Reflection, Self-Actualization and Creativity Peculiarities of Socio and Psychologically Maladjusted Students

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The relevance of the study is conditioned by the fact that first-year students find themselves in a completely new and unusual for them social conditions, and very often, the process of adaptation to them is not easy. Socio-psychological maladjustment of first-year students is a complex socio-psychological process. In addition, having entered the University, they find themselves in completely new and unusual for them social conditions, and very often, the process of adaptation to them is unconstructive. It is important for teachers and psychologists not only to create conditions for the effective development of the adaptive potential of the student's personality, but also the conditions for changing the negative personal characteristics that can cause students dis-adaptation and hinder the effective process of their professionalization and socialization in the future. The article aims to study the features of reflection, self-actualization and creativity of first-year students associated with their socio-psychological maladjustment. Methodology: The leading theoretical method for the study of this problem is the content analysis of scientific works related to the problem of research, allowing a comprehensive analysis of the factors associated with the problem of socio-psychological maladjustment of first-year students. Empirical methods were the study conducting using valid diagnostic techniques corresponding to the purpose of the study, statistical analysis and generalization of the results. Results: The article presents the results of an empirical study of the features of reflection, self-actualization and creativity in socially and psychologically dis-adaptive first-year students at the University. It is established that the socio-psychological maladjustment of first-year students can be caused by various factors at the physiological, social and psychological level. Applications of this study: The materials of the article are of practical value for the development of psychological and pedagogical programs aimed at increasing the adaptive potential of students in the process of studying at the University. Novelty/Originality of this study: One of the main factors contributing to the appearance of the socio-psychological maladjustment is the lack of constructive systemic reflection, values, skills and aspirations of the self-actualizing personality, as well as personal and social creativity, motivation for self-improvement, self-realization and self-development, skills of setting and achieving goals, understanding life prospects and the ability to adequately and creatively behave in a situation of uncertainty in social interaction.

Keywords: socio-psychological adaptation, socio-psychological maladjustment, reflection, self-actualization, creativity, first-year students, University students.

1 Introduction

First-year students are at the stage of transition from adolescence to youth, which in itself is a complex socio-psychological process. In addition, having entered the University, they find themselves in completely new and unusual for them social conditions, and very often, the process of adaptation to them is not easy. Socio-psychological maladjustment at the first stage of higher education can cause various mental disorders, including intellectual and cognitive processes, problems in interpersonal communication (2,7,10,25), deviant behavior, psychosomatic diseases, stress or depression, in the worst case, can cause suicide.
One of the most important activities of teachers and psychologists of higher education in modern conditions is the adaptation of students to the educational and professional environment, their personal and professional development, the formation of not only occupational knowledge and skills, but also those that will contribute to the successful social and labor life activity, construct the foundations of professionalism. At the same time, it is necessary not only to create conditions for the effective development of the adaptive potential of the student's personality, but also conditions for changing the negative personal characteristics that can interfere with the effective process of professionalization and socialization of students in the future.

There are several approaches to understanding the socio-psychological maladjustment in modern social psychology:
- It is a process that is not associated with any pathologies, the cause of which is the situation of withdrawal from certain habitual conditions of life activity and getting used to new ones;
- This is a process due to the interaction of the individual with the social environment, in which there is no proper coordination of its participants’ expectations;
- It is a state characterized by internal dissonance, the cause of which is the internal conflict between the attitudes of the individual and his/her specific life experience (27).

Socio-psychological maladjustment is such a violation of the interaction in the system personality – environment, in which the processes of the individual’s adaptation to life activity in society, providing a harmonious combination of the requirements of society and needs, motives, interests of the individual, become difficult or inadequate. There is misalignment of attitude to the world and Outlook of a personality with social values, norms and traditions, the weakening or loss of social ties in the system personality – social institution, resulting in the displacement from a situation of personal development, the status of psychological isolation in interpersonal and social relationships, loss of a sense of belonging to society take place (4).

One of the important means of regulation of adaptation processes of students is reflection, aimed at understanding both the transformations of the outside world, and intrapersonal transformations due to changes in the social environment, including education (12,17, 25).

Reflection as a property of the human psyche particularly actively develops at the youthful stage of its formation, which includes the period of higher education. Reflection of the personality is a poly-processing formation, which is based on cognitive processes aimed at the inner world. They are determined by the peculiarities of cognition, rethinking and designing by the personality of his/her activity, place in it and image as a subject of activity (26). Reflection in the formation of personality is a realized, experienced, unique system of ideas about yourself, on the basis of which the process of interaction with others and the regulation of their own behavior and activities takes place (8,11,23).

A number of researchers note that reflection plays a dual role in the process of adaptation of students to the educational environment of the University. Such mechanisms of reflection as mental repetition and emotionally positive reinforcement of actions, clarity of reflective images in the operational response to situational changes and the creation of stable motivation contribute to the effective socio-psychological adaptation of students. A reflection activated from the outside, its excessive saturation, excessive mobility, or, conversely, the stability of reflective images prevent the establishment of a harmonious combination of the educational environment’s requirements and the needs and capabilities of the student, which contributes to the development of maladaptation (13,20,21).

However, reflection, being a process of understanding, determines the attitude of the individual to both the external and internal world, acts as a special property that expresses consciousness and self-consciousness, the condition of the individual’s existence in society, the process and the result of a complex of self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-esteem, the basis of the uniqueness and originality of the individual, realized through his/her self-realization and self-actualization. It is reflection that contributes to self-improvement, self-realization, self-disclosure of the individual, taking into account all external and internal conditions for personification and awareness of the meaning of life. With the help of reflection, a person analyzes, predicts, corrects, regulates his/her behavior and is able to build it in the most effective way. It is the features of reflection that allow a person to reveal his/her adaptive potential, regulate and transform it, successfully adapting to changing social conditions (3).

Reflection is the basis of the individual’s self-actualization, as for the effective realization of oneself in life, meaningfulness, thoughtfulness of actions, a clear awareness of one's goals and capabilities are necessary. Reflection acts as a mechanism for building both the goals themselves and the behavior focused on their achievement. For self-realization and self-improvement, for successful and effective socio-psychological adaptation and socialization, a person should be able to adequately use his/her ability to reflect and apply the information obtained with its help (1,2).

Self-actualization is a fundamental property of a psychologically healthy, socially and psychologically adapted personality, which seeks to fully realize its potential, self-develop, maintain and maximize its best features. As a process, self-actualization implies a personal choice in favor of personal development based on a well-established system of values, deep reflection and an adequate image of one's self (29).

Self-actualization is the desire of the individual to find, develop and realize his/her abilities, talents and opportunities as fully as possible, and is an integrative characteristic that involves the formation of a multi-faceted personality in the process of education and upbringing and provides for the presence of appropriate socializing conditions (19).

Activity associated with the self-actualization of the individual, makes it possible to consider a person as a subject of activity, having the ability to choose, understand and do it with appropriate adequacy. This activity consists in the cognition and interpretation of the perceived external and internal world. The expansion of the possibility of interpretation, understanding, awareness and acquisition of new skills of social interaction for successful adaptation in society is impossible without the use of creative abilities, creativity of the individual in this activity (28).

Reflection is also a necessary condition for the transition of creative activity from the level of the unconscious to the level of awareness. This process transforms any activity, including creative one, which becomes possible by changing individual behaviors and bringing the real idea of oneself
closer to the ideal one. Creative potential (creativity) of a person is a complex of unique abilities that allow generating new ideas and creating new products. This is the ability to make non-standard effective decisions based on the analysis of available information, to go beyond stereotypes, to adapt and self-realize (24).

In Russian psychology and pedagogy creativity is considered as the inherent ability of the individual to create, implemented in appropriate conditions, as the ability to create new concepts and the formation of new skills, as an internal tendency to search-transformative attitude of the individual to the surrounding reality, manifested through the search-transformative activity, as the unconscious creative ability of the individual to generate a variety of models of the world and as a willingness to effectively realize their abilities (14).

Creativity performs a positive function in people's lives. At the level of interpersonal communication, it helps to solve the problems of relations with other people. In economic terms, creativity helps to improve labor efficiency, create new innovative financially profitable products and services, and ways to implement them, adapt to the ever-changing market conditions. At the social level, it meets the need for new views and solutions to maintain social balance, to find effective answers to the challenges of the changing political and social situation in its society and in the world as a whole (16).

Social creativity is understood as a complex of personal qualities that allows solving the problem situations of social (interpersonal) interaction in an original and constructive way. Social creativity combines into a single system motivational, communicative, intellectual, emotional and existential parameters that are separate units of personality characteristics and have their own value in interpersonal interaction, and the level of formation of each of these personality parameters determines the degree of development of social creativity (15).

2 Research Methodology
2.1 Theoretical Methods
The theoretical method of research, which allows a comprehensive review of the degree of this problem’s development and identify the main approaches to its understanding and the factors that represent the target for the correction of socio-psychological maladjustment in the student environment, especially in the first year of study, is the content analysis of scientific works related to the problem of socio-psychological adaptation and criteria that determine its characteristics at the personal-reflective and cognitive-creative level.

2.2 Empirical Methods
We conducted an empirical study aimed at studying the personality-reflective and creative features of students with different levels of social and psychological adaptation using the following techniques:

- To determine the groups of students with different levels of socio-psychological adaptation, we used the method of diagnosis of socio-psychological adaptation of K. Rogers and R. Diamond (9);
- the questionnaire Differential type of reflexing developed by D.A. Leontiev and E.N. Osin (2014) was used to study the features of reflexing (18);
- To study the characteristics of self-actualization the technique for diagnostics of self-actualization of A.V. Lazukin adapted by N.F. Kalin was used (9);
- To study the peculiarities of personal and social creativity the technique for diagnostics of personal creativity developed by E.E. Tunik (9) and the method of determining the personality’s social creativity of A.V. Batarsehev (2005) was used (6).

In total, the study involved 274 first-year students studying at universities of Kazan, both in humanitarian and technical specialties, including 153 girls and 121 young men.

According to the results of the study, a low level of social and psychological adaptation was found among 30.19% of students, the average level – among 33.96%, and high – among 35.85% of students, therefore, we can say that a third of first-year students are socially and psychologically maladapted.

3 Results and Discussion
3.1 First-Year Students’ Features of Reflexing with Different Levels of Social and Psychological Adaptation
The study results of reflexing features among socially-psychologically maladapted and adapted first-year students on the questionnaire Differential type of reflexion are presented in table 1.

As can be seen from the table, students with a low level of socio-psychological adaptation have significantly lower indicators of system reflexing, which is a constructive kind of reflexing, is the ability to perceive the situation of social interaction in a complex, taking into account the position of the subject of interaction, and the position of the object of interaction. It can be said that such students, compared with successfully socially-psychologically adapted students, have a much weaker ability to look at themselves from the outside, to distance themselves from their own feelings, thoughts, decisions, actions and adequately relate to other people and to themselves in order to know themselves and work with their inner world. In any situation, they are not able to fully see one of its most important elements – themselves, which leads to difficulties and failures in solving existential problems.

Socially-psychologically maladapted students have significantly higher indicators of such an unconstructive type of reflexing as quasi-reflexing that is, a tendency to reasoning on abstract topics, resonant speculation and groundless fantasies.

Table 1: The severity of development level of types of personality’s reflexing among first-year students with different levels of socio-psychological adaptation (average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Low level</th>
<th>Average level</th>
<th>High level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System reflexing*</td>
<td>28,40</td>
<td>34,57</td>
<td>40,38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introspection</td>
<td>23,36</td>
<td>22,03</td>
<td>25,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-reflexing*</td>
<td>29,44</td>
<td>26,67</td>
<td>18,94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * - a significant difference is established between the average indicators (student’s T-test) between the indicators of students with low and high level of socio-psychological adaptation (p=0.05).
This, most often, is a way of psychological protection – avoiding, avoiding the problem situation, in which there is no focus on its real, effective resolution.

According to the level of formation of another non-constructive type of reflexing – introspection –, there were no significant differences between socially-psychologically maladapted and adapted students. Therefore, they are approximately equally have tendency to focus on internal cognitive, emotional and other mental processes and States, which allows them to obtain material for self-understanding, self-knowledge, but can rarely become a real new knowledge about themselves.

3.2 Features of Self-Actualization among First-Year Students with Different Level of Social and Psychological Adaptation

The study results of the features of self-actualization among socially-psychologically maladapted and adapted first-year students by the method of diagnosis of personality self-actualization are presented in table 2.

The data obtained indicate that socially and psychologically maladapted first-year students have significantly weaker characteristics of self-actualizing personality, such as values, the need for knowledge, creativity, autonomy, self-understanding and flexibility in communication, and such characteristics as spontaneity are more pronounced.

Thus, we can say that socially-psychologically maladapted students studying in the first year of higher education, to a much lesser extent share the values inherent in self-actualizing personality and associated with good, truth, beauty, integrity, uniqueness, perfection, achievements, self-sufficiency, justice, order, the presence of which is the basis of the harmonious existence and activity of the individual in society.

Dis-adapted first-year students tend to avoid new experiences, they have a weaker ability to social cognition, weakened interest in subjects and phenomena that are not directly related to the satisfaction of their actual needs, desires and drives, and they do not appreciate enough what they have. They have difficult self-actualization, as poorly such its mandatory attribute as a creative attitude to life or creativity is developed. Poorly formed desire and ability to autonomy in maladapted students indicate violations of the integrity and completeness of their personality, lack of ability to self-support, weakness of internal locus control, dependence on other people or external circumstances, the prevalence of negative freedom from... over positive freedom for ....

Socially-psychologically dis-adapted first-year students are characterized by insensitivity to their own needs and desires, misunderstanding them, a tendency to substitute their priorities and assessments with external social standards, self-doubt, and orientation to the opinions of other people.

Such students have difficulties in establishing friendly and strong interpersonal relationships, for adequate self-expression in society. They are prone to manipulative or insincere communication, rigid, are not sure that communication with them is interesting and brings pleasure to others that they are attractive to those with whom they communicate.

They are more prone to commit rash, sometimes irresponsible, actions, to rash communicative reactions caused by momentary emotions and desires, which also prevents their successful self-actualization in society and good socio-psychological adaptation.

3.3 Features of Personal and Social Creativity of First-Year Students with Different Level of Social and psychological adaptation

The study results of personal creativity features among socially-psychologically maladapted and adapted first-year students by the method of diagnosis of personal creativity are presented in table 3.

The results of the study suggest that socially-psychologically maladapted first-year students have more pronounced characteristics of personal creativity, such as risk appetite, less developed complexity and personal creativity in General. They are prone to risky actions that are not justified by the conditions of the current situation, or the possibility of obtaining a positive effect in the future, to defend the point of view that they consider their own, by any means, are not able to sufficiently analyze the causes and consequences of their actions. They are less focused on deep knowledge of various phenomena than adapted students, they are less interested in complex objects and ideas, difficult tasks cause a negative reaction in them and do not cause a desire to solve them, and if their solution is necessary, they try to use outside help. They are not persistent in achieving their goals and strive to fulfill their desires, satisfy their needs and solve their problems in the easiest way.

As for personal creativity as an integral characteristic, according to the results of the study, it can be concluded that this characteristic among first-year students with a low level of social and psychological adaptation is significantly weaker than that of successfully adapted students. They are characterized by a low level of creativity, that is, they cannot at the proper level to perceive and generate non-standard ideas, to solve complex problems and problem situations in non-traditional way, go beyond traditional thinking schemes, and create innovative products in the process of their activities. The results of the study of social creativity features among socially-psychologically maladapted and adapted first-year students by the method of determining the social creativity of the individual are presented in table 4.

The table shows that the social creativity of students with a low level of social and psychological adaptation is also significantly less developed than that of students with a high level. That is, they are less able to find creative, non-standard approaches to solving various social problems, to identifying and solving complex problems of social life. They are less characterized by the ability to dynamically and flexibly behave in interpersonal interaction; they often experience situational tension in the situation of social interaction. We can say that dis-adapted first-year students have less social competence, less developed social intelligence, social thinking and imagination as cognitive components of social creativity. They observed a weaker development of supra-situation activity, active social cognition, and search for a new experience in terms of social reality, the ability to transgressive actions, expanding and changing personal social space as personal bases of a behavioral component of social creativity. If we talk about the personal basis of the affective component of social creativity, such students are characterized by a reduced interest in the social world, non-creative, convergent and weakly emotionally colored attitude to it.
Table 2: The intensity of personality self-actualization among first-year students with different levels of social and psychological adaptation (average values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Low level</th>
<th>Average level</th>
<th>High level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation in time</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values*</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A look at human nature</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>7.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need for cognition*</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>12.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity *</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>11.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy*</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>12.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneity*</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>7.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-understanding*</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>9.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sympathy</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>8.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact character</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>10.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility in communication*</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * - a significant difference is established between the average indicators (student’s T-test) between the indicators of students with low and high level of socio-psychological adaptation (p=0.05).

Table 3: The severity of personal creativity degree among first-year students with different levels of social and psychological adaptation (average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Low level</th>
<th>Average level</th>
<th>High level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>16.45</td>
<td>17.83</td>
<td>18.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>16.06</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>14.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity*</td>
<td>14.87</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>19.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to risk*</td>
<td>18.87</td>
<td>17.02</td>
<td>15.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity*</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>16.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * - a significant difference is established between the average indicators (student’s T-test) between the indicators of students with low and high level of socio-psychological adaptation (p=0.05).

Table 4: The severity of social creativity degree of the individual among first-year students with different levels of social and psychological adaptation (average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social creativity*</th>
<th>Low level</th>
<th>Average level</th>
<th>High level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.35</td>
<td>86.84</td>
<td>118.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * - a significant difference is established between the average indicators (student’s T-test) between the indicators of students with low and high level of socio-psychological adaptation (p=0.05).

The motivational component of social creativity is characterized by the lack of a clearly expressed desire to improve themselves, self-actualize and develop as a person. The existential component is characterized by a lack of clear life goals, meaningfulness and awareness of life, a sense of life prospects and weak authenticity of the individual. Socially-psychologically dis-adapted first-year students feel very uncomfortable in situations of uncertainty, which are unpredictable and activities in which are carried out in incomplete and contradictory conditions, which is typical for most situations of social interaction.

4 Conclusion

The study relevance of the features of reflection, self-actualization and creativity among first-year students with socio-psychological maladaptation is due to the fact that the first year of study at the University is a difficult transition period from adolescence to youth and maladaptation at this stage can cause various mental disorders, including intellectual and cognitive processes, problems in interpersonal communication, deviant behavior, psychosomatic diseases, stress or depression, in the worst case can cause suicide. It is important to study all the necessary targets to improve the adaptive capacity of students in the first year of study to improve their socio-psychological adaptation, professionalization and socialization.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature on the research topic, we concluded that the socio-psychological maladjustment of students at the first stage of study at the University is an integrative process that can be caused by:
- At the physiological level – deviations of mental development and neuropsychiatric diseases, the causes of which are functional-organic lesions of the Central nervous system;
- On a psychological level – the mental and psychological changes during the transition from the adolescent stage of personality development to youth, as well as the individual characteristics of the development of the psyche, such as accentuation of character, peculiarities of emotional-volitional, cognitive, and motivational processes;
- At the social level – the difficulties of adaptation to the new social environment of the University and to the new social role of the student, possible deformations of value orientations, moral and ethical standards, a tendency to deviant behavior that arose at an earlier stage of personal development.

Theoretical analysis of scientific research has led to the conclusion that one of the important factors determining the
success or failure of socio-psychological adaptation, being adapted or maladaptation of the individual, are the features of reflexing, self-actualization and creativity.

Empirical research has shown that to increase the level of socio-psychological adaptation of maladapted first-year students, it is necessary in psychological and pedagogical activity to focus on changing such features of their reflection as the formation of skills of constructive systemic reflection, increasing the ability to perceive any complex situation of social interaction, both from the perspective of the subject and the object of interaction. It is important to reduce the tendency to reasoning on abstract topics and unfounded fantasies instead of focusing on the real, effective resolution of problem situations, to teach them to look at the situation and themselves in it from the outside, to adequately relate to other people and to themselves in order to know themselves and work with their inner world.

In the aspect of self-actualization, it is necessary to instill in socially-psychologically maladapted first-year students the values inherent in the self-actualizing personality, the presence of which is the basis of the harmonious existence and activity of the individual in society. It is necessary to form their interest and ability to social knowledge, to autonomy in thinking, behavior and activities, to an adequate understanding of their own needs and priorities, to adequate self-expression and building friendly and strong interpersonal relationships, to commit deliberate actions and appropriate emotional and communicative response in any situation.

As for creativity, in order to improve the socio-psychological adaptation of first-year students, it is important to develop their creative abilities, the ability to non-standard solutions to various problems and the generation of innovative ideas, go beyond traditional thinking schemes. It is necessary to build up their social competence, social intelligence, social thinking and imagination, supra-situation activity, social cognition, and increase their interest in social world and to develop divergent emotional attitude. In addition, it is necessary to form a stable motivation for self-improvement, self-realization and self-development, skills of setting and achieving goals, understanding of life prospects and the ability to adequately and creatively behave in a situation of uncertainty in social interaction.

The study of psychological characteristics of maladjusted students in the first year of study is necessary to improve the efficiency of university educational and socializing activities, building effective and constructive trajectories of their socio-psychological adaptation. The materials of the article can be useful for psychologists, University teachers, curators of student groups and are of practical importance for the development of psychological and pedagogical programs aimed at improving the students’ adaptive capacity in the process of studying at the University.

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