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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 84 (2013) 144 – 148

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

3rd World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance (WCPCG-2012)
**Approaching to Immigrant Families – The Scope of
Transgenerational and Culture Shock Model**

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In this study, we have referred to the educational model of culture shock, and the transgenerational model understanding of family systems. In methodological terms, we have combined quantitative and qualitative methods. In the qualitative part of the study, we used semi-structured interviews with members of two generations, and systematic observations of behaviour under natural conditions. For the purposes of the quantitative part of the research we used research battery which included general information about respondents, and quality of family interactions scale. The sample consists of 100 families from B&H currently living and working in the USA (St. Louis and Phoenix).

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu & Dr. Mukaddes Demirok, Near East University, Cyprus

Keywords: cultural shock, system approach, the perception of family relations, Bosnian immigrant's families;**Introduction**

During the past two decades, as a result of aggression and ethnic cleansing, a large number of Bosnians have fled Bosnia and found a chance for a new life in some of the countries of the EU, the USA or Australia. The dramatic shift in their life occurs in almost every aspect of family functioning, which seeks for systematic and occupational assistance. Experiencing culture shock is too often unpleasant (and unexpected) experience in which the individual simultaneously re-evaluate the old - a domestic, but also a new - a visiting culture. Until recently, researchers have suggested that cultural shock involves only negative experiences. The educational model describes the cultural shock as a process that takes place in several stages, which are developed and through which an individual passes, through at least five stages: "honeymoon" or the first contact stage, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and interdependent stage (Pedersen, 1995). In our previous research (Alić, Habibović, 2011) application of intercultural sensitivity scale enabled us to connect information about family circumstances with scores of the five factors of IC: cultural integration, behavior scale, intellectual interaction, attitudes toward others and the empathy scale. Analysis of all five subscales of intercultural sensitivity in relation to domination of pedagogical logic that parents use showed no statistically significant difference in the observed sample. The only, but insignificant difference was noticed within the subscales of cultural integration, where it was shown that those children whose parents more often use praises and encouragements to raise their children achieve higher scores compared to children whose parents use more bans and punishments. Next interesting fact, worth of additional consideration, lies in the fact that unlike the previous, children whose parents use the bans and punishments achieve a bit higher scores on a scale of attitudes towards others in relation to children whose parents used more praise and encouragements. We have tried

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doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.525

to supplement the findings from previous studies with the knowledge provided by the transgenerational model and system theory. System theory (according to Olson & DeFrain, 2003) developed from the general systems theory, which was originally used by family therapists after they had found that individual and isolated work with persons with disabilities does not provide lasting results, especially in cases of therapy with children with problem behavior. They noted that a large number of such children, after returning to the family and social environment, went back to the old ways of behavior. Such results have led them to think that the process of therapy must not only include but also incorporate into an understanding of the educational reality strategies of studying family and all other agents of socialization. In a more complex scheme, Bronfenbrenner (1997) will further elaborate circle of mutual influence, in which he/she responds to the environment, but also the environment reacts to him / her (taking into account the existence of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem). According to Bowen (1977, Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008), in the framework of family systems theory, we can talk about the following concepts and processes: family inputs and outputs, the process of transforming external stimuli when going through the family system - the rules of transformation, or the family rules, relation of morphostatic and morphogenetic system, which may cause specific dysfunction, protective family rings, family trauma (med. term originally), and reciprocal influences between the members (on the individual or micro level, level of family, and at the broader, social context). Systems theory will be of a particular importance for this study, not only due to the fact that in a very systematic way it combines the most important elements of previous theories, but also because of the settings that are extremely important for understanding of the transgenerational transfer of values in the family, as well as various external influences and resistance of a family to these effects, especially in the case of the observed, immigrant families.

Purpose of the study

Experience and research of this problem points to the fact that the social frame of reference, specific cultural traditions, but also specific (idiosyncratic) learned patterns and strategies to cope with the phenomenon of culture shock, may lead to different outputs, particularly important in the understanding of transgenerational model. The main purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of implementation of culture shock model within the family system approach, as the occupational functional assistance regarding immigrant families (Olson & DeFrain, 2003, Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008, Sue & Sue, 2008).

Methods

In our previous research (Alić, Habibović, 2011) we felt that the degree to overcome the culture shock towards other cultures can be established by examining the dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, and thus determine the relationships between the generations that represent the culture "in itself". In this study, in addition to the family observed in Phoenix (Arizona), we expanded the sample to families in St. Louis, and we placed a greater emphasis on measuring inner family functioning. To determine the extent to which the family is an appropriate system of structure and communication, we decided to use scales that allow the consideration of measuring and controlling emotions. So we opted for a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, use of semi-structured interviews with members of two generations, systematic observations of behaviour under natural conditions, on a sample of 100 families in the USA (St. Louis and Phoenix). For the purposes of the quantitative research was used the research battery which included the following scales: general information about respondents, KOBİ - scale, quality of family interactions (Vulić-Prtorić, 2000) with five sub-scales that measure: satisfaction with family (11 items), acceptance (father and mother), rejection (father - mother), perceptions of family relations scale with two dimensions: emotionality and control of both father and mother. For the purposes of this study we used KOBİ family satisfaction subscale consisting of 11 items, and the scales of perception of family relationships with 25 items for the father and 25 items for the mother. The author of the scale of general satisfaction with the family from KOBİ states the following psychometric characteristics of the subscales: the results range from 11 to 55, the arithmetic

mean 46.29, standard deviation (SD = 7.92), and Alpha Cronbach 0.892. In our study the arithmetic mean is 44.52, standard deviation (SD = 6.55), and Alpha Cronbach 0.746.

Observational and interview techniques were applied in observing and talking with parents (older generation), while the scale to measure the quality of family relations is applied only on a sample of children (younger generation). In this way we were able to compare the credibility of the parents, and children. The distribution of scores on the scale of satisfaction with the family and the scale of perception of family relationships is asymmetrical and we used the Mann-Whitney test in relation to the sex variable and place of residence. There were no differences between males and females in terms of assessment of the family, emotionality or control of father and mother. Differences in the mentioned variables were not found between any of the respondents from St. Louis and Arizona.

Findings and Results

When it comes to the general status and structure, in the observed pattern the most pervasive is two-generation families (76.7%), while three-generation families seem somewhat smaller in number (23.3%). On average, there are 4 persons in a family (parents and two children on average), which means that among the immigrant families of Bosniaks in the USA nuclear families dominate. Most respondents of younger generation attend primary school 73.3%, secondary school 18.3%, while 8.3% attend college. Of the total number of respondents, 88.3% of respondents stated that their parents encouraged them to education, 11.7% of them admitted that their parents either do not encourage them to education, or they never talk about it. The analysis of the specific testimony reveals:

- "For me, family is a source of comfort and joy," 23.3% of respondents said that they were not sure of the claim, 16.7% said that this is not true, which makes up almost half of respondents that do not perceive their own family as a source of comfort and satisfaction (cumulative 43.3%: not true at all, mostly not true and I'm not sure).
- "My family gets on my nerves" cumulative 36.7% (I'm not sure, mostly true and completely true).
- "When I grow up, and I have my family, in many ways it will be similar to my current family" cumulative (I'm not sure, mostly not true and not true at all) 73.3% disagreed with this statement.

This finding confirms that the current family is not seen by the younger generation as an adequate identification model. In other words, and referring to the Circumplex model of the family system (Olson & DeFrain, 2003), within the dimensions of adaptability and cohesion, an average family of Bosniaks in the USA leans to a mid-range balanced.

By comparing the testimony of parents and children we observed differences in estimating the functionality of the family. While parents feel that their family is structurally cohesive, children experienced their family more as structurally enmeshed and, moreover, a rigidly cohesive. It is obvious that parents are trying to build a structured family system in which stability will prevail in relation to the constant changes, while the children, due to secondary effects of socialization, recognize the importance of adequate coping with change. Bringing the established cultural practices of raising children from the culture of origin, the parents insist on a high closeness, loyalty, a number of joint activities and dependence, which does not correspond to the cultural software which can be programmed within the middle strata of society dominated by patterns of independence and accountability.

Overall satisfaction with the family, based on the cumulative scale of observation, indicate the scores that range between 29-55, the arithmetic mean was 44.52, which ultimately shows that the results are slightly below the expected average. This fact supports the thesis that certain dysfunctions were evident within the observed sample. Based on excerpts from the correlation matrix of the scale of perception of family relationships we have tried to determine the scores on two subscales: emotional dimensions and control (Table 1.). Within the observed sample we see that there is a correlation in estimating the emotionality of mother and father, which is significant at $p < 0.01$ (0.814), while there is a correlation in the perception of control of the mother and father (0.508), and these correlations were significant at $p < 0.05$. This means that there is a high correlation in the perception of strategies of father and mother with the dimensions of emotionality and control: both parents are equally involved in the control, but also in the process of establishing an emotional attachment (closeness and mutual closeness).

Total emotionality of mother was estimated on the mean and it is 35.95 which is below the expected average. In the case of the father the overall emotionality is 34.21, which is also below average. This indicates that in the observed pattern there is lower closeness and acceptance. These results can be attributed to the parental tendency to ensure the stability of the family system as opposed to the changes, which makes the family system structurally enmeshed, which is why children often resist structure, especially when the structure takes on the characteristics of rigidity (rigidly cohesive).

Table 1. Excerpts from the correlation matrix of the scale of perception of family relationships

		Dimension of emotionality - father	Dimension of control - father
Dimension of emotionality - Mother	Pearson Correlation	,814 ^(1**)	-,409
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,082
Dimension of control - Mother	Pearson Correlation	-,331	,508 ^(2*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,166	,026

Total control of the mother was estimated based on the mean and it is 19.16 which is above the expected average. In the case of the father the overall control is 17.32, which is also above the expected average. It is noted that both father and mother are above average in the dimension of control, but that the mother is more closely involved in the control of children than the father. Less emotionality and more control means more control procedures and increased criticism of the child, which could be attributed to earlier conclusions about the transmission of cultural software from the culture of origin. For future research it would be important to determine whether the employment of the father and mother are more criterion variables that affect these data.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Communication between generations of Bosnian immigrants in the USA is overloaded with doubts whether to assimilate or to acculturate into, so called, American culture. Adopting of value system is rather difficult psychological state in which immigrants have to choose appropriate strategies how to be the part of American society, but still preserve basic and core cultural elements of their own tradition. Children of immigrants are in some case in a better position to see strengths and weaknesses both of American and Bosnian culture than the origin Americans and Bosnians can do – they still have another culture (at home or at school, etc.) with which they compare. Being somehow in-between seems to be for most of Bosnian immigrants an advantage, since they have the opportunity to pick the better sides of living in American society. For those who come from functional families, who take an advantage of adaptability of the family system, it is much easier to adapt to society. It is obvious that being the part of majority provides speaking the English language, to achieve higher educational achievement, mobility in the job market, avoid discrimination, to prefer life style of the majority having in mind that life style reflect the taste and values of social status. Yet, in the same time the younger generations of Bosnian immigrants, at the contrary to their American peers, still experience the advantages of extended families, collectivism, and emotional kinship bands etc.

On the basis of these results, and respecting Transgenerational approach, we note that the key routes to help immigrant families (in this case Bosniaks in the USA) would include some examples of family therapy:

- The structural approach - interaction, the distribution of power, coalitions, the boundaries of systems and subsystems, aims to which the family is focused:

^{1**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

^{2*} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- The technique of changing symptoms;
- Changing the definition of the problem;
- The technique of focusing on a hypothesis;
- The technique focused on the feelings between family members;
- The technique of changing family structure;
- The creation or establishment of pre-existing, but incomplete boundaries between subsystems;
- The technique of changing the relationship;
- The technique to clarify lifestyle;
- Integration of the methods of Transaction analysis in the framework of the proposed structural approach:
 - Analysis of life scripts / scenarios taken from the home culture to the level of the individual and on the family level;
 - Analysis of games played by family members in the family, and the environment;
 - An analysis of the concept of injunctions and permissions taken from the home culture and their interaction with the injunctions and permissions in the current culture.

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