

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ACCULTURATION DEPRESSION
AND REFUGEES' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEMPORAL CONTINUUM

CORELAȚIA ÎNTRE DEPRESIA DE ACULTURAȚIE ȘI ATITUDINILE
REFUGIAȚILOR FAȚĂ DE CONTINUUMUL TEMPORAL

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Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between acculturation depression and refugee attitudes toward the temporal continuum. Methodologies include the use of the Beck Depression Scale to assess severity and the Zimbardo Time Perspectives Inventory, which consists of five scales: positive and negative past, future, and fatalistic or hedonistic present. A total of 40 respondents participated in the research, divided into two subgroups: socially active (22 individuals) and socially passive (18 individuals). The findings indicate that socially active individuals exhibited the lowest presence of depressive syndromes at 77.3%, whereas socially passive individuals displayed indicators within sub-depression categories. Regarding temporal orientation, the first group leaned towards a future-oriented perspective (50%), while the second group showed a tendency towards a negative past orientation (38.89%). The study highlights the intricate relationship between subjects' levels of social activity and their propensity for depression based on their orientation towards time.

Keywords: refugees, acculturation, cultural shock, acculturation stress, temporal continuum, socialization, depression.

Rezumat

Studiul investighează relația dintre depresia de aculturație și atitudinile refugiaților față de continuumul temporal. Metodele includ utilizarea Scalei de depresie Beck pentru a evalua gravitatea și a Inventarului Zimbardo al perspectivelor temporale, care

constă în cinci scale: trecut pozitiv și negativ, viitor și prezent fatalist sau hedonist. La cercetare au participat în total 40 de respondenți, împărțiți în două subgrupuri: activi din punct de vedere social (22 de persoane) și pasivi din punct de vedere social (18 persoane). Constatările indică faptul că indivizii activi din punct de vedere social au prezentat cea mai scăzută prezență a sindroamelor depressive, cu 77,3%, în timp ce indivizii pasivi din punct de vedere social au afișat indicatori în cadrul unor categorii de sub-depresie. În ceea ce privește orientarea temporală, primul grup a înclinat spre o perspectivă orientată spre viitor (50%), în timp ce al doilea grup a arătat o tendință spre o orientare negativă spre trecut (38,89%). Studiul evidențiază relația complexă dintre nivelurile de activitate socială ale subiecților și propensiunea acestora la depresie în funcție de orientarea lor spre timp.

Cuvinte cheie: refugiați, aculturare, șoc cultural, stres de aculturare, continuum temporal, socializare, depresie.

Research Hypothesis. Refugees who actively engage in society tend to exhibit a greater inclination towards a geodynamic present, positive past, and future, whereas those who are less socially active lean towards a fatalistic present and negative past. In the case of less socially active participants in the study, there is a higher propensity for depression, while the opposite is observed in those who are more active.

Introduction. The armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine triggered the migration of the native population to European countries. According to Eurostat data as of the end of October 2023, the number of forcibly displaced persons amounts to 4,238.01 thousand. The highest number of refugees is recorded in Germany (1,215.37 thousand individuals; 28.7% of the total), Poland (960.62 thousand individuals; 22.7%), and the Czech Republic (364.45 thousand individuals; 8.6%). Overall, there has been an increase of approximately 52 thousand since November, underscoring the ongoing relevance of this issue.[2]

American scientist K. Oberg, who studied cultural clashes and ethnocultural dif-

ferences, noted that immigrants experience „culture shock.” During this process, there is a confrontation between new and old cultural norms and values within the individual consciousness. The theory of culture shock provides a basis for understanding and managing the emotional and psychological aspects of cultural adaptation. [6,11]

However, the use of the term „culture shock” is quite controversial, unlike „acculturation stress,” due to its pathological nature. An alternative concept of acculturation stress was proposed by the Canadian psychologist J. Berry. Its essence lies in the fact that it can carry both negative and positive experiences, depending on the individual’s ability to reassess their own culture, and attitudes towards other nations, and will be useful for self-development and self-determination in a new country. He also linked this phenomenon to socialization, as the roots of stressful development lie in the field of intercultural interaction. [1,8] Since acculturation stress is accompanied by individual reactions that elevate the level of depression, I will focus my research on it for a clearer understanding of

the consequences that this phenomenon may lead to.

Immigration to a new country can be a stressful process, with one of the reasons being acculturative stress. This pertains to the difficulties immigrants face when adapting to the host country. Acculturation, a term introduced in scientific publications in the early 20th century, has been increasingly associated with acculturative stress, defined as the conflict between patterns of behavior that create difficulties during adaptation to a new culture.

Immigrants may have limited access to social support and may not be able to adequately utilize mental health services in the new country due to language barriers, transportation issues, and insufficient linguistic and cultural compatibility of services. A supportive, protective, and friendly environment is also crucial for maintaining physical and mental health. Lack of community involvement has been associated with health problems among adult, child, and youth immigrants. Participation in cultural events has been positively linked to social competence and negatively associated with adaptation issues among immigrant children.

Stressors associated with acculturation, including loss of social support during the migration process, can affect mental health. Negative experiences with employment during settlement periods and economic difficulties stemming from them can also impact immigrants' mental health. Ethnic discrimination can contribute to *depression* and *psychological stress*, potentially creating barriers to accessing *mental health* services. Thousands of people still struggle to accept the fact that they are away from home and that the past cannot be brought

back. They eschew everyday joys, dwelling on „the good old days.” All of this directly influences the acculturation process in a new country, underscoring the importance of studying this topic to be able to provide qualified assistance.

The concept of the time continuum revolves around the idea that time exists in a sequential form of events that occurred in the past, are happening now (in the present), and will occur in the future. From a psychological standpoint, it reflects how people perceive, understand, and utilize time. Zimbardo and Boyd in their book „The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time That Will Change Your Life” also emphasize that a well-formed temporal perspective positively impacts human activity. Envisioning the future and having plans can create motivation and regulate how actively a person behaves. In their research, they also demonstrate that an individual's temporal perspective influences their nature, even though one's relationship with time is rarely conscious. [4,7]

However, there is a pressing issue globally as the world witnesses an unprecedented increase in the number of refugees, with most of them residing in low-income countries with limited resources and opportunities for psychiatric and psychological assistance due to language barriers. Although short, structured psychotherapeutic procedures conducted by professional consultants have proven effective in the short term for trauma stress reactions, questions remain about whether these interventions can be sustained under limited resources and whether they meet the needs in complex cases. Ideally, to unlock greater potential, offering a comprehensive set of programs, including social and psychotherapeutic measures, general mental

health services, rehabilitation, and special programs for vulnerable groups, would be more effective.

Many scientific studies confirm that among refugees, due to stressful factors directly impacting their mental health and psychosocial well-being during resettlement and integration into society, there is a wide spectrum of mental states observed. This spectrum includes disorders such as **depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder**, and even **suicide**. Specifically, regarding depression, it is noteworthy that it may persist even after leaving one's home country due to the influence of traumatic events, as well as during migration or residency in host countries accepting refugees. [10]

It is worth noting that the traumatic events experienced by asylum seekers during their flight include deprivation of basic survival needs such as access to water, food, shelter, and medication; *fear for their lives, loss of loved ones, forced separation from family; witnessing acts of violence, bombings, and shootings, as well as living in conflict zones; imprisonment and living in refugee camps. Between 50 to 85% of asylum seekers and refugees report experiencing at least one traumatic event.* This exposure is a key risk factor for the development of *mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety disorders.* A *significant number* also experience *feelings of loneliness, irritability, and low stress resistance.* Greater exposure leads to more pronounced symptoms of *mental disorders.* Thus, individuals who have been forced to migrate are classified as a vulnerable group at high risk of developing *psychological stress and disorders.*[5]

Therefore, understanding the necessity of studying this topic is crucial because, upon entering a new country, people experience *considerable stress, anxiety, and even panic*, which can lead to psychological disorders such as **depression**. As is known, having psychological disorders carries a high risk of physiological ones. Life in a different culture, lack of language skills leading to communication and socialization difficulties, living conditions, and myriad other factors have become burdens for millions of Ukrainians today.

The study aims to identify the correlation between acculturation depression and the attitudes of Ukrainian refugees toward the temporal continuum.

The content of the study is fully dedicated to the relevant theme, and the research conducted begins with dividing participants into two groups using a proprietary methodology in the form of a survey to determine the level of an individual's social activity.

The author decided to choose a methodology for detecting the level of depression for my work, namely **Beck's Scale**.

For detecting attitudes towards the temporal continuum, we chose **Zimbardo's Time Perspective Inventory**, as it allows tracing attitudes in 5 different categories: positive and negative past, future, hedonistic, and fatalistic present.

The research group was made up of *40 respondents* who were divided into two subgroups: **socially active (22 individuals)** and **socially passive (18 individuals)**.

We conducted online testing using these methodologies and disseminated them on social networks for refugees from the following countries: Germany, Poland, and the from the bottom - Netherlands. The distribution results are shown in Figure 1.

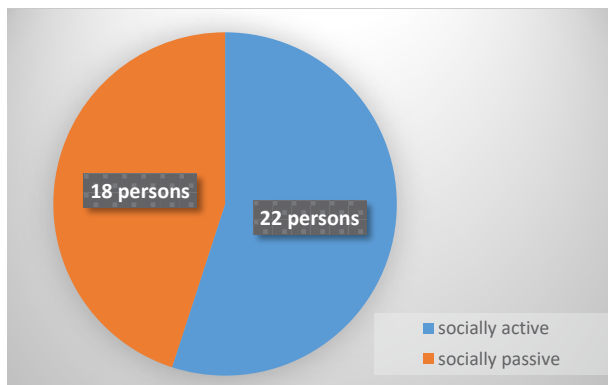


Figure 1. The quantitative distribution of levels of social activity among groups of refugees.

The study was based on the following literary sources and research by authors: N. Ivanova, Burbelo O.R, Life Philip G. Zimbardo, John Boyd, Smokova L.S, Dibrova V. A, Sprintska Z.V, M.M. Slyusarevsky, O.Ye. Blynova and others.

Research results. After analyzing the Beck Depression Inventory survey, the following results were obtained: from the first group, it can be observed that 77.3% (17 individuals) have an absence of depressive symptoms, 9% (2 individuals) have

subdepression, 9% (2 individuals) have moderately expressed depression, moderate severity - 0%, and severe depression is only 4.5% (1 person). As for the second group, 11,1% (2 individuals) have an absence of depressive symptoms, 27,78% (5 individuals) have subdepression, 27,78% (5 individuals) have moderately expressed depression, 27,78% (5 individuals) have moderate severity, and severe depression is 5,56% (1 person). **Figure 2.**

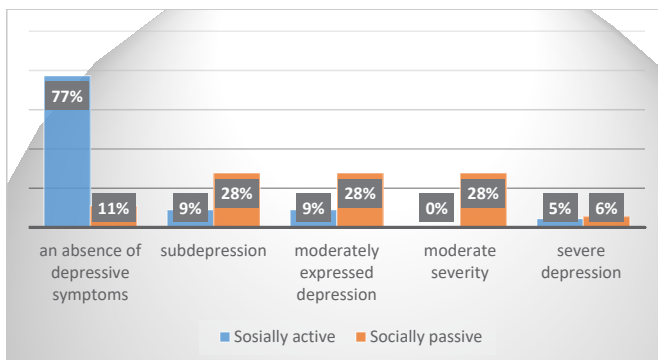


Figure 2. Distribution of diagnostic material for the Beck Depression Inventory

Based on the survey, it can be observed that the results demonstrate a greater tendency towards depression in the socially passive group.

According to the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory, the results were as follows (the following results can be observed based on the analysis of the highest inclina-

tions): In the socially active group, a stronger inclination towards the future was observed in 50% of the respondents (11 participants), a positive past in 27,27% (6 participants), and a hedonistic present in 18,18% (4 participants). High indicators of a negative past were only observed in 4,55% (1 participant), while the highest indicator of a fatalistic present was completely absent.

In the results of the second group, the highest indicator of a negative future is observed in 38,89% (7 participants), with positive past and fatalistic present having identical results of 22,22% each (4 participants). The indicators for the most pronounced future were observed in 16,67% (3 participants), while the hedonistic present was 0%. **Figure 3.**

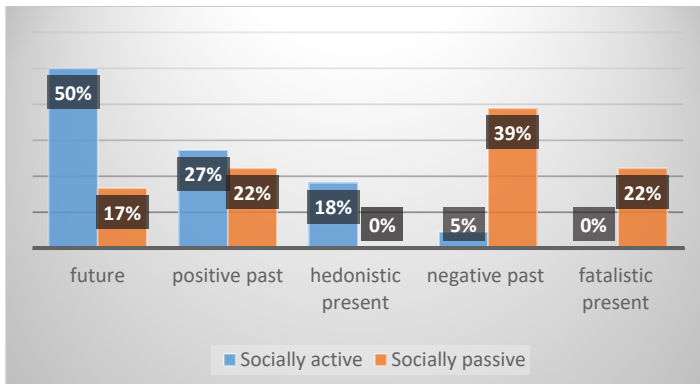


Figure 3. Distribution of diagnostic material among for the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory

Furthermore, based on the results, Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated, resulting in the following values: $p_1 = 0.971$ for the first group (socially active) and $p_2 = 0.904$ for the second group (socially passive). Upon analysis of these findings, the correlation is deemed to be both positive and robust.

Conclusions. Therefore, based on the research results, we observe that according to the Beck scale, in the group of socially active individuals, the highest indicator is „absence of depressive syndromes,” namely 77.3% (17 individuals). In the group of socially passive individuals, the highest indicators are distributed across three groups at 27.78% each (5 individuals), namely subdepression, moderate depression, and

moderate severity. Regarding the study of refugees’ orientation towards the time continuum according to Zimbardo, the first group shows the highest inclination towards the future, 50% (11 participants), while the second group tends towards negative past, 38.89% (7 participants).

In summary of the research and analysis of the results, a clear correlation between acculturative depression (measured through the author’s questionnaire on social activity and depression assessment methods) and refugees’ attitudes toward the temporal continuum (examined through the temporal-spatial perspective questionnaire) was demonstrated. Thus, the hypothesis that individuals with higher social activity exhibit lower tendencies towards depressi-

on and are more future-oriented, whereas those with lower social activity show higher tendencies towards depression, was

confirmed. Additionally, the highest level of orientation towards negative past experiences was observed among the participants.

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