

Emotional-value experience of Russian, Chinese and Armenian Students in conditions of cultural diversity

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Abstract. The relevance of the research is due to the expanding migration flows including academic ones and the problem of adaptation in a new cultural environment. The purpose of the article is to determine the emotional and value attitude of students from Russia, China and Armenia towards representatives of other cultures. The problem of intercultural relationships is one of the important in higher education didactics and should be included in programs developing soft skills. The research hypothesis is that intercultural relationships may vary depending on the dominant culture. The methodological basis of the research is the provisions of the economy of experience. The data obtained are based on a survey of students and subsequent statistical processing. The results of the research can be used in the formation of adaptation programs, content, in particular, in such subjects as “Foreign language” and “Intercultural Communication”, contributing to the development of intercultural communicative sensitivity (competence) towards representatives of other cultures. Keywords: emotional and value attitude, culture, adaptation, economy of experience, intercultural communicative sensitivity (competence)

1 Introduction

Currently, there are a lot of discussions on the development of not only narrow professional (hard) but also general professional (soft) skills; various theories and proposals are put forward for the implementation of an emotional-value attitude into the learning process in various subjects.

Adaptation to new intercultural conditions is one of the important problems, since it is a complex, multifactorial process that requires significant biosocial costs and insufficient adaptation negatively affects the formation of the personality of the future specialist. At the same time, the adaptation process cannot be considered as spontaneous; it must be controlled requiring the development of special educational and methodological complexes and guidelines not only for students but also for lecturers. In addition, a successful start to

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education and personal development has a positive impact on building interrelations with both fellow students and lecturers determining a future professional career [1].

First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to one of the priority areas of the higher education system – the development of international cooperation with the aim of training foreign students at Russian universities. However, the learning process is closely interconnected with the adaptation one, the need to create a favorable environment based on mutual understanding and mutual respect of all participants in the educational process. To achieve the aim, it is necessary to know the emotional and value relations of representatives of different cultures, their customs and traditions, how compatible they can be and whether their combinations are possible.

The purpose of the presented article is to determine the emotional and value attitude of students from three countries, Russia, China and Armenia towards representatives of other cultures. The research hypothesis is based on the fact that emotional-value relations can change depending on the titular culture. The theoretical basis of the research is the theory of the experience economy. The collection of data is carried out on the basis of a questionnaire with subsequent statistical processing of them. The results obtained can be used to create programs for mutual adaptation of Russian and foreign students, as well as educational programs aimed at developing intercultural communicative competence in university students.

2 Literature Review

As already noted, in the modern didactic process it is not enough to transfer a narrow specialized knowledge. It is necessary to develop general professional competencies that facilitate adaptation in complex conditions of uncertainty and professional environments while interacting with representatives of different cultures of a multipolar world.

According to Ortega R. Jr and M. R. Sanchez, “cognitive pedagogy can no longer fulfill all the tasks of modern education, since it is necessary to learn to overcome conflicts in a society with multiple systems of values and lifestyles. Moreover, personal attitudes, although vitally important, are ultimately based not on intellectual reasoning but on beliefs based on the values that give meaning to our very existence.” The authors propose a pedagogy of alterity, the center of which is the recognition and acceptance of the other which in turn is associated with the development of a positive emotional-value attitude towards the world around us [2].

According to O. N. Vasina, O. N. Ponomareva, N. N. Borisov, the problem of the formation and development of emotional-value attitudes is cross-cutting in higher education didactics [3].

According to V. V. Kraevsky and I. Ya. Lerner, the experience of an emotional-value relationship is part of the social experience recorded in culture which is an obligatory component in the content of education [4].

However, there assigned only those morally and socially significant values that students consider significant for themselves. The development of an emotional-value attitude is facilitated by a systematic and purposeful process of forming value orientations based on an emotional and rational assessment of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world.

Hence, the problem of identifying new ethical and aesthetic foundations of modern scientific knowledge and professional education and the emergence of a new ethical and aesthetic hierarchy of values becomes urgent [5].

Consequently, there is a need to determine the conditions for the development of an emotional-value relationship. Thus, L.V. Zhuk proposes the following didactic conditions at the university: transformation of content, based on learning from sociocultural experience;

formation of internal motivation; cognitive and emotional empathy; inclusion of non-standard creative tasks and educational cases [6].

O. N. Vasina, O. N. Ponomareva, N. N. Borisov propose the use of interactive methods taking into account the personal experience of students, the formulation and solution of worldview and value-semantic problem situations provided by the competence approach. An individual, as a subject of education, creates his / her own system of values in the world around and their own ways in it in accordance with new value orientations. ... Moreover, the formation occurs through perceptual (depending on sensations and emotional assessment), cognitive (processing of information, identifying significance and rational assessment), practical (practical interactions) channels [3].

It should be mentioned that the above provisions are developed by the authors for mathematical (L. V. Zhuk [6]), natural (O. N. Vasina, O. N. Ponomareva, N. N. Borisov [3, 7]) sciences and even physical education and sports (Hong Guo and Ming Wang [8], Zhengta Wang and Junheng Wang [9]), music (Yuan Lu [10]). From our point of view, the cultural theory of selection of the education content (I. Ya. Lerner, N. M. Skatkin, A. V. Kraevsky), according to which "the goal of education is the transmission of culture, fixed in all the diversity of social experience, consisting of experience cognitive activity, methods of activity and experience of creative activity" [7], is also applicable in teaching foreign languages and intercultural communication. This area is a good platform for considering the diversity of languages and cultures, traditions and values, comparing them and determining one's attitude towards them.

The problem described above is closely related to the internationalization of education. One of the priority areas is to attract foreign students (educational migrants) to Russian educational institutions, who under certain conditions can become human potential and, in the future, human capital of the host country.

Internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating cross-border and intercultural perspectives with the core functions of universities such as education, research and social adaptation. Economic globalization has made the material foundation for the internationalization of higher education, promoted openness, exchange and cooperation between different countries and brought their educational communication closer [11].

Consequently, not only high-quality education is important but also a system of sociocultural adaptation, often dependent on the acceptance and perception (emotional-value attitude) of people from another culture which is confirmed by a number of studies related to migration processes, including educational migration.

Thus, M. Gheorghiu et al. argue that status matters: migrants with lower status feel more deprived which highlights the need to study anti-immigration sentiment from the perspective of the group status and moral devaluation [12].

In addition, the place of residence also matters. In particular, according to J. Kent, it is assumed that residents of compact cities are more likely to maintain a positive attitude towards their neighbors, including migrants [13, 14].

B. Bertelsen points out that when taking into account background variables, closer contacts (friendship) reduce negative attitudes towards migrants compared to superficial contacts increasing negative attitudes [15].

According to educational data, L. Rosen et al. note that teachers with and without a so-called migration background do not differ significantly in most indicators [16]. From our point of view, teachers with a migration background, based on their experience, may be even more sensitive to the problems of educational migration and contribute to its faster adaptation.

Numerous studies are also conducted in Russia, noting the contradictory relationships between the host society and migrants.

V. Prokhoda argues that the more the host community is convinced of the positive impact of migrants on the development of the country and agrees that migrants are not only a source of economic (competition in the labor market) and physical (increasing crime) threat, the more positive the attitude towards them. However, insufficient confidence in the benefits of accepting migrants determines the choice of assimilation strategies associated with a negative attitude towards them [17].

For example, O. Vasilyeva notes that in the Republic of Sakha (Russia) there is a significant relationship between self-assessment of the financial situation, education, age, attitude towards migrants and the perception of interethnic relationships. Ethnicity is an important factor in the formation of interethnic tension and is becoming a significant socio-economic problem [18].

V. Yarskaya-Smirnova and A. Ruchin, having conducted a study among employees of cultural, educational, and social protection institutions, note that those who have migrants in their immediate environment believe that their organizations are more positively disposed towards them than those who have none. And the higher the degree of satisfaction with the current situation, the more positive the assessment of inclusion. Institutions of social support and cultural integration can help develop such forms of social solidarity where diversity is seen as a value and individual cultural and social choice is guaranteed by law [19].

A number of studies [20-22] conducted in Yekaterinburg note that about 30 million migrants currently live in Russia. The interaction between local society and migrants has a significant impact on the development of human capital in the territory. The study found that there is a relationship between cultural and national preferences and the interaction between migrants and locals. It is emphasized that the influence is exerted not only by socio-demographic characteristics but also by national-cultural and behavioral ones, such as attitudes towards one's own nationality and culture, as well as experience of interaction with migrants.

Thus, the emotional-value attitude can be determined by the mutual impressions that migrants and the host society have on each other. The phenomenon can be associated with the economy of experience.

The term "economy of experience" was first introduced by J. Pine and J. Gilmore as a new socio-economic stage of society in 1999 [23]. They proposed a model consisting of 4 domains: entertainment (to feel), education (to learn), escapism (to act) and esthetics (to be).

In addition, there are some other ways to get experience: rewarding activities, encouraging a careful attitude to learning, awakening curiosity, connecting the mind and discovering knowledge [24]. Moreover, it is noted that experience and positive emotions make people happier than material wealth. The model was created for business. However, it can also be adapted for the education sector.

From our point of view, J. Pine and J. Gilmore's model can be supplemented with sociocultural experience (emotional-value relationships) that contribute to establishing contacts requiring mutual adaptation of the migrants, including educational ones, and local residents.

So, the adapted model might look like this:

1. Entertainment (to feel) – passive absorption of knowledge with minimal activity (attending lectures, reading books, listening to video courses, etc.);
2. Education (to learn) requires active participation. The desire to acquire new knowledge is a natural and integral part of the human essence. But in order to transfer this knowledge to individuals or develop some skills in them, the full involvement of the mind (for intellectual education) or the body (for physical development) is required.
3. Escapism (to act), where students are responsible for the depth of experience they receive. The area includes the increasingly popular virtual training and quest rooms created

using augmented reality. In this aspect, there is more interest in collaborative learning using the flipped classroom type.

4. Esthetics (to be) – the simplest type of experience, focused on the essence of an individual and the desire for beauty. It only requires to “be” and “perceive.” Nobody needs to change or influence the environment. An individual receives aesthetic pleasure by joining world values.

5. Experience (to adapt) includes sociocultural environment, forming emotional and value relationships between representatives of different cultures and layers of society.

It should also be noted that we are talking not only about the development of narrow professional (hard) but also general professional (soft) skills, closely related to personal qualities.

As for the management of the process, according to J. Pine, the Chief Experience Officer (CXO) runs the activities, leading to success. He/she is a designer and problem solver with the goal of maximizing the optimization of a product or service to meet customer needs. On the other hand, he must monitor the employees' experience of work as customer experience is a consequence of the interaction of company employees [13].

Transforming the thesis to the education system, we can say that the lecturer runs the students' activities, leading to success which is consistent with the provisions of emotional leadership based on the development of emotional intelligence (EQ). He/she is a designer and setter of goals and objectives to maximize the optimization of the educational process to meet the students' needs.

Thus, there created a certain sociocultural educational environment that promotes not only the acquisition of professional knowledge but also adaptation to rapidly changing environmental conditions (activity content). Consequently, the study of experience produced by the environment has certain prospects in the formation of an emotional and value-based attitude towards it, including human relationships.

3 Materials and Methods

To conduct the research, the following methods of statistical data processing are used: descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, interquartile range), frequency analysis (visualization), correlation analysis (Spearman rank correlation method), Mann-Whitney non-parametric test for independent samples. Despite the fact that more than 2 groups of respondents participated in the comparison and the use of the Kruskal-Wallis test is more correct, it is generally accepted that the Mann-Whitney two-sample comparison test is statistically more powerful.

The research is conducted on the basis of the Ural Federal University (Ekaterinburg, Russia) and the Ijevan Branch of the Yerevan State University (Ijevan, Republic of Armenia) with bachelor and master degree students in the humanities.

In the research there used the author's questionnaire, consisting of direct and reverse questions. The total sample included 64 respondents. Of these, 18 students are Russians, 24 are Chinese, 22 are Armenians, 16 men and 48 women aged from 18 to 31 ($M=22.6$; $SD=2.64$).

While the representation of each nationality is more balanced in the overall sample, there are serious biases based on gender. Regarding the age factor, in the overall sample there are no serious shifts to the area of lower and higher values, although there are outliers. The interquartile range for age in the total sample is 21-23 years which is representative for 50% of the sample.

Frequency analysis allows seeing that 87% of the sample falls on the student age group (bachelor's/master's degree), which together allows considering it as a homogeneous socio-professional group and conduct a primary analysis in the general sample.

4 Results and Discussion

While analyzing the answers to the questionnaire, the following results were obtained. Answering the first question of the questionnaire, “A person from another culture usually scares or worries me,” the majority of respondents showed 2 types of answers – no and yes. Thus, in the context of the overall sample, the response can be classified as ambivalent. It should be noted that this question belongs to the inverse category and requires an understanding of inversion; accordingly, it can be assumed that representatives of other nationalities may experience difficulties in understanding inversion in the language.

Answering the second question, “I want there to be people of different nationalities among my friends,” respondents showed a tendency toward openness in social relationships, a unipolar attitude toward national diversity in friendship and socially approved friendliness. The question falls into the direct category.

Answering the third question, “It is difficult for me to communicate with people of other faiths,” one can see that respondents are open to understanding the beliefs of other nationalities, although this opinion is shared by approximately 62% of respondents.

Further, considering the assessments on the fourth question, “For me, it does not matter what nationality my boss is, as long as he/she is highly qualified,” it is noted that the answers are shifted towards the zone of positive assessments of intercultural business communication.

Analyzing the answers to the fifth question, “I am ready to meet people of other nationalities among my colleagues/fellow students/friends in the office (at work, at the university),” positive attitudes are noted in the perception of representatives of other nationalities in the professional, educational and organizational environment.

In the answers to the sixth question, “Willing to accept a person of any nationality as a family member,” a dichotomous assessment was obtained within the overall sample. Although there is a tendency to occupy the more tolerant pole of the scale. The rigidity of dichotomous schemes is consistent with instability in assessment, the readiness to take the opposite pole, namely to reject a representative of another nationality as a potential family member.

While distributing scores on the seventh question, “I have a negative attitude towards interethnic marriages, since they lead to the disappearance of the nation,” an answer similar to the previous one was received, but with a shift to the area of negative values. In general, there is a denial of intolerance but at the same time, a zone of uncertainty is growing. The zone of uncertainty in answers is the “hard to answer” assessment. This answer falls into the category of saving answers for those respondents who experience doubt or social pressure, or do not want to reveal their beliefs. An indefinite answer is evidence of a conflicting relationship between value-motivational attitudes and attitudes toward social approval.

The analysis of the answers to the eighth question, “A person should be assessed only by his/her moral and business qualities, and not by his/her nationality,” shows a pronounced shift in assessments in the positive direction, which indicates control over the ways in which national prejudices are formed.

The analysis of answers to the ninth question “I would like to live in another country” suggests that openness to experience is not a value for all respondents. The area of uncertainty in answers increases significantly, although the general attitude towards the desire to learn a new culture remains.

Thus, the general interethnic sentiments in the sample under study correspond to the attitudes of tolerant consciousness but there are areas of potential conflict, as evidenced by ambivalent assessments and responses with high uncertainty.

Correlation analysis between the variables – the questionnaire questions – made it possible to identify the closest relationships between them, some features of the constructed questions and their semantic similarity.

Let us describe the main connections with a high level of significance as the most reliable:

Indicator 1 correlated negatively with indicator 5 ($r=-0.374$; $p\leq 0.01$) and 8 ($r=-0.380$; $p\leq 0.01$), positively with indicator 7 ($r=0.429$; $p\leq 0.01$).

The lower the alertness, the higher the open-mindedness in intercultural communication. The greater the alertness, the more negative the attitudes towards interethnic marriages and vice versa.

Indicator 2 correlated with indicator 7 ($r = -0.403$; $p\leq 0.01$) and 8 ($r=0.376$; $p\leq 0.01$). Diversity attitudes in interethnic relationships are positively associated with open-mindedness in work and study and negatively with interethnic marriages.

Indicator 3 was negatively correlated with indicator 9 ($r=-0.379$; $p\leq 0.01$). The more difficult it is to communicate with representatives of other faiths, the lower the interest in living abroad. Indicator 7 was negatively correlated with indicator 8 ($r=-0.558$; $p\leq 0.01$). A focus on an open-minded approach in business relationships correlates with the acceptance of interethnic marriages.

4.1 Comparison of Results by Countries (Russia, China, Armenia)

A comparison of the questionnaires of respondents from Russia and China revealed significant statistical differences in answers to 1 ($M1=17.56$; $M2 = 24.46$; $p=0.03$), 2 ($M1=17.33$; $M2 = 24.63$; $p=0.01$), and 9 ($M1=27.03$; $M2=17.35$; $p=0.007$) questions. A tendency towards greater tolerance of Russians in business relations was discovered (question 5), which did not reach the level of statistical significance. The average ranks for the compared samples and the level of statistical significance are indicated in parentheses.

The results obtained indicate that the Chinese are warier of representatives of other nationalities but at the same time they are more flexible and prone to national diversity in contacts. At the same time, they dream less of living abroad. Their attitude towards other cultures is more restrained, critical and their openness to diversity is higher than that of Russians. We can say that the Chinese are more realistic, while the Russians are impulsive and dreamy.

Comparison of questionnaires of respondents from Russia and Armenia made it possible to detect significant statistical differences in answers to 1 ($M1=14.64$; $M2 = 25.30$; $p=0.001$) and 8 ($M1=27.03$; $M2 = 15.18$; $p=0.003$) questions, as well as differences by age ($M1=27.07$; $M2=15.05$; $p=0.001$).

Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that, in comparison with Russians, Armenians are more cautious, distrustful and suspicious of representatives of other nationalities. In addition, in their perception of the "other" there is a large amount of wariness which indicates interethnic mistrust. The sample from Armenia is younger than the sample from Russia.

Comparison of questionnaires of respondents from China and Armenia made it possible to detect significant statistical differences in answers to 2 ($M1 = 23.19$; $M2 = 17.30$; $p = 0.001$), 7 ($M1 = 14.44$; $M2 = 33.39$; $p = 0.001$), 8 ($M1=30$; $M2 = 16.41$; $p=0.001$) questions, as well as differences by age ($M1=28.71$; $M2 = 17.82$; $p=0.005$). There found a tendency towards a greater desire to live in another country among Armenians in comparison with the Chinese (question 9), which did not reach the level of statistical significance.

The Armenians' perceptions of people of other nationalities turned out to be more rigid. Thus, there discovered differences in the need for diversity and national richness of friendly contacts among the Chinese. It was revealed that among Armenians, negative attitudes towards interethnic marriages and a wary attitude towards others are more common. It is reflected in the fact that nationality is placed above business qualities.

Thus, the perception of representatives of other nationalities by Armenians is warier and polarized. The Chinese are more realistic and critical in their perception of people of other

nationalities. Russians demonstrate great open-mindedness, dreaminess and a desire to live abroad.

4.2 Comparison of Results for Each Nationality

Russian participants consisted of 18 people, 15 women and 3 men, aged 21-29 years (M=23.22; SD=1.86). The interquartile range in terms of age is close to the general sample and was 22-23 years.

Analysis of the frequency distribution of responses allows describing the perception of other cultures by Russians as follows. In the perception of Russians, a representative of another nationality is perceived as friendly. Answers to the second and third questions indicate openness to experience in social contacts. The willingness to understand other people's beliefs is not straightforward. The frequency distribution in questions four, five and eight indicates open-mindedness. However, in the answers to the sixth and seventh questions, this trend is replaced by inconsistency of assessments which indicates the instability of opinions regarding intimate and personal communication with representatives of other nationalities. On the one hand, there is no protest against interethnic marriages as some kind of abstraction. On the other hand, there is no obvious tendency towards convergence. There is a desire to live abroad.

Thus, in the interethnic attitudes of Russians there is openness to other cultures but at the level of peripheral ideas. Rather, there is a desire to experience another culture but not to integrate. The results obtained rather indicate friendliness and interest as an epistemic attitude. Correlation analysis revealed a single relationship between the first and fourth statements ($r=-0.589$; $p<0.05$), which indicates that Russians associate open-mindedness with a figure of authority. Summarized data are presented in Figure 1.

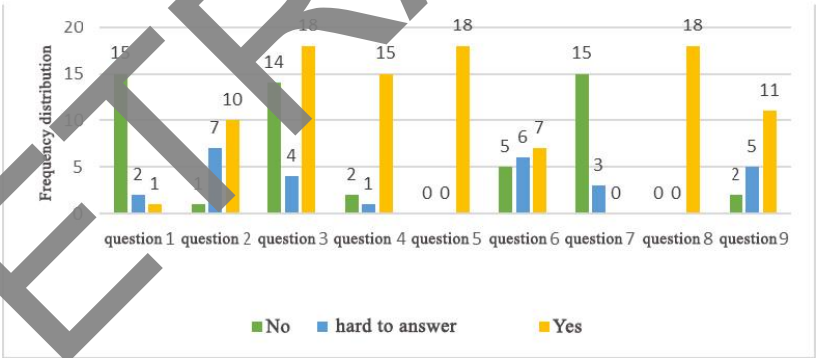


Fig. 1. Frequency distribution of respondents' answers to survey questions in a sample of Russian students.

The sample of Chinese participants consisted of 24 people, 14 women and 10 men, aged 20-27 years (M=22.8; SD=1.7). The interquartile range was 22-24 which exceeds the values in the Russian sample and in the general sample as a whole. The measure is more reliable than the mean and standard deviation because it is less affected by outliers.

The analysis of the frequency distribution of responses allows describing the perception of other cultures by the Chinese as follows. The attitude towards the "other" ranges from wariness to restrained interest. There is a high interest in diversity in contacts. Discussing matters of faith does not cause tension. They are friendly in working and professional

relationships. They express readiness for rapprochement in interpersonal contacts; open-minded in business communication. However, they do not express interest in living abroad, unlike Russians. Correlation analysis revealed a single relationship between the first and fifth statements ($r=-0.545$; $p\leq 0.05$), which indicates that trust in another nationality is associated with readiness for formal relationships at work or study. Summarized data are presented in Figure 2.

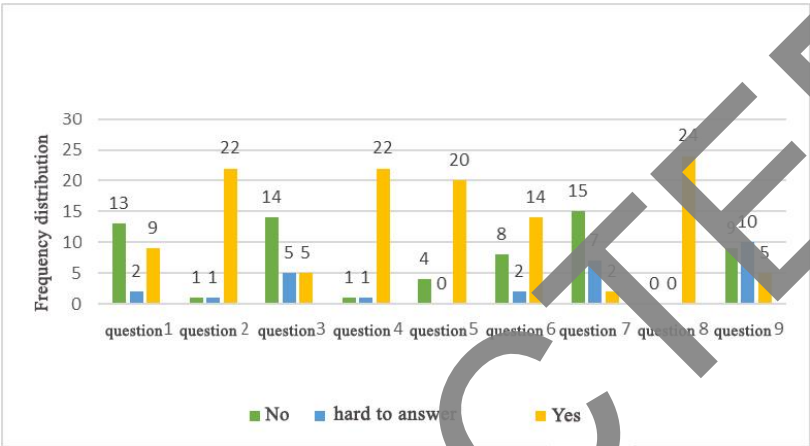


Fig. 2. Frequency distribution of respondents’ answers to survey questions in a sample of Chinese students.

Participants from Armenia consisted of 22 people, 21 women and 1 man, aged 18-31 years ($M=21.8$; $SD=3.4$). The interquartile range was 20-22 which is lower than in the sample of Russians and Chinese and in the general sample as a whole. In other words, this sample is younger.

An analysis of frequency table diagrams showed a high ambivalence of assessments on a number of issues which characterizes the perceptions of people of Armenian nationality as conflicting. If, while analyzing representatives of Russia and China, an attitude towards openness and friendliness is observed, here, to a greater extent, an attitude towards national closedness is observed. A representative of another nationality causes caution. There is no clear demand for diversity in social relations, as well as for discussion of issues of other beliefs. However, at the level of conventional relationships, open-mindedness is demonstrated. Probably, cultural traditions do not allow them to accept a person of a different nationality as a potential family member, this mode of relations is polarized and the belief about interethnic marriages is unipolarly negative. A conflict is also observed in the perception of the relationship between a person’s business and national qualities; there is a high zone of uncertainty in answers. There is an interest in life in another country but not as expressed as among Russians.

The correlation analysis made it possible to establish relationships between questions 1 and 7 ($r=0.506$; $p\leq 0.05$), questions 2 and 7 ($r=-0.438$; $p\leq 0.05$), questions 3 and 9 ($r=-0.447$; $p\leq 0.05$). Thus, the warier the attitude towards other nationalities, the higher the negative attitude towards interethnic marriages. The higher the demand for diversity, the lower the attitude towards unequal marriage. The lower the religious barrier, the higher the interest in living abroad. Summarized data are presented in Figure 3.

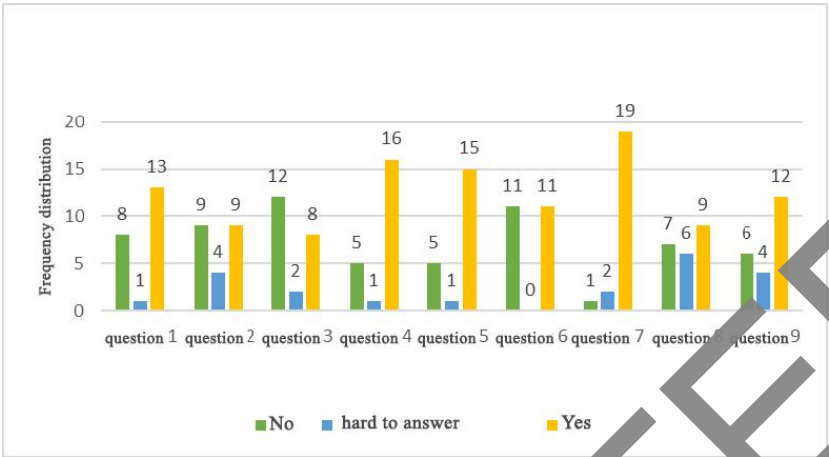


Fig. 3. Frequency distribution of respondents’ answers to survey questions in a sample of Armenian students.

Thus, based on a comparative analysis of responses to the questionnaire and methods of mathematical statistics, there discovered features of the value-emotional experience of students from three countries to representatives of other cultures, confirming the influence of the titular culture.

5 Conclusion

The presented article examines the theoretical basis of the research, substantiating the position that in the modern education system the provisions of cognitive didactics are not sufficient. In the context of the internationalization of education, new approaches and methods are needed that form general professional competencies that promote sensitivity to other emotional and value relationships.

It should be noted that the education system is closely connected with the development of the entire society, in particular with the economic system, which takes into account the data of the economy of experience, interconnected with the emotional and value-based attitude towards the environment. The components of the economy of experience can also be projected into the education system, connecting the learning process, interactive activity, sensory perception and aesthetic appreciation of intercultural communications and thus forming emotional and value relations within society.

Currently, attempts are being made to introduce emotional-value education in various subject areas. From our point of view, teaching foreign languages and intercultural communication is the most specific and productive platform for the formation and development of relevant competencies.

The results of the research show that emotional-value relations can change depending on the titular culture and have a certain impact on the perception of representatives of other cultures, thereby confirming our hypothesis. The results of the research can be used in the implementation of adaptation measures. At the same time, further research in this area can help create a favorable climate in the university, professional and social environment in general.

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