

DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0631  
УДК 398(517.1)

## Socio-Cultural Adaptation of Tuvan Students in Educational Environment of Tomsk

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Received 08.04.2019, received in revised form 04.06.2020, accepted 04.07.2020

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**Abstract.** This study is relevant owing the modern world, which is focused on a multi-ethnic educational space maintenance. The article reveals the stages of Tuvan students' adaptation in Tomsk's educational space. Using a systemic approach, different levels of sociocultural adaptation – ethnopsychological, social, linguistic and religious – are unveiled. The authors investigate the process of developing new types of cognitive and educational activities of Tuvan students in the universities of Tomsk and propose methods to create an unlimited interaction in a multi-ethnic educational environment.

**Keywords:** education, ethnocultural environment, multi-ethnic space, Tuvan students, system approach, ethnocultural adaptation.

Research area: history, culturology.

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Citation: Khomushku, O.M., Kukhta, M.S., Raitina, M.Yu. (2020). Socio-cultural adaptation of Tuvan students in educational space of Tomsk. *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, 13(7), 1137–1143. DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0631.

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## Introduction

The modern life stimulates creativity, communication and analytical skills in poly-ethnic academic space. Being analysed in 1960s and mostly addressed by Ph. Coombs, educational crisis revealed inability of the current educational models to meet so rapidly changing communication and social space as the result of increasing life rate and general informatization. In this manner, a search for new models and values, which supports today's social development and targets key competences, professional and personal qualities, determines an approach which enables not only acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also creative thinking needed for self-identification in culture. In our observation, such strategy is mostly demanded under global communicative diversification – to catch a balance through the means of educational space. Philosophy of education claims that just by an integrated reflection of education, one can get an insight into its real motives, which helps to form valuable personal qualities needed for a smooth ethno-social interaction in the modern world. Such interpretation, in the authors' view, which include permanent use of conventional and innovative (creative) educational tools, enables better involvement of polyethnic students' environment into university space. Thus, education guarantees the terms for social adaptation of the student, regarding their interests, abilities, challenges, values and ethnic identification.

Recently, in Tomsk, the institutions of higher education have admitted significantly large number of out-of-city students, as well as of foreign students from neighbouring countries and beyond. Most of out-of-city students, who enter Tomsk's universities, are the residents of Far Northern Regions, Krasnoyarsk Krai, the Republic of Khakassia, Buryatia, the Republic of Tuva, etc. Regarding all the factors mentioned above, adaptation of such students in cities, indeed, in Tomsk, is quite an urgent problem. The data of Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tuva say that there are more than 3000 students and young families who have moved from Tuva to Tomsk. Being ex-residents of another language and

cultural environment, these students face the problem of socio-cultural adaptation. The majority of Tuvans, esp. first-year students, have strong feelings about adaptation. This process includes acculturation, i.e. a complex stage of one's co-entering new social and cultural space and "adjustment" of this environment to one's personal needs.

## Materials and methods

As the problem of adaptation skills development in ethnic communities of different regions has poor coverage, this study aims comparative analysis of students' adaptive capabilities (through the example of Tuvans, who live in Tomsk and in the Republic of Tuva (Kyzyl)). The review on other researches demonstrates that adaptation of students to university is a part of social adaptation and a complex multi-level process of entering the learning process in higher education. Regarding the mechanisms of one's adaptation, S.G. Rudkova identifies such stages as autonomisation, identification and integration. Among others, O.V. Gavrilova, I.V. Koryakina, S.V. Kostenko, N.N. Kiseleva address the problems of first-year students' adaptation.

This research relies on the principles of socio-cultural approach and sociological survey. The analysis per se includes three key spheres of students' activities, i.e. learning (educational) and daily life, alongside with extra-curriculum (leisure) activities. All of them have helped to unveiled main troubles in adaptation process (Table 1).

The empiric data, used in the analysis, is the result of the original questionnaire. This survey has been based on 212 Tuvan students of Tomsk's institutions of higher education: Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics (TUSUR University), Tomsk State Pedagogical University (TSPU), Siberian State Medical University (SibMed) – the total number is 115 respondents, aged 17 – 24 years; and on 97 respondents, aged 18 – 28, at Tuva State University (TuvSU), Kyzyl.

The survey demonstrates the fact, that the students of TuvSU are more satisfied with their education, if to compare to the ones from Tomsk's universities. Regarding the answers to

Table 1. Problem areas of Tuvan students' adaptation

№	Problem areas of adaptation	Tomsk's universities, students, %	TuvSU, students, %
1	Willingness to study at university	81	95
2	Ability to communicate with other nationalities	96	75
3	Importance of mutual national environments	39	81
4	Absence from classes	68	47
5	Exams timing	67	87
6	Comfortable dorm facilities	22	93
7	Experience of public and socio-cultural activities	29	77

“Do you find your major difficult to study?”, one can say that Tomsk's students face more problems in their study – 39% answered “yes”, that is 17% more than at TuvSU. Besides, there is another trouble among Tomsk's students – language barrier. It is Tomsk's students who marked positive the question “Do you feel hard to understand the information in Russian?” (29%). It can be explained by the fact that new socio-cultural environment tests a Tuvan student, who cannot speak Russian, with the language barrier. The learning process at TuvSU is delivered in Tuvan as well, since many teachers are native speakers.

The level of communication between the respondents and other foreign students is significantly different: 25% of respondents from TuvSU answered “No” to the question “Is it easy for you to communicate with other nationalities?”, while in Tomsk – just 4% said the same. Tomsk is a student multinational city with old traditions and customs. Not only Tuvan, but all in-coming students try to tackle problems in cross-cultural communication. In Tuva, students stay in their native environment, in familiar conditions, and there is no need for them (students) to communicate with other nationalities. Importantly, socio-cultural adaptation is a unity of social and psychological integration into other culture, and a steady acceptance of its norms, values and behaviour patterns (Bel'mesova, 2013).

Moreover, the problem of adaptation correlates with the importance of mutual national environment in educational space: “Yes, it is important to have a student of same nationality

in the group” – answered 81% of TuvSU students and 39% of Tomsk's students.

The main reason for class absence in Tomsk's students – “laziness” – is marked by 35%, while for the students of TuvSU this reason is their babies: almost a fourth of the respondents there are young parents, while in Tomsk only two interviewees explain their absence by this reason.

Such results are based, firstly, on the fact that TuvSU has a strong attendance control, and, secondly, – the students of Kyzyl live in their native conditions, with their parents and influence of family values. The Republic of Tuva preserves family as the most precious moral value, since even in the beginning of new millennium, the Tuvan community remains authentic and relies on traditional principles, which declare that a family means life for people (Kenin-Lopsan, 2006).

The question “Do you pass term exams in time?” is answered by 87% of TuvSU students, which is higher than in Tomsk students (67%).

Another question in this survey is “Do you like living in dorms? (If you don't live in dorm, you can skip this question)”. In TuvSU, 59 respondents live in the dorm, while in Tomsk all the interviewed students live in the residence halls only. These students are not satisfied with such accommodation – 88 students out of 112 (78%); among 59 respondents of TuvSU, 55 students like living in the dorm of Kyzyl (that is 93%).

28% and 4% of students in Tomsk and Kyzyl respectively have conflicts with their neighbors. In Tomsk, there are other problems,

such as accommodation keeping, insanitary conditions, conflicts with the administrative department, etc. The list of such problems indicates rather more troubles in adaptation of Tuvan students in other city, than of the ones, who study in their mother region.

For the question “How do you spend your leisure time?” the most popular answer is “With my friends”. The students of both cities, as well as all young people, mark the key role of communication with the peers and in social networks. The answer “In the library, doing my homework” sounds rather weird, since it is chosen by 31% of TuvSU students and by just 3% of Tomsk students.

77% of TuvSU students are engaged into public activities, while in Tomsk this number is just 29%. Such gap results from unwillingness or embarrassment of the students and prevailing phlegmatic or melancholic character (Tovuu, 2009).

Thus, the research can be concluded as:

- socio-cultural adaptation of Tuvan students in Tomsk: middle engagement in learning process, high need for cross-cultural communication, low level of everyday life adaptation and middle – of leisure time activities.

- socio-cultural adaptation of TuvSU students in Kyzyl: high engagement in learning process, low need for intercultural interaction, high level of everyday life adaptation and middle – of leisure time activities.

At this point, one can draw the following line: by the ways of Tuvan students’ adaptation to social and cultural spheres in Kyzyl and Tomsk, the later are rather more frustrated by the socio-cultural adaptation, than the students of TuvSU.

## Conclusion

The survey brings us to reveal a range of problems which emerge at particular stage of university life in different regional conditional, and the dynamic analysis of problem areas enables forming a useful system of adaptation for in-coming students. In general, according to L. Buduk-ool, Tuvan students of have low level of psychosocial adaptation, which is formed under high stress level, phlegmatic and melancholic character, introversion, low strength

and mobility of nervous processes, significant prevalence of emotive, pedantic and fearful accentuations of the character (Buduk-ool, 2011). Traditionally, socio-cultural and economic conditions of the region determine such qualities as modesty, restraint in feelings, calmness, moderation, tolerance, which are the ethnopsychological feature of the Tuvan people (Tovuu, 2009).

Thus, the adaptation features of the students from other regions are individual and have ethnopsychological characteristics; they are able to cope with different social, language and religious barriers in mastering new types of cognitive and educational activities and lie in educational, material and everyday life, extra-curricular (leisure time) spheres. Consequently, the adaptation of Tuvan students in Tomsk is a complex phenomenon that includes not just one type. The success of adaptation process ensures adequate interaction of students with sociocultural and intellectual environment of the university, formation of new personal qualities and social status, development of new social roles, new values acquisition, understanding the significance of the future profession (Krivtsova, 2011), through the introduction of creative skills mastering techniques, critical thinking and extra-professional competencies which ground the contemporary educational discourse.

If we want the student to successfully undergo the adaptation process, a comprehensive work is needed to organize social and pedagogical support and psychological assistance from the university administration, department of social (educational) work, student union, and psychological support service. The university is a mediator for the migrant students to enter a new sociocultural space (Bel’mesova, 2013). In this regard, the authors emphasize the need to implement a creative approach in educational and extra-curricular activities when adapting students from different regions, since creativity acts as a tool for uniting a multi-ethnic team and as a technology for improving the quality of educational programs. An example is when the in-coming students, including the Tuvans, take part in the university events (Festivals of Cultures, extra-classes on efficient commu-

nication, leadership, creative activity, educational work, social projects, acting skills, etc.). Thus, today, creative self-realization, communication are the ways of organizing the culture that define the mechanisms for self-identification, aimed at creating tolerance, common meanings, and barrier-free interaction in a multi-ethnic educational environment.

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## Специфика социокультурной адаптации тувинских студентов в образовательном пространстве Томска

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**Аннотация.** В статье раскрываются этапы адаптации тувинских студентов в образовательном пространстве Томска. С помощью системного метода выявляются различные уровни социокультурной адаптации: этнопсихологические, социальные, речевые, религиозные. Авторы исследуют процесс освоения новых видов познавательной и образовательной деятельности тувинских студентов в вузах Томска и предлагают методы формирования безбарьерного взаимодействия в полиэтничном образовательном пространстве.

**Ключевые слова:** образование, этнокультурная среда, полиэтничное пространство, тувинские студенты, системный метод, этнокультурная адаптация.

Научные специальности: 07.00.00 – исторические науки, 24.00.00 – культурология.