Socio-Psychological Adaptation of International Students to Learning and Professional Activities

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Abstract

It remains well established that international students face a number of challenges when they arrive at a foreign institute to pursue higher education. This research aims to examine the socio-psychological adaptation of international students to learning and professional activities of Elabuga Institute (branch) of Kazan Federal University, Russia. Using a number of socio-psychological adaptation methods of assessment (such as the sense of social security satisfaction, social frustration and psychological adaptation to new life conditions), the research aims to make remedial arrangements to boost the psychosocial adaptation of international students to educational and professional activities.

The findings from the assessment methods were deployed to create an intervention programme, which in turn created the effective adaptation environment for overcoming the psychological inconveniences of language and culture barriers, integrating students into personal and business relations with the native speakers, corporate training of Russian language in conversation clubs, and invitation for participation in mass cultural institute events.

Keywords: International Students; Higher Education; Intercultural Education; Language and Culture Barriers; Social and Psychological Adaptation; Social Security, Russian Federation

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Introduction

Teaching international students is becoming a commonplace practice (Palaiologou & Gorski, 2017). Such educational movement adds new perspectives to the development of intercultural ties and communications between countries and generates a unique perspective of positive culture assessment by students and teachers (Dervin, 2015; Portera & Grant, 2017). This enables the employers of the host country to see the potential in international students to develop their company economy. At this point, many countries consider international education as one of the critical components of the higher vocational education system (Akhtar et al., 2015).

World joint and European educational system aims to develop the higher education system to completely another level of specialist training. It implies an inextricable connection with the educational and professional mobility of today's students.

According to the Russian Federation Programme on Education Development for 2013-2020, the share of international students studying in Russia must grow from 2.3% to 10% by 2020. This programme establishes strategic changes to be made in university development and plans for the interaction of vocational education and the labour market. The main focus of this programme is laid on internationalisation support in universities (Strategy 2020).

The arising situation with providing educational services to foreigners imposes new requirements for educational and professional adaptation of international students (Greenfield et al., 2016; Schartner & Young, 2016). Based on these arguments, one of the main objectives of modern education is to create a multicultural educational system that will contribute to this process.

The inclusion policy, adopted for foreign citizens to adapt to a new educational environment and society, is an integral part of the state policy of every developed state including Russian Federation (Greenfield et al., 2016; Fayzullina Robertovna, 2019), which stipulates specific efforts to maintain social stability. At the same time, we do not consider the adaptation as the assimilation of migrants and their rejection of their own ethnic and cultural identity. Assimilation implies giving up one's own culture by migrants, and the acceptance of another value system (Volokh & Suvorova, 2013).

Social integration acts as a process of "transformation" of somewhat independent, poorly interconnected objects (individuals, groups, states) into a unified, integral system, which is characterised by consistency and interdependence of its parts under common goals and interests (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016). The matter centres around the establishment of optimal connections between social institutions, groups, and branches of government, as well as around the social development of unified ideology, and cultural dialogue between indigenous people and visitors. The dialogue of cultures is not merely a union or interaction of different cultures; it is a process of integrating one culture into another to minimise ethnic conflicts: only dialogue can solve most of the problems between indigenous people and foreign citizens (Brisset, 2010; Akhtar et al., 2015).

Student adaptation is one of the critical components of educational inclusion. Poor inclusion success entails interpersonal conflicts (Chiang, 2015), higher anxiety, excessive strain and poor learning motivation, poor satisfaction with studies generally and future profession, escalating sense of alienation (Chirkov et al., 2007).

The primary social and psychological function of stereotypisation has become the intergroup discrimination, that favours its ethnic group, which conditions the maintenance of positive group identity (Hoang & Tran, 2017). Social adaptation of international students in stands for the assimilation and recognition of new values and behavioural standards in the course of adaptation to the social status of a foreigner and the social role of a student (Bulgan & Çiftçi, 2017; Tarasova et al., 2017). The majority of

international students adapt to the new socio-cultural reality is on the principle of adaptive asymmetry, when the student-adaptant's manner alters, but the inner alienation from the new social environment remains (Allen, 2010; Sakurai et al., 2010).

Despite the existing scientific knowledge in the field of social and psychological adaptation, its psychological essence remained insufficiently studied in terms of educational and professional activities of international students. In such a situation, identifying the sense of satisfaction with social security, social frustration and psychological adaptability to the new living conditions have become essential for educational success.

It has to be noted that in general, the problem of human adaptation to different living conditions and its integration into the new society was initially a philosophical problem, where the theoretical foundations of social inclusion were laid, viewing the image of the community as an aggregate of self-contained units based on egoistic interests. Distinguished social integration served as a system of shared values (Sakurai et al., 2010; Ozer, 2015; Zainullin, 2016).

The key aspect in the formation of mental-generating structures in assistance to cultural identification is that the person is seen not as passive, but as a positively minded participant of the evolution process. Great emphasis is placed on the role of education in personality development (Zheng, 2010; Greenfield et al., 2016).

The sociological approach regards adaptation as a social concept, as a form of particular interaction of an individual or social group with the social environment under the agreed requirements and expectations of its participants. At this point, any person should understand social norms and subcultural value traditions of a particular group. If the issue is about the assimilation of not specific (subcultural), but the common (cultural) values and traditions characterising society as a whole, then one may talk not about adaptation as a macro-process, but socialisation (Sakurai et al., 2010).

In the university environment, positive adaptation process generally determines the behaviour of a person: international students are going more into learning the culture, traditions and customs of the host country (an, Chiang, 2015). There is a new attitude shaped in international students towards the future profession. They learn new independent learning modes, requirements, methods and techniques. They adapt to a new type of educational establishment and discover new types of activity psychologically more easily. They learn new living conditions in student dormitories and new ways to spend free time (Chebotareva, 2016; Hoang & Tran, 2017).

We consider it essential to understand how young people feel being in a new socio-cultural environment. Recognising this problem allows the teachers and psychologists to determine what auxiliary remedial measures are required to overcome the socio-psychological cramps at higher educational establishments to improve the living standards and the learning process, and to engage international students into educational and professional activities without any psychological harm (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016).

Many foreigners are less informed of political, economic, and social systems. Firstly, these young people have confident life stance, ambitions, concepts of valuables and personal characteristics.

Secondly, the hard climatic environment of Russia and low winter temperature lead to psycho-physiological changes in the organism, often followed by stress. International students also experience household difficulties and communication difficulties.

Difficulties connected directly with the learning process depend on both the student and the teacher. In general, this is a binary process of subjective relations. The teacher must demonstrate his/her competence in a particular subject field and possess certain personal qualities, to take into account the national peculiarities of a student. As for the students, they should maintain learning potential, Russian proficiency, as well as bear in mind the national

mentality (Zheng, 2010; Thierry, 2012; Gruzdev & Old-Fashioned, 2016; Hoang & Tran, 2015).

It is reckoned that four groups of factors form the psychological barrier of adaptation. They are: psycho-physical (mind transformation, educational inclusion in the context of climatic change and psycho-emotional strain, homesickness); educational (language difficulties, distinctive features of a new educational system; unfamiliar, complex demands of a new higher education establishment); socio-cultural (new socio-cultural environment; communication barrier that arises while solving the problems of communication, cultural ignorance); household (dormitory accommodation, unorganised self-service capacity). By the psychological barrier of adaptation, one should understand social, economic, cultural, and language difficulties that foreign citizens may face with. However, the psychological barrier can be successfully overcome if foreign citizens have an interest in learning the language, customs, national traditions, and cultural heritage of the host country, and are highly motivated to do so (Karen, 2018).

However, an adverse effect of these factors may raise the sense of dissatisfaction with social security, as well as the sense of insecurity, based on a fear to be misunderstood by the representatives of Russian culture. These factors may also lead to low adaptation; high anxiety, intrapersonal conflicts caused by different cultural traditions and valuables (Bierwiaczonek & Waldzus, 2016; Meng et al., 2018).

Thus, most international students' difficulties are caused by socio-cultural factors. The psycho-physical factors occupy the second place; the third place is occupied by educational factor and the fourth is a household factor (Schartner & Young, 2016; Sakurai et al., 2010).

International students face the adaptation difficulties during their first academic year, as they find themselves in other language space for the first time. If we specify the adaptation path for the first marking period as a five-point V-shaped curve (points: the worst, worse, bad, better, good), then the point *bad* will match the period of coping with an instructional barrier, directly tied to the language barrier of adaptation (Tarasova et al., 2017).

The group of learning activities to be held in the native language was determined by systematising the findings from monitoring of the adaptive behaviour of international students. The actions taken by international students match with the basic elements of a bilingual adaptive education system. This assumes that spontaneous, unorganised and independent behaviour can be taken under control. Thus, bilingual learning activity of students can be brought to an optimum organisation.

Thus, adaptation in higher education establishment is a complex and multifaceted process as well which is expressed in student's adaptation syndrome, peculiarities of which are displayed depending on the organisation of teaching process in the higher education establishment and personal features of students. The future of studies regarding the socio-psychological adaptation of international students lies in the shortening of time necessary to get comfortable with the environment. This also applies to the process of learning new cultural patterns that enable a successful multicultural blend. This will help to (1) strengthen student satisfaction with social security; (2) reduce social frustration by making formal and informal social ties with people from other cultures; (3) understand the lifestyle and life priorities of other people; (4) adapt to new living conditions.

In light of this background, this research aims to probe the socio-psychological adaptation of international students to learning and professional activities in Elabuga Institute (branch) of Kazan Federal University, Russia. The methods and methodological issues are discussed in the next section.

Methods

The experiment is supported by the observations made about the performance of international students, and their social and household adaptation in Kazan Federal University, Russia.

The first stage of research implied observing of international students, and that took several months, from September 2015 to June 2016. The observation was performed both in and after classes; dormitories were a subject of visit, and living conditions of international students were assessed, as well as their ways of interacting with other ethnic groups living nearby. In September 2016, a summative stage had begun, which was to evaluate the satisfaction of international and Russian students with security, social frustration, anxiety and socio-psychological adaptation.

The findings from the first stage of research encompassed problems in socio-psychological adaptation only among the international students. This was a good reason to go for a formative experiment, which lasted from October 2016 to May 2017. This was the period of intervention classes, like "The Psychology Lounge", "Communication Mentor", "Russian Language Club","Mass Cultural Events". In June 2017, a control stage took place (second psychological assessment).

As mentioned above, the research period was from September 2015 to June 2016. We have analysed the problems that the international students from Africa, Latin America, and from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan face. One of the findings of our research unravelled that the international students found it difficult to accept the Russian attitude and mentality. Let us explain this in simple terms. A Russian person, who has been in conflict lately, will forget all about it shortly. By contrast, citizens from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan find it hard to forget the conflict once it ends. They are also incapable of enduring serious resentment. Besides, low Russian proficiency makes interaction with the native Russians challenging.

The psychological diagnosis was carried out in mini-groups (10-12 students) after classes. Each student was granted a package of psycho-diagnostic methods. The average time for execution was 1 hour. In the process, educational experiment was deployed using a psycho-diagnostic method via questionnaires and tests entitled — *Assessment of individual satisfaction with security needs* (Zotova O.Yu, 2015); *Instant diagnosis of social frustration level* (Wasserman L.I.,2017) (Dontsov, Zinchenko, Zotov, Perelygin, 2017); *Socio-psychological adaptation scale* (K. Rogers, R. Daymond, in the adaptation of Snegirev T. V.); *Determination of anxiety level*(Spielberger H in the adaptation of Y. L. Khanin) (Nemov, 2016). Student's mathematical statistics of t-criterion was used for approval of distinction.

Questionnaire by O.Yu. Zotova (2015)— *Assessment of individual satisfaction with security needs* —allowing us to assess socio-psychological security of individual through demand and motivational, ratable and communicative education that addresses, organises and guides toward specific goals.

Construction of questions presupposes the use of interval scale in five stages: *to a very large degree* (+2), *to a large degree* (+1) – *PvB satisfied; average* (0) – PvB average satisfaction; *to a small degree* (-1), *not at all* (-2) – PvB dissatisfied. The questionnaire— *Assessment of individual satisfaction with security needs* provides a full characterisation of the factors studied and its structure; allows to put a great number of subjects into investigation respectively within a short period; enables to create standardised processing scheme for data received; and bears relative simplicity and unambiguity interpretation of data collected.

Instant diagnosis of social frustration level by L.I. Vasserman specifies the level of dissatisfaction with social accomplishments in fundamental aspects of the life-sustaining activity. The level of frustration is determined by the answers to 20 questions which involve numbers— *completely satisfied* (0 points), *rather satisfied* (I point), *hesitating to answer* (2 points), *rather dissatisfied* (3 points), *completely dissatisfied* (4 points). The sum made is calculated and is divided by 20 (number of the question).

The questionnaire —*Scale of socio-psychological adaptation* by K. Rogers, R. Daymond is intended for complex psychological detection, accompanying the process of socio-psychological adaption and its inclusion, such as adaptation, internality, acceptance of others, self-acceptance, emotional comfort and will to

dominance. The methodology, here consists of 78 questions based on a relationship model of human being with the social environment and humans. It shows realistic self-assessment and social reality, personal activity, flexibility and social competence.

Points added to each of eight numbers, which align with performance benchmark providing for a range of uncertainty zone for this factor. Of all seven assessment options, numbered from 0 to 6, one is picked to display the answer on paper— 0 - is of no relevance to me; 1 - in most cases it is alien to me; 2 - this could hardly be applied to me; 3 – hesitate to apply it to me; 4 – it is similar to me but no confidence; 5 – it is similar to me; 6 – it is totally about me.

The test— *Determination of anxiety level* by Spielberger Ch. allowed to identify anxiety as a personality trait and mental state. Personal characteristics refer to own anxiety manifested by a person as anxiety and tending to perceive most of the situations threatening, producing strong emotional strain. State anxiety as a mental state demonstrated subjectively through emotions of the negative pattern once experienced (strain, anxiety, concern, nervousness).

Students were offered 40 propositions. To each of the propositions applied, there were four versions of the answer. General assessment on "situational" and "responsive" scale indicates that anxiety may be found in the range from 20 to 80 points. At the same time, the higher is the total score, the higher the level of anxiety (situational and personal). Rough anxiety estimations were employed: up to 30 points – low indicator; 31 – 44 points – moderate; 45 and more – high.

Investigation of socio-psychological adaptation of international students to the educational and professional activity was conducted in three experimental stages: summative, formative itself, and control. The experimental group involved 38 international students. Five of them are girls; the rest 33 are boys. All of the international students came to Russia for the first time, reside in a student dormitory. The

control group involved 40 Russian students; 19 of them are boys and 21 girls. Their ages ranged from 18 to 23 years. The average age of those under test is 19. The respondents who were selected were from the Elabuga Institute (branch) of Kazan Federal University. It is to be noted that the number of international first-year students increased over the past five years (from 130 in 2014 to 380 in 2018). Out of 800 first-year students, half are international students from Turkmenistan (200 people), Tajikistan (80 people), and Uzbekistan (100 people) that need smooth adaptation to new life to blend into the learning space.

Summative stage of the experiment was conducted in the period between September and October 2016. At this stage, control and experimental diagnostics were run by methods of *Assessment of individual satisfaction with security needs, Instant diagnosis of social frustration level, Socio-psychological adaptation scale.*

Ethical considerations

Psychological assessment was performed with voluntary consent. Students were given guarantees of confidentiality, respect for secrecy and safety effects. At the summative stage of the experiment, international students asked questions about relationships with Russian citizens and expressed concern about rapid accustomisation to new living conditions. At the formative stage of the experiment, international students were happy to take part in remedial activities; they shaped information about national traditions of their countries; demonstrated cultural heritage of their nations, and willingly performed team-building exercises. The results are discussed in the following section.

Results

Results of diagnostic data on the questionnaire— *Assessment of individual satisfaction with security needs* are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Satisfaction of Students Needs for Security		
Satisfaction level of security needs	International students (n=38)	Russian students (n=40)
Completely dissatisfied	8 (21.1%)	2 (5%)
Dissatisfied	21 (55.3%)	16 (40%)
Partially satisfied	9 (23.6%)	13 (32.5%)
Satisfied	0	9 (22.5%)
Satisfied to a large extent	0	0
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments		

Here, the satisfaction of security needs (Table 1) was determined by the Student's t-criterion. Statistical differences were revealed at the level of p=0.0098. It is apparent from Table 1 that the majority of international as well as Russian students were not satisfied with the level of security. However, the international students were far more dissatisfied when compared to Russian students. This is perhaps because international students upon arrival in Russia had to undergo massive changes in cultural and social life that resulted in the escalation of a social sense of insecurity and a poor source of psychological resistance.

Study data results on "Instant diagnosis of social frustration level" are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Social Frustration		
Level of social frustration	International students (n=38)	Russian students (n=40)
High	11 (28.95%)	0
Increased	13 (34.21%)	1 (2.50%)
Medium	13 (34.21%)	13 (32.5%)
Uncertain	1 (2.63%)	14 (35%)
Low	0	10 (25%)
Very low	0	1 (2.5%)
No frustration	0	1 (2.5%)
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments		

Our research then tried to examine the level of social frustration amongst the students (Table 2). Unsurprisingly and as expected, the results demonstrate that the majority of the international students suffer either increased or high level of social frustration. Percentage distribution of Russian students to the level of frustration is close to average. 25% of those surveyed have a low level of social frustration, which testifies satisfaction with accomplishments of main life activities.

Statistical significance of the group under study on social frustration term was determined by t-criterion of Students. Statistical differences revealed the level of p=0.0075. In short, international students to a great extent remains frustrated when compared to Russian students. When faced with unfamiliar social reality—contradictions in the value system triggering some sense of cultural shock— the international students perhaps have difficulty in translating and satisfying their needs in a new country.

Results on the question—Socio-psychological adaptation scale are shown in Table 3. Table 3 indicates that the test indices of socio-psychological adaptation are in terms of percentage. According to the results illustrated in Table 3, the international students have lower indices of acceptance of others, emotional comfort and general adaptation performance.

Table 3: Socio-Psychological Adaptation of Students		
Integral index	International students (average value ± standard deviation)	Russian students (average value ± standard deviation)
Self-acceptance	42.03 ± 18.03	40.86 ± 17.29
Acceptance of others	18.38 ± 12.85	41.83 ± 16.04
Emotional comfort	25.42 ± 11.8	37.74 ± 14.02
Internality	22.64 ± 15.2	23.58 ± 13.04
Drive to dominance	32.88 ± 10.2	29.66 ± 12.61
Total adaptation parameter	20.35 ± 14.3	37.83 ± 18.01
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments		

Statistical difference between selections of students was carried out by Student's t-criterion. The international students have a low index of "acceptance of others" than that of the Russian students (p=0.0077), which implies unwillingness for structural interaction with new people, inner disagreement with the feelings of others, estimative attitude towards the actions and behaviour of the Russians. Comparing the index of "emotional comfort" one may conclude that international students experience unpleasant, burdensome feelings of anxiety, lack of confidence, oppressions and not ready to express their own feelings overtly (p=0.0065).

According to "self-acceptance" index, no significant differences were revealed, which would mean impersonal self-esteem of own qualities with all accomplishments and shortcomings included (p=0.083). Also, no statistically significant difference was revealed in "internality" (p=0.37), "drive to dominance" (p=0.093). This means that each student under study equally assumes responsibility for their own decision and behaviour and is not seeking to manipulate others.

General index of socio-psychological adaptation of international students is considerably lower than those of the Russian students (p=0.0063), indicating the problem of dysadaptation, dissatisfaction with new social status and current environment, negative attitude towards the society. Table 4 demonstrates the diagnostic data results on "anxiety level determination" test.

Table 4: Students' Anxiety Level		
Scales	International students(average value ± standard deviation)	Russian students(average value ± standard deviation)
Situational anxiety	3.25 ± 0.75	2.1 ± 0.37
Personal anxiety	2.4 ± 0.56	2.8 ± 0.34
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments		

As evident from Table 4 that the international students have high situational anxiety. These differences are approved of by Student's t-criterion at significance level of p=0.036, implying that students at the moment of examination find themselves under tension and anxiety which leads to performance decrement, exhaustion, and tiredness. It is widely reckoned that such state anxiety is caused by dysadaptation in an unfamiliar social environment.

Thus, the results of the summative experiment revealed problem areas of socio-psychological adaptation of international students in educational and professional activity. These areas are:

- *Student dissatisfaction with social security*—International students do not

feel like being part of the group. Instead, they feel insecure due to the fear of being misunderstood by Russians;

- *High social frustration* caused by the dissatisfaction of needs for mutual interaction with pedagogues and fellow students.
- A *low total adaptation* that hinders proper and painless inclusion into the educational environment of higher education establishment;
- *High situational anxiety* enforcing intrapersonal conflict of motives, needs, behaviour caused by a variety of traditions and values.

These problem areas of socio-psychological adaptation become the blueprint for the second stage of the experiment. The second stage of experiment was conducted between October 2016 and May 2017. This experiment was conducted jointly with international students. Here, remedial activities were introduced into the education process to improve the socio-psychological adaptation of students through education.

The research findings highlighted that it is mainly the barriers of language and culture that most international students face after they arrive in Russia. Failure to understand Russian language triggers them a sense of alienation, inculcation of fear in their attempt to enter into conversation with attendees of the educational process. In most cases, the international students at training sessions tend to be passive, separate themselves from Russian fellow students, and spend their time on consolidation of study materials. Even when the language barrier is broken, the cultural values of their native countries tend to act as a barrier.

"Psychological lounge" is the training group, involving joint participation of international and Russian students. Training includes exercises enabling to heighten self-esteem, increase self-confidence, drawing the team together, improve communicative skills, etc. This group is engaged in conversation, role and business games through which students can cooperate with each other on a cross-cultural level. This is when they tell, show and explain one another the norms, customs and culture of their countries. Thus, in a psychologically safe circle, they develop barrier-free communication with holders of different social, ethnic, and national codes. For further psychological support in adopting language and culture patterns, increasing the level of congruence with itself and environment, the coach of the lounge recommends joint residence of specific Russian students with that of the international students in a student dormitory.

"Communication tutor". This is a compound and individual interactive form of activity of international and Russian-speaking students in training session. The tutor is a student who is fluent in Russian, and who helps international students to understand the educational material, perform a practical task, answer the teacher's questions, and highlight the main idea from the text. This form of interaction promotes academic adaptation of international students, reduces the distance within the study group and with the teachers; teaches business communication in a new socio-cultural environment, thereby, stimulate Russian speech activity.

"Club of Russian language". This is a corporate form of teaching international students the Russian language, which is conducted at the beginning of their studies at the University {also please read the article on the Club of International Friendship (CIF) "UNITY!" by Fayzullina Robertovna (2019)}. The work of the teachers of club focuses on overcoming the fear of communication in Russian; optimal settling language stress; maintaining the motivation of academic progress; teaching spoken and written Russian speech; business and interpersonal communication skills in a new language environment. Equally important was the activities organised by the teachers of the club, that enables international students to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of communication in Russian, the development of written speech, stimulating interest in the Russian language;

"Mass cultural events". It is a range of pre-planned meetings, evenings, celebrations etc., where time and place are fixed in advance, in the course of which students demonstrate the cultural heritage of their nation, familiarise the national peculiarities of traditions, communication and behaviour; and introduce the priorities and values of different ethnic groups. The range of cultural events included are Friendship of the world people, national cuisine, national theatre, Navruz, Folklore of Asian nations, the national sport. Involvement of students in cultural events contributes to the development of interest in historical and cultural traditions, the harmony of interpersonal interaction. What is emerging is the tolerant attitude to ethnic groups of students, the establishment of social and emotional contacts and development of multicultural consciousness.

Thus, new values from different cultural systems emerge enabling the students to feel and witness the links by uniting them together via their consciousness, language and culture. This allows understanding of how a person overcomes monoculture by rebuilding one's worldview. International students begin to perceive the surrounding reality knowingly, through the language of one's culture, as well as the language of other culture they are learning.

Remedial arrangements introduced into the educational activity allowed clearly and objectively to trace the dynamics of adaptation changes of international students. It was apparent in the active interpersonal communication in Russian; increased interest not only in the study but also in other initiatives such as participation in sports, scientific and educational events of the University.

To assess the effectiveness of remedial arrangements aimed at improving the socio-psychological adaptation of international students to educational and professional activities, a control stage of the experiment was carried out in June 2017. At this stage, the control and experimental groups were diagnosed over again by the methods of *assessment of personal satisfaction with security needs*, *instant diagnosis of social frustration level*, *Scale of social and psychological adaptation, and determination of anxiety level* — the method of mathematical statistics of Student's t-criterion was applied, which confirmed the significance of differences based on the results of each method.

The diagnostic data results of the control phase on the questionnaire *assessment of personal satisfaction with security needs* are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison of Satisfaction of the Needs for Security of Students at the Control Stage of the Experiment				
Satisfaction level of security needs	International students (n=38)		Russian students (n=40)	
	Summative stage	Control stage	Summative stage	Control stage
Completely dissatisfied	8 (21.1%)	3 (7.89%)	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)
Dissatisfied	21 (55.3%)	11 (28.95%)	16 (40%)	14 (35%)
Partially satisfied	9 (23.6%)	15 (39.47%)	13 (32.5%)	13 (32.5%)
Satisfied	0	9 (23.68)	9 (22.5%)	10 (25%)
Satisfied to a great extent	0	0	0	2 (5)
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments				

The data displayed in Table 5 reveals changes in the research parameters of international students at different stages of the experiment and the relatively large difference in significance. The number of unsatisfied students decreased (28.95%), while the number of partially satisfied students increased (39.47 %). The positive trend is evident from the occurrence of international students satisfied with security (23.68 %). These results suggest that students entered the phase of adaptation.

Any significant changes among Russian students have not been detected. Perhaps, this result stems from that fact that the Russian students continue to be satisfied with their need for security.

However, at the control stage, Student's t-criterion (p=0.0047) found differences in Russian and international students' satisfaction with security needs. Thus, all students have a greater sense of social security and equality; they have the feeling of being individuals of a safe society.

The diagnostic data results of the control stage—Instant Diagnosis of Social Frustration Level are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Social Frustration Comparison of Students at the Control Stage of the Experiment				
Social frustration level	International students (n=38)		Russian students (n=40)	
	Summative stage	Control stage	Summative stage	Control stage
High	11 (28.95%)	5 (14%)	0	0
Heightened	13 (34.21%)	2 (5.2%)	1 (2.50%)	0
Moderate	13 (34.21%)	6 (16%)	13 (32.5%)	7 (17.5%)
Uncertain	1 (2.63%)	17 (44.7%)	14 (35%)	15 (37.5%)
Low	0	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	12 (30%)
Too low	0	0	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)
No frustration at all	0	0	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments				

According to Table 6, the international students experienced social frustration at a high (14%) and heightened (5.2%) levels throughout the experiment. By the end of the experiment, the feeling of frustration tends to decrease down to the uncertain level (44.7%). This happened because students succeeded in becoming part of the new social group and thus, relieved emotional stress that was caused by the need to find one's place in a new environment. Subsequently, the remedial arrangements encouraged them to overcome the psychological barriers, which arose from the requirements imposed by a new social environment. Simply speaking, students found a new lease of life, pulled themselves together and went for communication and interethnic interaction.

Russian students show a better picture of frustration, which suggests that they are satisfied with their achievements in life.

There were no statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.275. This means that international and Russian students do not feel that teachers and fellow students intentionally or unintentionally infringe on their interests or hurt self-esteem. At the control stage of the experiment were analysed comparative data of social and psychological adaptability (Table. 7).

International students improved in the scores of "emotional comfort" (35.54 ± 12.63) and "overall adaptation index" (33.12 ± 13.03). Given that emotional comfort is associated with adaptation, one may claim that international students found mental balance, became more interested in what was going on in the real world, and enhanced the ability to establish close contacts with fellow students and teachers. However, Russian students have their scores unvarying throughout the experiment.

Statistical differences between two groups of students were found only in the "acceptance of others" (p=0.0081). This indicator refers to an evaluative attitude of international students towards the actions and behaviour of Russians. In our opinion, despite the social experience gained in Russia, international students continued to see unusual things in their everyday life in the country. Table 8 presents the anxiety outcomes measured at the summative and control stages of the experiment.

Table 7: Comparison of Social and Psychological Adaptability of Students at the Control Stage of the Experiment				
Integral indices	International students (average value + standard deviation)		Russian students (average value + standard deviation)	
	Summative stage	Control stage	Summative stage	Control stage
Self-acceptance	42.03 ± 18.03	43.04 ± 19.12	40.86 ± 17.29	41.22 ± 13.14
Acceptance of others	18.38 ± 12.85	19.33 ± 14.01	41.83 ± 16.04	40.98 ± 15.81
Emotional comfort	25.42 ± 11.8	35.54 ± 12.63	37.74 ± 14.02	38.45 ± 15.16
Integrity	22.64 ± 15.2	22.41 ± 14.32	23.58 ± 13.04	23.45 ± 12.56
Drive to dominance	32.88 ± 10.2	33.16 ± 11.14	29.66 ± 12.61	32.44 ± 10.13
Overall adaptation index	20.35 ± 14.3	33.12 ± 13.03	37.83 ± 18.01	37.58 ± 18.12
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments				

Table 8: Comparison of the Anxiety Level of Students at the Control Stage of the Experiment				
Scales	International students (average value + standard deviation)		Russian students (average value + standard deviation)	
	Summative stage	Control stage	Summative stage	Control stage
Situational anxiety	3.25 ± 0.75	2.25 ± 0.14	2.1 ± 0.37	2.26 ± 0.28
Personal anxiety	2.4 ± 0.56	2.6 ± 0.32	2.8 ± 0.34	2.7 ± 0.66
Source: Compiled by the Authors From the Results of the Assessments				

International students had significantly different scores in "situational anxiety" throughout the experiment. At the control stage, the level of situational anxiety was lower (2.25 ± 0.14) than that of the beginning of the experiment. From this, one can assume that the new living situation was no longer perceived as a threat. Thus, the adaptive capacity of international students became higher.

There were no statistically significant differences in anxiety between the two groups (p=0.136).

Currently, there is a ground laid for a more intensive and detailed study of the adaptation of foreigners to the new social and cultural environment (Sakurai et al., 2010). The interest in this matter arose from the upward trend in the arrivals of foreign citizens, who stay in Russia to learn. These students come mainly from the post-Soviet and neighbouring countries, such as Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc. (Smirnova 2017). In light of this, there are a few relevant questions. How does a student from another country, who found herself/himself in a new environment, feel? How to help her/him adapt? How to increase her/his adaptive capacity? (Hoang and Tran 2017). The process of socio-psychological adaptation runs in different ways depending on the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the students. Thus, the things will do smoothly, if encountering values do not collide with those in which the student is accustomed. By analogy, the adaptation process will be rough if the collusion takes place. Student's further performance depends on how well he/she copes with this collusion (Brisset et

al., 2010; Meghani & Harvey, 2016). We, in turn, believe that there are specific adaptation challenges – the confrontation of cultures – that make the behaviour of both sides rigid. The current practice shows that students face many problems during their early academic period (Akhtar et al., 2015; Tarasova et al., 2017). For foreign citizens, a rather long and challenging socialisation process is often is fraught with loneliness, discomfort, tiredness, depression, psychosomatic disorders and deviant behaviour (Meghani & Harvey, 2016).

Socio-psychological adaptation to educational and professional activities is a complex, dynamic, multilevel and multilateral process of re-shaping one's value-motivational sphere. This requires the maximum involvement of mental functions (memory, focus, perception, production of language, thinking, volition) to develop new skills and habits that would fit the new reality (Thierry, 2012). For this purpose, one will have to activate her/his inner resources and come up with new styles of behaviour. This is a matter of time, not to mention that some people are not able to break these walls (Hoang & Tran, 2017).

To control the learning activity of international students through the application of specific teaching methods and technologies, teachers and other parties involved in this process have to possess knowledge of ethnopsychological characteristics peculiar to different ethnic communities (Zheng, 2010; Rice et al., 2012; An & Chiang, 2015). Our experience in monitoring international students from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shows that these students happen to have the traits of perseverance, determination and individualism that form the habit of self-discipline. This contributes to good performance in class throughout the entire academic period. The swing of educational and professional motivation, which is peculiar to a certain part of students, can lead to poor knowledge (Ozer, 2015).

A detailed description gives a reason to choose the ethnopsychological approach and the principle of intercultural communication to make students from different foreign countries adapt to educational activity in Russian universities (Thierry, 2012). The principle of intercultural communication ensures the grouping of the international student under an umbrella of favourable interethnic relations. By contrast, in groups consisting of representatives of the same country, international students feel stressed. As a result, they are less interested in learning. Their performance gets worse. They may not be found in class. Besides, they may feel depressed and have some psychological disorders forming on the background of depression (Dyrbye et al., 2011). Considering the habit of keeping together that international students show, one should maintain the presence of micro groups, formed on the grounds of membership in a national or territorial community.

Our study reports on the adaptability of international and Russian students. There is a declining trend of adaptation at the beginning of education— the number of unsatisfied students decreased (28.95 %) against the increasing number of partially satisfied (39.47 %). The positive change occurred because, within the group, some students became satisfied with security (23.68%). This suggests that improvements took place in both the adaptation and the feeling of social security. Among Russian students, no changes were detected, so we assume that they were still satisfied with social security.

At the control stage, differences in satisfaction of security needs between international and Russian students was revealed only at the significance level of 0.0047. Thus, students all had stronger feelings of being secured and being part of a safe society.

The conclusion about the motivational effect of remedial arrangements that was put forward earlier matches with the arguments made by Bulgan and Çiftçi (2017). Through the example of international marriages, they showed the effectiveness of remedial arrangements, which have been used to enhance the adaptation to educational and professional activities. The findings confirm that socio-psychological adaptation of international students are

effective when remedial arrangements are included in educational and professional activities.

The international experience shows great interest in the problem of social and psychological adaptation of international students. For example, it was found that African students are less prone to anxiety and frustration when studying in Chinese universities but they do show aggressiveness and high self-esteem. These traits consume a lot of inner resources, to recover which students may attend remedial classes (Akhtar et al., 2015).

Socio-psychological adaptation of international students in France was reviewed through the lens of social experience acquisition. The experience was gained through education, of course. Some classes were interactive – a teacher acted as an advisor and a guide. Education within the team of fellow students builds tolerance for other cultures and other opinions. Such classes help students set themselves up for the proper interaction with specific individuals (teachers, classmates) (Brisset et al., 2010).

As a means of socialisation and cultural identity maintenance, sports acted at the forefront of adaptation in American universities. Sports activities were aimed at the creation of prerequisites for mastering various forms of social activities (Allen et al., 2010).

Conclusion

The purpose of the current research was to determine the socio-psychological adaptation of international students to learning and professional activities of Elabuga Institute (branch) of Kazan Federal University.The findings show that remedial arrangements accelerate and optimise the process of adaptation to life in another country. They (arrangements) are effective means of improving socio-psychological adaptation of international students to educational and professional activities. Thus, international students began to feel more comfortable, calmer and liberated when being within the walls of the university. They realised that instead

of being representatives of this or that country, they were seen as mates. Once remedial arrangements were introduced, international students became able to overcome barriers and find a way out of a difficult situation. Moreover, the sense of belonging to other ethnic group was no longer a cause of frustration. The socio-psychological adaptability became higher, as evident from the increased feeling of emotional comfort. Considering the motivational effect of emotional comfort, it is necessary to emphasise its close connection with the formation of an inner world of the individual and with one's self-development.

The findings of this research are of practical significance— they can be used to provide psychological support to international students. The proposed remedial arrangements are effective when it comes to socio-psychological adaptation and socialisation. These activities are aimed at reducing the feeling of insecurity, anxiety and frustration when integrating young people into the new social reality.

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