

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS DURING THE STAGES OF ADAPTATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION**Turdaliyeva Feruzabonu Asadullo qizi**

Master's Student in Psychology

Scientific Supervisor: Sh. I. Toyirova

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor

Annotation: This article examines psychological differences in students during the stages of adaptation to higher education. The study is based on theoretical analysis within the fields of Pedagogy and Psychology, focusing on key concepts such as Adaptation, Stress, and Motivation. The research identifies the main stages of adaptation and analyzes the psychological characteristics observed at each stage. It highlights that students experience different emotional states, including anxiety, uncertainty, and increasing psychological stability over time. The study also emphasizes the role of individual psychological traits, social support, and educational environment in shaping the adaptation process. Furthermore, the article discusses major stress factors affecting students and examines how motivation changes throughout the adaptation period. Based on the analysis, practical recommendations are proposed to improve students' adaptation, including strengthening psychological support, enhancing motivation, and creating a supportive learning environment. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of student adaptation in higher education and provide useful insights for improving educational effectiveness and student well-being.

Keywords: Adaptation, higher education, students, Stress, Motivation, psychological differences, academic performance, adjustment stages.

Introduction

Within the frameworks of Pedagogy and Psychology, the study of students' adaptation to the higher education system has become one of the most actual scientific issues. Entering higher education represents a critical transitional stage in an individual's life, requiring not only the acquisition of new knowledge but also adjustment to a new social environment, an independent lifestyle, and more complex academic demands. In particular, the adaptation process observed among first-year students is often accompanied by various psychological states that directly influence their subsequent academic performance. The relevance of this research lies in identifying the psychological differences that emerge during different stages of students' adaptation to higher education. Understanding these differences makes it possible to enhance academic achievement, reduce stress levels, and support students' personal development. Since the higher education system significantly differs from secondary education, students often encounter various challenges while adapting to new conditions. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of key psychological factors such as Adaptation, Stress, and Motivation. Moreover, individual psychological characteristics such as temperament, personality traits, social activity, and emotional stability play a crucial role in the adaptation process. While some students adapt quickly to the new environment, others may experience prolonged psychological discomfort, lack of self-confidence, or social isolation. Therefore, a stage-by-stage analysis of the adaptation process and the identification of psychological differences at each stage are of both scientific and practical significance.

Relevance

The problem of students' adaptation to higher education is highly important in Pedagogy and Psychology. Difficulties related to Adaptation, Stress, and Motivation can negatively affect students' academic success and well-being. Therefore, studying psychological differences during adaptation stages is essential for improving educational effectiveness.

Aim

The aim of the study is to analyze psychological differences in students at different stages of adaptation to higher education and to develop practical recommendations for improving this process.

Main part

The process of adaptation to higher education is closely related to the concept of Adaptation, which refers to an individual's adjustment to a new social, academic, and psychological environment. In scientific literature, adaptation is considered a complex and dynamic process involving the interaction between the individual and the environment. When entering higher education, students are required to develop new learning strategies, independent study skills, and time management abilities. The theoretical foundations of adaptation are explained through biological, psychological, and social approaches. The biological approach focuses on physiological adjustment, while the psychological approach emphasizes internal experiences and mental processes. The social approach highlights integration into a new social group and the acquisition of new roles. In addition, adaptation is closely linked to motivation, emotional stability, and volitional qualities. Students' internal resources, such as prior knowledge, self-confidence, and communication skills, play a significant role in successful adaptation. External factors, including institutional support, teaching quality, and social environment, are also crucial. Therefore, studying adaptation from a comprehensive perspective is essential. These theoretical foundations provide an important basis for understanding student development and improving support strategies in higher education.

Entering higher education marks a significant transition in a student's life and is accompanied by complex psychological changes. Students face a new environment, new academic expectations, and new social roles. This often leads to various emotional reactions, including anxiety, uncertainty, and excitement. In particular, first-year students frequently experience increased levels of Stress. This stress is associated with academic workload, unfamiliar teaching methods, and the need for social adjustment. Many students may doubt their abilities, which can reduce their self-confidence. Furthermore, the transition to a more independent lifestyle can increase psychological pressure. While some students adapt quickly and maintain emotional stability, others may experience prolonged discomfort and difficulty adjusting. These differences are largely influenced by individual psychological characteristics, such as emotional resilience, coping strategies, and communication skills. Social support from family, peers, and instructors also plays a vital role in stabilizing students' psychological state. Therefore, a scientific analysis of students' psychological conditions during this transition period is essential for developing effective support systems.

The process of adaptation to higher education occurs in several stages, each characterized by distinct psychological features. The first stage is the initial or orientation stage, during which students become familiar with the new environment and academic system. This stage is often marked by uncertainty, anxiety, and emotional tension. The second stage is the active adaptation stage, where students gradually adjust to new academic and social conditions. During this period, they begin to develop effective learning strategies, improve time management skills, and build social connections. Psychological stability starts to increase at this stage. The third stage is the stabilization stage, in which students achieve full integration into the academic and social

environment. At this point, their confidence grows, and their academic performance improves. Each stage reflects specific psychological differences among students. Some adapt quickly, while others require more time and support. A detailed scientific analysis of these stages helps to better understand the dynamics of adaptation and to design effective educational and psychological support strategies.

During the adaptation to higher education, students encounter various factors that contribute to Stress. These stressors are typically associated with increased academic workload, unfamiliar teaching methods, and new forms of assessment. In addition, social challenges such as forming new relationships and adjusting to a different social environment also play a significant role. The pressure to meet academic expectations and maintain performance standards can further intensify stress levels. Prolonged exposure to stress may negatively affect students' cognitive functioning, emotional stability, and overall well-being. It can lead to decreased concentration, fatigue, anxiety, and even burnout in severe cases. However, the impact of stress varies depending on individual coping mechanisms and resilience. Students with strong coping strategies and emotional regulation skills tend to manage stress more effectively. Therefore, identifying and analyzing stress factors is essential for developing preventive measures and support systems. Educational institutions should implement psychological support services and stress management programs to facilitate students' successful adaptation.

Motivation plays a crucial role in the adaptation process of students in higher education. At the initial stage, many students enter university with high levels of enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation. However, as they encounter academic difficulties and new challenges, their motivation levels may fluctuate. Some students may experience a decline in motivation due to stress, lack of confidence, or unclear academic goals. On the other hand, successful adaptation can lead to increased motivation and engagement in learning activities. Motivation is influenced by both internal factors, such as personal goals and interests, and external factors, including teaching methods, feedback, and academic support. A supportive educational environment can significantly enhance students' motivation and persistence. Moreover, the development of self-regulation skills helps students maintain consistent motivation over time. Understanding the dynamics of motivational changes is essential for improving students' academic performance and overall adaptation process.

Individual psychological characteristics play a significant role in determining how effectively students adapt to higher education. Traits such as temperament, personality, emotional stability, and self-regulation directly influence students' behavior and responses to new challenges. Students with strong emotional resilience and adaptability tend to adjust more quickly to new environments. In contrast, those with higher levels of anxiety or low self-confidence may experience greater difficulties during the adaptation process. Cognitive abilities, communication skills, and social competence also contribute to successful integration into academic and social settings. Furthermore, individual differences in coping strategies affect how students deal with stress and academic pressure. Some students actively seek solutions and support, while others may avoid challenges, leading to negative outcomes. Recognizing these individual differences is essential for providing personalized support and guidance. Educational institutions should consider these factors when designing interventions aimed at improving students' adaptation and academic success.

The adaptation process in higher education is characterized by noticeable psychological differences at each stage. These differences are primarily related to variations in Adaptation levels, emotional responses, and behavioral patterns among students. In the initial stage, students often experience uncertainty, anxiety, and heightened Stress. As they progress to the active adaptation stage, emotional tension gradually decreases, and students begin to develop more

stable coping strategies. In the final stage, psychological stability, self-confidence, and academic competence significantly improve. However, not all students follow the same trajectory; individual differences lead to diverse adaptation outcomes. Some students adapt quickly and demonstrate high levels of resilience, while others may struggle with prolonged stress and low motivation. These psychological differences are influenced by personal traits, social support, and environmental factors. A systematic analysis of these variations is essential for understanding the dynamics of student adaptation. Such analysis allows educators and psychologists to identify at-risk students and provide targeted interventions to support their academic and psychological well-being.

Improving the adaptation process in higher education requires the implementation of effective pedagogical and psychological strategies. One of the key approaches is strengthening students' Motivation through supportive teaching methods and clear academic guidance. Providing orientation programs for first-year students can help them better understand academic expectations and institutional structures. Additionally, psychological counseling services play a crucial role in helping students manage Stress and emotional challenges. Developing students' self-regulation and time management skills is also essential for successful adaptation. Creating a positive and inclusive learning environment encourages active participation and social integration. Peer support programs and mentorship initiatives can further enhance students' sense of belonging. It is also important to monitor students' psychological well-being regularly and provide timely assistance when needed. By implementing these measures, higher education institutions can significantly improve students' adaptation process, increase academic success, and promote overall personal development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the process of students' adaptation to higher education is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that involves significant psychological changes. The study has shown that Adaptation occurs through several stages, each characterized by specific emotional and behavioral features. During these stages, students experience varying levels of Stress and fluctuations in Motivation, which directly influence their academic performance and personal development. The analysis highlights that individual psychological characteristics, social support, and educational environment play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the adaptation process. Differences among students indicate that adaptation is not uniform and requires a differentiated approach. Therefore, it is essential for higher education institutions to implement comprehensive psychological and pedagogical support systems. Overall, improving adaptation conditions, providing timely support, and fostering a positive learning environment can significantly enhance students' academic success and well-being. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of student adaptation and offer practical recommendations for optimizing this process in higher education.

References

1. Kepalienė, I., & Žygaitienė, B. (2025). Student adaptation at a higher education institution. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 73, 329–339
2. Liu, Y. (2025). The mediating role of student engagement in academic adaptation. *Sustainability*, 17(24), 11256.
3. Jaiswal, S. (2024). College students' adaptation and perceived stress in distance learning. *Cogent Education*, 11(1), 2357907.
4. Al Juboori, R. (2025). Predictors of academic adjustment among international students. *Journal of Educational Psychology Research*, 5(2), 45–60.

5. Alnajjar, A. A., & Alacapınar, F. G. (2024). Understanding international students' academic adaptation and motivation. *European Journal of Psychology and Educational Research*, 7(2), 65–81.
6. Faria, A. A. G., & Almeida, L. S. (2021). Academic adaptation of first-year students in higher education. *Education Sciences*, 11(9), 540.
7. American Psychological Association. (2022). Student mental health in higher education. *APA Monitor on Psychology*, 53(7).
8. Izzati, A. Y. I. (2026). Adaptive educational management and psychological resilience in education. *International Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(1), 15–27.