

Thinking Style is a Factor of Socio-Psychological Adaptation at Youthful Age

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Abstract-This work reveals the relevance to study the problem of dependence of socio-psychological adaptation on subjective factors. Special attention is paid to the consideration of the correlation between individual and typological features of thinking and successfulness in socio-psychological adaptation of a person in the student age.

To implement the empirical tasks we organized and conducted the research, using the complex of methods aimed at the study of the correlation between successfulness of socio-psychological adaptation of students and thinking styles. The first-year students at the age of 17-18 years participated in this research.

The results, obtained in the research and proved by the methods of mathematical statistics, have let us state that the more developed students' thinking, the more they can take into account their own experience (pragmatic type of thinking) and subjective social factors (idealistic type of thinking) in solving problems and the higher the level of their socio-psychological adaptation.

Keywords-mindset, thinking style, socio-psychological adaptation, student age, youthful age

I. INTRODUCTION

Active social economic transformations and rapid IT development of the society give rise to the new demands to the individual professionalization. The modern society needs the people, able not only coexist with the environment, but also to unlock their inner potential in it. However, the most of modern young people struggle with self-development in conditions of changing reality. The level of their future professional activity depends on how successful their socio-psychological adaptation is.

The main social requirement in any higher educational institution is the orientation of education not only to the students' acquisition of certain professional knowledge, but also on developing their personality, their cognitive and creative abilities, on the successful socialization and on the active adaptation of students in the society.

One promising approach to the comprehensive study of an individual is the concept of adaptation. Adaptation in psychology is understood as the process of accommodation and active interaction of an individual with the environment, which is carried out at the biological, psychological and

social levels, which largely determines the degree of individual adaptation [1, p. 39].

Adaptation is considered from several perspectives: (a) as "the state of interrelationships of an individual and a group, when an individual without long-term external and internal conflicts productively performs his leading activity, satisfies his sociogenic needs, makes concessions to those role expectations that the reference group demands from him, and experiences a state of self-affirmation" [2, p. 46]; and (b) as a result of successful socio-psychological individual adaptation [3, 4]. In turn, socio-psychological adaptation, according to G. Allport and A. Maslow, is a complex dynamical process of interaction between an individual and a social environment, which leads to an optimal balance between the values of the individual and the environment [5, 6].

In the process of socio-psychological adaptation to new conditions, knowledge and skills play a significantly smaller role than some intellectual features of a person [7, p. 212].

Adaptability as a result of the process of socio-psychological adaptation also implies the presence of individual characteristics that allow individuals to resolve problem situations quickly and adequately, normalizing their interaction with the environment (A.A. Nalchadjyan) [2]. Traditionally, adaptive qualities are interpreted in the context of individual traits: personal dispositions (G.W. Allport) [5], attitudes (D.N. Uznadze) [8], character traits (R.B. Cattell) [9] or in the context of effective behavior and skills: skills of interaction with the environment and behavior strategies (R. Lazarus) [10]. At the same time, it is the peculiarities of thinking, which consist in the ability to change the strategies of intellectual activity depending on the tasks in hand, can have a significant impact on successfulness of socio-psychological adaptation of an individual.

Therefore, the study of the types and styles of thinking that affect the level of socio-psychological adaptation of students is a rather topical issue related to the tasks of the subsequent professional development of young people.

M.A. Kholodnaya believes that thinking is an indirect and generalized reflection of the essential characteristics of reality based on its analysis and synthesis (in a broad sense), the process of solving and setting tasks (in a restricted sense). Thinking is one of the forms of manifestation of intelligence

[11, p. 67]. According to C.G. Jung, the level of development of certain types of thinking depends on the individual and personal characteristics, which are especially manifested in individual thinking styles [12].

The style of thinking is a typical system of intellectual strategies, techniques, skills and operations for a particular person, which he mainly uses in the processes of mental activity [13]. This system is formed in childhood and based on both the individual and personal characteristics of a man and his social and professional experience. The thinking style is reflected on the statement of problems (their depth, width), the ways of solving them, and the behavior of a person in everyday life [14].

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that in modern psychology there is adopted and prevailing the following somewhat conventional classification of thinking types on such various grounds as: development genesis, nature of tasks, degree of development, degree of novelty and originality, means of thinking, thinking functions, etc. In the process of thinking the solution of problems occurs with the help of diverse operations, such as comparison, analysis, synthesis, abstraction and generalization. Individual peculiarities of a person's thinking are manifested in the styles of thinking, age-related and individual features of a person are manifested in thinking.

A.N. Leontiev emphasized that thinking cannot arise and develop outside the social sphere with its processes of professional and interpersonal interaction of people, outside communication and culture. Moreover, internal (mental) activity is a derivative of external, practical, behavioral activity and has much in common with it (the presence of activity elements, the possibility of including external elements of activity into the internal and vice versa) [15, p. 267].

The views of neo-behavior psychologists (A. Bandura and R. Walters) also point to the connection of mental functions and successfulness of personal adaptation. According to the representatives of this direction, one of the ways of forming more adaptive behavioral reactions is the substitution reinforcement, i.e. the behavior underlying successful adaptation. Through such behavior, cognitive-evaluative formations are developed, which are directly related to the peculiarities of the subject and his interaction with the surrounding social environment [16].

Also an appealing approach to study adaptation is that in the framework of cognitive psychology (J. Carlsmith, L. Festinger). This approach operates with the concept of information interaction of the individual with the environment, while the emphasis is placed on the active role of the adaptant. This means that if there is a mismatch between the content component of the belief and the image of

the real situation in the process of personal adaptation, then this discrepancy (or cognitive dissonance) is experienced by the subject as a state of discomfort, which, in turn, stimulates the individual to look for opportunities to remove or reduce this cognitive dissonance [17, 18].

Relying on a theoretical analysis of conditionalism of socio-psychological adaptation by various factors, especially including mentality, the study of how the individual-typological factors of thinking influence on successfulness of individual psychological adaptation in the socially active age period seems to be on-time.

II. PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHODS

In order to study the correlation of individual characteristics of types and styles of thinking in the structure of socio-psychological adaptation of students, we conducted an empirical study, the hypothesis of which was an assumption that there is a relationship between peculiarities of thinking and socio-psychological adaptation of students: the more the thinking of students is developed, the more the students are able to take into account their experience (pragmatic type of thinking), subjective and social factors (idealistic type of thinking) in solving problems, the higher the level of their socio-psychological adaptation.

The study involved the first year students at the age of 17-18 years. The total sample number was 50 people.

To solve the tasks, the following diagnostic tools were used:

1. The technique "Styles of Thinking" by R. Brynson, A. Harrison with adaptation of A. A. Alekseev, which allows to reveal the preferred style of solving the set tasks, the manner of asking questions and making decisions [19].

2. The technique "Type of thinking" by J. Bruner with modification of G.V. Rezapkina, designed to identify the degree of manifestation of 5 types of thinking (subject-active, abstract-symbolic, verbal-logical, vivid-figurative and creative) [20].

3. The method of diagnostics of socio-psychological adaptation by C. Rogers and R. Diamond, which allows to analyze the level of adaptation, the manifestation degree of tendencies of acceptance of others, self-acceptance, internality, emotional comfort, the desire to dominate [21].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the study, the respondents were offered a technic of diagnostics of the thinking style of the students using the methodology of R. Brunson and A. Harrison in adaptation of A.A. Alekseev. The results of the study are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF STUDENTS' THINKING STYLES

Styles	Preference levels									
	Very strong		Strong		Moderate		Insufficient		Disdain	
	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%
Synthetical	0	0	1	2	5	10	21	42	23	46
Idealistic	3	6	6	12	12	24	24	48	8	16
Pragmatical	4	8	7	14	10	20	26	52	7	14
Analytical	2	4	6	12	7	14	19	38	18	36
Realistic	1	2	2	4	6	12	27	54	15	30

People with the synthetic style are extremely sensitive to contradictions in the arguments of others, have an increased interest to paradoxes and conflicts of ideas. They love changes, tend to see the world constantly altering and approve such vision of the world by other people. 42% of the students have insufficient expressiveness of this style. 46% neglect it. These results are consistent with the research of R. Brunson, A. Harrison and A.A. Alekseev, which reveal that the synthetic style is peculiar only to a small number of people who are classified as creative individuals.

It follows from the results of the study that among the students there are more of those who in the process of solving intellectual tasks are focused on an intuitive, global

assessment without a detailed analysis of the problem (idealistic style of thinking), or rely on a direct personal experience, on the use of that materials and information, which are easily accessible (pragmatic thinking style), i.e. the students are not oriented on a thorough analysis of the problem, their ability to plan and program the activity is underdeveloped.

We also studied the severity of the students' thinking types using the technique of G.V. Rezapkina. The results of the study are shown in table 2.

According to these results, all types of thinking are expressed at an average level for most students (about 70%).

TABLE 2. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF STUDENTS' THINKING TYPES

Thinking types	The severity level					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%
Subject-active	4	8	38	76	8	16
Abstract-symbolic	3	6	39	78	8	16
Verbal-logical	12	24	35	70	3	6
Vivid-figurative	8	16	37	74	5	10
Creative	7	14	38	76	5	10

TABLE 3. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION

Characteristics	The severity level					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%	Absolute values	%
Adaptability	17	34	30	60	3	6
Acceptance of others	23	46	27	54	0	0
Self-acceptance	12	24	36	72	2	4
Emotional comfort	11	22	34	68	5	10
Internality	14	28	32	64	4	8
Dominance	15	30	31	62	4	8
Escapism	6	12	35	70	9	18

Most of the students have the verbal-logical type of thinking (24%). They are distinguished by a pronounced verbal intellect. They operate with words well, think logically.

In general, the study has shown that among the subjects the students with the verbal-logical type of thinking predominate; they rely on the verbal stimuli in the process of mental operations.

The next task of the study was to consider socio-psychological adaptation of the students. The results of the research carried out using the technic of C. Rogers and R. Diamond are presented in Table 3.

The study has revealed that the majority of the students (60%) have an average level of adaptability, 6% have a low level of adaptation, manifested in a negative attitude towards themselves, a pursuance of isolation, pessimism; these young people can be characterized as closed and shy. 34% of the students have a high level of adaptability, i.e. it can be said that they easily adapt to the conditions, quickly “enter” a new group, quite easily and adequately navigate the situation, quickly develop a strategy for their behavior and socialization. As a rule, they are non-confrontational, have high emotional stability.

The research of acceptance of others has shown that 46% of the students have a high level of it. The results connected with self-acceptance speak to the fact that these respondents accept themselves, consider themselves capable to appeal others, are self-confident, believe that they have more positive features than negative ones. 30% of the young people have pronounced dominance, i.e. they are ready to take responsibility and carry out leadership. Also, according to the results of the study, 12% of the students tend to get away from problems and only 18% are ready to solve problems, the rest (70%) have average indicators, they are selective in solving problems.

At the final stage of the study, to test the hypothesis of the relationship between the peculiarities of thinking and indicators of socio-psychological adaptation and to confirm statistical significance, we used the methods of mathematical statistics with the help of the software program SPSS Statistics 17.0. In particular, we applied a correlation analysis using the rank-correlation test of Ch. Spearman.

As the correlation analysis has shown, there are links between indicators of the brain building and abstractness of thinking that are associated with the types of thinking: indicators of verbal intelligence and abstractness are directly related to the pragmatic and verbal-logical types of thinking, and the ability to solve arithmetic tasks is associated with the symbolic thinking type; constructive abilities are connected with the imaginative and creative types of thinking.

There are also links between the indicators of adaptation: high adaptability is directly related to adaptation to the study group and learning activity, which are the higher, the higher

students' internality is developed and the lower the desire to avoid problems.

An analysis of the relationship between the indicators of socio-psychological adaptation and the peculiarities of students' thinking has shown the following:

adaptability as an individual feature is the higher, the more pronounced the idealistic ($r = 0,43$, $p < 0,01$), pragmatic ($r = 0,351$, $p < 0,05$) and creative ($r = 0,322$, $p < 0,05$) types of thinking and the less pronounced the analytical type of thinking ($r = -0,486$, $p < 0,01$);

acceptance of others as an indicator of socio-psychological adaptation of the students is the higher, the more pronounced idealistic ($r = 0,47$, $p < 0,01$) and the less pronounced the analytical types of thinking ($r = -0,47$, $p < 0,01$);

students' emotional comfort is the higher, the higher the development of creativity ($r = 0,347$, $p < 0,05$);

internality is also associated with the development of creativity ($r = 0,29$, $p < 0,05$).

the tendency to dominate among the students is the higher, the more synthetic type of thinking they have ($r = 0,353$, $p < 0,05$) and the less pronounced the analytical type of thinking ($r = -0,293$, $p < 0,05$);

escapism, avoiding the problem solution for the students is the higher, the less pronounced the pragmatic type of solution ($r = -0,32$, $p < 0,05$) and the lower the creativity ($r = -0,29$, $p < 0,05$).

Thus, the performed study shows that thinking is associated with socio-psychological adaptation: the more developed the students' thinking, the more students are able to take into account in solving problems their own experience (pragmatic thinking type), the subjective and social factors (idealistic thinking type), the higher level of socio-psychological adaptation.

IV. SUMMARY

Analyzing the results obtained in the process of the empirical research, we can draw the following conclusions and generalizations:

1. Among the students there are more of those who are focused on an intuitive, global assessment without a detailed analysis of the problem in the process of solving the mental tasks (idealistic thinking type), or rely on direct personal experience, on the use of materials and information that are easily accessible (pragmatic thinking style), i.e. the students are not oriented to a thorough analysis of the problem, their ability to plan and program the activity is underdeveloped.

2. Among the respondents most of the students have the verbal-logical type of thinking. They rely on verbal stimuli in the process of mental operations.

3. Most of the students have an average level of socio-psychological adaptability, while the students with a high level of adaptability predominate comparing with those students who have low indicators of adaptability. These respondents adapt quite easily to new conditions, are able to enter a new group quickly, orient themselves in situations, work out a strategy for their behavior and socialization, and are emotionally stable and not conflicting.

4. The correlation analysis has shown that social-psychological adaptation, adaptability to the university for the students is based on the development of verbal intelligence, abstract thinking, the ability to focus on their own experience, the presence of interest to goals, needs, human values, moral problems, the ability to take into account subjective and social factors in their decisions. The direct dependence of socio-psychological adaptation of the students on creativity, the ability to think outside the box, and the negative dependence of adaptation on the analytical and symbolic types of thinking were revealed.

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