

Diploma thesis:

Integration of foreign students in the Czech public higher education: difficulties and opportunities

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The experience of international students might bring about many stressful events linked to the process of adaptation in the host country. The thesis covers this theme using a research design based on the combination of qualitative individual interviews (N=8) and quantitative questionnaires (Perceived Stress Scale - PSS, N=36). The main focus is the situation of international Russian-speaking students who are a) preparing for university study via intensive Czech language course, b) participate in university degree programs taught in the Czech language. The aim is to compare experienced stress of those recently arrived and longer-staying students (above 1 year].

The theoretical part presents the specifics of the international student's situation, challenges of the acculturation process focusing on stress, and the introduction of the measure PSS. Further, the author elaborates on the characteristics of intercultural contact and more specifically links stress to the length of the stay, whereas the impact of the length of the stay is a key focus of the empirical part. In the closing part, the author elaborates on the prevention of acculturative stress among international students. Together these parts provide a functional background for the research, based on relevant international resources. I have some minor concerns here, such as few paragraphs that are a bit too wordy without proper references (ie beginning of 2.1.), key points summarized at the end of the theoretical part shall be better grounded in concrete arguments.

The empirical part presents background information on the study and then the results are divided into five parts. The major focus is on the analysis of qualitative data, and the PSS results are added at the end. The discussion part provides a synergy of research results as well as proper references to existing international research. Provided schemes help navigate the presentation of results and focus on the dynamic aspects of the adaptation. My minor concerns in this part are the following: I would encourage the author to provide more details on methods of analysis, including references, also the table with the characteristics of the online questionnaire sample is missing, it would perhaps be useful to include also the age of the participants. Again, some parts tend to be a bit wordy without more specific linkages to the literature reviews (ie conclusions) resulting in lower persuasiveness of the presented arguments.

Overall, the thesis fulfills expectations for the master thesis in the discipline of psychology and I recommend it for defense.

I have the following questions for the discussion:

- Typically, the transition to university is a difficult period in the student's life, however here it seems that it has not played such a role, can you elaborate on this? It seems that students have already developed skills that helped them transition rather smoothly and without too much stress.
- Did students themselves speak about how they provide support to other international students? Was there a difference between short/long-term stayers? Has this facilitated how stressful their experiences were?