Social and Psychological Support of The Person During Adaptation in New Socio-Cultural Environment

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Abstract

The article addresses the problem of prevention of possible development of asocial, uncooperative behavior during interethnic communication, and negative changes of personality of repatriates during intercultural adaptation. The proposed article analyses the developed program of social and psychological support of repatriated students after primary diagnostics of their degree of adaptation. Secondary diagnostics proved the efficiency of applied psychological methods and technologies, ways of working with repatriates during intercultural adaptation. It was revealed that the process of psychological support of repatriates during intercultural adaptation promoted the formation of adequate self-esteem, higher level of emotional comfort of the immigrant, his confidence in own abilities, activated the need to develop social contacts and building partnerships, reduced the feeling of alienation, and created a feeling of belonging to the new social community.

1. Introduction

Adaptation of repatriates to the new socio-cultural environment largely depends on their own attitude to the country and its culture and the state of their own intimate and personal relationships (Berry, Annis, 1974). Especially at the beginning of adaptation, we observe the inconstancy of purpose, ease of conduct, and the lack of effort to perform group tasks and socio-cultural requirements, which builds the attitude of the society towards them. During intercultural adaptation we also observe the reduced resistance to difficulties, reduced self-control, conflict representations of the I-concepts, sensitivity to the social demands, and the growing sense of unfitness (Oberg, 1960). Therefore it is important to create conditions for adaptation of the repatriates to the new socio-cultural
environment, help them develop adequate self-esteem, so that they would accept themselves for who they are and see in themselves a lot more good than bad (Nalchajyan, 1988). An adequate self-esteem allows the person to normally respond to criticism knowing all the imperfections of the world; he does not fall into despair comparing himself with others. Such self-esteem helps living life to the full and enjoy each day.

Process of psychological support of the person in the process of intercultural adaptation helps building adequate self-esteem, raise the level of emotional comfort, self-confidence, activates the need for social contacts and building partnerships, reduces feelings of alienation, builds a feeling of belonging to a social community. Consequently, the properly organized work on support of repatriates in high school will not only contribute to the formation of self-esteem, effective intercultural adaptation, but also to the prevention of possible negative personal changes. Repatriated students are a special group of people characterized by the need to adapt to the changing conditions of life (social, ethnic, cultural, material, personal, and psychological). Adaptation is often characterized by deep stress that leads to the breakdown of positive protection available to young people. Such person need help and support from the neighborhood. The proposed solution includes introduction into the education process of a specially developed and tested model (Fig.1) of the process of formation of self-esteem of repatriated students during their intercultural adaptation in the educational environment of the university.

2. Research technique and methods

The subject of research were the repatriated students, total sample volume – 106 people. The longitudinal study was conducted in two stages: Slice 1 – the research of self-esteem of repatriated students of 1st and 2nd years of study (2010-2011), Slice 2 – the dynamics of self-esteem of repatriated students of the 2nd and 3rd years of study (2011-2012). The study was also attended by experts who were mainly the teachers and supervisors of student groups, members of the International Programs' Department. Fig.1 shows the set of actions promoting the formation of adequate self-esteem of the repatriate that determines the effectiveness of his intercultural adaptation at high school. The Model includes two main blocks: social and personal.

In our case we will focus on the analysis of the personal block as the main component of personality of the repatriate that determines his intercultural adaptation.

We highlight the following main strands of work:

1) need-motivational direction focused on the formation of skills to find the strength within yourself in difficult situations, taking responsibility for your own actions, decisions; forming the need to engage in interpersonal contacts with representatives of different cultures; the formation of skills to make a choice, the need for self-transformation and personal growth.

2) Tooling direction focused on the formation of skills to realize your feelings, the reasons for the behavior, consequences of actions, to build a life plan, i.e. formation of personal reflection; formation of skills that enable coping with unfulfilled expectations, with frustrating situations; understanding of coping strategies, the development of decision making skills.

3) Interactional-creative direction focused on improving of interethnic sensitivity and empathy, the emotional involvement in the situation and active engagement in the social environment, the educational group; the formation of social activity, the developing need for partnership with satisfactory social status in the group; the development of skills of constructive resolution of conflict situations (Zakharova, 1993; Zinchenko, 2005).

The proposed strands of work on formation of adequate self-esteem during interethnic adaptation in general determine the transformation of the very personality of the repatriate. In our Model, this is indicated by the personal block.
Figure 1. Model of formation of self-esteem as a factor of intercultural adaptation of repatriated students in the educational environment of the university

Various techniques, methods and technologies are used to implement the proposed Model of dealing with the repatriates (Table I).
Table 1. Psychological techniques, methods and technologies of working with repatriates to form their adequate self-esteem during their intercultural adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques, methods and technologies</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Expected outcome</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptational trainings</td>
<td>Required during 1st-2nd months of study. Purpose of such trainings: to increase the efficiency of adaptation to the new training conditions, socio-cultural conditions. Trainings are hold by teachers of the department with the assistance of graduate students and attended by the whole training group. During the trainings, the students get to know each other and the whole group, assign the group duties with the account of capacities and desires of all members of the group.</td>
<td>Formation of adequate idea of each group member in the group as a whole, reducing stress, familiarization with the new structure of education, rules, regulations. The adoption of each participant of the training as the group member, emotional support to each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling. Psychological trainings</td>
<td>Required during the whole academic year for students of all specialties regarding the emerging problems and difficulties they face. Constant duty in the consulting room allows the students to apply for psychological support at any time. The counseling is also provided in hostels at a stated time, where the students can discuss their problems or ask questions on issues of their interest. Issues for psychological trainings are proposed by the students and their teachers engaged in it, with a special focus on the formation of social competence of students. Trainings on formation of coping strategies aimed to give an idea of coping focused on solving the problem and regulation of one’s emotional status. The counseling and psychological trainings are provided by experienced teachers and students prepared for such activities.</td>
<td>Reduction of anxiety, increased social activity, the formation of social interaction, the readiness for expansion of social ties; self-confidence; critical view on the own behavior; readiness for self-transformation; focus on co-operation with the others; control over your own behavior, taking into account the social norms, the dominant roles in the group, a sense of belonging to a given social environment, acceptance of self and others, positive attitude to the surrounding space</td>
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<td>Role plays, modeling technique</td>
<td>Study of situations close to real conditions in of interaction of representatives of different cultures which emphasize the significant or most notional differences between the cultures. The selection of situations shall consider the stereotypes, differences in role expectations, custom features of verbal and non-verbal behavior. Orientation on common interaction during study and in extra-curricular conditions.</td>
<td>Effective adaptation of the person to the new socio-cultural conditions, increasing social activities, development of tolerance to frustrating situations, strengthening the social position of the individual, the adoption of the self as a participant in the educational process, acceptance of others as representatives of other cultures, partner type of relationship.</td>
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<td>Round tables, curatorial hours, university and department events</td>
<td>Hold by curators, teachers, Associate Dean for Educational Work. Round tables, talks required at the level of department, group to discuss main personal and interpersonal problems faced by the students. Topics culture of Kazakhstan and ethnic groups living in its territory shall be covered. Events aimed to increase interaction between students of different specialties (psychological marathons, thematic academic competitions, students’ primes, initiation of first-year students, etc.) determine the direction of cooperation and identification of repatriates to the new environment.</td>
<td>Emotional involvement of repatriates in the learning process, increasing the activity in the processing of various information materials; the formation of the concepts of intercultural relations, developing the ability to &quot;penetrate&quot; into cultural differences, understanding the causes of the behavior of each other</td>
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</table>

Implementation of the proposed Model shall result in reducing the negative manifestations during the intercultural adaptation and the creation of the psychological, emotional comfort for the repatriate’s personality. The longitudinal study included the study of the specifics of self-esteem of oralmans in the course of intercultural adaptation after the testing of the Model.
Table 2. Criteria, parameters of intercultural adaptation of oralmans and methods of diagnosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of intercultural adaptation</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Purpose of study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Components of self-esteem and levels of intercultural adaptation</td>
<td>Test</td>
<td>1) sociometric test by G. Moreno (Moreno, 1960)</td>
<td>Specifies of self-esteem, indicators of interpersonal relationships and adaptation of the individual to the new socio-cultural environment</td>
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<td>2) self-esteem test by Budassi (Budassi, 1971)</td>
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<td>3) questionnaire on personal adaptation to the new socio-cultural environment by L.V. Yankovsky (Sonin, 2004)</td>
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<td>Objective</td>
<td>Specifics of interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Expert review</td>
<td>Prepared scale for experts (Berekbussunova, 2013)</td>
<td>Socio-pedagogical aspect in the process of intercultural adaptation</td>
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</table>

3. Main findings

The Model of formation of self-esteem as a factor of intercultural adaptation was tested on students of the 1st and the 2nd years of study. The 2nd diagnostic slice allowed to judge the effectiveness of this Model for repatriates.

Implementation of the Program for the formation of self-esteem as a factor of intercultural adaptation in groups of students of the 1st and the 2nd years of study caused significant changes in the socio-psychological manifestations of their self-esteem.

From our point of view, significant changes have occurred in connection with the conducted work, especially during training sessions devoted to the establishment of interpersonal contacts in the new socio-cultural environment, which considered the cross-cultural differences in the relationship and where the situation were played, which allowed to transfer this knowledge into the new situations in everyday life, in practice.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of sociometric status of repatriated students in their student groups before and after the Program

Before implementation of the Program, some repatriates in the 1st year of study had the “outcaste” status. At the 2nd year of study, 6.9% of repatriates had such status. Besides, before the Program at the 2nd year of study there were some repatriates with the “isolated” status. After the Program, these categories were not presented.

To affirmatively say that the proposed Program really affects the change of status of the repatriate in the group, we used φ*-Fisher criterion ($φ^* = 1.64(p<0.05), 2.31(p<0.01))$.

Statistical analysis of the data suggests that the presented Program on the formation of self-esteem as a factor increases of intercultural adaptation the sociometric status repatriated students in the group thus increasing their satisfaction with their position, building confidence in themselves, forming positive attitude towards the others.

Let’s see how our Program influenced the socio-psychological manifestations of self-esteem and the self-esteem of repatriates in general.
Common activity of students and teachers in the implementation of the proposed Program showed that the level of self-esteem suffered significant changes, namely: at the 1st year of study, level of low self-esteem reduced from 20.8 to 12.5%, which indicates that after the conducted adaptation and supporting events on intercultural adaptation the repatriated students have come to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. The students gained confidence in themselves, they are showing the relevant knowledge in the interaction process. Self-confidence allows the repatriates to adjust the level of aspiration and correctly assess their own capabilities as applied to various situations in life. During interaction, they show decisiveness, strength and ability to find and make logical decisions, and implement them consistently.

After the Program, the repatriates became critical of the admitted mistakes, analyzing their causes, in order not to repeat them again. The same picture was at the 2nd year of study, that is, the self-esteem reached an adequate level.

According to the results of statistical data, we can say that the specially developed Program of psychological support of repatriates during their intercultural adaptation will ensure successful adaptation, thereby preventing a variety of personal and interpersonal problems.

Last stage of the analysis of results (Fig. 4) was the study of levels and types of intercultural adaptation using the “Questionnaire of personal adaptation to the new socio-cultural environment” by Yankovsky.
The results after the completion of the Program contributed to the following conclusions:
- adaptive and conformal type of adaptation has become the dominant type in 1st year students, that is, figures for these types decreased in the manifestation of negativity from 43% to 8.3 – for adaptive type, from 25% to 8.3 – for conformal type. Therefore, after the first year students conducted work are characterized by personal satisfaction, positive attitude towards others and acceptance of others, feel physically and socially protected, have a sense of belonging to a group, and society as a whole; they show willingness to self-realization, confidence in relationships with others, are active both in training activities and in social and public life of the university / group;
- the level of alienation reduced from 18.3% to 4.1. This result indicates a positive attitude toward yourself, a self-esteem based on consistency of the aspiration and the actual capabilities; the repatriates are sure their efforts can significantly influence the situation. While before the Program the repatriated students of the first year felt abandoned and impatient, after the Program such feelings were not recorded. The same refers to the level of nostalgia. The repatriates do not feel a loss of connection with the culture, the internal disorder and confusion. This could be influenced by the actions aimed to maintain the traditions and values of different cultures, keeping them informed about the intercultural specifics of interaction;
- After the Program, the repatriated second-year students are characterized by personal satisfaction, positive attitude towards others and acceptance of others, feel physically and socially protected, have a sense of belonging to a group, and society as a whole; they show willingness to self-realization, confidence in relationships with others, are active both in training activities and in social and public life of the university / group; they plan their future based on their own capabilities. They are characterized by an active entry into the new environment, the wish to expand the new social contacts; there appears a critical view on own behavior, reflection and self-reflection, focus on cooperation, the need for affection and emotional relationships with people whom the repatriates contact every day, that is, with their group members and other social neighbors. As well as the first year students, they show a reducing rejection of self and others from 15.8% to 4.1, that is, their self-esteem grows (when it was low or undervalued); they show consistency of their aspiration and capabilities, confidence in the ability to satisfy their own needs. Similar picture, namely, the decrease of negative results in the Slice 1 and the increase of positive results, is valid for all scales.

Therefore, to affirmatively state that the Program is yielding results and really forms an adequate self-esteem, we checked the results by $\varphi$ * Fisher criterion.

Thus, our statistical analysis of the data suggests that the process of psychological support of repatriates during their intercultural adaptation helps forming adequate self-esteem, increasing the level of emotional comfort of the repatriate, his confidence in own abilities; it activates the need to develop social contacts and building partnerships, reduces feelings of alienation, builds a feeling of belonging to a social community where the repatriate is.

Then comes the analysis of results received from expert evaluation after testing of the Program (Fig. 5) done by the teachers and curators of student groups, employees of the International Programs’ Department.

![Figure 5. Results of expert evaluation of diagnostic slices 1 & 2 of the first year students](image-url)
From the experts' point of view, after testing the Program the repatriated students of the 1st year of study changed their self-esteem at the 2nd year of study. Most changes were detected in motivational background and communicative performance. Level of intellectual and cognitive, emotional and volitional indicators has not undergone major changes. From the experts' point of view, the repatriated students experienced the changes relating, first of all, to their working capacity, initiative, confidence, sociability and cooperation.

After the implementation of the Program for the formation of self-esteem for the second year students (Fig. 6), the changes occurred primarily in the field of communication, with the qualitative changes in terms of confidence, sociability and cooperation.

![Figure 6. Results of expert evaluation of diagnostic slices 1 & 2 of the second year students](image)

Thus, from the point of view experts after the implementation of the Program the repatriated students experienced the largest changes in the motivational and communicative spheres, which undoubtedly contributes to the manifestation of intercultural adaptation in the social and educational environment of the university.

4. Conclusions

Based on the results of the conducted study, we claim that the proposed Program for the formation of self-esteem as a factor of intercultural adaptation increases the sociometric status of repatriates in the group, increases their satisfaction with their position, brings confidence in themselves, helps forming positive attitude towards others. After the conducted adaptational and supporting actions on intercultural adaptation, the repatriated students have come to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. The students gained confidence in themselves, they are showing the relevant knowledge in the interaction process. Self-confidence allows the repatriates to adjust the level of aspiration and correctly assess their own capabilities as applied to various situations in life. During interaction, they show decisiveness, strength and ability to find and make logical decisions, and implement them consistently.

Properly organized work on support of repatriates in high school will not only contribute to the formation of self-esteem, effective intercultural adaptation, but also to the prevention of all possible manifestations of asocial, conflict behavior during interaction of all the participants of this process, and of negative personal changes. Besides, this Program can be applied not only to the repatriated students, but to all participants of international programs (student swap).

References


Budassi, S. A. (1971). Way to explore the quantitative characteristics of the individual in the group. *Questions of psychology, 3*, 138-143.


