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**ECOLOGIZATION OF EDUCATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

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***Abstract***

The paper considers the problem of ecologization of education as a development factor of the ecology of a student's personality in the educational environment of a higher educational institution. The relevance of the study is caused by modern trends of social and cultural transformation of the society impacting social, psychological, physical health of students. The importance of the study is defined by the priorities of the national strategy on education for sustainable development of the Russian society towards ecologization. There is an increased interest to this problem due to requirements of educational standards to healthy and safe educational environment. It is beyond argument that it is impossible to reach sufficient quality of education without considering the fact that the development of future experts takes place in close interaction with the educational environment of a higher educational institution. The current understanding of the educational environment as a quality requirement of education, personal development, sociocultural safety, in many respects defines needs of modern school to create the eco-friendly learning environment. The paper presents the study of environmental condition of the educational environment at Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov (KalmSU) of the Republic of Kalmykia and its impact on the ecology of students' personality. According to authors, in the conditions of social and cultural transformation of the society, it is critical to trace key indicators of educational condition within a higher educational institution that will allow forecasting psychological and social health of students and rendering them psychological and pedagogical support.

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**Keywords:** Ecologization, educational environment, ecology of personality, student.



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## **1. Introduction**

The implementation of strategic objectives of education for sustainable development causes an urgent need to study the problem of the educational environment and its impact on the ecology of personality, which holds key positions within the system of modern higher education. In the conditions of modern globalization, the educational ecology shall transform the concept of sustainable development into the system of spiritual and professional attitudes of students. In modern conditions students are considered as a strategic resource for social development since the course and prospects of modernization of Russia will depend on their beliefs, values, and health. One of the key problems of education these days is to understand how the personality of students is formed, what factors does it depend on and how to influence these factors to achieve positive results. At the same time, ecologization of the educational environment within a higher educational institution serves an important factor that ensures health protection and sociocultural safety of student's personality.

The concept "ecological educational environment" defines a wide range of factors influencing the ecology of student's personality. Hence, the study of the educational environment is extremely important since without it we may fail to understand many basic problems related to the ecology of student's personality.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problems of ecologization of education are caused by the fact that the modern education implies professional development of a student, but his spiritual and moral qualities, state of health are not always well studied and developed.

Despite importance and relevance of ecologization of education, at present this problem is not thoroughly studied yet. Its multidimensionality and interdisciplinarity causes some difficulties in terms of pedagogical strategies of ecologization of the educational environment within a higher educational institution, which would ensure the development of the ecology of student's personality. In this regard, there is a need to analyze the corresponding processes of modern sociocultural educational environment, to understand what elements and factors can contribute to the development of the ecology of student's personality.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the study covers ecologization of a student's personality in the educational environment of a higher educational institution in modern conditions of sociocultural transformation of the society.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the state and features of the ecology of student's personality in the educational environment of a higher educational institution and to identify factors causing this process.

## 5. Research Methods

To solve the above purpose, the study was based on the analysis of theoretic and empiric material; methodology of environmental approach; diagnostics of students' social and psychological health; questionnaires: Diagnostics of the educational environment, Study climate, Way of life and health, Factors affecting students' health.

## 6. Findings

The importance of the ecological problem is noted in scientific studies highlighting that ecologization of social environment and personality, which main objective is to embed modern ecological ideas and values into all spheres of the society and a person, is a key condition for social safety of the society (Agadzhanyan, 2012; Goltsova, 2005; Manuylov, 2002; Khachatryan, 2015). A new paradigm of modern science is defined by the ecological aspect since the tendency towards "ecologization" becomes critical within the modern scientific knowledge (Khachatryan, 2015).

Foreign studies attribute the environmental approach to the names of such psychologists as D. Gibson, G. Allport, F. Steiner and others, which fostered the development of the theory of social interaction and introduced the concepts of "habitat", "individual-environment", psychology of interpersonal interaction, environmental approach to the living environment of a person (as cited in Gibson, 1988). The main idea of the environmental approach is that neither personal system is able to be what it is and to exist for a long time without surrounding collective systems (Allport, 1961). Synthesizing the works of various scientists Steiner (2002) notes that human interactions within the human ecology can be understood as ecological relations.

From a variety of tasks related to the problem of ecologization of education, the ecology of personality as a new scientific direction studying regularities and possibilities of health maintenance in the conditions of the educational environment of a higher educational institution seems quite interesting (Druzhilov, 2012; Rossova, 2015; Subetto, 1999). In his study devoted to students Starke (1982) states that the current situation and educational activity of a higher educational institution has the dominating impact on the development of student's personality. Hence, we can make an important conclusion on consistency and simultaneity of ecologization of student's personality and the sociocultural environment of a higher educational institution.

Thus, the ecology of student's personality becomes an important component of modern educational environment of any higher educational institution. Being a new form of social life of a personality, education serves the carrier of "educational ecology of a personality" and defines the ever increasing relations between a wellbeing of a personality, quality of its life, social self-fulfillment and the quality of education in its general sense (Subetto, 1999). In this regard, there is a need to define the influence of the university environment on the personality of a student. Today there is a number of fundamental principles defining the methodology of educational ecologization. Thus, we defined the methodology of environmental approach, which is reflected in scientific works of modern Russian and foreign scientists, such as P. Kislyakov, Yu. Manuylov, J. Coleman, Z. Bauman, etc. The importance of environmental approach is defined by the fact that it is perceived as a tool methodology considering the system of

interactions of a student with the educational environment where the environment is a tool of design, diagnostics and pedagogical result. The value of the environment in student's personal development is increasing, as well as its close interaction with the pedagogical system and personal development (Manuylov, 2002).

Foreign studies on the organization of higher educational institutions and their direct impact on students' achievements also seem relevant. It is noted that the university organization shall include not only the development of cultural values, but strongly support them (Coleman, 2004). The role of the educational environment is critical in the development of a student's personality, namely his habitat, and the university represents a certain place of student's activity, his living environment (Bauman, 2002). This educational environment contributes to the development of living objectives, personally important qualities, culture, professional competences and readiness for personal and professional activity. Besides, the university impacts the development of personal potential through its entire structure or its separate elements (Bauman, 2002).

Social-psychological and physical health of students particularly defines the condition of environmental friendliness of the educational environment thus integrating all aspects of the quality of life of a student. We consider health as the indicator of ecology of student's personality caused by environmental conditions of the educational environment. The importance of health of the Russian student is emphasized in international studies, according to which the quality of health of young people in Russia is still lower than that of their age-mates in Western Europe (Tompson, 2007).

Considering that health represents the system of biological, psychological, social states of an individual, the study of students' health was mainly focused on their social-psychological comfort in the educational environment of a higher educational institution, which is defined by the level of psychosocial wellbeing (Kislyakov, 2017). Due to their complexity the medical indicators are not used in the study and are based on health self-assessment since it gives students a feeling of social harmony and mobility. The subjective assessment of the quality of life is quite individual and is expressed in students' opinions, feelings and estimates. At the same time, such indicators as the perceived health and satisfaction with health serve the subjective evaluation criteria of the quality of life (Sirgy, 2010).

The students of the Department of Engineering and Technology of the Kalmyk State University participated in the study. The importance of social and psychological wellbeing of students is caused by various students' groups, namely: students from CIS and non-CIS states, territorial subjects of the Russian Federation (RF), urban and rural areas. Today 77 international students study at different directions of the department. The tables below (Table 01, 02 and 03) show the diagnostics of educational environment revealing subjective opinions of students regarding the degree of their satisfaction with educational environment at the department and the feeling of safety.

**Table 01.** Indicators of students' satisfaction with educational environment

University environment	Level of satisfaction with chosen characteristics (%)					
	In a greater degree		Average		In a lesser degree	
Relations with teachers	68.4	85	31.6	25	0	0
Relations with coursemates	73.7	72.4	21.0	27.4	5.3	0
Emotional comfort	72.5	72.0	22.5	28.0	5.0	0
Personal respect	100	100	0	0	0	0
Personal dignity	100	100	0	0	0	0
Opportunity to seek advice	63.2	60.5	31.6	37.5	5.2	2.0
Attention to requests and proposals	78.9	96.0	21.1	4.0	0	0

In total, 196 students took part in the survey. The diagnostics of the university environmental condition shows that about 70% of respondents are quite satisfied with their relations with teachers, coursemates, while the international students are more satisfied with their relations with teachers than the Russian students; 95% feel the emotional comfort; all students feel personal respect and an opportunity to seek advice from teachers, coursemates, and the dean's office of the department.

The characteristic of the educational environment at the department makes it possible to claim that the department ensures social and psychological comfort where students feel calm, convenient, confident and satisfied thus causing optimism, confidence, freedom from fear and anxiety. It is particularly important for international students and students that arrived from territorial subjects of the Russian Federation.

**Table 02.** Psychological Security Of Students

Indicators Of Psychological Security	Feeling Of Psychological Security		
	Feel Unsafe	Feel Safe	Not Sure
1. Public Humiliation			
A) By Coursemates	5.3	89.5	5.2
B) By Teachers	5.3	89.5	5.2
2. Offense			
A) By Coursemates	0	94.8	5.2
B) By Teachers	0	89.5	10.5
3. Ridiculing			
A) By Coursemates	5.3	89.5	5.2
B) By Teachers	10.5	84.3	5.2
4. Threats			
A) By Coursemates	0	94.8	5.2
B) By Teachers	0	79.0	21.0
5. Disrespect			
A) By Coursemates	15.8	73.7	10.5
B) By Teachers	15.8	84.2	0
Mean Value	6.9	86.8	6.3

According to the survey, on average 87% of respondents feel psychological security, while 7% feel vulnerable. The students generally feel unsafe from "disrespectful attitude of classmates and teachers". The indicator of psychological security confirms the satisfaction of students with the quality of educational environment at the department. The survey of students based on the questionnaire *Study Climate* showed the following results:

**Table 03.** Study climate

Questions	Indicators (%)			
	“yes”			
Do you have a cohesive team?	98	94	94	95
Is the atmosphere at the university creative?	57	65	57	63
Are you satisfied with relations in your team?	64	75	80	78
Are there any university traditions that are important for you?	25	27	14	20
Do you feel that your groupmates have good relations?	90	87	93	93
Are you proud to study at the university?	82	79	71	75
Do you eager to take part in group and public events?	64	77	85	98
Do you attend the university with pleasure?	80	68	70	70

All respondents unambiguously marked their team cohesion. 77% of respondents feel proud to study at KalmsU, and this indicator is higher among students from the Republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Congo, Zambia and makes 82%. On the contrary, this indicator makes 73% among urban and rural students of the Republic of Kalmykia. The students from Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco are satisfied with their education. This indicator is confirmed by good progress of students from these countries, 50% of students studying Agricultural Engineering and Construction show “good” and “excellent” results.

The state of health was estimated against subjective characteristics based on the test *Your Way of Life and Health* and a questionnaire *Factors Affecting Health*. First-year students assessed the level of their health quite high (excellent – 27.6%, good – 36.7%, satisfactory – 35.7%).

To ensure better analysis of factors affecting health the students were offered to list key factors affecting their health. It was found that the risk factors are as follows: bad habits (67%), health abuse (52%), unhealthy diet (73%). The most important negative factors include bad habits such as the Internet, social networks (19.6%) and food addiction (12.3%). The obtained subjective data concerning alcohol, drug and smoking addiction suggest that these addictions do not pose any threat.

The study also revealed negative sociocultural factors of the educational environment at the department serving as factors of sociocultural risk, such as loss of worldview, ethical, esthetic values; decrease of the educational level, discrepancy between the quality of professional education and the labor market demand; safeguarding of social employment and job placement upon graduation. Students also feel the de-emphasis of morality and moral, healthy lifestyle, loss of national traditions (Krasnorutskaya, 2014). We believe that these feelings, though not typical, but somewhat reflect students’ feelings in a modern sociocultural situation of the Republic of Kalmykia.

Besides, the study showed that the deficiency of due understanding between a teacher and a student is another problem of the educational process at the university. The survey of poor students showed that one of the reasons for their poor progress is “bad relations with teachers”, 36% of respondents estimate the relations with teachers as official, and only 43% of respondents estimate such relations as benevolent.

In many respects the problems of communication and interpersonal perception are defined by the personality of a teacher, which in turn requires the change of attitude, position of teachers regarding the system of cooperation, humanistic style of interaction, communication and trust (Romanov & Dauksha, 2016). Thus, it is important that on the one hand a student is ready to accept help, support, participation, and on the other hand – to bear responsibility for personal deeds and behavior. We believe that the corporate

culture of the university plays a key role here. A corporate culture as a factor of ecologization of the educational environment can be considered as a condition to optimize professional and personal development of all participants of the educational process. Such model is created at Kalmyk State University and requires practical evaluation in terms of its influence on ecologization of education at a higher educational institution.

In pedagogics the problem of ecology of personality and its destructive features may be solved through obligatory inclusion of creativity into the educational activity of students. Creativity represents a norm of life, it serves the basis for all types of health, appears as the law of ecology of personality, since beyond the creative life the personality is decaying and self-destroying (Subetto, 1999).

Our study showed that high-quality changes of relations happen within out-of-class activity during creative interaction, joint scientific search between students and teachers, humanistic style of interaction and communication, trust (Krasnorutskaya, Borlikov, & Mutyrova, 2018).

Thus, the following will serve the major factors of educational environment impacting the ecology of students' personality:

- enrichment of educational environment with innovative activity, including pedagogical technologies and educational models, new educational standards;
- availability of the university corporate culture defining target features of joint activity, quality of relations, emotional and moral atmosphere, standard aspects of interactions;
- personal involvement of students into the educational process: focus on self-knowledge, reflexive attitude to studied disciplines, social phenomena, educational process, yourself, future professional activity;
- focus on spiritual values and ethnocultural traditions of the nation, its language, history;
- inclusion of students into creative and research activity;
- democratization and humanization of students' life as a necessary condition of ecologization of education thus contributing to morality, tolerance, empathy, friendly relations, mutual support among students.

## **7. Conclusion**

The theoretical analysis of the problem and the analysis of obtained empirical data makes it possible to conclude that the social and psychological health of a student as an indicator of ecology of his personality characterizes the environmental condition of education and hence its sociocultural safety. We believe that the quality indicators of educational environment are caused by the status of the Kalmyk State University as a major regional higher educational institution within the educational system of Russia, its innovative activity, comfortable sociocultural and educational conditions. This suggests that in the conditions of sociocultural transformation of modern society the university is able to create favorable conditions for the development of professional elite of the Republic of Kalmykia through ecologization of the educational environment.

The study also allows concluding that the analysis of the state and factors of ecologization of education contributing to the development of the ecology of student's personality are only at their initial stage these days, while a considerable part of ecological factors fails to gain due theoretical study, scientific interpretation and practical assessment yet.

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