudinov, S.I. & Chzhan Pan Hao, 2013; Lykova & Karaverdo Intriago, 2010; Maslova, 2011; Novikova & Ibadova, 2009; Novikova, 2010; Chebotareva, 2011, 2012, 2013).

According to this theoretical model six psychological areas responsible for adaptation process characteristics were distinguished. The *operational and dynamic* aspect includes stylistic characteristics of the adaptation process, in particular inter-ethnic cooperation and stress coping strategies. The *motivational* aspect of adaptation involves the adaptants' life goals, long-term plans, depending on which they choose adaptation styles. It is clear that, for example, that the adaptation styles and results of students studying abroad in order to become good specialists at home vary significantly from those who are considering studying abroad as a form of tourism or an opportunity to work abroad. Also, various adaptation characteristics vary depending on individual purposefulness, awareness of their goals in life, etc.

The *cognitive* aspect of adaptation also plays a significant role. It is important to consider a system of person's understanding of certain intercultural situation, his or her own ideas about their place and role in this situation, and their ability to analyze a variety of social situations.

The understanding of the situation is closely related to the attitude to it, i.e. the *emotional* aspect of adaptation. It

also takes into account the person's ability to understand and regulate his or her emotions and the others' emotions, to understand the specifics of emotional expression in other cultures.

Many researchers believe that the *regulatory* aspect is the key one in the social and psychological adaptation. Naturally, in intercultural adaptation it is important to consider the level of the person's main regulatory processes development. But it is important to consider them in relations to other aspects of adaptation.

The *productive* aspect includes the rates of adaptation successfulness, the degree of person's satisfaction with his or her adaptation, the presence or absence of maladjustment signs.

In addition, since the intercultural adaptation is inextricably linked with the concept of ethnic tolerance, we think it was important to investigate the relation of this personality trait with the selected aspects of intercultural adaptation.

2. The Research Methods

According to our theoretical model, for each aspect of intercultural adaptation special psychodiagnostic techniques were picked up. In total we used 14 techniques.

The *operational and dynamic* aspect was assessed by the techniques: "Types of Ethnic Identity" (G.U.Soldatova, S.V.Ryzhova), "The Indicator of Stress Overcoming" (D. Amirkhan, translated and adapted on Russian N.A. Sirota and V. M Jaltonsky). The *motivational aspect* was regarded with "The Test of the Life Meanings Orientations (D.A.Leontev). The *cognitive aspect* was investigated with "The Scale of Base Convictions" (R. Janov-Bulman), "The Scale of Social Distance (E.Bogardus in T.G. Stefanenko modification), "Who am I ?" – Technique of 20 questions (M. Kun, T. Mc-Partland), "The Social Intelligence Measurement" (J. Guilford). The *emotional aspect* was measured with "The Questionnaire of Emotional Intelligence" (D.V. Lusin) and the techniques "Gnosis Facialis Foto" (J. Merten, J. Spang). For investigating of the *regulatory aspect* the questionnaire "Style of Self-control" (V.I. Morosanova) was used. The *productive aspect* was assessed with the techniques "Adaptation" (A.I. Krupnov) and "The Person's Adaptation to New Social and Cultural Environment (APSCE) (L.V. Yankovsky in modified version of T.G.Stefanenko, M.S.Panova). The level of students' tolerance was measured with "Tolerance Index" (G.U. Soldatova, O.A. Kravtsova, O.E. Khukhlaev and I.A. Shaigerova) and "Diagnostics of the General Communicative Tolerance" (V.V. Bojko).

The statistical significance of the differences between studied groups of the students was estimated by means of nonparametric *Kruskall Wallis test*. Also we used *Multiple Range Tests*, with which the variables received for students from different regions were compared by pairs. For revealing the gender specifics of adaptation of students from different regions we investigated joint influence on indicators of adaptation of factors of region and gender by means of the *multifactorial dispersive analysis (MANOVA)*. For revealing the correlations of various aspects of intercultural adaptation with its productivity we used *Spearman's rank correlation coefficient*. For research of the structure of adaptive characteristics of foreign students and specifics of such structures at students from different regions we used *factorial analysis*. This article summarizes the results of these statistical studies.

3. Sample

351 foreign students studying in Peoples' friendship university of Russia were included into the empirical research sample. Among them there were students from 5 regions of the world: Asia (80 persons), Africa (61), South America (69), Middle East (81) and the Central Asia (60), from 49 countries. All examinees were students of the first years of 9 different faculties. Among examinees there were 189 men and 162 women. Ages of examinees were from 17 to 25 years old, the average age - 21.3 years old.

4. Results and Discussion

The aim of this stage of the study was to identify the nature and the psychological mechanisms of foreign students' intercultural adaptation through the assessment of its different aspects intensity and interaction.

At first the general characteristics of the foreign students' intercultural adaptation should be considered. In operational and dynamic aspect of adaptation can be seen a wide scatter in the data on all tests' scales, what is the evidence of variety of ethnic identity forms at foreign students. Leading ethnic identity type for most foreign students is a positive ethnic identity, that is, on average, foreign students accept their own ethnicity and have positive attitudes towards other ethnic groups. However, next in intensity goes an ethnic indifference, and then – an ethnic bigotry. Accordingly, in the sample, there are many students with blurred ethnic identity, for whom ethnicity is irrelevant (perhaps

