

# Pedagogical Support of Foreign Students Social Adaptation in Russian University

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## ABSTRACT

Social adaptation of foreign students in Russian high schools is a process of active adaptation to the conditions of a new socio-cultural and educational environment. The article is directed on the development of pedagogical support, contributing to the efficiency of this process. The following leading methods for the mentioned problem's solving are chosen: Modeling, survey, interview, test, ranking, observation, mathematical processing of experimental data. The experiment involves foreign students of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> courses. The article deals with the specifics of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities, including socio-cultural, socio-psychological, pedagogical aspects; presents the internal and external factors that influence the process of social adaptation of foreign students studying in Russian universities; represents the developed model of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities, including conceptual, target, process, evaluation-criteria parts; reveals the necessary and sufficient organizational and pedagogical conditions of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities. Comparison of experimental work results proves the effectiveness of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities if the necessary and sufficient organizational and pedagogical conditions are created (initiation of foreign students to the traditions and values of the multinational Russian culture, organization of intercultural communication of foreign students with each other and with Russian students; adaptive works organization to form and develop foreign students' general educational abilities and skills necessary to adapt to the educational process, development of sustained interest and motivation for the future professional activities).

**Keywords:** Social Adaptation, Foreign Students, Pedagogical Support, Russian University

**JEL Classifications:** A23, I23, I26

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Relevance of the Study

The current reform of the Russian professional education is directed, in particular, to improve its accessibility and openness to foreigners. The process of social adaptation is complicated by the fact that the trained foreigners represent the community, combined by internal connections on the basis of culture, language, national consciousness and interests related to system of prevailing attitudes, values and norms (Kupriyanov et al., 2015; Masalimova et al., 2016). Being for a long time in a new, unfamiliar, foreign socio-cultural environment, they face

difficulties when interacting with those whose culture differs significantly from their own.

### 1.2. Features of Social Adaptation of Foreign Students in Russian High School

The specifics of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities are determined by the fact that this process involves socio-cultural, socio-psychological and pedagogical aspects.

### 1.3. Socio-cultural Aspect

Socio-cultural aspect is considered in terms of acculturation, which is defined as the entry into a new culture, the gradual development

of its norms, values and patterns of behavior. Analysis of works by Lebedeva et al. (2003), Stefanenko (1999), Yuzhanina (2009) and others shows that the process of acculturation of international students allows determine the trajectory of their entry into the new society, focus and motivation to intercultural interaction and social activity. As the indicators of foreign students' social adaptation is taken the degree of their acceptance of socio-cultural values and traditions of the new community, as well as alignment of their own behavior in accordance with them and ethnic tolerance.

#### **1.4. Socio-psychological Aspect**

Socio-psychological aspect of foreign students 'social adaptation in Russian universities is updated in the light of the nature of formal and informal relationships and status-role structure of the student group. Significant indicators of social adaptation are the state of satisfaction with the interpersonal interaction in the studying group.

#### **1.5. Pedagogical Aspects**

The pedagogical aspect of foreign students' social adaptation in the Russian university is opened from a position of the organization's features of educational process in it and it is associated with an abrupt change of the content, scope, nature of educational material, forms, methods, tools and the need for their mastering, which is often accompanied by the absence of necessary skills of foreign students. The indicators of this aspect of foreign students 'social adaptation are the availability of motives of educational activities aimed at training activities, matching of levels of developed general abilities and skills to the requirements of the curricula in Russian universities.

#### **1.6. Factors of Social Adaptation**

Social adaptation of personality is influenced by external and internal factors. Analysis of the problem of foreigners' social adaptation studying in Russian universities, allows to summarize important as internal (biographical, national, cultural and religious features, linguistic competence, willingness to learn, motivation in training, communication skills, values, personality orientation, etc.), so external factors which are characteristic for each of the abovementioned aspects of it. The socio-cultural aspect of international students social adaptation is influenced by the multinational Russian culture, values, views, moral and ethical mentality of Russian society, the socio-cultural environment of the city, the environment of the university (Lipaev and Alekseeva, 2011; Lipaev et al., 2010; Alekseeva et al., 2015). Accordingly, the socio-psychological aspect is affected by relations in the team, morale and psychological climate in it; the pedagogical aspect - By value components of the content of education, educational technology of general cultural training and vocational training, methodical support of general learning skills' formation.

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Different sources devoted to the issues of human adaptation to an unfamiliar socio-cultural environment, including educational institutions (Vitkovskaya and Trotsuk, 2005; Yuzhanina, 2009; Koroleva, 2009; Lebedeva et al., 2004; Stefanenko, 1999;

Filimonova, 2009; Hudyshkina, 2010) note that the social adaptation of personality is complicated due to the impact of different factors. Pedagogical support contributes to overcoming the difficulties of social adaptation and reducing their negative impact. The existing research identify the conceptual foundations of human support in education (Mudrik, 2000; Berezhnova, 2007; Zinkovsky, 1997); consider pedagogical support of adaptation process of university students (Khusainova, 2005; Krys'ko, 2002; Savotina, 2004; Korepanova, 2003), reveal various aspects of pedagogical support of cadets' adaptation to training conditions in military academies (Davydov, 1980; Kiselev, 1998). But the problem of foreign cadets' social adaptation trained in Russian military high schools and their pedagogical support has not received adequate reflection in above mentioned previous studies.

An analysis of the scientific literature on the social adaptation of personality in general and social adaptation of foreign students in universities allow to clarify the basic concepts, to develop understanding of the essence of international students' social adaptation in Russian universities.

Based on a systematic approach, it is carried out a categorical clarification of the conceptual apparatus within the study. Pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in the Russian military high school means humanistic oriented, specially organized pedagogical activities of all the entities of the educational process with the contingent with different socio-cultural mentality, aimed at helping students in adaptation problems' solving and difficulties' overcoming in a foreign environment.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

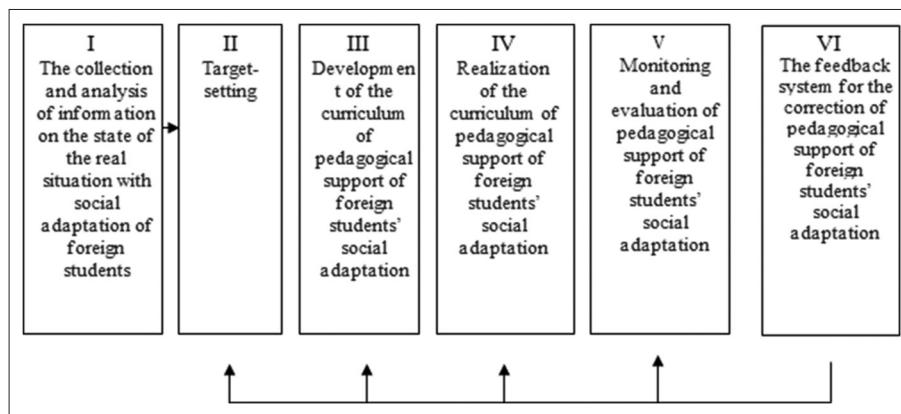
#### **3.1. Algorithm of Pedagogical Support of Foreign Students' Social Adaptation at the University**

In its most general form the basis for pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation is the problems' solution of values' and traditions' understanding in Russian culture, the successful adaptation to the statutory formal and Ethnic informal relationships, responsibilities, the experience's enriching in modern educational technologies' mastering of general professional training, the development of sustained interest and motivation in professional activities.

Algorithm of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in the university is shown in Figure 1.

The first step involves information verifying on the empirical situation in the field of foreign students' adaptation in Russian universities. Therefore it is necessary first of all to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the potential abilities of the university in terms of the social adaptation of foreign students, to study specific personal difficulties connected with their entry into the new socio-cultural, educational environment.

The second step involves goals' and objectives' setting. The strategic goal of pedagogical support is considered a successful social adaptation of foreign students in Russian universities.

**Figure 1:** Algorithm of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in the university

The third stage of the algorithm includes the development of curriculum and plans of pedagogical support of foreign students' adaptation. There are the following main thing for the developers of such a curriculum and plans: To identify and describe the conditions, principles and technology (equipment) of pedagogical support, to develop criteria and indicators of the effectiveness of the activities taking into account the features of social adaptation of foreign students in Russian universities.

The fourth stage actually involves the implementation of curriculum and plans, which provides for the direct organization of the process to achieve this goal, the implementation of the necessary organizational and pedagogical conditions.

The fifth step involves monitoring and evaluating of changes in the dynamics of social adaptation of foreign students in Russian universities. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the changes is made on the basis of internal and external criteria, which are characterized by certain indicators.

The sixth stage reflects the feedback establishment for pedagogical support's correction of social adaptation's process under the influence of negative factors or the use of inefficient methods, forms and techniques of these activities to further possible collection of the missing data on the educational environment, and others.

### 3.2. Model of Pedagogical Support of Foreign Students' Social Adaptation in Russian Universities

While developing the model of pedagogical support of foreign students' adaptation in Russian high school (Figure 2) the basic ideas of humanistic and activities approaches, the ideas of entity - The supporting and the supported ones, ideas of respect of dignity and individual rights of the latter were summarized; the main provisions of a student-centered approach contributing to students' adaptive capacities' revealing in educational activities were defined; the essential characteristics of a systems approach allowing consider the pedagogical support system as a consistent and whole phenomenon were concluded; axiological approach was identified as that one which considers pedagogical support as valuable actions in one's own definition of valuable orientations, which imply the willingness to accept new values by the personality. Based on the analysis of the main methodological approaches principles of pedagogical support of foreign students'

social adaptation in the Russian high school were identified: Individualization and taking into account of foreign students values base, subjectivity, activity stimulating and tolerant interaction.

The main goal of pedagogical support is ensuring of foreign students' social. Adaptation's success in Russian universities. As urgent tasks can be defined the following ones: To contribute to Russian general cultural values' accepting, norms, traditions' and rules' assimilation of the new team by the international students; to form students' valuable attitude to the future professional activities; to help to overcome the difficulties of entering into the system of formal and informal interpersonal relationships; to assist in the formation of skills related to the peculiarities of training and mastering of training curricula in the Russian high school.

In specific problems' solving of foreign students' social adaptation in the Russian high school the pedagogical support provides a consistent change of tactics in its implementation, where some degree of personal involvement of the supporter and the autonomy of the supported by a companion dominates.

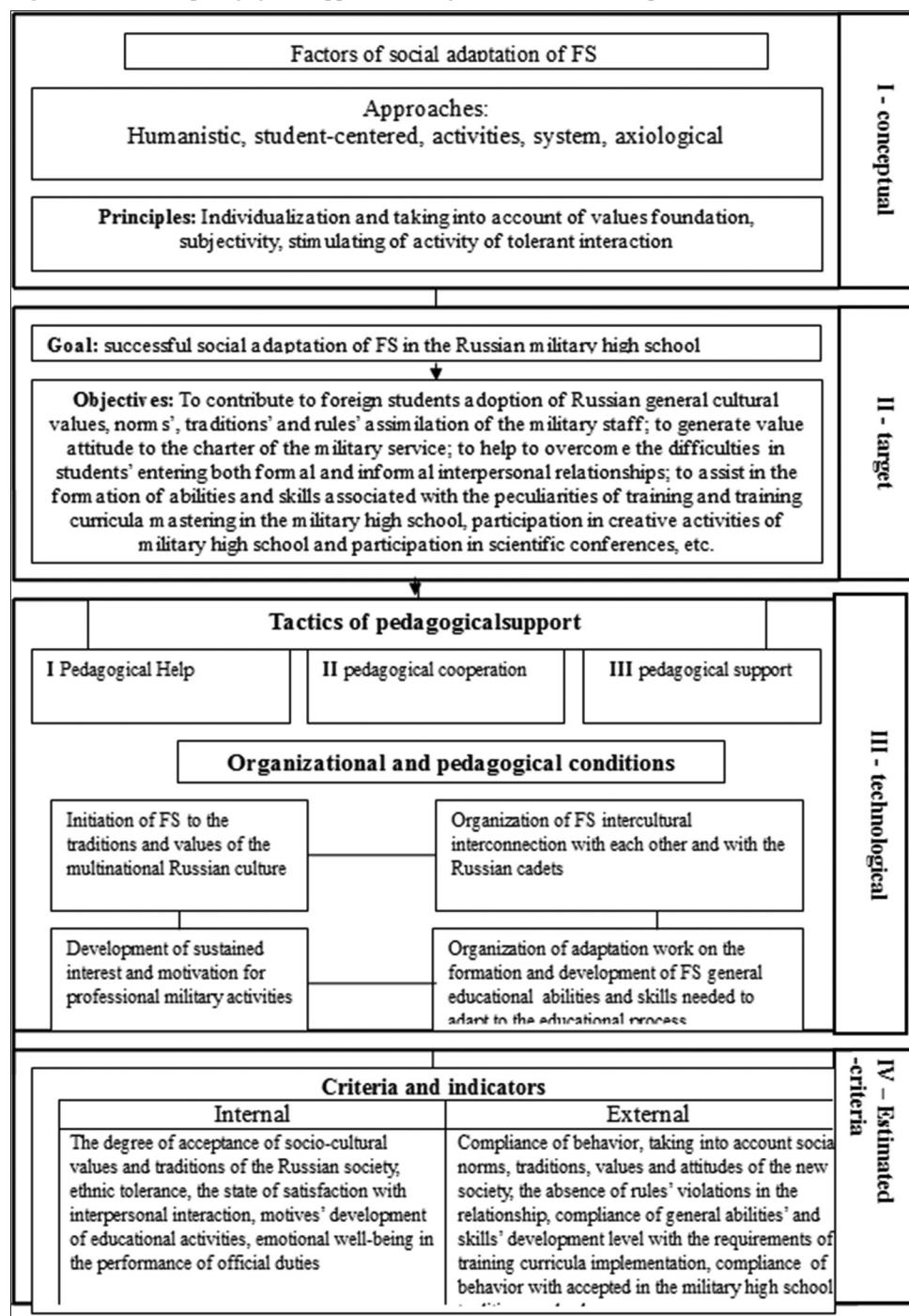
As priorities tactics the following were identified: Pedagogical assistance, teachers' collaboration, pedagogical support.

Organization of pedagogical support is carried out through the creation and implementation of the organizational and pedagogical conditions as: Foreign students' adoption to the traditions and values of the multinational Russian culture, the organization of intercultural interaction among themselves and with Russian students; adaptation works' organization to form and develop foreign students' general educational skills necessary to adapt to the educational process; development of sustained interest and motivation for professional activity.

The result of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities is their adaptability which is defined by internal and the reflection of the respective indices.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Experimental work was carried out from 2010 to 2014 on the basis of the Far Eastern Higher Military School (Military Institute) named after Marshal of the Soviet Union Rokossovsky. The

**Figure 2:** Model of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities

participants of pedagogical experiment were the representatives from Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central America - 40 people who were randomly divided into control (CG-20 people) and experimental (EG-20 people) group. On stage of ascertaining experiment with the help of Pearson's criterion the uniformity was established in experimental and control groups (results of comparison at the 5% significance level  $\chi^2_{kp}(0.05, 2) = 5.99$ ;  $\chi^2_{kp}(0.05, 1) = 3.841$ ), which allowed to consider them as samples of one and the same general integrity. The process of social adaptation of respondents of control group in the Russian military high school took place naturally, in the experimental group it was accompanied by organizational and pedagogical conditions.

Experimental work was aimed at the implementation and verification of organizational and pedagogical conditions' effectiveness shown in Figure 2 of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities.

#### 4.1. Implementation of the First Condition - Foreign Students' Involvement to the Traditions and Values of the Multinational Russian Culture

The first condition is foreign students' involvement to the traditions and values of the multinational Russian culture as in academic hours' study, in the study of subjects (Russian language, Culture), so during extracurricular time. Within the study of

discipline “Russian language” in the classroom and during extracurricular reading at the preparatory department the texts used, which had regional geographic and cultural information. Topics of texts as well as their timing in the study corresponded to the logic of learning of Russian language by foreign students. This contributed to gradual and appropriate to their language skills getting acquainted with the values and traditions adopted in the Russian society. To integrate foreign students in the socio-cultural environment it is important to be based not only on the knowledge of customs, norms and values, but also on a personal interest in their understanding and active participation in the activities with elements of creativity. Effective for this problem’s solving, as it is shown by practice, are training sessions in the form of role-playing games, building of mini-stories that reflect the characteristics, traditions and values of Russian culture, meeting with this culture’s students from other educational institutions, artistic groups and others.

In the experiment, following the aim of foreign students’ familiarizing to the values of the multinational Russian culture a series of events was organized including: The party dedicated to the ancient Russian traditions and rituals; master class on the technique’s carrying out of Gzhel and Khokhloma painting, thematic discussion on the topic “etiquette in the life of the Russian people,” the party of questions and answers, etc.

#### **4.2. Implementation of the Second Condition - The Organization of Intercultural Interconnection of Foreign Students with Each Other and with Russian Students**

The second organizational and pedagogical condition - The organization of intercultural interconnection of foreign students with each other and with the Russian students - was realized through cultural and leisure activities. Each of them pursued a specific purpose - For example, the discussion of meaningful symbols adopted in the culture, familiarization with the differences in the perception of personal space, the space-time orientation, interpersonal distance and comparison of these elements in various cultures around the world, forming of foundations of human actions’ prediction, and the lines of their behavior depending on the specific elements of national culture, awareness of eclecticism of stereotypes in the perception of people of different cultures, and others.

One of the important events both for foreign students and Russian students was a show-concert “Dialogue of Cultures”. International students were invited to participate in the competition of guitar songs, and in the party of humor organized by the Russian students. Traditional events become soccer matches between national teams, master classes in athletics and Kyokushinkai Karate, in which actively participated as foreign students, so the teaching staff of the university. These activities contributed to the high emotional spirit of foreign students, their better understanding of human and national features, developing of their interest in other cultures, tolerance and respect for its representatives.

#### **4.3. The Implementation of the Third Condition - The Organization of the Adaptation Work on the Formation and Development of Foreign Students’ General Educational Abilities and Skills**

The third organizational and pedagogical condition - The organization of the adaptation work on the formation and development of foreign student’s general training abilities and skills necessary to adapt to the educational process-was implemented with the introduction in the educational process of elective course. It is designed for 30 h of study time and consists of two modules. During the study of the first module of training material foreign students’ acquainted with the features of the basic forms of training in Russian high school and practiced almost all necessary general educational abilities skills.

The second module of electives, including subjects related to the military professional culture of cadets, the culture of their relationship, the role of the military rituals and traditions in forming the culture of the individual student, contributed to the development of sustained interest and motivation for professional military activities (the fourth organizational and pedagogical condition). Additionally, the foreign cadets were involved in the work of the military and scientific community DVVKU in which they prepared reports and presentations on topics related to their military profession, practiced in military-professional games.

#### **4.4. The Course and Results of the Experiment**

During the formative experiment reference sections were provided in order to diagnose the dynamics of the main indicators of internal and external criteria of foreign soldiers’ social adaptation in the Russian military college. In the control stage of the pedagogical experiment the main indicators’ measurement of foreign students’ social adaptation in Russian military college was carried out.

The results of the experimental work suggest that indicators of social and cultural aspects of the social adaptation of foreign students were significantly improved in EG. So from 10 to 50% the number of foreign students, with the average level of ethnic tolerance was increased. The degree of acceptance of socio-cultural values and traditions of the Russian society was changed and their behavior complied with social norms, traditions, values and attitudes of the new society.

Significant positive changes of the socio-psychological indicators of foreign students’ social adaptation in Russian universities took place. Satisfaction by the interpersonal interaction in the EG group was improved in all three components: Emotional, behavioral and cognitive. So, from 15 to 85%, the number of tested, positively assessing the knowledge of team members’ features was increased, 75% of respondents started to like the members of the academic staff, it was a pleasure to work with them, from 10 to 70% the number of foreign students was increased who wanted to learn, to perform professional duties, communicate with team members in the field of leisure. In addition, there was a reduction in the number of violations in the EG of regulations governing relations from the 70 to 20% in 1 month, to 40% - for one semester, and 65% - for the academic year.

**Table 1: Distribution of foreign students by the level of experienced emotions' index in their duties' performance before and after experiment**

Indices	Groups	Levels (values in %)				$\chi^2$ observation before	Levels (values in %)				$\chi^2$ observation after
		E	S	M	W		E	S	M	W	
Index of positive emotions	EG	-	-	5	95	3.72	65	-	35	-	21.33
	CG	-	-	35	65		-	-	70	30	
Index of acute negative emotions	EG	85	10	10	-	4.59	-	-	95	5	40
	CG	60	40	-	-		75	25	25	0	
Index of anxiety and depression	EG	100	-	-	-	3.08	-	-	90	10	36.21
	CG	70	5	10	15		75	20	5	-	

Designation of experienced emotions' levels: E: Expressed, S: Strong, M: Moderate, W: Weak

The dynamics of changes in indicators of pedagogical aspect of foreign students' social adaptation in the EG was traced. If at the beginning of the experiment such motives of educational activities as a diploma possession, continuous receipt of salaries, the approval of parents and others had been expressed, after the experiment, the dominant motives in their educational activities were aimed at professional activities (study successfully, ensure the success of future professional activities, to become a highly qualified specialist, etc.).

Experts' estimations of general learning abilities and skills' formation, given by the faculty of the university, pointed to their significant improvement in the EGF or example, if before the experiment there was a low level of abilities and skills' formation in abstracts' making among 85% of foreign students, after its conducting 90% of students showed a high level.

The data presented in Table 1, show that the index of positive emotions among foreign students in the EG in the performance of their duties changed from the weak one at the beginning of the experiment (95% of respondents) to expressed one (65% of respondents). The number of foreign students who experienced a acute negative emotions was reduced in the expressed form (from 85 to 0%), as well as anxiety and depression (from 100 to 0%).

Comparison of the dynamics of social adaptation indicators in CG and EG after the experiment with the help of Pearson criterion, U-Mann-Whitney test shows significant differences between the results obtained before and after the ascertaining stage of the experimental work. Thus, the obtained differences in the EG are not accidental-they were formed under the influence of the organizational and pedagogical conditions' implementation of pedagogical support, necessary and sufficient for successful foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study shows that the social adaptation of foreign students in Russian universities is a process of active adaptation to the conditions of a new socio-cultural and educational environment. The specifics of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities are determined by the fact that this process involves socio-cultural, socio-psychological, pedagogical aspects.

The core of the study is the basic concept-pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities,

it is understood as humanistic oriented, specially organized pedagogical activities of all entities of the educational process with the contingent, with different socio-cultural mentality, aimed to help students in solving adaptation problems and difficulties in foreign environment.

The study shows that the characteristics of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation studying in Russian universities are reasoned by the influence of internal (national-cultural, individual - Personal characteristics of students) and external (socio-cultural environment of the university, regulated laws of relationships, moral and psychological climate in the team, educational technology of general vocational training, requirements for a future professional activities and others) factors.

The novelty of this study is theoretically justified, developed and integrated into the practice the model of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities, including four parts: A conceptual, target, process and evaluation-criteria.

Theoretical and practical value is represented by the identified and empirically proven necessary and sufficient organizational and pedagogical conditions of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities: The adoption of foreign students to the traditions and values of the multinational Russian culture; organization of intercultural interconnection of foreign students with each other and with Russian students; adaptive works' organization to form and develop foreign students' general educational abilities and skills necessary to adapt to the educational process; development of sustained interest and motivation for future careers.

Comparison of experimental work proves the effectiveness of pedagogical support of foreign students' social adaptation in Russian universities in case of the necessary and sufficient organizational and pedagogical conditions' creation.

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