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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL STUDENTS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: The globalization of higher education has led to a significant increase in the number of international students studying medicine in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Along with academic challenges, foreign medical students face psychological, socio-cultural, linguistic, and professional adaptation difficulties. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main psychological characteristics of adaptation among international medical students, identify key adaptation factors, and determine the role of motivation, emotional intelligence, and social support in the successful integration of students into the educational and cultural environment of Uzbek medical universities. The study emphasizes the importance of creating supportive educational conditions to ensure effective professional development and psychological well-being of international students.

Keywords: adaptation, international students, medical education, psychological adaptation, socio-cultural adaptation, motivation, emotional intelligence, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

In recent years, Uzbekistan has become an increasingly attractive destination for international students seeking medical education. Medical universities in Tashkent, Andijan, Samarkand, and other regions actively enroll students from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and CIS countries. While academic programs are structured according to international standards, foreign students often experience significant difficulties adapting to a new socio-cultural, educational, and linguistic environment.

Adaptation is a complex, multidimensional process that includes psychological, social, academic, and cultural components. For medical students, this process is particularly demanding due to the intensity of academic workload, clinical training requirements, and high professional responsibility. Failure to adapt effectively may lead to emotional stress, decreased motivation, academic underachievement, and psychosomatic disorders.

Therefore, studying the psychological adaptation of international medical students in Uzbekistan is an актуal scientific and practical problem.

Theoretical Background of Student Adaptation

In psychology, adaptation is defined as a dynamic process of active adjustment of the individual to changing environmental conditions while maintaining internal psychological stability. According to L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leontiev, and S.L. Rubinstein, adaptation occurs through activity, communication, and the internalization of social norms.

The adaptation of international students includes several interconnected types:

Psychological adaptation – emotional stability, stress resistance, self-regulation;

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Socio-cultural adaptation – acceptance of cultural norms, values, and traditions of the host country;

Academic adaptation – adjustment to educational methods, assessment systems, and professional requirements;

Linguistic adaptation – mastering the language of instruction and professional communication.

Successful adaptation depends on both external conditions (educational environment, teacher support, institutional policy) and internal factors (motivation, personality traits, emotional intelligence).

Psychological Characteristics of International Medical Students' Adaptation

International medical students often experience the following psychological difficulties during the adaptation period:

culture shock and value dissonance;

anxiety and emotional tension;

communication barriers;

fear of academic failure;

reduced self-confidence.

Motivati

on plays a key role in overcoming these difficulties. Students with strong professional motivation and clear career goals demonstrate higher levels of adaptation and academic achievement. Emotional intelligence is another important factor that allows students to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions, as well as build effective interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

Social support from fellow students, academic staff, and university administration significantly reduces stress and facilitates faster integration into the educational environment.

The Role of Medical Universities in the Adaptation Process

Medical universities in Uzbekistan play a crucial role in ensuring successful adaptation of international students. Effective adaptation strategies include:

orientation programs for first-year international students;

psychological counseling services;

inclusive educational approaches;

intercultural communication training;

supportive teacher–student interaction.

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Creating a tolerant, inclusive, and psychologically safe learning environment contributes not only to students' academic success but also to their professional identity formation as future physicians.

Conclusion

The adaptation of international medical students in Uzbekistan is a complex psychological and socio-cultural process that requires systematic support from educational institutions. Psychological well-being, motivation, emotional intelligence, and social support are key determinants of successful adaptation. Enhancing adaptive mechanisms among international students contributes to improving the quality of medical education and the formation of competent, emotionally stable, and culturally sensitive medical professionals.

Further research should focus on developing evidence-based psychological support programs and adaptation models tailored to the specific context of medical education in Uzbekistan.

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