

Psychological interventions for labor migrants' sociocultural adaptation: a resource-oriented approach illustrated by Uzbek migrants in Russia

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Abstract

Objective: This article examines the adaptation characteristics of labor migrants from Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation, focusing on their sociocultural integration challenges, and proposes evidence-based recommendations for psychological support and targeted psychocorrection to enhance their adjustment to a new environment.

Method: The study was conducted at the Migration Center of Vladimir Oblast, Russia, involving a sample of 150 male labor migrants aged 21 to 51 years. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing the Personality Adaptation to a New Sociocultural Environment Scale by L. V. Yankovsky, the Multilevel Personality Questionnaire "Adaptability" by A. G. Maklakov and S. V. Chermnyanin, and the Personality Adjustment Inventory by K. Rogers and R. Dymond to assess psychological traits and adaptation levels. Statistical analysis included Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to explore relationships between variables such as interactivity, emotional comfort, and internal control.

Results: The findings revealed that 82% of respondents exhibited low adaptation levels, reflecting significant sociocultural integration difficulties. However, notable strengths were identified: 24.7% scored high on the "Interactivity" scale, 25.33% scored low on "Depressiveness", 40% demonstrated high "Emotional Comfort", and 70% showed high "Internal Control". Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between interactivity and both emotional comfort ($r = 0.217$; $p \leq 0.01$) and internal control ($r = 0.229$; $p \leq 0.01$), suggesting a foundation for resilience.

Conclusions: The findings underscore the potential of leveraging internal resources, such as interactivity, internal control, emotional comfort, and low depressiveness, to enhance the psychological resilience of Uzbek labor migrants in Russia. By informing tailored psychocorrectional and psychotherapeutic strategies, this study supports the development of adaptive interventions that mitigate sociocultural challenges and facilitate sustainable integration into the host environment.

Keywords: labor migrants; sociocultural adaptation; migration psychology; psychological support; psychocorrection; psychotherapy; internal resources.

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Introduction

In the first and second quarters of 2024, a total of 1,282,244 citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan entered the Russian Federation for employment purposes [1]. Obtaining a work visa in Russia entails a change of residence and relocation for foreign citizens, which inevitably involves their integration not only into a work environment but also into the sociocultural space of the local population. While support from Uzbek diasporas can help labor migrants avoid feelings of isolation by providing a shared culture,

traditions, and language, these individuals face interactions with the local population from the moment they cross the border.

Broadly, adaptation refers to the process of adjusting to changing external and internal conditions [2]. In a narrower sense, adaptation involves the interaction between an individual and society, encompassing integration into social groups and the adoption of socially approved norms [3]. J. W. Berry developed a model of acculturation that describes various ad-

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adaptation strategies for migrants, laying the groundwork for understanding how migrants interact with a new culture [4]. In this study, using three psychodiagnostic methods, we explore the resources and challenges faced by labor migrants upon arriving in a new sociocultural environment, and formulate recommendations for their psychological support.

Method

This cross-sectional study was conducted at the Migration Center of Vladimir Oblast, Russia, a key local hub for labor migrant registration and support. The sample comprised 150 male labor migrants from Uzbekistan, aged 21 to 51 years ($M = 34.2$, $SD = 8.6$), selected to explore gender-specific adaptation patterns. Psychodiagnostic tools included the Personality Adaptation to a New Sociocultural Environment Scale by L. V. Yankovsky [5] to assess cultural adjustment, the Multilevel Personality Questionnaire “Adaptability” by A. G. Maklakov and S. V. Chermyanin [6] to evaluate personal adaptive potential, and the Socio-Psychological Adaptation Diagnosis Method by K. Rogers and R. Diamond [7] to measure social and emotional adjustment. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was applied for mathematical-statistical analysis to examine relationships between interactivity, emotional comfort, internal control, and adaptation outcomes [8].

Results

The psychodiagnostic assessment of 150 Uzbek labor migrants revealed significant insights into their adaptation to the Russian sociocultural environment, utilizing three distinct methods: the Personality Adaptation to a New Sociocultural Environment Scale by L. V. Yankovsky, the Socio-Psychological Adaptation Diagnosis Method by K. Rogers and R. Diamond, and the Multilevel Personality Questionnaire “Adaptability” (MLPQ-AM) by A. G. Maklakov and S. V. Chermyanin.

Adaptation levels (Yankovsky Scale)

Analysis of the Personality Adaptation to a New Sociocultural Environment Scale indicated that 82% of respondents exhibited low adaptation levels, reflecting substantial challenges in sociocultural integration. High scores were observed in 17.3% on the “Adaptability” scale, 24.7% on “Interactivity”, 22% on “Nostalgia”, and 12.7% on “Conformism”, while low scores were noted in less than 1% for “Adaptability” and “Interactivity”, 25.33% for “Depressiveness”, 2% for “Conformism”, 1.3% for “Nostalgia”, and 27.3% for “Alienation”, with the majority showing average scores. Migrants with high scores

on “Adaptability”, “Interactivity”, and “Conformism” demonstrated an active life stance, engagement in activities, a drive for self-realization, and a focus on forming new social connections, coupled with confidence and self-critical abilities. However, they also expressed a need for social approval and emotionally warm relationships, suggesting a potential openness to adopting the host culture’s value system. Conversely, low scores on “Depressiveness”, “Nostalgia”, and “Alienation” indicate a favorable psychological foundation for adaptation, reflecting minimal negative perceptions of the new environment.

Psychological traits (Rogers and Dymond Method)

The Personality Adjustment Inventory revealed diverse psychological profiles. High scores were recorded for 40% on “Emotional Comfort”, 70% on “Internal Control”, and 15.3% on “Maladaptation”, while low scores were observed in 7.3% for “Emotional Comfort”, 22.7% for “Maladaptation”, and 26% for “Emotional Discomfort” (with 20.67% high). Additionally, 33.33% scored high on “Escapism”, 16.67% showed submissiveness, and 18% indicated external control, contrasted by 13.33% low on external control. The predominance of high “Internal Control” (70%) and “Emotional Comfort” (40%) suggests a strong sense of autonomy and emotional stability, enabling migrants to influence their circumstances and maintain a positive outlook, which are critical for psychotherapeutic interventions.

Adaptive potential (MLPQ-AM)

The Multilevel Personality Questionnaire “Adaptability” provided a contrasting perspective, with only 4.7% of respondents in high/normal adaptation groups, characterized by ease in adapting, quick social integration, and emotional stability. A further 13.3% fell into the satisfactory adaptation category, showing dependence on external conditions and occasional aggression, while the majority (82%) were classified in the low adaptation group, exhibiting difficulties in reality perception, social contact establishment, and role assessment. This distribution underscores the need for targeted psychological support.

Correlational insights

Correlation analysis further elucidated these findings, revealing significant positive relationships between “Interactivity” and “Emotional Comfort” ($r = 0.217$; $p \leq 0.01$) and “Internal Control” ($r = 0.229$; $p \leq 0.01$). Higher interactivity correlated with greater readiness to engage with the new environment, expand social networks, and exhibit self-regulation, enhancing emotional comfort and autonomy — key factors for psychotherapeutic resilience-building.

Summary

Overall, despite 82% of migrants showing low adaptation, strengths such as high “Interactivity” (24.7%), low “Depressiveness” (25.3%), high “Emotional Comfort” (40%), and high “Internal Control” (70%) suggest a foundation for successful adaptation. These traits, including a positive outlook and self-control, indicate potential for psychotherapeutic interventions to address sociocultural barriers.

Discussion

The study reveals a striking paradox: despite 82% of Uzbek labor migrants exhibiting low adaptation levels, high scores on “Interactivity” (24.7%), “Emotional Comfort” (40%), and “Internal Control” (70%), alongside low “Depressiveness” (25.3%), indicate significant internal resources. These traits — reflecting resilience, autonomy, and positive outlook — suggest a foundation for enhancing adaptation, aligning with psychotherapeutic frameworks.

Proposed psychocorrectional interventions

Based on these strengths, targeted psychocorrectional strategies are recommended:

- **Social skills and self-regulation:** Leveraging interactivity and internal control to develop social competencies and self-regulatory skills.
- **Anxiety reduction and motivation enhancement:** Utilizing emotional comfort and low depressiveness to mitigate anxiety and boost motivation.
- **Cognitive restructuring:** Addressing maladaptive beliefs about the new environment through psychotherapeutic techniques, such as cognitive restructuring [9].
- **Positive reinforcement:** Employing visualization to reinforce purposefulness and optimism.
- **Reflective practices:** Encouraging self-reflection via diaries, capitalizing on high internal control and emotional stability for therapeutic engagement — high scores on the relevant scales suggest that migrants may actively collaborate with a therapist and will be receptive to self-reflection.
- **Reducing isolation via group dynamics:** Considering high interactivity and engagement with the environment, group psychotherapy, support groups for sharing adaptation experiences, social skills training with role-playing, intercultural communication training, and dialogue practice are suggested to decrease isolation and enhance social support [10].
- **Art and narrative therapies:** Leveraging low depressiveness for art therapy and narrative techniques to process adaptation experiences without exacerbating emotional distress [11].

Broader implications and future directions

While focused on Uzbek migrants, these findings may extend to other cultural groups, highlighting universal adaptation mechanisms alongside culture-specific needs. Future research could incorporate age-stratified samples to assess age-related adaptation variations, enabling tailored psychotherapeutic programs that address diverse migrant profiles.

Conclusion

Psychological support, psychocorrection, and psychotherapy play a crucial role in reducing stress and activating the internal resources of migrants, serving as invaluable tools for their adaptation to a new sociocultural environment. Preliminary psychological diagnostics of labor migrants can significantly enhance the effectiveness of psychocorrectional interventions by enabling the design of tailored support programs based on identified strengths and weaknesses. To ensure successful integration into a new sociocultural environment, we recommend incorporating psychological and psychotherapeutic support programs, developed through psychological diagnostics, into comprehensive adaptation frameworks alongside sociocultural initiatives.

Declaration of interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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