DOES INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT SHAPE STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE PROFILE? A CROSS-UNIVERSITY COMPARISON

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A recurring assumption in communication psychology is that individual psychological characteristics — motivation, social experience, emotional-volitional traits — are shaped primarily by personal history rather than by institutional environment. Yet universities differ substantially in their academic culture, student norms, and programme demands, and it is plausible that these differences leave a detectable mark on students' communicative profiles. The present study tests this assumption directly by comparing two university populations in the same city.

Participants were 120 undergraduate students: 60 from Fergana State University (FSU; programmes: Psychology, English Language, Natural Sciences, Economics) and 60 from the International Institute of Food Engineering and Technology (IIFET). Gender: 92 female (76.7%), 28 male (23.3%). The Social-Psychological Questionnaire (SPQ; Yuldasheva & Xolbo'tayev, 2025) was used to measure four dimensions of the communicative profile: emotional-volitional characteristics (Block A), motivational orientation (Block B), social experience (Block S), and academic environment perceptions (Block D). Communication technique (Tvorogov scale) and communicative control (adapted Snyder scale) were also administered. Group comparisons used Student's independent-samples t-test; significance level $p < .05$.

Results revealed a clear and selective pattern of institutional differences. IIFET students scored significantly higher than FSU students on emotional-volitional characteristics (Block A: $M = 15.60$ vs. 13.88; $t = -3.38$, $p = .001$) and on social experience (Block S: $M = 12.15$ vs. 11.27; $t = -2.12$, $p = .036$). No significant differences emerged on motivational orientation (Block B: $p = .288$) or academic environment perceptions (Block D: $p = .425$). Neither communication technique nor communicative control differed significantly between the two institutions.

The selectivity of these differences is theoretically informative. The two dimensions on which institutions differ — emotional-volitional self-regulation and social experience — are precisely those that can be expected to respond to the practical, laboratory-intensive, and professionally socialising atmosphere of an engineering institute. IIFET students routinely work in structured team environments, handle laboratory deadlines under pressure, and interact across disciplinary boundaries, all of which may cultivate both emotional self-management and a richer repertoire of interpersonal experience. FSU students, by contrast, operate in a more academically varied environment with different social demands.

The absence of institutional differences in motivational orientation is equally noteworthy. Motivation appears to be a more stable, person-level characteristic that is not substantially reshaped by the particular institutional culture a student enters. Similarly, the absence of differences in communication technique and communicative control suggests that observable communicative skill levels converge across institutions even when the underlying psychological profile differs. This implies that raw communicative performance may be a poor proxy for the psychological resources that sustain it.

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Gender comparisons within the full sample yielded one significant finding: male students rated their emotional-volitional characteristics higher than female students ($t = 2.05$, $p = .042$), while no gender differences were found on any other dimension. This pattern is consistent with differential social expectations around emotional expressiveness and self-regulatory display, rather than with any difference in underlying emotional capacity.

These findings carry two practical messages. First, institutional environment does matter for students' communicative profile, but its influence is domain-specific: it shapes emotional-volitional regulation and social experience without touching motivational orientation or actual communication skill levels. Second, universities and programme designers should not assume that students arrive with uniform psychological resources for communication, even within the same city and educational system. Assessment of communicative profiles at entry — particularly emotional-volitional self-regulation — could help tailor support accordingly.

Future research should extend this comparison to additional institutions, include longitudinal measurement, and examine whether institutional differences in communicative profile translate into measurable differences in academic or professional outcomes.

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