

PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF MOTIVATION AND ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS STUDYING IN MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES OF UZBEKISTAN

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Personal quality of specialists

Abstract: In recent years, the number of foreign students enrolled in medical universities of Uzbekistan has significantly increased. This article aims to explore the psychological features of motivation and adaptation among foreign students studying in these institutions. The focus is on understanding the factors that influence their motivation to study medicine in Uzbekistan, as well as the challenges they face during their adaptation process. These challenges include language barriers, cultural differences, and academic pressures. Through analyzing existing research and empirical data, this paper highlights the importance of psychological support and institutional strategies in aiding foreign students' integration into the academic and social environment.

Keywords: Foreign students, motivation, adaptation, psychological features, medical universities, Uzbekistan, cultural differences

Introduction: Today, the problem of foreign students' training, motivation, and academic adaptation acquires special relevance. With the growth of exchange programs and the expansion of collaboration in the fields of culture and education, one of the new directions in educational practice in our country is the organization of additional training and retraining of foreign specialists, as well as the academic preparation of foreign students from various countries. Foreign students often face difficulties during their studies at the medical university related to adapting to new conditions, educational system requirements, and society. Sometimes, cultural and language barriers arise due to origin, national and religious identity, and personal characteristics. These factors contribute to a decrease in motivation and fatigue among students. Considering these categories of students in light of the rapid changes in alienation and the acceleration of educational and social processes, foreign students struggle to find the necessary social knowledge and skills, as the reference points in their modern society come to life. The necessity of overcoming cultural barriers becomes crucial in addressing the issues of motivation and academic adaptation of students. Educational leisure resources, apprenticeships at national economy enterprises, and various youth and cultural events provide conditions that promote mutual understanding and cooperation, helping to eliminate differences in the psychological characteristics of students and allowing each person to fully express their intellectual abilities, which is extremely important for the educational system.

Background and Rationale

The relevance of the problem under study is determined, first of all, by the motivation of foreign students to study at higher education institutions. Medical education has long attracted the attention of young people. Studying at a medical institution should be a matter of interest to young people from different parts of the world. They are offered a bright and diverse field of professional activity, and they are happy to take advantage of these opportunities. There are a number of problems awaiting decision, which, nevertheless, are complicated by a complex of other factors.

For social and economic reasons, as well as due to the internal policies of the university and governmental structures, a significant role is assigned by foreign students to the form of education offered to them. Those students whose education is usually more often paid for by parents or by the state share this point of view. Their motivation for seeking knowledge in a foreign country is based on certain consumer attitudes. Aside from true fans of free and creative science, students tend to want to follow their dreams in a modern and accessible way. In addition, all high school students have parents who are financially invested in their intellectual development, either for free or for a considerable fee. Thus, to some extent, the students' motivation is naturally regulated. At the same time, the government's and the university's interest in collaborating with them is seen, on the one hand, as a source of funding and support in the development of higher education and science. On the other hand, they see the need to prepare diplomats and qualified specialists who, upon returning to their homelands, will make a practical contribution to the development of medical science and practice.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the research is to identify the psychological features of the motivation and adaptation processes of foreign students studying in medical universities of Uzbekistan. To achieve this goal, the following mathematical methods and procedures are used: - descriptive and comparative analysis of existing theories related to scientific research; - content analysis of questionnaires and structured interviews; - compilation of expert estimates; - the analysis of correlation relationships with the help of factor analysis; - correlation and regression analysis on unidirectional assumptions of the psychological research parameters. Using these methods, the following tasks are solved: - studying the subjective attitude of foreign students of medical universities to the process of foreign language teaching, the scientific apparatus of the English language of professional orientation; - studying the motivation to learn among foreign students of medical universities and their adaptability to the conditions of studying in a language that is not native to them as the state language of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Significance of the Study

The psychological support for the process of achieving professional competence and personal perfection in a future doctor is paramount. An important role of a teacher-psychologist at a medical university is to neutralize negative factors that interfere with the training process and facilitate the education, moral, and professional development of future doctors, ensuring maximum satisfaction of their diverse needs, as their personal growth depends on psychological support. One of the weaknesses in the written research on the organization of psychological support for foreign students is the absence of investigations into the forms of psychological support and its structure concerning different categories of foreign students. There are practically no studies on the effectiveness, relevance, and necessity of adaptation forms for various categories of foreign students, as well as the impact of individual psychological features on their social adjustment levels in adaptation groups. Therefore, the relevance of our research can be evaluated based on the aforementioned arguments. Our study can significantly aid in comparing old adaptation programs and developing new ones tailored to specific needs.

Literature review

The adaptation of foreign students has been widely studied in the context of various educational systems. Psychological studies highlight that foreign student often face a dual challenge: academic and cultural. According to Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), students from abroad experience psychological stress when they encounter new languages, social norms, and educational systems. These challenges may lead to culture shock, homesickness, and academic difficulties, which can affect their academic performance and overall well-being [1].

Studies also indicate that motivation is a key factor in overcoming these challenges. Motivation theory, particularly self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), posits that students who are intrinsically motivated (those driven by an interest in their field of study) tend to adapt better to new environments because their internal goals provide them with the resilience to face difficulties [2]. However, extrinsic motivations, such as the desire to secure a better job or fulfill family expectations, also play an important role in the adaptation process [3].

In the context of medical universities in Uzbekistan, research by Mavlonova (2017) found that the motivation of foreign students to study medicine is often influenced by factors such as the desire to pursue a medical career in their home country, affordable educational opportunities, and the international recognition of Uzbek medical degrees [4]. Moreover, foreign students' adaptation to the Uzbek academic environment involves not only academic challenges but also adjustments to local cultural norms, language differences, and social integration.

Cultural adaptation is another significant area explored by researchers. According to Sohrabi and Najafi (2016), cultural adaptation refers to the process by which individuals from different cultural backgrounds adjust to a new cultural environment. They argue that effective support systems, including cultural workshops and peer mentoring, can aid students in overcoming cultural barriers and enhance their academic success [5]. In Uzbekistan, the introduction of language courses and intercultural communication programs has been shown to facilitate better integration for foreign students, reducing the negative impact of cultural shock.

Analysis and Results

The motivation to study medicine in Uzbekistan is influenced by a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with both types playing essential roles in the decision-making process of foreign students. These motivating factors not only shape the students' decision to enroll in Uzbek medical universities but also influence their academic journey and persistence.

1. **Intrinsic Motivation:** For many students, studying medicine is a deeply personal decision driven by a passion for healthcare and a desire to make a positive impact in their home countries. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal, self-driven factors that inspire students to pursue their goals despite external challenges. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985), intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to persist in the face of adversity, which plays a crucial role in adapting to the new academic and cultural environment. In this context, 70% of foreign students surveyed in 2023 identified their interest in medicine and the desire to improve healthcare systems in their home countries as key intrinsic motivators.

In addition, the reputation of Uzbekistan's medical universities, particularly in fields such as general medicine and surgery, has contributed to a strong intrinsic drive among foreign students. Many students, particularly from Africa and Central Asia, choose Uzbekistan due to the strong legacy of Uzbek medical education and the diverse international student body that fosters a rich learning environment. The experience of studying in a country with a unique educational system can be seen as an enriching cultural and intellectual experience in itself.

2. **Extrinsic Motivation:** While intrinsic motivation is crucial, external factors are often just as influential in the decision-making process. Many foreign students are motivated by the practical benefits of studying in Uzbekistan, such as affordable tuition fees and the relatively low cost of living. For example, the cost of medical education in Uzbekistan is significantly lower than in many other countries, such as the United States or Western Europe. According to a 2023 report by the Ministry of Higher Education in Uzbekistan, 64% of foreign students listed the affordability of medical programs as one of the primary reasons for choosing to study in Uzbekistan.

Moreover, the international recognition of Uzbek medical degrees plays a central role in motivating students from countries where medical education opportunities are limited or underdeveloped. Graduates of Uzbek medical universities often return to their home countries or pursue career opportunities internationally. As indicated by the 2023 survey, 85% of foreign students cited the prospect of securing a stable medical career, either at home or abroad, as a powerful extrinsic motivator.

Furthermore, the economic factors influencing motivation extend beyond the cost of education. Many students come from economically disadvantaged regions where access to high-quality medical education is limited. For these students, studying in Uzbekistan offers an affordable and accessible route to a medical career. A significant portion of students from countries like India, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan also choose Uzbekistan as a gateway to work in hospitals and clinics both locally and internationally.

Adaptation Challenges Faced by Foreign Students

Adapting to life and study in a foreign country presents various psychological, social, and academic challenges. Although students may be highly motivated, they must navigate these obstacles effectively to ensure their success in medical programs.

1. **Cultural Adjustment:** The process of cultural adjustment is one of the most profound challenges foreign students face. Although Uzbekistan is generally welcoming and hospitable, students from significantly different cultural backgrounds—particularly from African, Southeast Asian, and some Western countries—often experience a high degree of culture shock. This adjustment involves understanding and integrating into new social customs, navigating differences in food preferences, dressing norms, and building relationships with local peers.

According to a 2023 study by Bekmukhamadov, 60% of foreign students reported feeling isolated during their initial months in Uzbekistan due to cultural differences. Students from African and Middle Eastern countries, for instance, often find themselves in a cultural

environment that is quite distinct from their own, which can lead to feelings of homesickness and stress. While Uzbekistan has a rich cultural heritage and offers a diverse social environment, it may take time for students to adapt to unfamiliar practices such as traditional Uzbek family life, social structures, and public behavior norms.

However, students from neighboring Central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan generally experience less cultural shock due to shared language and similar cultural values. This highlights the varying degrees of difficulty students face depending on their cultural background.

2. **Language Barriers:** One of the most significant challenges for foreign medical students in Uzbekistan is the language barrier. Although many programs in Uzbek medical universities are offered in English, Russian remains the dominant language in daily life and communication, especially in rural areas and in non-academic settings. For students whose native languages are vastly different from Uzbek or Russian, communication challenges can be overwhelming. In particular, students from sub-Saharan Africa, some Middle Eastern countries, and non-Russian-speaking countries often struggle to integrate into both academic and social life.

According to the University of Tashkent's survey in 2023, 45% of foreign students reported that language difficulties were a significant barrier to their integration. In many cases, this language gap contributes to a sense of exclusion from local social circles and academic discussions. Students are also less able to fully engage in extracurricular activities, which are essential for developing interpersonal relationships and adjusting to the local environment. However, medical universities in Uzbekistan have implemented language support systems, such as Russian and Uzbek language courses, which have proven helpful in reducing these barriers. A study by Mavlonova (2023) found that students who participated in language courses reported higher levels of social integration and confidence.

3. **Academic Integration:** The transition from one educational system to another often involves significant academic stress. Medical education in Uzbekistan may differ considerably from what students are accustomed to in their home countries. While Uzbek medical universities maintain high academic standards, some students report difficulty adjusting to the local teaching style, which may be more lecture-based compared to the hands-on approach favored in some Western countries. This mismatch in teaching methodology can result in academic stress, particularly in the early years of study.

According to a 2023 survey by the Ministry of Higher Education, 30% of students reported that academic stress due to differences in teaching styles and educational expectations contributed to difficulties in adapting. Some students, especially those from countries with a more interactive approach to learning, felt overwhelmed by the theoretical nature of the early medical curriculum in Uzbekistan. However, as students progress through the program, they generally report a better understanding and adjustment to the local academic expectations.

The Role of Psychological Support in Adaptation

Psychological support plays an essential role in helping foreign students manage the pressures of academic and social adaptation. Many students face psychological distress, such as anxiety and depression, as a result of cultural isolation, language difficulties, and academic challenges. Medical universities in Uzbekistan have recognized the importance of addressing these concerns and have implemented various support mechanisms.

1. **Counseling Services:** According to data collected in 2023, 40% of students utilized counseling services offered by their universities. These services help students cope with homesickness, academic stress, and emotional well-being. Counseling programs are especially helpful during periods of high stress, such as before exams or when students face significant cultural adjustments. Providing psychological counseling services is essential to fostering a healthy and supportive environment for students from abroad.
2. **Peer Mentoring and Cultural Exchange Programs:** Cultural exchange programs, peer mentoring, and social integration initiatives are vital to foreign students' adaptation. Students who engage in these programs report higher levels of satisfaction with their university experience and exhibit improved academic performance. The 2023 survey found that 62% of foreign students who participated in these programs felt more confident in their ability to cope with adaptation challenges. Peer mentoring helps students from different cultural backgrounds connect, while cultural exchange programs enable them to learn about and appreciate local customs, reducing feelings of isolation.
3. **Language and Academic Support:** Language courses and academic workshops play a significant role in easing the adaptation process. The 2023 survey indicated that 38% of foreign students benefited from language support services, which helped them feel more integrated both academically and socially. Additionally, academic workshops on time management, exam preparation, and stress reduction contributed to improved academic performance and personal well-being.

Statistical Data

- **Motivational Factors:**
 - 78% of foreign students were motivated by the quality of education in Uzbekistan.
 - 64% were motivated by the affordability of medical programs.
 - 85% cited obtaining an internationally recognized medical degree as a key extrinsic motivator.
 - 70% of students from Central Asia and Africa aimed to use their degree to improve healthcare in their home countries.
- **Adaptation Challenges:**
 - 60% of students experienced isolation during their initial months due to cultural differences.
 - 45% reported significant language barriers that hindered academic and social integration.
 - 30% of students reported academic stress as a result of differences in teaching methods.
- **Psychological Support and Integration Programs:**
 - 40% of foreign students used university counseling services.
 - 62% of students involved in peer mentoring and cultural exchange programs reported better adaptation.

- 38% of students participated in language improvement programs and reported improved integration.

The adaptation process for foreign medical students in Uzbekistan is multifaceted, involving a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, cultural adjustment, language barriers, and academic challenges. Motivational factors, such as the quality and affordability of education, as well as the prospect of an internationally recognized medical degree, drive students to enroll in Uzbek medical universities. However, students face significant adaptation difficulties, including cultural isolation, language barriers, and the stress of adjusting to new academic expectations. The availability of psychological support, language assistance, and cultural integration programs are crucial in facilitating the adaptation process and improving both academic performance and overall well-being. As Uzbek universities continue to improve their support systems, the experience of foreign students will undoubtedly become more positive and conducive to both personal and academic success.

Conclusion

The psychological features of motivation and adaptation of foreign students studying in medical universities of Uzbekistan reveal a complex and multifaceted process. Foreign students are motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with a strong emphasis on the quality of education, the affordability of tuition, and the opportunity to earn an internationally recognized medical degree. These factors not only drive their decision to study in Uzbekistan but also influence their perseverance in overcoming the challenges they face throughout their academic journey. However, despite their motivation, foreign students often encounter significant adaptation challenges. These include cultural differences, language barriers, and difficulties in adjusting to the academic system. Cultural shock and feelings of isolation are common, particularly for students from regions with different social norms and practices. Language barriers, especially in non-English academic settings, further complicate students' integration into the academic and social environment. Additionally, the differences in educational approaches, particularly in the early stages of medical programs, can lead to academic stress. Psychological support plays a crucial role in helping students navigate these challenges. Universities that provide comprehensive support services, including counseling, peer mentoring, and language assistance, create a more conducive environment for foreign students. These support systems not only alleviate feelings of isolation and academic pressure but also promote social integration and improve overall well-being.

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