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PERSONAL FACTORS OF SUCCESSFUL SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF WOMEN WHO MARRIED FOREIGNERS

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Abstract

Aim. Identification of factors influencing the success of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners.

Procedure and methods. The study was conducted based on social networks using Yandex. Forms. The sample consisted of 154 Russian speaking women who migrated to a new country due to marriage to foreigners, of which 74 respondents migrated to Russia and 80 respondents migrated from Russia. To reach the objective the following methods were used: "Social and psychological adaptation test – questionnaire", "Attachment to close people questionnaire", "Interpersonal relations questionnaire", "Zimbardo time perspective inventory", "Badner's scale of tolerance to uncertainty", "Assessment of aspirations level", "Self – concept clarity scale", "Psychological well-being scale" as well as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient and factor analysis.

Results of the research demonstrated differences in the adaptability profiles and adaptability in the sample that indicates a complex structure of social and psychological adaptation of migrants. Adaptability is influenced by such factors as self-actualization, pro-activeness, motivation, personality integrity, assessment of achievements level ("I can"). The following factors contribute to maladaptivity: lack of meaning of life, lack of emotional stability and positive self-esteem, significance of result in motivation structure, motivation for failure avoidance, behaviour in close relationships, avoidance of challenges due to negative experiences in the past.

The theoretical and/or practical significance of the study lies in the clarification of ideas regarding factors influencing the success of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners. The data obtained can be used by practical psychologists and employees of social services to provide adequate assistance and support.

Keywords: social and psychological adaptation, marriage migration, adaptability, maladaptability, adaptation of women

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Научная статья

ЛИЧНОСТНЫЕ ФАКТОРЫ УСПЕШНОЙ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ АДАПТАЦИИ ЖЕНЩИН, ЗАКЛЮЧИВШИХ БРАК С ИНОСТРАНЦАМИ

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Аннотация

Цель. Выявление факторов, влияющих на успешность социально-психологической адаптации женщин, заключивших брак с иностранцами.

Процедура и методы. Исследование проводилось на базе социальных сетей при помощи «Яндекс.Формы». Выборку составили 154 русскоязычные женщины, переехавшие в новую страну в связи с заключением брака с иностранцами, из них 74 опрошенных переехали в Россию и 80 – из России. Для решения поставленной задачи были использованы методики «Тест-опросник социально-психологической адаптации», «Опросник привязанности к близким людям», «Опросник межличностных отношений», «Опросник временной перспективы Зимбардо», «Шкала толерантности к неопределённости Баднера», «Оценка уровня притязаний», «Шкала ясности Я-концепции», «Шкала психологического благополучия», а также описательная статистика, корреляционный анализ с применением коэффициента корреляции Спирмена и факторный анализ.

Результаты исследования продемонстрировали различия в профилях адаптивности и адаптивности в выборке, что свидетельствует о сложной структуре социально-психологической адаптации мигрантов. На адаптивность влияют такие факторы, как самоактуализация, проактивность, мотивация, целостность личности, оценка уровня достижений («я могу»). Деадаптивности способствуют следующие факторы: отсутствие осмысленности жизни, отсутствие эмоциональной стабильности и позитивной самооценки, значимость результата в структуре мотивации, мотивация на избегание неудач, поведение в близких отношениях, избегание вызовов из-за негативного опыта в прошлом.

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, брачная миграция, адаптивность, деадаптивность, адаптация женщин

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Introduction

Defining family migration is difficult due to the diversity of family connections and the circumstances of move. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has proposed a classification of family migration which includes three main types: family formation, accompanying family and family reunification [4; 7]. Family formation refers to the situation where citizens or persons having legal status for residing in a country marry foreigners who then become eligible to move or change their status in the country. Accompanying family means the moving of family members at the same time as a migrant who has been granted permission to enter a country for the purpose of work or study. Reunification involves the move of family members to a country where the immediate family lives provided that family ties existed before the relocation.

Currently, the topic of marriage migration is under investigation. Most literature on the social and psychological adaptation of this group of migrants considers economic, demographic and political characteristics of migrating to a new country. A number of articles analyze marriage migration from the perspective of a woman benefiting from moving to a wealthier country [6; 10].

The psychological aspect of marriage migration in most cases falls outside the focus of the attention of modern scientists. The majority of information on this topic is mainly limited to a description of the clinical consequences of the migration and emphasizes the importance of

psycho-therapeutic support for marriage migrants. There is practically no overall research in this area. The literature studied on this topic of the research mainly either focuses on individual elements of adaptation (for example, mental health, isolation, job seeking characteristics) [5; 8; 9] or is associated with the study of individual small groups (for example, migrating from the Philippines to the USA [11], or from a Chinese village [15]).

This study is a continuation of the fundamental research on the topic of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners. At the previous stages the theoretical model of social and psychological female adaptation [14] was proposed and the determinants that affect the success of integration into the host society [12] were identified.

As the stage of the theoretical study has shown when studying the social and psychological characteristics of adaptation of marriage migrants – women, in order to understand the studied processes it is necessary to take into account the specific difficulties the migrants from the studied group face after migrating: the predominance of the forced contacts in the communication structure; women's expectations related to interaction with society do not coincide with society's expectations; ideas about oneself as a migrant before migrating do not coincide with the real ideas about oneself in a new country; the predominance of external motivation when migrating to a new country (to follow one's husband), as a consequence – loss of job and familiar environment.

These difficulties that determine the dynamics of the adaptation process and its components: the stages (honeymoon, accumulation of contradictions, depression, integration), levels (cultural, social, personal, the level of close relations), types (assimilation, separation, marginalization, integration). The inability to solve any expected difficulties leads to “getting stuck” at the corresponding adaptation stages and are characterized by specific clinical manifestations: irritability, frustration, depression, somatization, interpersonal conflicts [13].

The current research examines the marriage migration with the purpose of starting a family, when a woman migrates to a new country to a husband raised in a different culture and at the same time the couple has not previously lived together. Since marriage migration is usually associated with the migration of women to their husbands, the study of women who married foreigners allows us to better understand the processes of social and psychological migrants' adaptation.

Thus, the aim of the study is to identify the personal characteristics of women who married foreigners that influence the success of their social and psychological adaptation in a new country.

This stage of the research is devoted to empirical testing hypotheses formulated at the previous, theoretical stage of the study: 1) the success of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners is influenced by the following characteristics: features of interpersonal communication, time perspective, tolerance to uncertainty, motivation profile, level of aspirations, self – concept, type of attachment, characteristics of mental well-being; 2) it is possible to identify personal factors of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners.

Methodology

To reach the objectives of the study, reliable and valid methods were selected and used. The level of social and psychological adaptation of the respondents was determined using the method “Social and psychological adaptation test – questionnaire” edited by A. K. Osnitskiy.

The type of attachment to a partner was identified using the method “Attachment to close people questionnaire” edited by N. V. Sabelnikova and D. V. Kashirskiy.

Thanks to the method “Interpersonal relations questionnaire” edited by A. Rukavishnikov, the characteristics of the expected and actual behaviour towards oneself and others in interpersonal communication were determined among the respondents in each of the groups.

To identify the attitude of the respondents to a continuum, the method “Zimbardo time perspective inventory” was used.

The level of tolerance of the respondents to uncertainty was assessed by the method “Badner’s scale of tolerance to uncertainty” edited by Soldatova.

The factors influencing the level of aspirations were determined using the method “Assessment the level of aspirations” by V. K. Gerbachevskiy.

Using the method “Self – concept clarity scale” by J. Campbell edited by V. V. Vdovenko, S. A. Shtchebetenko differences between the real and ideal images were revealed.

Finally, the level and characteristics of psychological well – being were studied using the method “Psychological well-being scale” by K. Ryff edited by T. D. Shevelenkova and P. P. Fesenko.

The questionnaire also included questions examining social characteristics of

the respondents (length of residence in a new country, age, presence of children, level of education, employment, knowledge of the new country's language, income level).

Study Procedure

To confirm the hypothesis, a survey of women migrated to a new country due to marriage was conducted. The study involved 156 women who speak Russian and live in Russia or abroad. A sample of women living after migration in the countries belonging to different cultures was formed to identify common characteristics of social and psychological adaptation of marriage migrants, for example, independent of specifics of the host society.

The study was conducted from December 01, 2023, to February 25, 2024. The participants in the study were asked to fill in a questionnaire in Yandex.Forms. All participants were informed, that the data obtained would be used in the study of factors of social and psychological adaptation of the women married to foreigners. The participation was voluntarily and anonymous.

74 respondents migrated to Russia from such countries as Austria (1 woman), Armenia (4 women), Belarus (4 women), Bulgaria (4 women), Great Britain (1 woman), Hungary (1 woman), Germany (5 women), Georgia (1 woman), Kazakhstan (9 women), Canada (1 woman), Kyrgyzstan (2 women), Moldova (3 women), Poland (1 woman), the USA (4 women), Tajikistan (2 women), Turkmenistan (1 woman), Ukraine (22 women), Finland (1 woman), Estonia (1 woman).

The remaining 80 respondents migrated from Russia to such countries as Australia

(1 woman), Austria (3 women), Armenia (3 women), Belarus (3 women), Bulgaria (1 woman), Great Britain (1 woman), Hungary (3 women), Germany (13 women), Greece (1 woman), Georgia (3 women), India (1 woman), Ireland (1 woman), Italy (2 women), Kazakhstan (2 women), Canada (2 women), Kyrgyzstan (1 woman), Latvia (1 woman), Morocco (1 woman), Mexico (1 woman), New Zealand (1 woman), Peru (1 woman), Serbia (1 woman), Singapore (1 woman), the USA (6 women), Turkey (13 women), Finland (1 woman), Czech Republic (1 woman), Switzerland (1 woman), Sweden (1 woman), South Korea (3 women), Japan (1 woman). All participants were aware of the purposes of the study and took part in it voluntarily.

This study was conducted in three stages. At the first stage a survey of respondents was carried out. At the second stage the data obtained was analyzed using the methods of mathematical statistics: correlation research to identify connections between the studied characteristics of the respondents and the indexes of their adaptability and maladaptivity was conducted using Spearman's non-parametric coefficient. The third stage was devoted to identifying personal factors of successful social and psychological adaptation of the respondents using a factor analysis. All calculations were made using the program IBM SPSS Statistics v. 26.

Social characteristics of the sample are shown in Fig. 1–4.

According to the data obtained, the respondents mostly have a higher education, have lived in the new country from 1 to 9 years, their average age is 36 – 40 years and the economic status corresponds to the middle-class level.

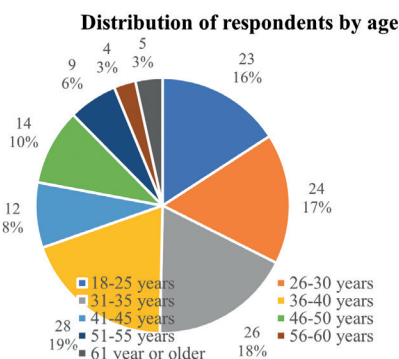


Fig. 1 / Рис. 1. Distribution of respondents by age / Распределение респондентов по возрасту

Source: author's data.

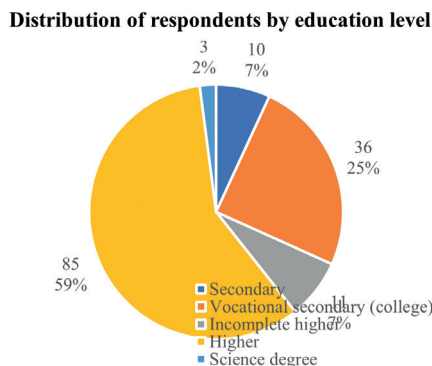


Fig. 2 / Рис. 2. Distribution of respondents by education level / Распределение респондентов по образованию

Source: author's data.

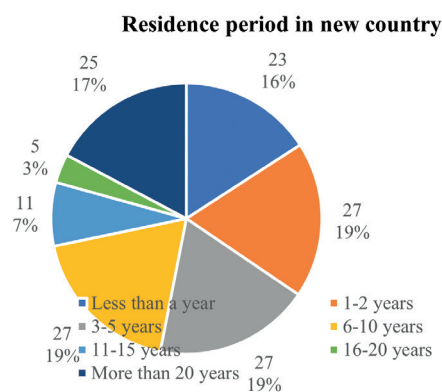


Fig. 3 / Рис. 3. Distribution of respondents by residence period in new country / Распределение респондентов по сроку жизни в новой стране

Source: author's data.

Analysis of the study results

To validate and detail the data obtained in the result of the questionnaire, statistical methods of data processing were used (descriptive statistics, correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient, factor analysis).

The first task of this study was to identify the parameters correlating with the indicators of adaptability and maladaptivity of the respondents. The widely accepted method by Rogers – Dymond edited by Osnitskiy was used to determine the level of characteristics of social and

Economic status of family

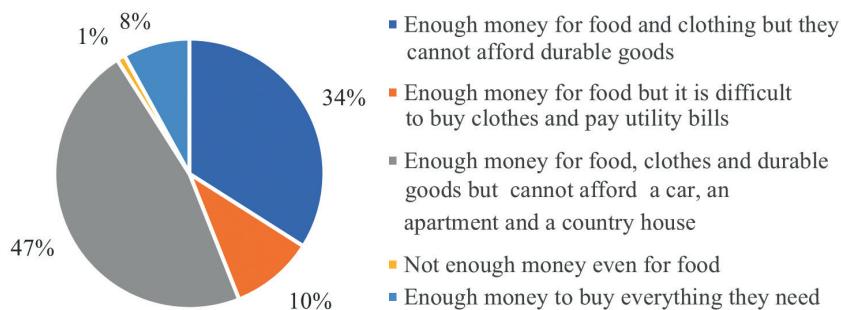


Fig. 4 / Рис. 4. Economic status of family / Экономический статус семьи

Source: author's data.

psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners. This tool best meets the requirements of this study.

At the same time it should be noted that at present time there are a number of questions regarding the interpretation of the final scales of this questionnaire [1], therefore, due to the unclear interpretations in the Russian version of the final scales of the questionnaire it was decided to use transitional scales (adaptability, maladaptivity) for which optimal and suboptimal values were presented. These scales were also chosen to assess if it is possible to call the process of social and psychological adaptation linear or if the structure of correlations between adaptability and maladaptivity will differ.

Figure 5 clearly presents the results of the correlation analysis.

As can be seen from the correlation study conducted, the scales of the questionnaire of attachment to close people (avoidance and anxiety) demonstrate a strong negative connection with adaptation and a strong positive connection with maladaptation.

The questionnaire of interpersonal communication did not show correlations with adaptability and maladaptivity in the sample studied, while it showed significant differences when studying marriage migrants satisfied or dissatisfied with marriage which caused them to migrate to a new country [2]. As the additional research showed, the scale “expressed behavior in area of affect” demonstrates a negative connection with the level of proficiency in the language of the new country and education, and the scale “required behaviour in the area of affect” is negatively connected with such social characteristics as having children and living with children.

Thus, it can be assumed that this method can be used for studying the influence of social characteristics of migrant – women on communication, but communication associated with adaptability should

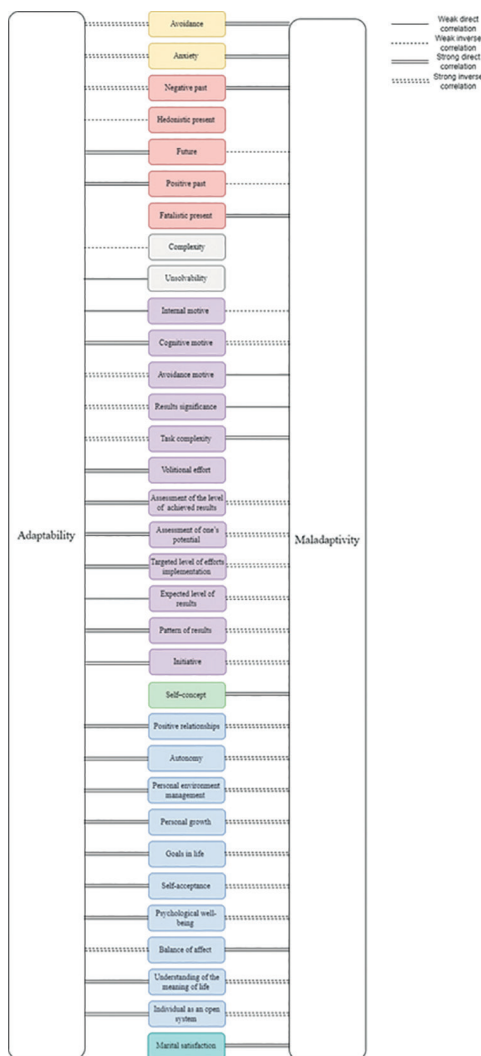


Fig. 5 / Рис. 5. Correlation pleiade of a profile of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners / Корреляционная плеяда профиля социально-психологической адаптации женщин, заключивших брак с иностранцами

Source: author's data.

be measured with other tools. It is likely that the indicator of interpersonal communication is associated with the adaptability of the respondents not directly but through other characteristics.

The results of the correlation study of connections between the adaptability scales and time perspective questionnaire are interesting, demonstrating differences in the profiles of adaptability and maladaptivity of the respondents. Thus, the ideas about the negative past, future and positive past are associated with both adaptability and maladaptivity. At the same time, adaptability is associated with the ability of women to focus on what is happening “here and now”, without difficulty in relation to what is happening while maladaptivity is influenced by affirmations associated with a fatalistic attitude to towards life events.

It can be assumed that such results reveal the psychological characteristics of the studied group since among migrants the line separating the past and the present is especially noticeable – it is migrating to a new country. The data obtained are logical and the questionnaire can be used when working with recently moved migrants for predictive diagnostics of their social and psychological adaptation development.

The tolerance to uncertainty questionnaire revealed weak connections between the scales only with the adaptation indicator: a weak negative on the “complexity” scale and a weak positive on the “unsolvability” scale. It can be assumed that the respondents had a high level of adaptation due to setting the bar high and their belief that this level can be achieved without serious difficulties.

The aspirations level questionnaire showed a very interesting correlation

with adaptability and maladaptivity scales in the sample. According to the data obtained, motivation and aspirations levels significantly influence the level of social and psychological migrants’ adaptation. Scales associated with a focus on results showed a strong connection with adaptability and maladaptivity.

These results reveal the differences obtained in time perspective inventory and allow us to formulate the hypothesis that hopes for changes associated with migrating to a new country are of significant importance for the successful migrants’ adaptation, and belief in the possibility of these changes and volitional effort for their achievements help to overcome difficulties arising in the adaptation process.

The Self-concept consistency questionnaire did not show connections with adaptability. But it is clear that the lack of consistency of the Self-concept leads to maladaptation.

The method for assessing psychological well-being showed strong connections with adaptability and maladaptivity on all scales. This method can be recommended for use in studying the level of social and psychological adaptation of migrants and assessing such significant for individual indicators as integrity, communicative skills and abilities, sense of purpose, having goals in life, self-acceptance.

Regarding the social indicators studied, a strong positive connection between maladaptivity and marital satisfaction was identified. It corresponds to the results of the previous research conducted as part of studying the factors of social and psychological adaptation of women who migrated to a new country due to marriage [2]. We can make a conclusion that marital satisfaction and the desire to save the marriage may be connected with the fact that a

woman manages her available psychological, economic, time resources differently prioritizing family needs rather than own.

It should be noted that the obtained data indicate that the profiles of adapt-

ability and maladaptivity differ in the sample studied. Consequently, psychological work aimed at developing successful social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners should in-

Table 1 / Таблица 1

Adaptability factors / Факторы адаптации

Rotated components matrixa	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Avoidance			-0,455	
Anxiety	-0,638			
Negative past	-0,805			
Hedonistic present				
Future			0,509	
Positive past			0,594	
Complexity				-0,580
Unsolvability			0,421	
Internal motive		0,703		
Cognitive motive		0,670		
Avoidance motive				-0,671
Results significance		-0,640		
Task complexity				-0,542
Volitional effort		0,508		
Assessment of the level of the achieved results		0,470		0,428
Assessment of one's potential		0,705		
Targeted level of efforts implementation		0,737		
Expected level of results		0,561		
Pattern of results		0,550		
Initiative	0,472			
Positive relations	0,659			
Autonomy	0,483			
Personal environment management	0,675			
Personal growth			0,514	
Life goals	0,626			
Self-acceptance	0,803			
Psychological well-being	0,742			
Balance of affect	-0,892			
Making sense of life			0,563	
Individual as an open system			0,706	

*Factors extraction method: principal components method.

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Source: authors' data.

Table 2 Таблица 2.

Maladaptivity factors / Факторы дезадаптации

Rotated components matrix ^a	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Avoidance					-0,609	
Anxiety		-0,640				
Negative past		-0,780				
Future	0,559					
Positive past						0,662
Fatalistic present		-0,680				
Internal motive			0,746			
Cognitive motive			0,704			
Avoidance motive				-0,644		
Results significance			-0,613			
Task complexity						-0,632
Assessment of the level of achieved results				0,655		
Assessment of one's potential			0,656			
Targeted level of efforts implementation			0,783			
Self-concept		-0,722				
Autonomy	0,534					
Personal environment management	0,612					
Personal growth	0,775					
Life goals	0,708					
Self-acceptance		0,561				
Psychological well-being	0,744					
Balance of affect		-0,799				
Making sense of life	0,825					
Individual as an open system	0,853					
Marital satisfaction					-0,805	

Factors extraction method: principal components method.

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

Source: authors' data.

clude both tools for improving adaptation and reducing maladaptation.

The second objective of the current study was identifying the factors of adaptability and maladaptivity based on the conducted questionnaire of the personal characteristics of the sample. Only scales

that showed correlations with the indicators of adaptability and maladaptivity were selected as variables for the analysis.

Analyzing the data obtained as a result of factor analysis, it can be assumed that the first component group is associated with such personality characteristics as

self-actualization, pro-activity, the second group describes motivation factors, the third one illustrates the integrity of an individual, and the fourth – assessment of achievements level (“I can”).

Based on the results of the conducted factor analysis we can conclude that maladaptivity has a more complicated structure than adaptability. At least this assumption is true for the determinants associated with psychological characteristics of the women surveyed.

The first category can be combined into factors of lack of meaning in life, the second category is lack of emotional stability and positive self-esteem, the third one is associated with the significance of the result in the motivation structure, the fourth one describes the motivation for failure avoidance, the fifth category describes behaviour in close relationships, and the sixth one refers to avoidance of challenges due to negative experience in the past.

It should be noted that the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth components are in one way or another associated with the avoidance motive but they manifest themselves in various life areas (motivation, aspirations level, organization of tasks resolving and close relationships).

Discussion

Before discussing the result obtained, it is worth noting some limitations of the conducted study that shall be considered when interpreting the data mentioned above.

Firstly, due to crudity of the topic under study and lack of reviews studying specifically social and psychological characteristics of marriage migrants in the process of adaptation to a new country, a number of methods were chosen to test hypotheses. Since the correlations of adaptation

indicators with various characteristics of women's personality were checked at this stage, some methods will be further refined, so we can assess prospects and leave one of them for a more detailed study of certain characteristics of individuals who migrated to a new country.

Secondly, we can specify the problem of the influence of hidden factors on the process of social and psychological adaptation of the studied group. Most of the studies found on success of migrants' adaptation give logical recommendations about the necessity of learning the language of the host country, find employment and make friends. At the same time, apparently, these recommendations can lead to false adaptation and do not contribute to real integration into society. However, at the current stage of the study we can only speculate on the direction of further developments that will help to identify these hidden factors.

Thirdly, some difficulties can be specified in the interpretation of the factors obtained during the research. In the future when studying this topic, we can use other methods and discover that some of the scales studied here will be excluded and the obtained factors will have a more homogeneous structure.

Despite the identified limitations, we can already make a number of interesting conclusions associated with the successful adaptation of both the studied sample and migrants in general.

The conducted study showed that the process of social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners has a non – linear character. That is, at psychological support of migrants, it is necessary not only to improve adaptability, but also to pay attention to the prevention of maladaptivity.

As can be seen from the conducted correlation study, the type of attachment, characteristics of psychological well-being and some parameters for motivation and ideas about time perspective are associated with both adaptation and maladaptation. At the same time, there are specific indicators associated only with adaptability (hedonistic present, tolerance for uncertainty, volitional will in the motivation profile) or only with maladaptivity (fatalistic present, self – concept, marital satisfaction). The use of the tools associated with identifying these differences has a diagnostic and predictive nature.

In addition, apparently it is necessary, first, to pay attention to working with maladaptivity in order to improve the social and psychological adaptation. Otherwise, for example, when working with motivation to adaptation one may encounter a paradoxical situation where a client is asked to make a volitional effort in relation to a meaningless action. And the inconsistency of the self-concept may be not only the cause but the consequence of the crisis in which a woman migrated to a new country finds herself.

It is also obvious that studies considering marriage migration only from the point of view of obtaining economic benefits are insufficient for understanding the psychological reasons of migration to a new country due to marriage. The motivation of women married to foreigners has a more complicated structure and fulfills not only objective needs for improving life quality but is also associated with needs and affirmations that a woman herself may not be aware of.

In addition, the factors associated with motivation and pro-activity of the respondents show the strongest connections with the level of adaptability and maladaptivity.

Since one of the objectives of this research was studying the factors of social and psychological adaptation of non-local groups of women in certain countries or belonging to certain diaspora, the data obtained go beyond sociological parameters and try to come close to understanding the psychological characteristics typical for different groups of migrants. This objective has also been considered within the framework of the current study using qualitative methods on the same sample [3].

Thus, with further study of the topic of successful social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners, it is reasonable to study the motivational structure of migrants in connection with affirmations, values, underlying reasons of migration which the woman herself is often not aware of. However, it is they that shape the motivational profile of women and their level of subjectivity and the success of social and psychological adaptation in a new country. Additionally, an important perspective when studying migration psychology is a more accurate identification of the parameters of adaptability and maladaptivity separately in large samples.

Based on the research conducted it can be concluded that the first hypothesis was partially confirmed, the second hypothesis was fully confirmed.

Conclusions

Despite the ongoing interest of the scientific community in the migration theme, the topic of factors for successful social and psychological adaptation of women migrated to a new country due to marriage still remains undetermined.

The conducted empirical study of factors of successful social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners allow us to establish the complexity

and non-linearity of the phenomenon of migration adaptation.

As the correlation study has shown, the following characteristics influence the success of social and psychological women adaptation: time perspective, tolerance to uncertainty, motivational profile, level of aspirations, self – concept, type of attachment, characteristics of psychological well-being.

During psychological work with marriage migrants, it is necessary to take into account the differences in their profiles of adaptability and maladaptivity. Thus, adaptability is influenced by such factors as self-actualization, pro-activity, motivation structure, personality integrity, and

assessment of the achievements level. Maladaptivity is associated with a lack of meaning in life, a lack of emotional stability and positive self-esteem, result importance in the motivation structure, motivation for failure avoidance, behaviour in close relationships, avoidance of challenges due to negative experience in the past.

The interesting topics for studying social and psychological adaptation of women married to foreigners are examination of the content of hidden factors of adaptability and maladaptivity, such as the motivation profile and the identification of unconscious reasons associated with the decision to choose a foreigner as a partner.

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