

## Identity and Mental Adaptation of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students

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**Abstract :** For the mental and social adaptation of the deaf and hard-of-hearing people, cultural and social aspects - the formation of identity (acculturation) and educational conditions - are highly significant. We studied 137 deaf and hard-of-hearing students in different educational situations. We used these methods: Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1997), TRF (Becker, 1989), WCQ (Lazarus & Folkman, 1988), self-esteem, and coping strategies (Jambor & Elliott, 2005), self-stigma scale (Mikhailov, 2008). Type of self-identification of students depended on the degree of deafness, type of education, method of communication in the family: large hearing loss, education in schools for deaf, and gesture communication increased the likelihood of a 'deaf' acculturation. Less hearing loss, inclusive education in public school or school for the hearing-impaired, mixed communication in the family contributed to the formation of 'hearing' acculturation. The choice of specific coping depended on the degree of deafness: a large hearing loss increased coping 'withdrawal into the deaf world' and decreased 'bicultural skills' coping. People with mild hearing loss tended to cover-up it. In the context of ongoing discussion, we researched personality characteristics in deaf and hard on-hearing students, coping and other deafness associated factors depending on their acculturation type. Students who identified themselves with the 'hearing world' had a high self-esteem, a higher level of extraversion, self-awareness, personal resources, willingness to cooperate, better psychological health, emotional stability, higher ability to empathy, a greater satiety of life with feelings and sense and high sense of self-worth. They also actively used strategies, problem-solving, acceptance of responsibility, positive reevaluation. Student who limited themselves within the culture of deaf people had more severe hearing loss and accordingly had more communication barriers. Lack of use or seldom use of coping strategies by these students point at decreased level of stress in their life. Their self-esteem have not been challenged in the specific social environment of the students with the same severity of defect, and thus this environment provided sense of comfort (we can assume that from the high scores on psychological health, personality resources, and emotional stability). Students with bicultural acculturation had higher level of psychological resources - they used Positive Reappraisal coping more often and had a higher level of psychological health. Lack of belonging to certain culture (marginality) leads to personality disintegration, social and psychological disadaptation: deaf and hard-of-hearing students with marginal identification had a lower self-estimation level, worse psychological health and personal resources, lower level of extroversion, self-confidence and life satisfaction. They, in fact, become 'risk group' (many of them dropped out of universities, divorced, and one even ended up in the ranks of ISIS). All these data argue the importance of cultural 'anchor' for people with hearing deprivation. Supported by the RFBR No 19-013-00406.

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