ABSTRACT

of the dissertation by Sanbayeva Balym Zhalgasqyzy on the topic «Socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment» submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under the educational program 8D01801 – Social pedagogics and Self-Cognition.

Relevance of the research: The socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment is one of the pressing issues of today. In the era of globalization, wider opportunities to study abroad have increased learners' need to adapt successfully to a new social and academic environment. Differences between countries in education systems, cultural characteristics and social norms make adaptation to a new environment more difficult for foreign students. This makes it necessary to support their adaptation and to identify effective mechanisms for it.

In the higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students is addressed indirectly in a number of strategic and regulatory documents. The Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023–2029 identifies the internationalization of higher education as one of its priority areas. Although the document does not treat the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students as a separate area, it provides for conditions that support their successful integration into the university environment: the development of international programs, support for students' social activity, involvement in student self-government, provision of dormitory accommodation, wider access to digital resources and the creation of a favourable learning environment.

Kazakhstani higher education institutions are actively working to attract foreign students. At present, ensuring the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students is closely linked to the internationalization of the higher education system. However, the existing institutional and methodological mechanisms still need to be improved before they can fully support this process.

Aim of the research: To provide a scientific and theoretical substantiation of the process of socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment, to develop a structural and content model, and to prove its effectiveness through pedagogical experimental work.

Objectives of the research:

– to analyse the scientific and theoretical content of the concepts of "adaptation" and "socio-pedagogical adaptation" and to formulate the author's definitions;

– to systematize and substantiate the theoretical and methodological approaches and principles for studying the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students;

– to carry out a comparative analysis of how higher education institutions ensure the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment, including the experience of Gazi University (Türkiye);

– to design a structural and content model for ensuring the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students in the university environment, and to define the criteria, indicators and levels of their socio-pedagogical adaptation;

– to develop and pilot the program "Socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment";

– to test the effectiveness of the structural and content model and the program through experimental work, to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results, and to provide scientific and methodological recommendations.

Object of the research: the process of socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment.

Subject of the research: the content and model for ensuring the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment.

Research hypothesis: if a structural and content model, a program and a website for the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment are developed and systematically integrated into the educational process, then the level of foreign students' socio-pedagogical adaptation to the university environment will increase, because the proposed model, the adaptation program and the website cover the motivational, cognitive, communicative and personal components of the adaptation process and provide a system of pedagogical influences aimed at students' entry into the academic environment and their social interaction.

Research methods:

1) source analysis – theoretical analysis of legislative documents, periodicals and scientific and methodological literature, as well as the study and processing of materials published on the Internet;

2) bibliometric analysis – mathematical and statistical processing of scientific publications was used to identify the development dynamics of the research topic, the main research areas and scientific links;

3) comparative analysis – the features of students' socio-pedagogical adaptation to the university environment in Kazakhstani and international practice were analysed;

4) questionnaire survey – pre-designed questionnaires were administered to identify respondents' opinions and views; 120 students of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University took part in the survey, and the data were processed quantitatively and qualitatively using IBM SPSS Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 22.0;

5) thematic analysis – data were collected through the author's questionnaire from Kazakhstani students studying at universities in Türkiye in order to identify their experience of socio-pedagogical adaptation, the difficulties they encounter and their needs. During the thematic analysis, the data were coded, similar codes were grouped into categories, and the main themes were identified;

6) pedagogical experiment – the research hypothesis was tested and the effectiveness of the proposed model was established in practice.

Leading idea of the research: successful socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment is ensured by a purposefully organized system of pedagogical support that takes into account their individual and personal characteristics and their sociocultural needs.

Theoretical significance of the research: successful socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment is ensured by a

purposefully organized system of pedagogical support that takes into account their individual and personal characteristics and their sociocultural needs.

Practical significance of the research: an adaptation program for foreign students, a set of diagnostic instruments, a system of trainings and practical tasks, an adaptation roadmap and an interactive information website have been developed.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the research:

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the research are the systems approach (Sh.T. Taubayeva, V.V. Kraevsky, M. Yessekeshova, G. Tuleuova), the competence-based approach (G.Zh. Menlibekova, I.A. Zimnyaya, N.V. Kuzmina, M.V. Ryzhakov), the synergetic approach (I. Prigogine, I. Stengers, E.N. Knyazeva, S.P. Kurdyumov, H. Haken, J. Portugali) and the environmental approach (I.A. Baeva, Yu.S. Manuilov, N.D. Khmel), together with studies on the cultural and socio-psychological adaptation of foreign students (J.W. Berry, A.G. Ryder, L.E. Alden, D.L. Paulhus, C. Ward, S. Bochner et al.), their academic adaptation (J.R. Anderson, Y. Guan, Y. Koc), and adaptation to the university and sociocultural environment, including the adaptation of kandas, ethnic Kazakh repatriates (K.K. Shalgynbayeva, A.M. Kazhgaliyeva, A.S. Nurzhanova, Zh.A. Yeskazinova et al.).

Research base: Al-Farabi Kazakh National University; Gazi University (Türkiye).

Scientific novelty of the research:

– the concepts of “adaptation” and “socio-pedagogical adaptation” have been examined comprehensively within philosophy, psychology and pedagogy, and their content has been logically systematized;

– the bibliometric analysis expanded the conceptual vocabulary of the research and showed that recent studies on the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students pay particular attention to academic and institutional aspects. On the basis of this analysis, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research were defined and expanded;

– the systems, competence-based, synergetic and environmental approaches have been applied to substantiate the principles of ensuring foreign students’ adaptation. These approaches make it possible to design the adaptation of foreign students on the principles of comprehensiveness and activity;

– a structural and content model for ensuring the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students in the university environment has been developed, and its effectiveness has been proven through experimental work. The model is presented as a system that comprehensively combines academic, social and psychological support. A system of criteria, indicators and levels of socio-pedagogical adaptation, reflecting the development of foreign students’ motivational, cognitive, communicative and personal components, has been substantiated. The experimental results showed that the model can significantly raise the level of adaptation;

– a website (https://uznatbolche.tilda.ws) has been developed for the managerial and pedagogical support of foreign students’ adaptation at the university, and the program “Socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment” and a roadmap have been developed and tested in pedagogical practice.

Provisions submitted for defence:

1. Through the systematization and analysis of theoretical works on the adaptation of foreign students to the university environment, the essence and content of the concepts of “adaptation” and “socio-pedagogical adaptation” have been clarified, and the author’s definitions have been formulated:

“Adaptation” is a dynamic and continuous process that results from the alignment of an individual’s internal psychological resources with external social demands as the individual gradually enters the conditions of a new social, cultural, educational and professional environment.

“Socio-pedagogical adaptation” is a multilevel process that ensures a student’s effective integration into the university environment, the system of social relations and the cultural space of the host society, and that is carried out on the basis of social support, pedagogical guidance and the individual’s active participation.

2. The significance of four approaches has been proven: the systems approach, which treats the adaptation of foreign students as an integrated system of interrelated components; the competence-based approach, aimed at developing students’ knowledge, skills and values in the educational process; the synergetic approach, which uses the dynamic and self-organizing nature of adaptation to explain how foreign students interact in the social and academic environment; and the environmental approach, which defines the role of the social and educational environment in improving students’ academic performance and ensuring their effective academic adaptation to the university environment. The complementarity of these approaches made it possible to provide a scientific substantiation for the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students.

3. A thematic analysis conducted with Kazakhstani students studying at universities in Türkiye provided the basis for a comparative study of students’ socio-pedagogical adaptation to the university environment in Kazakhstan and Türkiye. The data collected through the author’s questionnaire made it possible to identify students’ adaptation experience, the difficulties they encounter and their needs. The data were coded, similar codes were grouped into categories, and the main themes were identified. Mechanisms for supporting the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students were identified based on the experience of Gazi University.

4. A structural and content model of the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment has been developed. The model consists of motivational, cognitive, communicative and personal components. Its theoretical and methodological basis is formed by the systems, competence-based, synergetic and environmental approaches. The effectiveness of the proposed model has been tested in practice.

5. The program “Socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students” and a roadmap have been developed. The program covers the cultural, psychological, pedagogical and social areas of adaptation and is aimed at helping students adjust to the new environment, participate actively in the learning process, integrate into the university community and develop intercultural communication skills. To digitalize the research results, a dedicated website for foreign students (https://uznatbolche.tilda.ws) was developed on the basis of the program.

6. To study the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students, a pedagogical experiment was conducted at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Socio-pedagogical adaptation was assessed with the Vancouver Index of Acculturation for the motivational component, the Academic Adjustment Scale for the cognitive component, C. Rogers and R. Dymond's method for diagnosing socio-psychological adaptation for the communicative and personal components, and the author's questionnaire "Assessment of the socio-pedagogical adaptation of foreign students to the university environment" for an integrated assessment of all components. The internal consistency of the research instruments was checked with Cronbach's alpha; correlation analysis and an independent-samples t-test were used to identify relationships between the components and differences between the study groups. The results confirmed the scientific soundness, reliability and validity of the proposed model.

Structure of the dissertation: the dissertation is 180 pages long and consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and appendices. It contains 35 tables and 16 figures.