



## MATERIÁLY

IX MEZINÁRODNÍ VĚDECKO-PRAKTICKÁ KONFERENCE



**MODERNÍ VYMOŽENOSTI  
VĚDY – 2013**

27.01.2013 - 05.02.2013

**Díl 27  
Pedagogika**



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димо сформировать убеждение в том, что только на основе глубокого ретроспективного анализа развития историко-педагогического процесса можно успешно прогнозировать тенденции его дальнейшего развития.

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### **SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF ARAB STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF UKRAINE**

Relevance of the topic of our study is explained by the fact that today in Ukraine about 55,000 students – foreigners from 130 countries are trained in various educational institutes. As an example (regarding Arabic students) gives the data of the State Statistics of Ukraine, which were published in 2012 [1]:

#### **Entry of foreign citizens in Ukraine as countries from which they came**

Country	The number of foreign nationals who have entered the country (all)	Of them – the purpose of the journey: training
Azerbaijan	85482	2636
Algeria	837	210
Ethiopia	207	37
Palestinian Territory	591	256

Iran, Islamic Republic	8289	1423
Iraq	5201	3923
Jordan	5728	2850
Kuwait	978	125
Lebanon	4696	826
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	998	184
Morocco	2297	1655
Pakistan	1230	245
Saudi Arabia	1362	144
Uzbekistan	14163	424
Republic of Yemen	204	78
Syrian Arab Republic	4333	1077
Tunisia	1416	841
Turkey	76363	2136
Turkmenistan	14060	7490
Egypt	2649	229

Having read the English Church publications of Khalid Said, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Ukraine, A. Hatem al-Rubaie Jabbar (Iraq), Fadia Bukhari (Saudi Arabia) and having analyzed the results of Akhmed Red research concerning students at the University of Sharjah as well as investigations of D. Ghazi Saleh Nahar (Jordan) on higher education issues related to globalization problem [2], we got convinced of the relevance of our research subject.

Although intercultural contact is at the heart of the acculturation experience, the effects of this contact on sojourners' social and psychological adaptation remain a subject of debate. This is due in part to varying emphases on the affective, behavioral and cognitive components of acculturation (Ward, 2001a) [3]. It is further compounded by competing theoretical approaches that frame intercultural encounters as a source of uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst, 1985) [4] on one hand, and as an avenue of culture learning and social support, on the other (Berry, 1997; Bochner, 1982) [5].

All individuals who enter a new cultural environment share common adaptation experiences. They are all «strangers» in their host country and must accept at least some of the demands of their new surroundings. Each will experience uncertainty and unfamiliarity as they try to cope with the changes. Modes of behavior which were useful in their old setting may be maladaptive in the new one (Kim, 1988) [6]. As described by Schuetz (1944) [7], the cultural pattern of the host country is to the stranger «not an instrument for disentangling problematic situations but a problematic situation itself and one hard to master» (p. 108). Asian students must also confront the challenges of learning and adjusting to a number of competing and even contradictory new roles and a narrowly defined set of behavioral norms (Spradley & Phillips, 1972) [8]. Many experience interpersonal distress as a result of language barriers, different values and expectations, and the loss of close contact with their social support network and family.

Concretely, factors as cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional Stability, social initiative, and flexibility have been related to physically and emotionally adjustment in different countries (Van Oudenhoven & Van deer Zee, 2002; Leong, 2007).

In addition, in line with Ward's model (2001), adaptation may be meaningfully divided into two domains: 1) Psychological domain (emotional/affective) and 2) Sociocultural (behavioral) domain related to the ability to «fit in» to acquire culturally appropriate skills and to negotiate interactive aspects of the host environment.

The process of a personality adaptation to changing environmental conditions is the subject of study of different trends. In the research of contemporary Ukrainian sociologists three types of adaptation of foreign students are singled out: physiological, psychological and social ones. From our point of view, the social- psychological adaptation, which is defined as a type of interaction of an individual or social group with the social environment is of the biggest interest and value as in the course of this adaptation the harmonization of requirements and expectations of social actors with their capabilities and reality of the social environment is realized [9].

Social-psychological adaptation is a process directed at the preservation of the balanced status of individuals or groups, with the purpose of adjustability to conditions of a new cultural environment and obtaining relative autonomy from the previous environment, for the prospective provision of basic needs by means of academic or professional work.

The purpose of our research is to reveal problems which can arise during the adaptation process of the Arab students studying at Luhansk East Ukrainian National University named after Volodymyr Dahl (EUNU). Particular attention in this respect has been paid to the physiological and psychosocial factors. Many questions for the questionnaire we have developed are provided with some additional comments, which allow our respondents to express their emotional attitude. In this survey 46 Arab students took part at the age of 18 – 30 years old. Empirical data have been processed with the use of statistical software package for social sciences SPSS13.

According to the results of our study, students from not well-to-do or financially-poor families and those who are accustomed to be under their parents' strict guardianship experience a particular stress for the first few weeks after the arrival in a foreign country. They are in a state of stress: complaining of loss of appetite, fatigue, lethargy, insomnia, low mood and irritability (67% of respondents).

Climate change is a strong irritating factor for Arabian students, and it can result in sleep disturbances, headache, high blood pressure, acute condition of chronic diseases. High or low temperature, humidity changes, fluctuations of atmospheric pressure, specific features of a local daylight can cause a bad mood and discomfort. Here are some answers of foreign students to the following question: «How does the weather (climate) in Luhansk influence you?». 38% of students responses are «can not adapt, feel sick all the time», 12% say they have adapted at once. Adaptation to climatic conditions is one of the longest and most difficult processes. It was very hard for students to be adapted to frequent changes of weather, little sun and snow.

Another question is: «What are the specific features of Luhansk climate you can't adapt to?».

The answers are: little sun (39%), temperature changes (31%) 4% – high humidity, 26% – snow.

The process of adaptation of students to the Ukrainian cuisine is the quickest and easiest one. In many Arab countries, as well as in Ukraine, potatoes, rice, meat and fish are preferable; people of these countries use a lot of spices. Therefore, some Ukrainian dishes turn out to be similar to the dishes of native cuisine to students' pleasant surprise (38% of respondents admit this fact). The question is proposed: «How was the adaptation process to the Ukrainian food developing?» The students responded as follows: 38% said they had got accustomed to it at once, 22% – were still getting used to it, 40% – had got used to it for a long time.

Water is one of the most frequent negative factors of adaptation (68.8%). A poor quality of water as sanitary facilities is also noted. Analysis of the survey results leads to the conclusion that adaptation to this factor is particularly difficult.

We emphasize that adaptation to an abrupt change in climatic conditions and food makes a person switch on the appropriate coping mechanisms that negatively affect the learning process bringing it to the background. The impact of climate and nutrition, in turn, unfavorably affects students' health and psychological state. Complaints of fatigue are the most frequent. It is known to be caused by the organic disorders, poor environmental conditions and psychological discomfort. In turn, fatigue can result in memory deterioration. 61% of students surveyed complain of memory deterioration. This fact is very disturbing, because similar memory impairment can be often a signal of extreme condition. Health disorders have been noted by 55% of respondents. It is a matter of great importance because it prevents nearly 40% of the students from studies.

The second part of the questionnaire is devoted to the problem of adapting to the educational process. It turns out to be developing much easier than other forms of adaptation. The results show that 55% of respondents do not consider the system of training difficult. Only 9% of students regard examinations and tests to be difficult and 30% point to an extreme educational load and 18% mention other factors.

Overwhelming majority of Arabian students enjoy studying their disciplines, although they have some difficulties, for example with memorizing terms. The initial period of teaching subjects in Russian is also challenging. The questionnaires' responses propose teaching subjects in foreign languages for some period.

Thus, it is adaptation to the educational process that softens and makes easier the process of general adaptation.

In all aspects of adaptation foreign students who are young men, experience various problems 3-4 times more often than girls do, but communication with classmates is equally difficult for both genders.

In studies of socio-psychological adaptation of Arab students is important gender dimension. Gender differences in Arab societies tend to remain strong, and the

social structure is male dominant. In Arab society, women are perceived as «physically and mentally weak in comparison to men» (Al-Haj, 1987) [10, p. 103]. The male is the leader and highest authority in the household, the economy, and the polity (Al-Krenawi, 1996; Morsy, 1993)[11]. In many Arab societies, women's social status is strongly contingent on being married and rearing children, especially boys (Al-Sadawi, 1977, 1995) [12; 13].

Gender differences in responses to the question what Arabian students like on their arrival in Ukraine have been distinctly revealed. Unlike girls, boys like the Ukrainian people, independence and autonomy, different lifestyle, presence of fellow countrymen (100%) and education process (90%), while girls show their preference for culture, weather and sights of Luhansk.

In the course of the research we have analyzed the problems of adaptation connected with the academic system of Ukrainian universities.

**Academic System and Arab Postgraduate Students' Challenges**

**1. Academic system is different from my own country**

No Item – 7.97%.

Strongly Agree – 61.34%.

Agree – 6.13%.

Not Sure – 15.33%.

Disagree Strongly – 9.20%.

**2. I face academic difficulties**

No Item – 4.90%.

Strongly Agree – 70.55%.

Agree – 2.45%.

Not Sure – 14.11%.

Disagree Strongly – 7.97%.

**3. Lectures are helpful to solve my academic difficulties**

No Item – 6.13%.

Strongly Agree – 52.14%.

Agree – 3.68%.

Not Sure – 19.63%.

Disagree Strongly – 18.40%.

**4. Academic difficulties are affecting my achievement**

No Item – 5.52%.

Strongly Agree – 67.48%.

Agree – 6.13%.

Not Sure – 11.04%.

Disagree Strongly – 9.81%.

**5. Methodology of teaching is different from my own country**

No Item – 12.26%.

Strongly Agree – 74.23%.



Agree – 4.90%.

Not Sure – 6.13%.

Disagree Strongly – 2.45%.

As can be seen from the results of the interview participants also report changes in their academic plans, and lack of certain types of assistance.

Our study has shown that faculty members of the University assist students in their adaptation. The question was asked: «Do your teachers provide you with any supplementary consultations after classes?» 35% of foreign students answered «always», 36% – «not always» 29% – «no.» Despite this fact, 43% of students in case of having problems with their studies turn to teachers for help.

Following identifies the most troublesome problems encountered by Arab students studying in Luhansk. 54% indicated that the academic barriers were their biggest problem. 35% identified language problems as their main grief. A smaller number of just on 10% were particularly worried about cultural barriers.

Most Troublesome Problems faced by Arab Students the most important troublesome problems of students Percentage %

Academic challenges – 54.60%.

Language challenges – 35.58%.

Cultural challenges – 9.81%.

Summing up the results once again we want to stress that exploring the socio-psychological adaptation of Arab student's scientists will need to take into account that the Arab world itself is a mosaic of various cultures that differ in religion, ethnicity, social condition, democracy level, ruling ideology, role of women, literacy level, etc. We will see later that while some books are accepted and translated in one Arab country, the same books are rejected in another. Differences are acute even within the same country. Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Egypt, where various religious groups cohabit, present a mosaic of micro-cultures within the same cultural community.

Conclusion. As a whole we should admit a high level of Arab students' adaptability at our University to the University reality in which they not only learn, but live for a long period of time. A considerable number of the Arab students face certain difficulties, which are of physiological, social and psychological character. Adaptation to the Ukrainian climate and cuisine is the main physiological problem. Adaptation to climatic conditions is a more complex process. A complex of professional and psychological factors, marked by more successful adaptation, suppresses an acute influence of social and physiological factors, despite the fact that they exert a negative impact on the students' health and studies.

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OBSAH

PEDAGOGIKA

PROBLÉMU PŘÍPRAVY ODBORNÍKŮ

<b>Ныязбекова К.С.</b> Развитие педагогической мысли в Казахстане .....	3
<b>Соколовський В.В.</b> Формування готовності військовослужбовців до дій у напружених ситуаціях, як елемент емоційно-вольової культури .....	9
<b>Слененкова Е.А.</b> Прогностическая функция истории педагогики .....	12
<b>Krupenina N.A., Tihonova M.I.</b> Socio-psychological adaptation of Arab students at the universities of Ukraine .....	15
<b>Глязкова І.Я.</b> Навчальний процес у контексті мотиваційних бар'єрів студентів ..	22
<b>Танасва З.Р.</b> Методологический регулятор развития педагогической компетенции магистрантов юридической направленности .....	24
<b>Винтман В.Р., Дайнарович Т.Ю., Чурсина Н.Г.</b> Особенности проведения пленера со студентами-дизайнерами .....	31
<b>Никитенко А.Н.</b> Использование педагогического наследия В.Н.Сорока-Росинского в современных условиях .....	33
<b>Павлова Е.В.</b> Особенности руководства научно- исследовательской работой студенческой молодежи в условиях высшей школы .....	35
<b>Черникова С.М.</b> Проблемы подготовки специалистов в области художественного проектирования .....	38
<b>Сущенко Л.О.</b> Фактори впливу на посилення розвитку наукової складової у вищому навчальному закладі .....	40
<b>Сурова Н.А.</b> Аналитическая химия как инструмент в подготовке специалистов в крымских вузах .....	42
<b>Луговская Э.М.</b> Профессионально важные качества техника-механика агропромышленного производства как составная его профессиональной компетентности .....	45
<b>Беркімбаєв Р.Ә.</b> Экономикалық мамандықта оқытын студенттердің ездiк жұмыстарын ұйымдастыру ерекшелiктерi .....	54
<b>Жұмабекова Ф.Н., Салиева А.Ж.</b> Мектепке дейiнгi бiлiм мазмұнын жаңартудың жаңа парадигмалары .....	56
<b>Шкутина Л.А., Карманова Ж.А., Асанова К.Д.</b> Выбор профессии и профориентация – основные факторы в самоопределении подрастающего поколения .....	61