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# TYPE OF ATTACHMENT AS A FACTOR OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF WOMEN MARRIED TO FOREIGNERS

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#### Abstract

**Aim.** To study the influence of the attachment type factor on the success of socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners.

**Methodology.** The study was conducted on the base of social networks using Yandex Forms. The sample group consisted of 59 women who moved to a new country due to marriage to foreigners. The used methods were: "Questionnaire for attachment to close people" edited by N. V. Sabelnikova and D. V. Kashirskiy, "Questionnaire for interpersonal relations" edited by A. Rukavishnikov, methods of Rogers — Dymond "Test — questionnaire for socio-psychological adaptation" edited by A. K. Osnitskiy. For analysis of the data obtained the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient were used.

**Results.** Differences in adaptation and interpersonal communication between groups of the respondents with different types of attachment were revealed.

**Research implications.** The theoretical and practical significance of the study is a specification of the ideas about the factors influencing the success of socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners. The obtained data can be used by practical psychologists and employees of social services for providing adequate assistance and support.

**Keywords:** socio-psychological adaptation, type of attachment, interpersonal interaction, adaptation of women married to foreigners

# ТИП ПРИВЯЗАННОСТИ КАК ФАКТОР СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ АДАПТАЦИИ ЖЕНЩИН, ЗАКЛЮЧИВШИХ БРАК С ИНОСТРАНЦАМИ

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#### Аннотация

**Цель.** Изучение влияния фактора типа привязанности на успешность социально-психологической адаптации женщин, заключивших брак с иностранцами.

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Процедуры и методы. Исследование проводилось на базе социальных сетей при помощи Яндекс-формы. Выборку составили 59 женщин, переехавших в новую страну в связи с заключением брака с иностранцами. Применялись методики «Опросник привязанности к близким людям» под редакцией Н. В. Сабельниковой и Д. В. Каширского, «Опросник межличностных отношений» под редакцией А. Рукавишникова, методика Роджерса-Даймонд «Тест-опросник социально-психологической адаптации» под редакцией А. К. Осницкого. Для анализа полученных данных были использованы описательная статистика и корреляционный анализ с применением коэффициента корреляции Спирмена.

**Результаты исследования.** Были выявлены различия в адаптации и межличностном общении между группами испытуемых с разным типом привязанности.

**Теоретическая и/или практическая значимость исследования** заключается в уточнении представлений о факторах, влияющих на успешность социально-психологической адаптации женщин, заключивших брак с иностранцами. Полученные данные могут быть использованы практическими психологами и сотрудниками социальных служб для оказания адекватной помощи и поддержки.

**Ключевые слова:** социально-психологическая адаптация, тип привязанности, межличностное взаимодействие, адаптация женщин в браке с иностранцами

### Introduction

The problem of migrants' adaptation is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world. The main trends in approaches to description of the sociopsychological adaptation process of a migrant to a new environment are theories of assimilation and acculturation [8; 19]. The former assumes that for successful adaptation a migrant loses connection with the culture of the country of origin and rethinks familiar values in close interaction with the dominant society [17]. The latter considers the adaptation as a two - way dynamic process when a person is enriched as a result of cultural exchange [9].

Both approaches accept that the adaptation process of a migrant starts with conditions of interpersonal communication with representatives of the local population. Inclusion of migrants in local communities positively influences integration into the host society. [11; 12; 16; 18].

Despite the fact that all groups of migrants communicate with the local population, this process is most significantly revealed among married migrants as intercultural communication affects marital relations themselves.

According to a number of researches when studying socio-psychological adaptation of women in intercultural marriages it is reasonable to take into consideration the type of attachment since this characteristic is substantially associated with satisfaction with marital relations and the ability itself to build warm and trusting relations [2; 7; 20].

With respect to the above, hypotheses of this study are the following provisions:

1) there is a connection between the level of socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners and the type of their attachment, 2) features of adaptation of the study group are revealed through characteristics of interpersonal communication.

### Methodology

For the purpose of studying the features of socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners the techniques assessing adaptation indicators, interpersonal communication and type of attachment were used.

To determine the type of attachment the technique "Questionnaire for identifying attachment to close people" by N. V. Sabelnikova and D. V. Kashirskiy was used. The stimulus material contains 30 statements, results are distributed in two scales: "anxiety" and "avoidance". Depending on the data obtained one from four types of attachment is determined: secure, fearful – avoidant, dismissive – avoidant (detached), anxious – preoccupied (dependent).

To assess the characteristics of communication the method "Questionnaire for interpersonal relations" edited by A. Rukavishnikov was used. The questionnaire consists of 54 statements and the results of the study are evaluated by six main scales which form the basis for describing the features of respondents' interpersonal behaviour using integral indicators.

Assessment of adaptation was carried out by using Rogers – Dymond methodology "Test – questionnaire for socio-psychological adaptation" edited by A. K. Osnitskiy. Respondents are offered 101 statements given in an impersonal form that helps to neutralize the possibility of socially approved answers. To describe adaptation, six integral indicators are used.

# **Study procedure**

The study involved 59 Russian-speaking women (N=59) moved due to reunion with a foreign partner. The average age of the respondents was 40 years old. 26 respondents moved from Russia and have lived in the following countries (information in brackets indicates a number of respondents from this country): Germany (4), Greece (4), Spain (2), Kazakhstan (1), Nigeria (1), UAE (1),

Tunisia (1), Turkey (7), Sweden (5). The rest 33 respondents moved to Russia from such countries as Belarus (4), Bulgaria (1), Ghana (1), Greece (1), Georgia (2), Kazakhstan (9), Canada (1), Moldova (3), Pakistan (1), Poland (1), Uzbekistan (3). Ukraine (5), Finland (1).

Respondents were recruited through social networks for migrants' communication. The survey was conducted using Yandex-forms where respondents were asked to answer questions from the standardized methods and indicate social characteristics such as age, period of residence in a new country, satisfaction with relations. All participants were informed that the collected data would be used for the research. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and anonymous.

By age, the respondents in the first group were distributed as follows: 15% of the respondents aged 22–29, 47% aged 30-39, 14% aged 40-49 and the remaining 24% was over 50.

The majority of respondents has been living in a new country from 4 to 10 years – 29%, 22% have been in a new country from 11 to 20 years, 16% have been living in a new country for over 20 years, 16% – from 2 to 4, 10% have been living in a new country from 1 to 2 years and 3% have moved less than 1 year ago.

88% respondents continue living with the spouse they moved to. At the same time only 78% noted that they were satisfied with relations.

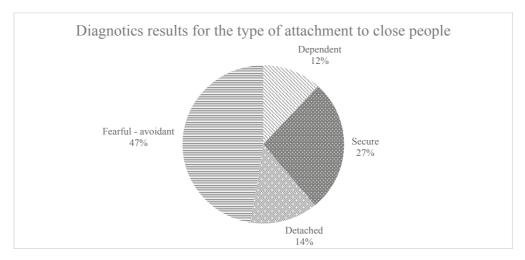
### Analysis of the survey results

For validation and detailing the data obtained as a result of the survey, statistical methods for data processing were used (descriptive statistics, correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient to evaluate small sample groups), analysis

of data was carried out using software MS Excel and SPSS v. 23.

On fig. 1 distribution of respondents by type of attachment is clearly shown. The most frequent type is fearful – avoidant (47%), which is characterized by high

scores on anxiety and avoidance scale. The next most common type is a secure type (27%) demonstrating low scores for both anxiety and avoidance. Detached (14%) and dependent (12%) types are much less prevalent in the group of respondents.



**Fig 1 / Puc. 1.** Diagnostics results for the type of attachment to close people / Результаты диагностики типа привязанности к близким людям

Source: authors' data.

Let us consider how average scores differ on scales of diagnostic methods for interpersonal communication and adaption depending on the type of attachment in the study group (see Table 1 and Table 2). The obtained results can be described as follows:

- on the scales of «inclusion» - detached and fearful-avoidant types are not inclined to search for new contacts, are

Table 1 Таблица 1

Distribution of the results of diagnostics of interpersonal communication by types of attachment (average values) / Распределение результатов диагностики межличностной коммуникации по типам привязанности (средние значения)

	Dependent	Secure	Detached	Fearful - avoidant
Expressed behaviour in the area of "inclusion"	4,0	4,4	3,1	3,3
Required behaviour in the area of "inclusion"	3,6	3,8	2,3	2,6
Expressed behaviour in the area of "control"	4,3	4,4	4,5	5,1
Required behaviour in the area of "control"	3,6	2,8	4,5	4,0
Expressed behaviour in the area of "affect"	3,3	3,2	2,8	2,5
Required behaviour in the area of "affect"	4,3	3,2	2,6	2,5

Source: authors' data.

Table 2 / Таблица 2

Distribution of diagnostics results for adaptation indicators by types of attachment / Распределение результатов диагностики показателей адаптации по типам привязанности

	Dependent	Secure	Detached	Fearful-avoidant
Adaptability	127	139	105	114
Maladaptation	104	69	93	94
Self-acceptance	42	46	36	37
Non-self-acceptance	18	13	19	19
Acceptance of others	26	26	19	19
Rejection of others	22	16	17	20
Emotional comfort	23	25	20	20
Emotional discomfort	22	11	18	20
Internal control	49	55	42	50
External control	26	19	22	24
Dominating	8	9	8	7
Submissiveness	21	16	17	17
Escapism	15	14	15	15

Source: authors' data.

not interested in belonging to groups and communities, prefer to avoid communication; dependent and secure types also do not demonstrate high interest in belonging, but this intention is not so clearly pronounced and depending on the situation the representatives of these types can show more expressed interest to communication and joint activity;

- on the scales of "control" - all respondents tend to control others and do not accept control over themselves. Secure type is the least in need of self-control and fearful - avoidant type is most inclined to control close people;

- on the scale of «affect» - detached and fearful-avoidant types are careful when choosing individuals for deep, emotional relations, secure and dependent types demonstrate more freedom in seeking deep communication. For dependent type it is more important when others treat him warmly and share their feelings.

As it can be seen from the table, the structure of adaptation indicators is different in each of the studied groups. The highest adaptation scores at a low level of maladaptation are discovered among women with the secure type of attachment. This type has also the most expressed difference between interconnected indicators of adaptability and maladaptation, acceptance and rejection of oneself and others, emotional comfort and discomfort, internal and external control, the lowest level of avoidant behaviour. Such indicators are typical for people with a harmonious, holistic attitude towards themselves and others.

In women with the dependant type of attachment the fairly high level of adaptation is revealed but at the same time the level of maladaptation is the highest among the studied groups. The representatives of this type show the most contradictory behavioural tendencies demon-

strating minimal difference between such indicators as acceptance and rejection of oneself and others, emotional comfort and discomfort, internal and external control. The high level of submissiveness looks also understandable in this group.

It can be assumed that instability and inconsistence are associated with high anxiety and the desire of the respondents to build their activity focusing on needs and desires of close people but not on their own ones.

In the fearful – avoidant type low scores of adaptation and emotional comfort, dominance are of interest. At the same time a high level of emotional discomfort and characteristics of attitude towards oneself and others (low scores of acceptance of oneself and others at a high level of rejection of oneself and others) is indicated.

Difficulties in adaptation of this type can be associated with tendencies to negatively evaluate both oneself and others, unwillingness to be involved in joint activity as there is no need either in leadership (low scores on scale of dominance) or desire to listen to others (low scores on the scale of submissiveness).

Finally, the lowest level of adaptation is in the group with detached type of behav-

iour, while the level of maladaptation in this group of the respondents is also low. Based on the data obtained it can be assumed that representatives of this group can, in general, have a bad attitude to oneself and view others better than themselves.

In table 3 the integral indicators of adaptation in the studied groups are shown. They will be further used for studying connections between characteristics of groups identified in the study result.

To validate and to refine the obtained data as the result of the survey the correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient was carried out. The connection between the studied scales for each type of attachment was analysed separately.

The respondents with the secure type of attachment had a direct strong connection between the integral adaptation indicator and required behaviour in the area of "affect" (KC=0,581,  $p\ge0,01$ ), emotional comfort and expressed behaviour in the area of "control" (KC=0,497,  $p\ge0,01$ ), internality and expressed behaviour in the area of "control" (KC=0,508,  $p\ge0,01$ ), desire to dominate and expressed behaviour in the area of "inclusion" (KC=0,621,  $p\ge0,01$ ). There is also a less pronounced direct con-

Table 3 / Таблица 3

Integral indicators of adaptation level in respondents' groups / Интегральные показатели уровня адаптации в группах опрошенных

	Dependent	Secure	Detached	Fearful – avoidant
Adaptation	55	68	53	55
Self – acceptance	59	69	55	55
Acceptance of others	58	65	57	53
Emotional comfort	52	72	52	51
Internality	58	70	56	60
Dominance seeking	41	52	46	45

Source: authors' data.

nection between the indicators of desire to dominate and expressed behaviour in the area of "control" (KC=0,932,  $p \ge 0,05$ ) and an inverse connection between emotional comfort and required behaviour in the area of "control" (KC=-0,627,  $p \ge 0,05$ ).

Attention shall be paid to the inverse strong connection between anxiety level and such adaptability characteristics as acceptance of others (KC=-0,537,  $p\ge0,01$ ), emotional comfort (KC=-0,584,  $p\ge0,01$ ) and internality (KC=-0,532,  $p\ge0,01$ ).

In the largest group of the respondents with the fearful – avoidant type of attachment, the direct strong connection between acceptance of others and expressed behaviour in the area of "affect" (KC=0,419,  $p\geq0,01$ ) was discovered.

In the group with the dependant type of attachment there is a direct connection between emotional comfort and the indicators of expressed behaviour in the area of "inclusion" (KC=0,805,  $p\ge0,01$ ) and required behaviour in the area of "inclusion" (KC=0,883,  $p\ge0,05$ ). There is also an inverse connection between avoidance and self – acceptance (KC=-0,893,  $p\ge0,05$ ).

Finally, the respondents with the detached type of attachment revealed an inverse connection between level of avoidance and such indicators as emotional comfort (KC=-0,770,  $p\ge0,01$ ), internality (KC=-0,735,  $p\ge0,01$ ) and desire to dominate (KC=-0,831,  $p\ge0,01$ ). In addition, there is an inverse connection between the required behaviour in the area of "control" and internality (KC=-0,749,  $p\ge0,01$ ) and desire to dominate (KC=-0,847,  $p\ge0,05$ ).

Let us consider the obtained results in more detail.

#### Discussion of results

The data obtained confirm the significance of such indicators as the type

of attachment [7; 20] and interpersonal communication [6; 14] for the successful socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners.

It should be noted that the study of interpersonal communication shows that all women respondents moved to a new country due to marriage have, in general, a tendency to vigilance in interactions with other people and building emotional and deep relations. This situation can be associated with the context of intercultural communication and does not depend on the migrants' type of attachment. This is evidenced by the survey studying other groups of migrants [5; 11; 15].

It is discovered that success of adaptation in the studied group is directly associated with the type of attachment. Revealing the structure of relations at a deeper and more intimate level, this factor shows difficulties affecting the success of the adaptation of women married to foreigners and not related to the context of intercultural communication but to the psychological characteristics of women themselves.

A number of researchers also suggest distinguishing the influence of external factors related to the context of intercultural communication and internal factors of a migrant's personality [1; 3; 15].

It can be assumed that for different types of migration the ratio of these factors and their influence on adaptation success may differ in their structure.

The most successful in adapting to a new country are the women with the secure type of attachment. According to the conducted analysis, a low level of anxiety is associated with the ability of the respondents to take responsibility, experience emotional comfort, and treat others positively.

It is important to note that in this group the largest number of connections between adaptation indicators and interpersonal communication was revealed. The respondents with a high level of adaptation do not tend to control others in making decisions and are not inclined to avoid responsibility. They demonstrate interest to joint activity, when necessary, are ready to belong to groups and communities while showing selectivity. It can be assumed that women with the secure type of attachment are more adequately included into various types of interaction with common goals and motives, ways of activity organisation, common results which they themselves are aware of and share. It allows them to take an active subjective life position.

Researches of women's adaptability show that the secure type of attachment is associated with overall success in life [10; 13; 21]. It can be concluded that this statement is true for the studied sample group as well.

Most often in the studied group of women the fearful – avoidant type of attachment is revealed. It is characterised with a high level of both avoidance and anxiety. It is likely that avoidant behaviour contributes to the fact that women can experience difficulties with building warm, trusting relations in their native country and anxiety makes it difficult to be satisfied with the state of loneliness and allows to remain in the relationships with foreigners since the stage of intimacy development happens in the conditions of long – distance communication.

This assumption indirectly confirms the connection between the most expressed of all the studied groups' tendency to be cautious and selective in establishing close relations and such a characteristic of adaptability as acceptance of others.

E. V. Kuftyak in her study of attachment types reveal individuals showing interpersonal mistrust and choice of non – productive coping – strategies with a tendency to show helplessness and refusal from activity demonstration [4]. We assume that in the studied groups these characteristics can hinder adaptation success to a new country, society and cultural settings since the fact of belonging and dependence is experienced as a threat to personal welfare and can disturb inclusion into the collective entity that negatively affects realization and following the life strategy in practice.

#### **Conclusions**

The conducted study showed that the type of attachment and interpersonal communication affect the adaptation in a new country of women married to foreigners.

In accordance with the questionnaire of interpersonal relations, all respondents regardless of the type of attachment demonstrate tendencies to vigilance in communication and finding new friends.

By identifying the type of attachment among married migrants it is possible to determine women's psychological characteristics that influence their success in adaptation in a new country. As the conducted survey shows women with the secure type of attachment are the best in adapting in a new country. Due to a low level of anxiety migrant women with this type of attachment manage to meet their communication needs the best, to treat themselves and others adequately.

The fearful – avoidant type of attachment is most represented in the studied group. It can be assumed that long - distance relations are, in principle, easier to build for this particular type of women.

Choosing a partner from a different culture and moving to a new country can be associated with avoidant behavior and attempts to cope with anxiety.

Due to a low level of avoidance the representatives of the dependent type of attachment feel more comfortable in familiar conditions and women with the detached type of attachment may lack motivation to change something in their lives due to a low level of anxiety.

The limitations of the obtained results related to the size and features of the

sample group should be taken into consideration. At the same time, considering the trends identified during this study it seems promising to study psychological features and personal characteristics of women married to foreigners with consideration of the type of attachment for better understanding of the specifics of the socio-psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners, making programs for its improvement.

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