

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ON INTEGRATION AND ADAPTATION POTENTIAL OF YOUNG MIGRANTS

Anton Shmelev (a)*, Dmitry Belashchenko (a), Liliya Ulmaeva (a),
Olga Shmeleva (a), Imomidin Shodzhonov (a)
*Corresponding author

(a) Institute of International Relations and World History, N.I. Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, 2,
Ulyanov Str., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, imomi@imomi.unn.ru, (831) 462-35-03

Abstract

Modern migration processes in the context of globalization tend to increase quantitative indicators and a change in the ratio of migrants of different categories in favor of increased number of refugees and forced migrants. These processes actualize the issue related to development and implementation of an effective policy for integration and adaptation of migrants. Meanwhile, the development of information and communication environment in the context of globalization processes is becoming one of the most important factors that can significantly reduce the integration and adaptation potential of migrants of all categories. The employed methodology includes applied analysis methods and comparison of the results of correlating research of representatives of the scientific community. The study identifies current capabilities of information and communication technologies to meet information and communication, and spiritual requests of representatives of the migrant community. This results in distancing of migrants from representatives of the autochthonous population, reduction of interest in development of local languages, familiarization and perception of cultural and everyday traditions. In the long term, this trend can lead to increased hostility between allochthonous and autochthonous groups, xenophobia, conflict areas in various aspects of the socio-political environment; spread of non-traditional and radical religious and ideological concepts and trends; challenges and threats to national and regional security. In the context of ensuring security at the state and interstate levels, the development and implementation of new approaches to adaptation and integration of migrants becomes relevant.

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Keywords: Migration, integration of migrants, adaptation of migrants.



1. Introduction

Modern migration processes in the world tend to increase in numbers, on the one hand, to transform the structure and change the ratio of types of migration groups, on the other: "... over the past 15 years, the number of international migrants has increased by 40%... according to the latest data, the number of migrants is already 244 mln people... more than 60 mln people... fled from violence or persecution and are now refugees or local migrants..." (UN, 2016, para. 6). Numerical growth and transformation of migration flows form socio-political and economic risks for countries accepting migrants, both due to emerging problems with adaptation and integration of migrants, and due to emergence of conflict-related environment due to reaction of the autochthonous population. Moreover, a negative reaction of the local population (for example, the events of the summer-autumn of 2018 in Chemnitz in Germany, the situation with the "caravan of migrants" in the USA in 2018) is largely related to reluctance/inability of migrants to perceive local language, traditions and culture. "Dropping out" of integration practices, an increasing number of migrants (short-term, pendulum, irregular, transit migrants, trafficked persons, refugees and asylum seekers) become difficult-to-count categories (UNECE, 2012), which complicates monitoring of the processes occurring within such migrant communities. It should be noted that even if regional specifics is taken into account, the spectrum of the problems being formed is common to almost all countries accepting migrants, which in combination with other factors affecting the public systems of these countries results in toughened migration policies, search and development of more effective integration and adaptation practices.

2. Problem Statement

Adaptation and integration of migrants into the host community, a priori, occurs within the framework of communication with the local population, forming a constructive cultural dialogue to develop informal rules and norms of behavior that do not cause a negative reaction from both sides. Effective perception and exchange of information directly depends on the level of migrants' knowledge of the language of the accepting countries. Studies conducted in various countries confirm the fact that socio-cultural adaptation is the result of successful mastering the language of the host country by migrants. The problems associated with insufficient knowledge or lack of knowledge of the local language, or reluctance to learn it, negatively affect the whole process of integration of migrant communities: segregation, ghettoization, formation of conflict areas. Understanding the problem of ignorance/lack of language of the host community in the context of reduced effectiveness of integration policies, adaptation and acculturation of migrants is highlighted in speeches by top officials of the leading states (German Chancellor Merkel (2010), October 2010, Prime Minister of the UK D. Cameron, February 2011, French President Sarkozy (2011), February 2011). This issue is discussed in studies on problems and issues of migrant adaptation (in the work by scientists from Tilburg and Utrecht (Netherlands) to find out how language competence contributes to the entry of a foreigner into new cultural environment (Tubergen, 2009); scientists from the University of Nottingham (UK) who concluded that "it is the socio-cultural component of communicative language competence that plays the most important role in professional viability of migrants in a different country" (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1991, p. 72). One can fully agree with the thesis that "effectiveness of the programs of legal, social, cultural adaptation of migrants is unattainable without a language component"

(Dracheva & Tumakova, 2017, para. 4). In the Russian Federation, understanding of this aspect at the highest level is reflected in the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of May 20, 2015 No. 481 through the approval of the Federal Target Program Russian Language for 2016–2020, (RF Government, 2015), in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012 No. 602 (Putin, 2012) and in the Federal Law of November 12, 2012 N 185-FZ (RF Government, 2012). These documents introduce examinations on knowledge of the Russian language for labor migrants. Thus, in terms of risk formation, the problem of ignorance of the language by migrants in the accepting country actualizes the study of the causes of this situation. Paradoxically, the development of information and communication environment focused on meeting the society needs can be viewed as a process that not only does not contribute to integration and adaptation of migrants, but, on the contrary, prevents it.

3. Research Questions

The subject of this study was practical examples of respondents who used the opportunities provided by modern information and communication environment to meet physical and spiritual needs, taking into account reasons, motives, regularity, and conditionality of their use in the context of the specifics of the respondents' communication with the host community. In general, the survey in the formats of focused interviews and in-depth interviews was aimed at studying integration and adaptation, relations with the autochthonous population, and to isolate conflict-prone moments. For the survey, the interview components used focused on the place and role of information and communication technologies in the life of the respondents.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to investigate the totality of forms and practices of using the capabilities of modern information and communication environment by respondents in their causation as a technology to minimize verbal communication in the language of the host community and impact of this communication format on adaptation and integration of migrants.

5. Research Methods

This study relies on the results of applied projects implemented in recent years in the focused interview format, since this method "emphasizes the connection between stimulus and response, i.e. investigates and establishes their interaction to identify certain tendencies in people's behavior" (Shlyapina, 2016, para. 9). In addition, the focused interview method allows the use of an adjacent set of tools in the work with small groups and with one or two respondents. According to the concepts of the founder of this method, Merton et al. (1991), the interviewers shape the general vector of the dialogue, and make the interviewees themselves determine "the most significant aspects... situations and then consistently develop their answers ... " (p. 73). When the interviewees attempted to make the transition or to depart from an issue that was not of interest to him or to get out of a highly emotionally significant topic, the interviewers used reverse transitions rephrasing the questions after some time. Since the main topic of the interview contained questions of communication with representatives of the autochthonous population, including negative

aspects arising during communication, this method (reverse transition) was used sufficiently regularly. The subject of the interview contained questions that often were personally significant for the respondent; therefore the in-depth interview method was equally effective. It implied variability of the alternation of questions in the context of the planned scenario. When processing the results of focused and in-depth interviews, the research team analyzed the correlations of those with the developments of scientists.

The object of the study was representatives of the migrant community in Nizhny Novgorod that belong to the age category of "youth" (aged 20–26). In the format of focused interview, 4 groups of 5–8 people were interviewed (2 groups of students, one of whom was from Latin America, the other from Central and North Africa, and 2 groups of labor migrants from Central Asia, mainly Tajikistan). The work with groups was largely due to the fact that the respondents in each group were either fellow students or worked together, that is, they knew each other, which minimized the influence of the personality factor of the subject matter of the interview. At the same time, the other 14 people were interviewed in the in-depth interview format (6 students from Latin America and West Africa and 8 labor migrants from the South Caucasus and Central Asia). This sampling aimed to form a religious, ethnic and linguistic polyvariance (respondent's mother tongue) in order to obtain representative data to isolate specific and characteristic features.

6. Findings

The applied research yielded the following interesting results. In fact, in modern urban environment, a migrant who has a modern gadget with Internet access does not need verbal communication with the local population, or the need is minimized. All the programs, services, institutions cited in the study were reported by the respondents, that is, were actively used by them.

Firstly, the Internet banking system allows for a wide range of mobile banking operations through the thin client (does not require installation of additional software). The systems Visa or Master Card allow financial operations at both the state and transboundary levels.

Secondly, the client's account tied to the gadget, and this enables numerous actions without using the card and without any verbal communication, which makes it possible to buy goods in hypermarkets and online stores (Auchan, Magnit, Lenta, AliExpress); to use the services of Yandex.Food, KFC, McDonald's and Burger King; to pay for public transport and many others. Technologies such as digital display boards at checkout counters, self-order stands with a visual interface, language selection, the possibility of ordering on the Internet to your home, including products and goods of national character – are in demand among representatives of migrant youth largely due to exclusion of direct verbal communication from the process of receiving goods or services. With regard to the object of study, this is more common among representatives of Latin America and Africa. In addition to online shopping, migrants from Central Asia buy goods at shops with sellers-compatriots and communicate in their native languages.

Thirdly, modern technologies and services together with realizable opportunities (language selection, visibility and intuitive interface, on-line mode) and the Internet concept (access to any domain) significantly minimize the need for verbal communication and provide any reference information (for example, Google Maps).

Migrants forcedly use the opportunities provided by modern technologies in modern information and communicative environment, which are focused on facilitation of receiving and transmitting information, solving everyday problems by ordinary members of society. None of the respondents who lived in the city for more than half a year avoided negative attitudes (unwillingness to listen to a question ill-defined due to poor knowledge of the language, and to consider the matter; negative remarks from sellers of small shops or buyers in case of problems with the choice of goods, discontent with loud foreign speech in the Russian-speaking environment). All these force the migrants to search for ways to satisfy their material needs avoiding verbal communication.

The role of modern information and communicative environment has increased in the sphere of spiritual needs. Firstly, the Internet allows the user to access any domain, as a result, the objects of study (members of focus groups and individual members of the migrant community) have the opportunity (and regularly use one) to receive a full range of content (news and entertainment programs, films and serials) from channels broadcasting in their native languages.

Secondly, the gadget with Internet traffic and software completely satisfies the request for communication with relatives and compatriots. Such programs and applications as Skype, Raidcall, Mumble, TeamSpeak, and Discord are able to realize a wide range of video calls in various formats. Such messengers as Viber and WhatsApp are constantly being improved. These messengers borrow a significant set of functions of common social networking projects (for example, Twitter or Facebook) to offer users greater opportunities for communication and information sharing. Moreover, there is a noticeable increase in respondents' demand for this communication format if it is impossible to regularly communicate with compatriots or native-speakers face-to-face.

Thirdly, the problem of satisfaction of spiritual needs of representatives of the migrant community. A priori, religious centers abroad play the role of an institution for adaptation and integration of migrants (Finotelli, 2017). In this case, information and communication environment helps to minimize verbal communication. The results of in-depth interviews showed that, for example, people from Tajikistan do not attend mosques in Nizhny Novgorod (formally related to the Sunni's Hanafi Madhab) due to language and cultural differences in reading prayers. For this reason, in Tajikistan it is proposed to use Tajik language along with the Arabic one, since "people need to understand what they are talking about with God" (Ahmadi, 2016). Accordingly, ignorance of local languages forces respondents, among other reasons, to visit unofficial religious premises, musalla (or jamaat khan), or to use free and accessible Internet resources (Catholic resources allow choosing/ordering a prayer, and more conservative Muslim resources allow on-line service).

7. Conclusion

The results obtained showed that the study revealed a number of fundamental moments.

Firstly, the level of local language proficiency directly affects the behavior of migrants in the host community; low level of language proficiency distances the subject from the host community, which, in turn, does not contribute to development and improvement of knowledge of local languages.

Secondly, modern information and communication environment provides a wide range of opportunities to meet physical and spiritual needs without communication with the host community.

In fact, a gadget with all the necessary programs and services, and the Internet access can help a modern migrant to satisfy almost all of his information and communication needs without verbal communication with the local population.

A number of key issues seem to be relevant to minimize the dependence of migrants on the Internet (some areas and approaches are analyzed in more detail in *Innovative Approaches in Public Administration in the Context of Developing and Implementing Effective Migration Policies* (Shmelev & Shmeleva, 2013). These are:

- firstly, enhancement of the preliminary adaptation system by providing the possibility of learning the local language by potential migrants up to the moment of migration and an increase in the effectiveness of the control system for passing exams for proficiency in the language of the accepting state;
- secondly, support for the activities of diaspora communities, which is focused on communication of compatriots with the local population;
- thirdly, development and improvement of the system of volunteer and non-commercial organizations focused on enhancement of the communication of migrants with the local population, and provision of migrants with necessary information.

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