

# Socio-Psychological Predictors for Integration of Indigenous Youth of the North, Siberia and the Far East of Russia into City Colleges

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The paper presents the results of studying the resources of academic, socio-cultural and psychological adaptation of students representing indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East to college. The sample consisted of 720 students, of which 304 people (58% girls) identify themselves as representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North and the Far East. The collection of empirical data was carried out using questionnaires (Scale of academic motivation; Questionnaire of online and offline coping; The Child and Youth Resilience Measure; Types of ethnic identity questionnaire; Scales of Psychological problems of adolescents; Methodology psychological safety of the educational environment). The adaptability of students was studied using the Scale of Socio-Cultural Adaptation; Self-assessment scales of satisfaction with various aspects of life; author's questionnaire. Regression analysis revealed invariant predictors (emotional attitude towards college, satisfaction with the educational environment of the college, adaptation to the amount of homework in the educational process) only for academic adaptation ( $R^2=0,53$ ;  $R^2=0,57$ ). Indicators of introjected learning motivation are also significant for predicting the success of academic adaptation of students representing the Indigenous Minorities and the Far East. The predictor of socio-cultural adaptation for the students representing the North, Siberia and the Far East nations is the level of ethno-egoism. Coping strategies and the size of the settlement predict the psychological adaptation this group students. The results obtained can contribute to the optimization of the process of socio-psychological adaptation of students-representatives the Indigenous Minorities to study in colleges.

**Keywords:** adaptation; academic adaptation; psychological adaptation; socio-cultural adaptation; adaptation predictors; college students; representatives of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

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## Социально-психологические предикторы адаптации студентов колледжей — представителей коренных и малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока

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Представлены результаты исследования ресурсов академической, социокультурной и психологической адаптации студентов — представителей коренных малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока (КМНСС и ДВ) к обучению в колледже. Выборку составили 720 студентов, из которых 304 человека (58% — девушки) относят себя к КМНСС и ДВ. Для изучения ресурсов адаптации студентов были использованы опросные методы: Шкала академической мотивации; Опросник совладания с проблемами онлайн и офлайн; Опросник жизнеспособности детей и молодежи; методика «Типы этнической идентичности»; шкалы методики «Психологические проблемы подростков»; методика «Психологическая безопасность образова-

тельной среды»; авторская анкета. Адаптированность студентов изучалась при помощи Шкалы социокультурной адаптации, Шкалы самооценки удовлетворенности различными сторонами жизни, авторской анкеты. Применение регрессионного анализа (метод прямого включения) позволило выявить инвариантные для студентов — представителей КМНСС и ДВ ( $R^2=0,53$ ) и студентов группы сравнения ( $R^2=0,57$ ) предикторы академической адаптации к колледжу, в число которых вошли отношение к колледжу, удовлетворенность образовательной средой колледжа и легкость адаптации к объему самостоятельной работы в учебном процессе. Для прогноза успешности академической адаптации студентов КМНСС и ДВ также значимы показатели интроецированной учебной мотивации. Предиктором социокультурной адаптации для студентов — представителей КМНСС и ДВ ( $R^2=0,10$ ) является выраженность сегрегационных тенденций, уровень этноэгоизма. Копинг-стратегии и размер населенного пункта, в котором расположено учебное заведение, выделены в качестве предикторов психологической адаптации ( $R^2=0,10$ ) студентов этой группы. Полученные результаты могут способствовать оптимизации процесса социально-психологической адаптации студентов — представителей КМНСС и ДВ к обучению в колледжах.

**Ключевые слова:** адаптация; академическая адаптация; психологическая адаптация; социокультурная адаптация; предикторы адаптации; студенты колледжей; представители коренных и малочисленных народов Севера, Сибири и Дальнего Востока.

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## Introduction

Student adaptation to the study at universities and vocational schools is important for all participants of the educational process, as such adaptation determines how effective students are in their learning. There is evidence [1; 2] that Russia's students from among indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East ('indigenous students') encounter additional adaptation difficulties that stem from a number of factors. Such difficulties are related to city life and socio-cultural adaptation, problems in cross-cultural communication, high risk of alcohol

addiction, etc. [11]. This requires that psycho-pedagogical programs assisting indigenous students are designed and implemented taking into account such students' academic, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation to study at an educational institution. This also requires that indigenous students' adaptation level is measured based on prognostic parameters.

Modern research actively explores prognostic parameters of adaptation to the study at universities and vocational schools. The following parameters are identified as the main adaptation

predictors: an individual's cognitive and behavioral features [5; 9], an individual's system of relations and subjective well-being [3], personality traits (extraversion, tractability, neuroticism, communicative tolerance) [9; 13; 14; 18], and social support [14; 15; 17]. Being able to independently adjust the intensity of one's immersion into a new socio-cultural environment is identified as an important condition of psychological adaptation to university study for indigenous students — this means being able to select a subjectively acceptable level of integration in the cross-cultural interaction and the degree of cultural closeness/openness [8].

Some scholars, while admitting the interrelation between psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, argue that predictors for these two types of adaptation should be studied separately [13; 18]. The following predictors of socio-cultural adaptation are identified in existing research: proficiency in the language of schooling, cultural distance, academic support, stable social connections [13], the cultural distance between the native country and the destination country, linguistic aptitude, cultural identity, general emotional stability [19; 20], length of residence in the country of study, immigration status, and expected discrimination [20].

Most of the available research involves university students, which makes it especially relevant to study adaptation resources in indigenous students of vocational schools.

Our study aims to identify predictors of indigenous students' adaptation to vocational schools in a new socio-cultural environment.

We have reviewed the available literature on the factors and resources of social and psychological adaptation of indigenous peoples to the study in a new socio-cultural environment and developed a theoretical model which considers that the main factors

of the quality of student adaptation include their personal resources, the resources of the vocational education environment, and the resources of the social environment [10; 11]. In our model, an individual's personal resources of socio-cultural adaptation include academic motivation, coping strategies, resilience, ethnic identity and communicative competence indicators. The resources of the educational environment include its parameters — in particular, its psychological safety, the referentiality of the educational institution (the degree to which the values and standards of the institution's environment constitute a reference for the students), and the availability of social support in the educational institution. The resources of socio-cultural environment consist of a wide range of macrosystem factors, including climatic, ecological, social, economic and political factors. The theoretical analysis was followed by an empirical research in which we tested the hypothesis that the said factors determine the quality of indigenous students' adaptation.

### **Sample and methods**

The study involved 720 students of vocational schools located in Russia's North, Siberia and Far East. Among those, 304 students (179 females, 125 males) identify themselves as belonging to the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, and 416 students (195 females, 221 males) made up the control group and identify themselves as representatives of other ethnic groups.

The set of measurement methods was developed in accordance with the theoretical model [10]. The empirical data on vocational school students' personal adaptation resources were collected using a short version of the Scale of Academic Motivation (T.O. Gordeeva, O.A. Sychev, E.N. Osin), the Questionnaire of Online and Offline Coping (E.J. van

Ingen, K.B. Wright), the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28, adapted by A. Makhnach and A. Laktionova), the Types of Ethnic Identity Questionnaire (G.U. Soldatova, S.V. Ryzhova), separate scales from the Psychological Problems of Adolescents questionnaire (L.A. Regush, E.V. Alekseeva, A.V. Orlova, J.S. Pezhemskaya). The resources of the educational environment were measured using the Psychological Safety of Educational Environment Questionnaire (I.A. Baeva) and the authors' questionnaire which allows to measure the specifics of social support offered by an educational institution. The resources of the environment were measured using the indicators reflecting the socio-economic specifics of the city/town that houses a vocational school (population size and ethnicity breakdown; the number of vocational schools; the number of social venues such as cultural, leisure, healthcare, and sports facilities).

The actual student adaptation was measured using the Revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS-R, J. Wilson, C. Ward, V.H. Fetvadjev, A. Bethel, adapted by S.L. Vasilyeva, A.A. Abramova, M.G. Volkova, N.A. Dmitriyenko, and N.S. Kovalenko), the Self-Assessment Scale of Satisfaction with Various Aspects of Life (before and after the start of vocational education), and the authors' questionnaire developed to assess the degree of student adaptation to their educational institutions [11]. The obtained data on the specifics of vocational students' adaptation were analyzed using the principal component analysis based on the Cattell scree test and the Kaiser criterion. The analysis identified three adaptation criteria common for both studied groups. They include: 1) academic adaptation, which assesses the specifics of adaptation to academic activities, fellow students, and educational institution (proportion of variance 0.23); 2)

socio-cultural adaptation, which reveals the specifics of adaptation to a new socio-cultural environment (proportion of variance 0.13); and 3) psychological adaptation, which represents the emotional wellbeing of students (proportion of variance 0.13) [pending publication].

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess the reliability of variance in adaptation resources between indigenous students and the control group students. The predictors of effective adaptation to vocational schooling were identified with regression analysis (forward selection approach). Prior to this, all variables had been tested for potential multicollinearity. The variables with multiple correlations were excluded from the subsequent analysis.

## Results and discussion

The first stage of the study describes the variables of students' personal adaptation resources to vocational schooling.

Tab. 1 showcases mean group values and standard deviation in variables related to students' personalities and significant differences in the studied groups.

The results show that indigenous students display a more pronounced eagerness to acquire new knowledge and understand educational materials, a greater degree of curiosity, commitment to improve one's academic performance, and eagerness to satisfy the need for competence. At the same time, the group's focus on education is more motivated by duty and shame that students feel because of significant others. According to [5], these feelings arise due to the frustration of the autonomy need. This combination of commitment to academic excellence and high level of dependency on external validation may create additional stress for indigenous students and cause potential difficulties in adaptation to vocational schools.

Table 1

**Mean group values and standard deviation in variables related to students' personalities and significant differences in the studied groups**

Variable	Indigenous students		Non-indigenous students		Mann-Whitney U criterion
	M	δ	M	δ	
Cognitive motivation	15.44	3.78	14.43	4.64	56702.0**
Achievement motivation	13.8	4.05	12.76	4.65	55691.5**
Introjected motivation	13,53	3.68	12.53	4.12	53765.5**
Ethnic nihilism	5.67	5.29	6.98	5.91	56185.0**
Positive ethnic identity	14.96	4.44	14.32	4.56	58044.5*
Diversion	1.33	1.05	1.17	1.05	58204.5*
Active online coping	1.30	1.06	1.50	1.06	57035.0**
Online planning	1.05	1.07	1.21	1.07	57035.0*
Tool-based support	0.93	1.01	1.12	1.04	57086.5*
Online emotional outbursts	0.38	0.73	0.57	0.87	56853.0**
Problems at school	3.13	0.71	3.34	0.81	54263.0**
Problems with peers	2.86	0.91	3.15	1.01	52960.5**

Note: \* —  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\* —  $p \leq 0.01$ .

The study revealed that indigenous students show an appropriate degree of tolerance, demonstrating positive attitudes to their own ethnicity and other ethnic groups. This can be considered an important factor for effective adaptation to a multicultural educational environment.

The study of coping strategies showed that indigenous students use diversion as a way to cope with difficult situations more often than students from the control group. Besides that, they do not tend to use online solutions as a way of coping as much. They are less likely to explore online solutions (including online communication) to find ways to improve or solve problem situations. This may indicate that indigenous students are cautious about the use of Internet as a resource for coping with difficult life problems.

Indigenous students are less concerned with situations related to vocational schooling or interpersonal interaction with peers. A possible reason is that indigenous students tend to partly retain their social circle. The study showed that 62% of

indigenous students have siblings or first cousins studying in the same vocational school — a major factor of social support making students feel more comfortable and confident in a new educational environment. At the same time, indigenous students admit to being more concerned about their vocational studies, which may reflect some adaptation difficulties related to the curriculum, school requirements, etc.

Tab. 2 displays the results of the analysis of resources related to vocational education environments for the studied groups.

Indigenous students demonstrate high results across all the variables related to the resources of vocational education environments. This indicates that vocational schools have made a positive contribution in the development of their intellectual abilities and life skills and highlights that education in vocational schools requires continuous improvement of students' capabilities. Besides, indigenous students have a more positive opinion about vocational education in general, expressing

Table 2

**Mean group values and standard deviation in variables related to the resources of vocational education environments for the studied groups**

Variable	Indigenous students		Non-indigenous students		Mann-Whitney U criterion
	M	$\delta$	M	$\delta$	
Cognitive component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.87	0.37	0.70	0.56	55108.0**
Emotional component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.71	0.50	0.56	0.81	54749.0**
Behavioral component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.53	0.55	0.40	0.61	56818.0**
Assessment of the vocational school contribution in the improvement of one's capabilities	4.05	0.83	3.87	0.91	56877.0*
Satisfaction with a vocational school	4.23	0.87	4.01	0.99	56182.0**
Assessment of the vocational school contribution in personal development	8.61	1.40	7.88	1.88	49880.0**
Commitment to a vocational school	2.41	0.61	2.22	0.65	53794.5**
Satisfaction with the possibilities to express one's point of view	2.45	1.03	2.29	1.08	57972.0*
Protection from being ignored by teachers	3.95	1.17	3.72	1.35	58269.0*

Note: \* —  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\* —  $p \leq 0.01$ .

higher satisfaction with and commitment to their vocational schools. At the same time, indigenous students feel lower satisfaction with the possibility to express their personal point of view (the study utilized a reverse satisfaction assessment scale), which may indicate some difficulties with self-disclosure. Vocational school students feel better protected against psychological abuse from teachers and peers, which demonstrates a high level of psychological safety in vocational education institutions. Indigenous students particularly highlight a more attentive and respectful attitude displayed by their teachers towards them.

The second stage of data analysis involved regression analysis using a forward selection approach to test the main hypotheses of the study. The indicators of students' adaptation — academic adaptation, socio-cultural adaptation, and psychological adaptation — were selected as the dependent variable, while the independent variables comprised

indicators revealing personal adaptation resources, educational environment resources as well as socio-economic specifics of an educational institution's location. Tab. 3 displays the results of the regression analysis conducted separately for each studied group. The values of the Fisher criterion and the adjusted rate of determination allow to conclude that the resulting model is valid.

The results indicate that the academic adaptation of indigenous students depends on the emotional attitude to the educational environment ( $\beta=0.37$ ), low introjected motivation ( $\beta=-0.12$ ), quick adaptation to the amount of homework ( $\beta=0.11$ ), satisfaction with the vocational education environment ( $\beta=-0.14$ ). It is evident that the positive attitude to vocational schools, satisfaction with social relationships within vocational schools, attentive and respectful attitude displayed by teachers, and lack of a didactic barrier are important resources of an educational environment

Table 3

**Results of regression analysis**

Dependable variable		Predictors	Standardized rates		Non-standardized rates			p
			b*	Std. Err. of b*	b	Std. Err. of b	t	
Academic adaptation	Indigenous students R=0.73 R2= 0.53 Adjusted R2= 0.50 F(14,29)=23.12 p<0.0000 Std.Error of estimate: 0.66	Intercept			-1.01	0.41	-2.44	0.02
		Introjected motivation	-0.12	0.06	-0.03	0.01	-2.06	0.04
		Emotional component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.37	0.05	0.71	0.10	6.98	0.00
		Dissatisfaction with vocational education environment	-0.14	0.05	-0.02	0.01	-3.02	0.00
		Easy adaptation to the amount of homework	0.11	0.05	0.05	0.02	2.23	0.03
	Control group R= 0.76 R2= 0.57 Adjusted R2= .56 F(10,40)=53.22 p<0.0000 Std.Error of estimate: 0.68	Intercept			-1.01	0.31	-3.29	0.00
		Academic support	0.16	0.04	0.08	0.02	3.71	0.00
		Emotional component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.21	0.04	0.27	0.05	5.43	0.00
		Dissatisfaction with vocational education environment	-0.28	0.04	-0.03	0.00	-7.66	0.00
		Cognitive component of one's attitude to vocational education environment	0.17	0.04	0.31	0.07	4.41	0.00
		Achievement motivation	0.12	0.04	0.03	0.01	3.26	0.00
		Easy adaptation to the amount of homework	0.10	0.03	0.07	0.02	2.88	0.00
		Number of educational institutions in the city/town that houses the vocational school	0,10	0.04	0.05	0.02	2.43	0.02
		Socio-cultural adaptation	Indigenous students R= 0.32 R2= 0.10 Adjusted R2= .09 F(3,301)=11.34 p<0.00000 Std.Er. of estimate: .92	Intercept			-0.12	0.24
Ethnic egotism	-0.25			0.06	-0.05	0.01	-4.38	0.00
Number of educational institutions in the city/town that houses the vocational school	-0.12			0.06	-0.06	0.03	-2.08	0.04
Control group R=0.26 R2=0.07 Adjusted R2=0 .07 F(3,41)=9.98 p<0.00000 p<0.00000 0.07 Adjusted R2=0 .07 F(3,41)=9.98 p<0,00000 Std. Error of estimate 0 .99	Intercept				0.16	0.20	0.78	0.44
	Positive ethnic identity		0.20	0.05	0.04	0.01	4.16	0.00
	Size of the city/town that houses the vocational school		-0.12	0.05	-0.19	0.08	-2.48	0.01
	Ethnic nihilism		-0.10	0.05	-0.02	0.01	-2.01	0.05



Dependable variable		Predictors	Standardized rates		Non-standardized rates			p
			b*	Std. Err. of b*	b	Std. Err. of b	t	
Psychological adaptation	Indigenous students R= 0.30 R2=.010 Adjusted R2=0.07 F(9.295)=3.24 p<0.00091 Std. Error of estimate: 0 .94	Intercept			0.32	0.34	0.94	0.35
		Emotional outbursts	-0.21	0.06	-0.21	0.06	-3.27	0.00
		Tool-based support	0.14	0.07	0.14	0.07	2.09	0.04
		Diversion	-0.14	0.06	-0.12	0.06	-2.19	0.03
		Online emotional outbursts	0.13	0.07	0.18	0.09	2.04	0.04
		Size of the city/town that houses the vocational school	-0.21	0.10	-0.11	0.05	-2.09	0.04
	Control group R= 0.23 R2= 0.05 Adjusted R2= .004 F(7.405)=3.3573 p<0.00172 Std.Er. of estimate: 1.0034	Intercept			0.27	0.28	0.98	0.33
		Contextual resilience	0.37	0.12	0.03	0.01	3.02	0.00
		Individual resilience	-0.26	0.12	-0.04	0.02	-2.28	0.02

that positively impact emotional wellbeing of students and encourage effective academic performance. At the same time, the success of academic adaptation also depends on low dependency on external validation as a learning motivation.

The control group exhibited a greater diversity of academic adaptation predictors. In their case, academic adaptation depends on 1) the satisfaction with a vocational education environment ( $\beta=-0.28$ ), 2) emotional ( $\beta=0.21$ ) and cognitive ( $\beta=0.17$ ) components of attitude to the educational environment, and 3) academic support ( $\beta=0.16$ ). Thus, seeing vocational schools as a positive contributor to students' professional development, a possibility to get help from teachers, and a positive opinion on vocational education in general contribute to students' commitment to their vocational school and encourage effective academic performance. These findings correspond to the data from previous studies determining that self-regulation of academic activities [7] and academic self-efficacy [16] act as predictors of students' academic adaptation and performance. Furthermore, students'

academic adaptation also benefits from personal resources, such as achievement motivation ( $\beta=0.12$ ), and the specifics of educational and social environment, e.g., quick adaptation to the amount of homework ( $\beta=0.10$ ) and the number of other educational institutions in the same city/town that houses the vocational school ( $\beta=0.10$ ). Academic adaptation of the control group is reflected in their commitment to academic excellence, lack of a didactic barrier, presence of other educational institutions in the same location and ability to select an educational institution and academic path. On the whole, this may indicate that consciousness in professional decision making is an important condition of academic adaptation for the control group students.

Ethnic egotism ( $\beta=-0.25$ ) and the number of educational institutions in the city/town that houses the vocational school ( $\beta=-0.12$ ) are key predictors of socio-cultural adaptation of indigenous students. A greater focus on one's ethnic identity against the backdrop of multiple educational institutions might hamper integration into a multicultural student community that

embraces indigenous students. This finding correlates with the studies showing that a lack of ethnocentrism and an orientation towards accepting cultural diversity are significant predictors of the fact that international students will not experience culture shock [6].

Positive ethnic identity ( $\beta=0.20$ ), ethnic nihilism ( $\beta=-0.10$ ), and the size of the city/town that houses the vocational school ( $\beta=-0.12$ ) are significant predictors of psychological adaptation of the control group students. The adaptation to a new socio-cultural environment is challenged by the loss of positive ethnic identity, loss of personal ethnic identity, and a bigger size of a city/town that houses the vocational school. Importantly, an imbalanced attitude to personal or other ethnic groups against the backdrop of a diverse cultural environment and more fast-paced way of local life increase the chances of frustration and hostility towards other ethnic groups.

Indigenous students tend to use the following coping strategies as major predictors of psychological adaptation: emotional outburst ( $\beta=-0.21$ ), emotional outburst online ( $\beta=-0.13$ ), tool-based online support ( $\beta=0.14$ ), diversion ( $\beta=-0.14$ ), and the size of the city/town that houses the vocational school ( $\beta=-0.21$ ). Students are more comfortable in small towns. Besides, the harmonization of student emotional state and their psychological comfort largely depend on their readiness to fine-tune their emotional state and resort to online communication to adopt the experiences of resolving difficulties. At the same time, emotional outbursts online or diversion of one's negative emotions through online leisure activities do not contribute to the harmonization of student emotional state. A possible reason is a lack of in-depth work with the accumulated problems and emotional discomfort.

The control group students were found to have the following key predictors of

psychological adaptation: contextual resilience ( $\beta=0.37$ ) and individual resilience ( $\beta=-0.26$ ). A skill in using social resources and an ability to seek support in the works of culture, religious practices, existing folk and cultural traditions promote psychological adaptation of the control group students. On the opposite, a tendency to rely upon one's individual resources impedes psychological adaptation and may deplete personal resources.

## Conclusions

To conclude, vocational school students (both indigenous and non-indigenous) were found to have a range of invariant predictors of academic adaptation. They include students' emotional attitude to the vocational school, satisfaction with the vocational education environment, and easy adaptation to the amount of homework. Effective academic adaptation of indigenous students is driven by introjected motivation, while the predictors for the control group students include academic motivation, a cognitive component in one's attitude to vocational education environment, academic support and an opportunity to choose from a range of educational institutions.

Regarding other adaptation criteria, no invariant predictors have been found. The study shows that indigenous students adapt more effectively to a new social-cultural environment if they exhibit less ethnic egotism. Higher ethnic tolerance and positive ethnic identity in the control group students increases the chances of their effective socio-cultural adaptation.

Coping strategies and the size of the vocational school city/town are significant predictors of psychological adaptation for indigenous students, while non-indigenous students showed higher significance of the resilience-related variables.

The results of the study may find an application in the programs facilitating

more effective social and psychological adaptation of indigenous students to vocational schooling.

Follow-up research on adaptation resources of indigenous students from

among the peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East may focus on the contribution of personal and macroenvironmental factors that failed to be covered in the reported study.

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