

Original Research Article

Social Adaptation of University Students Migrating from Rural to Urban Areas: a case study

Abstract

In This study, it is aimed to examine the social adaptation of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas in Kyrgyzstan. The reason for this is the rapid increase in rural-urban migration in Kyrgyzstan in recent years and this increase has caused some social adaptation problems in the cities. The sample group consisted of 220 university students determined by a simple random technique. In the study, a questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to determine the social cohesion levels of university students. As a result, it was determined that the social adjustment levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas were at a medium level. It was determined that the social adjustment levels of the students did not differ significantly according to the variables of gender, family marital status, employment status and language (replace with Medium) of instruction. Among the independent variables, a significant difference was determined in the variable of whether the students experienced a negative event in a social field. It was observed that the social adjustment levels of students who experienced a negative situation in a social field were lower than those who did not.

Keywords: social adaptation, student, rural-urban migration, migration

INTRODUCTION

The problem of social adaptation has often been the focus of social sciences. One of these problems is the adaptation of immigrants to a new environment. Globalization due to advances in science and technology has led to increased social mobility and interaction of people from different cultures and social groups. Social mobility can be voluntary or compulsory. For example, people move voluntarily from one country to another to study or to find a higher paying higher-paying job. In some cases, social mobility may be involuntary, for example due to natural disasters, war or economic crises crisis. However, in the case of both voluntary and forced social mobility, it can be difficult for individuals to adapt to new cultures and new social environments [1]. Especially in educational migration, students may face some problems. According to Rodgers and Tennison [2], an individual's university education is more demanding and cognitively more difficult than other levels of education. The higher the level of education, the greater the pressures and challenges leading to emotional and social complexities [3]. The transition of rural students to urban areas implies environmental and social changes that affect the process of cultural and social adaptation. The negative effects of rural-urban migration of university students outweigh the positive effects, as the patterns of interaction between urban and rural areas are substantially different. Therefore, these difficulties may cause emotional and psychological disturbances that affect interpersonal relationships in cultural and educational settings.

Human beings are social beings who grow by interacting with themselves and their environment from birth to death, and while trying to be themselves in the social environment in which they live, they also strive to belong to the society in which they live. At any stage of

life, the individual will face the need to adapt to changes in living conditions. The task of adapting to other people arises for every human being from the moment of birth. With the course of life, moving to another place of residence, changing marital status, and joining a new work collective requires the individual to look for ways to adapt to an unfamiliar social environment.

Interactions and relationships in the city differ significantly from the rural environment, so the process of adaptation of people from rural and urban areas to an unfamiliar way of life proceeds in different ways. The peasant who adapts to the conditions of the city faces the difficulties of mastering new forms of activity, communication, entertainment, and linking expectations with reality. The ability to successfully adapt to the rapid changes in the city, to overcome problems, to make the right decisions on their own, to realize themselves in the urban space is the most important factor in the success of a student coming to the city.

According to Kovaleva and Masterov[4], social adaptation can take place in an active or passive form and often both at the same time. An active form of social adaptation refers to the individual's influence on the social environment, the change in his or her ideas about the norms and rules of social behavior. At the same time, the existing social environment tries to maintain the stability of these norms and patterns of behavior. This process, defined as the passive perception of the individual, implies a rethinking of an individual's views and beliefs and the adoption of new norms and rules established in a particular society and the immediate social environment[5].

Various types of social adaptation include industrial, competent, socio-psychological, cultural, material, political, labor and educational [5]. The study of social adaptation of rural youth in urban conditions is of great interest. This is because young peasants strive to get an education, build a career, start a family and apply their knowledge in the city. Some of the young migrants have a full idea of who and what awaits them, while others, on the contrary, move towards the unknown. Despite the difference in the goals they set for themselves, young people face the same problems when moving to the city, especially in adapting to new, unfamiliar conditions, finding their place in the urban community, (and) acquiring an appropriate social status. Individuals have to relate their expectations and aspirations to the opportunities provided by the urban environment to fulfill them.

Theoretical Background

Relationships strongly influence human psychology. Developing meaningful relationships with others increases people's self-esteem and brings happiness because they feel accepted and socially competent. It seems that when people have meaningful relationships, they satisfy their need to relate and connect with others (relationship need) and their need to feel socially competent (competence need) [6]. However, creating meaningful relationships may not always be one's goal. Especially in educational institutions where student achievement is often the center of attention, their social goals may be limited to being popular or avoiding ridicule by their peers.

The impact of migration on society is increasing as more and more people are unable to meet their needs where they were born or raised and move elsewhere to fulfill them. Although the concept of migration is generally defined as "the movement of relocation", it is considered a complex social process that affects many aspects of the social, economic, political and cultural life of society[7]. With this movement, people who migrate affect the destination region and the source region, as well as the redistribution of population and labor force, population age and reproduction process of both.

Throughout history, people have migrated and continue to migrate **in order** to live a better life. In terms of its conceptual structure, migration is defined as the geographical relocation of people living in a certain region for any reason. Population migration is one of the global problems of humanity. Migration movements are considered not as a simple movement of people from one region of the country to another, but as a complex social process that affects many aspects of the sociological, political, economic and cultural life of society. Migration is both a result and a cause of social and economic change processes. The most important elements of this process are the settlement from which migration originates, the people who migrate and the phenomenon of migration that includes all these elements [8]. Vorobieva et al.[9] define migration as any territorial movement of the population associated with the crossing of both external and internal borders of administrative-territorial entities **in order** to change their place of permanent residence for study or work or temporary stay in the territory[10].

As a result of large-scale climate change, it is not the world's strongest that will survive, but those who can adapt to the new environment. This rule also applies to people's lives. Not the highly intellectual and the strongest in life, but those who can adapt to a new situation will find their place in life. Therefore, being able to adapt quickly to new environments and circumstances makes life easier. Adaptation is the individual's ability to meet his/her own needs by establishing a balanced relationship with **his/her self (herself)** and the environment in which he/she lives and to maintain this relationship [11]. For every child, being in the outside world from the moment they leave the mother's womb is a foreign situation for them. Likewise, as the child grows up, new social environments, new situations and rules that he/she encounters are situations that he/she needs to adapt and get used to. From a psychological perspective, every change causes people to experience stress. One of the biggest changes in an individual's life is the process of starting university. This process is the transition from the school period to another educational life and at the same time, it is a process in which the ability to act individually is acquired due to the age period. In this process, students experience new experiences that require individualization skills such as living in another city for the first time, moving away from their families and staying in dormitories. Adapting to changes in this period, which is considered as a transition to adulthood, can be challenging. However, while some may adapt to these changes more quickly, others may experience difficulties in adjusting. Such situations show the importance and value of ensuring that students are aware of the adaptation problems they may face and can avoid them.

Internal and external migration in Kyrgyzstan has a strong impact on political, demographic, social, **and** economic processes in Kyrgyzstan and its regions. Therefore, the importance of state administrative decisions aimed at regulating and controlling migration processes has increased significantly. Kyrgyz people move from rural to urban areas in the hope of more opportunities outside the village. Then they face the realities of life. Depending on the skills available and experience gained, some cannot adapt to the urban environment, while others do. Internal migration can take place from any type of settlement, but migration is usually from rural areas of Kyrgyzstan to Bishkek. In terms of regions, the two largest regions of internal migration in Kyrgyzstan are Osh and Jalal-Abad regions [12]. The main attractive and repulsive reasons for internal migration are family, economic situation and infrastructure. Men migrate mostly for economic reasons, women for family reasons, and young people for infrastructure reasons. However, in the last 10 years, the influence of family and religious reasons in internal migration has increased, while the reasons related to economics (**economics**), infrastructure, relations with the local population, neighbors and security of residence have decreased[13].

Purpose of the research

The main purpose of the research is to examine the social adjustment levels of university students who migrate from rural to urban areas. In this research, the question "How is the social adaptation of university students who migrate from village to city?" is considered as the main problem.

1. How is the social adaptation of university students who migrate from village to city?
2. Social adjustment levels of students migrating from rural to urban areas;
 - Gender
 - Family marital status
 - Experiencing a negative situation in a social field
 - Whether it works or not
 - Does it show a statistically significant difference according to the language of education variables?

METHOD

Research Model

This research is a descriptive study designed based on a quantitative approach. Descriptive research attempts to systematically describe any situation, problem, phenomenon, phenomenon, service or program [14]. The descriptive research type is applied in a naturally occurring environment without any intervention or manipulation of variables. The main purpose of this type of research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. The descriptive method, which is about how and why something happens, usually uses observation, questionnaire and scale tools to collect data [15].

Study Group

The data of the study were collected from 220 university students studying in Kyrgyzstan in the 2022-2023 academic year. A Simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample of the study. Simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which everyone in the group has an equal chance to participate in the research [16].

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the research sample

Factor	Variable	f	%	Mean
Gender	Female	163	74.1	3.05
	Male	57	25.9	3.13
Family status	Together	185	84.1	3.07
	Divorced	35	15.9	3.08
Have you experienced negative situations in public?	Yes	114	51.8	2.99
	No	106	48.2	3.15
Do you work?	Yes	77	35	3.10
	No	143	65	3.06
Your language of education	Kyrgyz	122	55.5	3.04
	Russian	98	44.5	3.11

Data Collection Tools

In this study, the social cohesion questionnaire developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. While creating the questionnaire statements, first of all, the literature on the subject was reviewed and all statements including the concept of social cohesion were tried to be included. **In order** to enrich the item pool, 15 students were asked the question "What does social cohesion mean?" and their opinions were obtained. The form, which included 22 items in total, was presented to 3 academicians for expert opinion. The statements that the experts said "should be removed" were removed from the questionnaire form and 14 items remained.

Data Analysis

In order to determine whether parametric or nonparametric tests will be used in the analysis of the data, the distribution of the data was taken into consideration. Skewness and Kurtosis values were examined to understand whether the data met the normal distribution condition. It was observed that the kurtosis value of the data was 1.8 and the skewness value was 0.30. According to Field[17] and Gorge and Mallery[18], these values should be in the range of +2 and -2 in order to say that the data are normally distributed. According to this explanation, it was understood that the data fulfilled the normal distribution condition. Therefore, Independent Samples t-Test, one of the parametric test types, was used to determine the pairwise differences.

FINDINGS

1. Findings related to social adjustment levels

Table 2. Descriptive Data on Social Cohesion

Variables	Range Value		n	X	Sd
Social Adaptation	Strongly disagree	(1) 1.00-1.80	220	3.07	.420
	Disagree	(2) 1.81-2.60			
	Moderately agree	(3) 2.61-3.40			
	I agree	(4) 3.41-4.20			
	Completely agree	(5) 4.21-5.00			

As can be seen from the table above, the social cohesion level of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas was calculated as 3.07. Considering the evaluation intervals of the scale, it is understood that this value corresponds to the medium level of agreement.

2. Sosyal uyumun cinsiyet değişkenine göre farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığına ilişkin bulgular

Table 3. Differentiation of Social Cohesion According to Gender Variables

Factor	Gender	n	X	Sd	t	p
Social Adaptation	Female	163	3.05	.42	1.22	.22
	Male	57	3.13	.38		

Table 3 shows the differentiation of social adjustment levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas according to gender. As a result of the independent samples t-test, it was concluded that social adjustment did not differ according to gender

variable ($p \geq 0.05$). In other words, the difference between the social adjustment levels of female and male students is not statistically significant.

3. Findings on whether social adjustment differs according to the marital status of the family

Table 4. Differentiation of social adaptation according to marital status of the family

Factor	Variable	n	X	Sd	t	p
Social Adaptation	Divorced	35	3.08		.202	.84
	Together	185	3.07			

Table 4 shows the differentiation of social adjustment levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas according to the marital status of the family. As a result of the independent samples t-test, it was concluded that social adjustment did not differ according to the marital status of the family ($p \geq 0.05$). In other words, the marital status of the families of university students migrating from rural to urban areas does not lead to any statistical difference.

4. Findings on the differentiation of social cohesion according to whether there is a negative situation in the social field

Table 5. Differentiation of social cohesion according to whether there is a negative situation in the social field

Factor	Variable	n	X	Sd	t	p
Social Adaptation	Yes	114	2.99	.41	2.93	.00
	No	106	3.15	.41		

The table above shows the differentiation of the social adaptation levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas regarding whether they experienced a negative situation in a social field. The result of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to determine the differentiation was found to be significant ($p \leq 0.05$). Accordingly, it was determined that the social adjustment levels of university students who experienced a negative situation in the social environment were lower than those who did not experience a negative situation in the social environment.

5. Findings on the differentiation of social adaptation according to whether students are working or not

Table 6. Differentiation of social adaptation according to whether students are working or not

Factor	Are you working?	n	X	Sd	t	p
Social Adaptation	Yes	77	3.10	.40	.65	.51
	No	143	3.06	.43		

Table 6 shows the differentiation of social adjustment levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas according to whether they were working or not. The result of the Independent Samples t-test conducted to determine the differentiation was not significant ($p \geq 0.05$). In other words, there is no statistically significant difference between the social adjustment levels of working and non-working students.

6. Findings on the differentiation of social adaptation according to students' language of instruction

Table 7. Differentiation of social cohesion according to students' language of instruction

Factor	Language of instruction	n	X	Sd	t	p
Social Adaptation	Kyrgyz	122	3.04	.40	1.22	.22
	Russian	98	3.11	.43		

The table above shows the differentiation of social adaptation levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas according to their language of instruction. The result of the t-test conducted to determine the differentiation was not significant ($p \geq 0.05$). Accordingly, the language of education variable does not have statistical significance in the social adaptation levels of students studying in Kyrgyz and Russian.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

In this study, the social adjustment levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas were examined according to some variables. Migration from rural to urban areas brings along some problems. Among these problems is the inability of individuals to adapt from rural life to urban life. It has been a matter of curiosity whether people who migrate from the village to the city carry the culture they acquired in the village to the city or whether they integrate with the city and adapt to the new culture. In some studies [19, 20, 21], especially the inability of young people to adapt to the fast urban life can also affect their academic development. In this context, the adaptation to urban life of students studying in Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, was examined. The social adaptation levels of the students were found to be at a medium level according to the measurement tool. This shows that students cannot fully adapt. Since Bishkek is the most developed city in terms of job and education opportunities compared to other cities of Kyrgyzstan, the number of students coming to study is increasing rapidly [22]. This may have an impact on the urban life of students.

Another important finding of the research is that the social adaptation of students who migrated from the village to the city does not differ statistically according to the gender variable. This can be interpreted that male and female students who came to Bishkek from the village for education have similar difficulties in social adaptation. However, when the averages of both groups were taken into consideration, it was determined that the social adaptation of male students was slightly higher than that of female students. This may be attributed to the fact that male students are under less social pressure than female students. Apart from this, the differences in the upbringing of men and the upbringing of women in the Kyrgyz society living **in accordance** with their culture can also be said to be the reason. It was concluded that whether the families of the students who migrated from the village to the city were together or separated did not cause a significant difference in terms of social adaptation.

Another important finding of the study is whether the students who migrated from rural to urban areas experienced a disturbing situation in front of the society. As a result of the test, it was determined that the social adjustment levels of the students who experienced a negative situation in front of the society were lower than those who did not. Negative situations encountered in an individual's life can also **have a negative impact on** (hurt) social adaptation [23]. In particular, negative experiences that students may experience in a way that

they would be embarrassed and unwilling in public can change their whole lives. A similar result was also found in the language of instruction of the students. It was observed that the social adaptation levels of students whose language of instruction was Kyrgyz were lower than those who were educated in Russian. The difference was not statistically significant, but it was understood that there was a slight differentiation. Considering that those who chose Russian as the language of education have knowledge of Russian and that Russian is predominantly spoken in Bishkek compared to Kyrgyz, this result is acceptable.

Recommendations

According to the findings of the research, the following recommendations are given:

- Organizing and implementing a program to increase the social adaptation levels of university students who migrated from rural to urban areas in Kyrgyzstan;
- Including courses on social adaptation in the curricula of universities;
- Organizing seminars on "Social Adaptation" in universities;
- It is suggested that more studies on the subject should be included in the academic environment.

References

1. Duru, E., & Balkıs, M. (2013). The Psychometric Properties of the Utrecht Homesickness Scale: A Study of Reliability and Validity. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 52, 61–78.
2. Rodgers, L. S., & Tennison, L. R. (2009). A Preliminary Assessment of Adjustment Disorder Among First-Year College Students. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(3), 220–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnu.2008.05.007>
3. Beduschi, A. (2021). International migration management in the age of artificial intelligence. *Migration Studies*, 9(3), 576–596. <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnaa003>
4. Ковалева, С., & Мастеров, Д. (2011). Свобода и социальная гармония. *Философия и Культура*, 11, 97–104. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/svoboda-i-sotsialnaya-garmoniya>
5. Шуругина, И. А. (2017). *Социальная адаптация сельской молодёжи в городской среде* [Master Thesis]. Саратовский Национальный Исследовательский Государственный Университет имени Чернышевского.
6. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
7. Karakartal, H., & Sasman Kaylı, D. (2023). Feminist Sosyal Hizmet Bakış Açısından Kadın Mülteciler. *Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 46, 243–263. <https://doi.org/10.59572/sosder.1333298>
8. İçduygu, A., Sirkeci İ., & Aydınğün, İ. (1998). *Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi*. Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
9. Воробьева О.Д., Топилин А.В., Гребенюк А.А., Лукьянец А.С., Мукомель В.И., & Парфенцева О.А. (2012). *Миграция населения: теория и политика*. Экономическое образование.
10. Рахманов, Э. Т. (2013). Миграция жана миграциялык процесстер: Концептуалдык Экспликация. *Бишкек Гуманитардык Университетинин Жарчысы*, 1, 294–296.

11. Yeşilyaprak, B., TemuroğluSundur, Y., &Ekşisu, M. (2014). *Ortaöğretimeuyumprogramı pilot uygulamavedeğerlendirmeraporu*. https://yayim.meb.gov.tr/earged/unicef/ORTAogRETiME_UYUM_PROGRAMI_PIL_OT_UYGULAMA_VE_DEGERLENDIRME_RAPORU.pdf
12. Омуркулова-Озерска Э.А., & Кийизбаева Ж. Р. (2018). *Расширенный миграционный профиль 2015-2018*. Миссия Международной Организации по Миграции (МОМ). <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Migration-Profile-2018-in-Russian.pdf>
13. Базарова, Г. Ы., Мамбетова, М. Н., & Бусурманкулова, А. О. (2018). Кыргызстандын калкынын ички миграциясы. *Известия Вузов Кыргызстана*, 8, 56–59.
14. Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. Sage
15. Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction*. Pearson Education.
16. Akarsu, B., & Akarsu, B. (2019). *Bilimsel Araştırma Tasarımı: Nicel, Nitel ve Karma Araştırma Yaklaşımları*. Cinius Publishing.
17. Field, A. (2009). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS* (3rd Edition). Sage Publications.
18. George, D., & Mallery, P. (2016). *IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Step by Step*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315545899>
19. Deniz, O., & Etlan, E. (2009). Kırdan kente göç ve göçmenlerin uyum süreci üzerine bir çalışma: Van örneği. *UluslararasıİnsanBilimleriDergisi*, 6(2), 472–498.
20. Keleş, R. (1972). *Türkiye’de şehirleşme, konut ve gecekondu*. GerçekYayınevi.
21. McGee, M. C. (1975). In search of ‘the people’: A rhetorical alternative. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61(3), 235–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637509383289>
22. Рахимов, Р. (2015). *Внутренняя миграция в контексте земельных отношений*. https://auca.kg/uploads/Tian%20Shan%20Policy%20Center/TSPC%20Publications/5794_propiska_rus_small.pdf
23. Gökkaya, M. (2016). *Bir grup üniversite öğrencisinde sosyal kaygı, depresyon ve anne-baba tutumları ile mükemmeliyetçilik eğilimleri ve üniversiteye uyum arasındaki ilişkinin değerlendirilmesi* [Master Thesis]. Işık Üniversitesi.