

FEATURES OF SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF TEENAGERS FROM FOSTER FAMILIES IN SCHOOL

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Abstract: The paper presents the results of an empirical study of social and psychological adaptation at school of teenagers, who are brought up by blood and foster parents. The goal of the research is to study the features of the social and psychological adoption of teenagers, who are being brought up by foster parents. The authors accepted two quality criteria of social and psychological adaptation of students in the school environment: the external on how well a student is involved in the learning process and the team of peers, and internal on how comfortable he or she feels in the school environment. The study was conducted on the basis of three secondary schools in the town of Krasnoturinsk, Sverdlovsk region. Two groups of adolescents were formed in grades 6-8, who are brought up by blood families (48 people) and brought up by foster parents, as well as by persons who substitute the parents (48 people). The following methods were used examining the adaptability to the external and internal criteria: the database analysis of student performance (the external criterion); sociometry (the external criterion); Phillips diagnostics of school anxiety level (the internal criterion); "Family" and "Nonexistent animal" pictures testing (the internal criterion). The data show a statistically significant difference between the studied groups on the internal criterion of adaptability associated with subjective well-being in the school environment. The external criterion, which is related to the successful involvement in the learning process and the team of peers, did not reveal significant differences. This is due to the fact that already in adolescence, protective tendency appears to hide inner feelings. The teenagers from foster families try to behave confidently, to win the status position in the class, to maintain the school performance at a fairly high level. Some of them are excellent students; they are involved in school governance, try to become a leader. However, according to the internal criterion related to subjective well-being in the school, there were significant differences between adolescents, who are brought up by blood families and those brought up by forest parents. The latter are more common to possess a high level of anxiety, school fears.

Keywords: Forest parents, adaptation, social adaptation, social and psychological adaptation, maladaptation, adaptation criteria, emotional well-being.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the moral foundations of the family dramatically changed. The families with the patriarchal relations tended to keep the family at whatever the cost. It was believed that the blood parents were definitely better than non-blood ones. Currently, the number of second marriages, adoption of children increases.

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Today, therefore, we study many problems of orphans' family living arrangements (Avdonicheva, 2014). This is the motivation of care and the adoption of a healthy child (Gibadullin, 2014) and a child with disabilities (Ubozhenko, 2013) and especially orphans upbringing (Morozova et al., 2014), as well as his or her adaptive capabilities (Kiseleva, 2014; Solomatina, 2015; Tatarenko, 2012), and parent-child interaction (Pleteneva, 2013).

Various systems are integrated for accompanying assistance (Bobkova, 2015); criterial evaluation of successful living arrangement is developed for the orphans and children left without parental care (Bezrukova, & Golub', 2011). Many psychological risks (Dudina, & Dolgova, 2016) and possibilities of psychological and pedagogical support are proven for the families raising a foster child with special needs in the development (Kitaeva, 2016).

In this regard, the school social and psychological adaptation problem becomes extremely urgent for the adolescent children, who are brought up by foster parents and persons replacing parents (Dolgova et al., 2016).

The social and psychological adaptation refers to the process of active individual adaptation to the conditions of the social environment, as well as the result of this process. The social and psychological adaptation mutual affects communication, personality and psyche of a teenager (Lisina, 1997); psychological development (El'konin, 1999); a teenager's place in the team (Mudrik, 2003).

Traditionally, there are two quality criteria of social and psychological adaptation of students in the school environment: the external on how well a student is involved in the learning process and the team of peers, and internal on how comfortable he or she feels in the school environment.

However, the compliance with these criteria is extremely difficult to achieve, since it depends not only on the family (Warsawskaya, 2015). Such compliance is determined by the moral position of younger teenagers in diverse relations with teachers and parents (Derecha, 2015), as well as their social development in co-distributed interaction both in the classroom (Kotina, 2016) and in extracurricular activities.

The nature of this compliance is diverse; it is determined by each specific social situation of development, age and individual psychological structure (Patrikeeva and Ivont'eva), cognitive development and the valuable relation to him- or herself (Nikolaeva, 2015), the adolescents' tolerance and self-attitude (Skutina, & Velicheva, 2014).

In general, the experts say about the three-factor model of social and emotional intelligence of children (Semenov, 2015) and even teenagers' selflessness in extracurricular activities (Napadiy et al., 2015).

METHODS

The goal of the present research is to study the features of the social and psychological adoption of teenagers, who are being brought up by foster parents.

The study was conducted on the basis of three secondary schools in the town of Krasnoturinsk, Sverdlovsk region. 48 students of grades 6, 7 and 8 took part in the research. A group of teenagers, who are brought up by blood parents, included 48 people (Group I). A group of teenagers, who are brought up by foster parents, as well as by persons, who replace the parents, also included 48 people (Group II).

In the study, the following methods were used in order to identify the level of adaptability by the external and internal criteria:

- Database analysis of student performance (the external criterion).
- Sociometry (the external criterion).
- Phillips diagnostics of level of school anxiety (the internal criterion).
- Testing of “Family” pictures (the internal criterion).
- Testing of “Nonexistent animal” pictures (the internal criterion).

The method of surveillance has become the integrating research method. Since surveillance and other methods were carried out by professional psychologists, the results of their own research of emotional tension under stress were included (Dolgova et al., 2016), in the context of changing stereotypes (Dudina, & Dolgova, 2016), in the process of formation and development of professionally important qualities (Dolgova et al., 2016).

Statistical analysis was performed using χ^2 of Pearson criterion ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The following results were obtained from analysis of the school performance:

TABLE 1: PROPORTION OF TEENAGERS WITH DIFFERENT SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN THE STUDY GROUPS

<i>School Performance</i>	<i>Proportion of Teenagers</i>	
	<i>Group I (%)</i>	<i>Group II (%)</i>
High	50 (24 persons)	45.8 (22 persons)
Medium	37.5 (18 persons)	33.3 (16 persons)
Low	12.5 (6 persons)	20.8 (10 persons)

Table 1 shows that a high level of performance was reached by half of the children from the first group of teenagers, who are brought up by blood parents; these children are 4.2% more than in the second group of teenagers, who are brought up by foster parents and persons replacing the parents.

The medium performance was also reached by more children from the first group (4.2%).

More children from the second group show the low performance (8.3%).

We can say that the foster children are studying worse.

But the analysis by χ^2 method ($p < 0.05$) showed no significant differences between the groups by the performance level.

Result of using sociometry are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: PROPORTION OF TEENAGERS IN DIFFERENT SOCIOMETRIC CATEGORIES IN STUDIED GROUPS

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Proportion of Teenagers</i>	
	<i>Group I (%)</i>	<i>Group II (%)</i>
Stars	6.3 (3 persons)	8.3 (4 persons)
Popular	12.5 (6 persons)	16.7 (8 persons)
Accepted	41.7 (20 persons)	27.1 (13 persons)
Isolated	18.8 (9 persons)	22.9 (11 persons)
Outcast	20.8 (10 persons)	25.0 (12 persons)

In the second group of teenagers brought up by foster parents and persons replacing the parents, there a bit more (2%) “stars”, more (4.2%) “popular”, but also more “isolated” (4.1%) and more (4.2%) “outcast” students.

In the second group of teenagers, who are brought up by foster parents or persons replacing the parents, there are much less of so-called “accepted” students (14.6%).

By the method of sociometry, there are no significant differences between adolescents of groups I and II. In general, the external criterion differences are insignificant between the adolescents of both groups.

The results of our study do not disagree with the findings of other authors on the necessity of teenagers’ communicative abilities formation during both extracurricular activities (Baranova, 2015) and design approaches of coping behavior of teenagers in the conditions of the educational process as a whole (Lueva, 2015).

As for the internal criterion, by Phillips method the following results were obtained, which are shown in Table 3.

The statistic significant analysis using χ^2 method ($p < 0.05$) showed statistically significant differences between the adolescents of groups I and II on such scales as “Success achievement frustration”, “Fear of self-expression”, “Fear of quiz”, “Fear of not meeting the expectations of others”.

At these scales, the proportion of adolescents with higher rates is more in group II than in group I.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF TEENAGERS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SCHOOL ANXIETY

		<i>Number of teenagers with different level indicators</i>					
<i>Scales</i>		<i>Group I</i>			<i>Group II</i>		
		<i>Medium</i>	<i>Above the medium</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Above the medium</i>	<i>High</i>
1.	Total anxiety at school	22	16	10	12	22	14
2.	Social stress experience	24	15	9	10	16	22
3.	Success achievement frustration	16	22	10	14	12	22
4.	Fear of self-expression	16	18	14	13	19	16
5.	Fear of quiz	16	22	10	10	12	26
6.	Fear of not meeting the expectations of others	16	23	9	10	13	25
7.	Low resistance to stress	28	10	10	24	14	10
8.	Problems and fears in relations with teachers	25	14	9	22	17	9

Thus, for the teenagers, who are brought up by forest parents, the most terrible is not meet the expectations of society, to express his or her ‘I’. The social assessment is the most important for them; and they are afraid not to comply with it.

The results of picture testing ‘Family’ and ‘Nonexistent animal’ are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4: PROPORTION OF TEENAGERS WITH DIFFERENT LEVEL OF ANXIETY ACCORDING TO THE PICTURE TESTING

<i>Level of Anxiety</i>	<i>Proportion of Teenagers</i>	
	<i>Group I (%)</i>	<i>Group II (%)</i>
High	8.3 (4 persons)	33.3 (16 persons)
Above the medium	50 (24 persons)	50 (24 persons)
Medium	41.7 (20 persons)	16.7 (8 persons)

According to the picture testing, as shown in Table 4, a high level of anxiety was recorded in the second group of the teenagers, who are brought up by foster parents and persons replacing the parents (25%).

Above-the-medium anxiety is equal as often for children of both groups.

The medium level of anxiety in the second group appears much less often (up to 25%).

The statistic significant analysis using χ^2 method ($p < 0.05$) showed statistically significant differences between the adolescents of groups I and II in the level of anxiety.

The above gives an edge to study the conflict behavior of adolescents, the development and implementation of psycho-pedagogical conditions of its overcoming (Varfolomeeva, 2014), increases demands on the children aggressiveness and hyperactivity education of psychologists (Yatsenko, 2015; Yurkshat, 2013).

CONCLUSION

In summary, we note that by the external criterion the teenagers, who are brought up by foster parents, are adapted much better than by the internal criterion. This is due to the fact that already in adolescence, protective tendency appears to hide inner feelings. The teenagers from foster families try to behave confidently, to win the status position in the class, to maintain the school performance at a fairly high level. Some of them are excellent students; they are involved in school governance, try to become a leader. However, according to the internal criterion related to subjective well-being in the school, there were significant differences between adolescents, who are brought up by blood families and those brought up by forest parents. The latter are more common to possess a high level of anxiety, school fears.

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