

Adaptation of First-Year Students to The Medical Academy

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Abstract: *After entering university and starting their studies, a person changes the routine rhythm of their life. Their social environment changes and they become subject to new requirements in connection with the features of the educational process. Consequently, these changes affect a first-year student's personal time and their psychophysiological state. The process of preparation for professional activities involves not only the acquisition of a certain body of knowledge and skills but also the acquisition of a system of values and attitudes governing the life of society. Speed and degree of adaptation influence the success of training, psychological comfort and satisfaction with the career choice.*

Index Terms: *adaptation, professional activity, social environment, personal adaptive potential.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society, in the context of the continuous development of all its spheres, imposes high requirements for the training of specialists with higher education, the main purpose of which is not only high-quality preparation for a professional carrier but also the creation of optimal conditions for the implementation of needs and abilities.

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that during training, the foundations of professionalism are laid and the need and readiness for continuous self-education are developed. In this regard, it is especially important that students actively take part in the educational process from the initial stages of their studies [1].

The beginning of university studies is characterized by the transition of the organism to a new level of functioning, associated with the lack of skills of independent learning activities, as well as the lack of professional self-determination. Analysis of psychological, sociological and medical literature allows us to conclude that in older adolescents, the transition from school to further education is a complex adaptation process, the violation of which affects psychological comfort and neuropsychic health of a person, as well as on the effectiveness of professional training [2]. A range of rather intensive factors begins to influence the

student, during the adaptation to each of which, a functional system is developed [3].

After entering the university and the first exam session, in many first-year students, depending on the results of exams, self-assessment and ideas concerning the future profession change. Many of them become disappointed in their studies, express doubt in the correctness of their choice and desire to transfer to another specialty or university. At this point, the support of family and friends is very important. Character and personal qualities play a great role as well – perseverance, the ability to resist depression, to overcome difficulties and absorb a large amount of educational information. If the primary adaptation goes well and engagement in the educational process is easy, then professional development occurs next. Y.K. Babansky shows adaptation as a successive passage of three stages: breaking of school stereotypes and the formation of new ones (1st-3rd semesters), cumulative stage (4th-6th semesters) and completing stage (7th-10th semesters) [1].

Adaptation is the body's adjustment to changing external environment. The following types of adaptation are distinguished:

Biological adaptation develops on the basis of the interaction of regulatory systems; their disorders lead to functional and organic changes.

Psychological adaptation characterizes psychological and social patterns of students' behaviour triggered by studies: development of skills, competencies, habits, transformation of behavioural motives, features of temperament, academic abilities, as well as personality traits that have an impact on both higher mental and physiological functions.

Physiological adaptation is considered as a stable level of activity and interconnection of functional systems, organs and tissues, as well as control mechanisms ensuring the normal functioning of the student's body in the educational conditions.

Social adaptation involves an active adjustment to social conditions, stability in behaviour and in relationships, which corresponds to self-perception and self-assessment. The main function of social adaptation is the individual's compliance with the norms and values of a new group and the forms of social interaction developed in it. Social adaptation of students is divided into professional adaptation (adjustment to the nature, content, conditions and organization of the educational process, development of independence in

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Adaptation of First-Year Students to The Medical Academy

educational and scientific work) and socio-psychological adaptation (adjustment of the individual to the group and the relationships within it, development of one's own style of behavior) [4].

In the process of adaptation, students experience the following main difficulties:

1. Uncertainty of motivation for carrier choice, lack of psychological preparation for it;
2. Inability to perform psychological self-regulation of behaviour and activities;
3. Search for the optimal work and rest schedule in the new conditions;
4. Establishing a certain lifestyle and self-service, especially during the transition from the domestic environment to that of a dormitory;
5. Socio-economic problems of non-resident students: providing themselves with housing and financial means, unfamiliarity with the city, lack of emotional support from relatives and friends;
6. Lack of general learning skills – performing in front of the audience, lack of independent work skills, lack of skills related to taking notes, working with primary sources, dictionaries, etc.

All these difficulties are different in origin and are associated with insufficient preparation and defects of upbringing. The process of adaptation is accompanied by an increased level of anxiety, rivalry in the group, aggressive, insecure and conflict behaviour.

When working with students communicating in the first year of university, special attention should be paid to the factors contributing to their successful adaptation to university studies:

- Knowledge of the educational structure of the university, one's own rights and responsibilities;
- Changing educational conditions, an increase in the share of practical classes;
- Counselling assistance provided by psychological-pedagogical service;
- Lecturers' support in the planning of educational, social activities and research activities of students;
- Curators' support in organizing the academic group as a whole.

Entering the system of university education requires the development of new patterns of behaviour, allowing the student to correspond to the new social status. In improving the efficiency of adaptation at different levels and introducing different forms of interaction with students, an important role should be given to the curators of academic groups, namely:

Educational – adaptation to educational activities;

Psychological – development of motivation for learning

and self-confidence;

Interpersonal – ensuring the processes of effective interpersonal interaction [5].

The goal of the study is to identify the main problems of adaptation of first-year students to a new educational environment, as well as to investigate personal adaptation potential and features of socio-psychological adaptation of students.

The hypothesis of the study: We suppose that students with a low level of adaptation to the educational process have low levels of moral normativity.

II. METHODS

A. Overview

The purposive sampling in our study included 120 students of the medical and pediatric faculties of the North Ossetian Medical Academy of the Russian Ministry of Healthcare aged from 17 to 21. It was carried out from October to January 2018-2019 in two stages. The first stage involved the theoretical justification of the problem and the formation of the sample, the second stage – a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the dynamics of adaptation of first-year students.

B. Algorithm

We consider adaptation as a process of active and creative adjustment of the individual to the educational environment.

To assess the adaptation of the students, a multi-level personality questionnaire "Adaptability" was used [6]. The questionnaire was designed for assessing the adaptive abilities of the individual, considering socio-psychological and some psychophysiological characteristics, reflecting the generalized features of neuropsychic and social development. The respondents answered to 165 questions of the proposed questionnaire. Processing was carried out by counting the number of correlations of the answers with the keys to each of the scales, after which, the results were compared with each other using mathematical methods, namely, calculation of arithmetic averages.

The methodology included the following scales:

1. Neuropsychic stability;
2. Communicative features;
3. Moral normativity;
4. Adaptive skills.

III. RESULTS

Neuropsychic stability is the ability to properly self-regulate the interaction with the environment, as well as resistance to the negative, stressful effects of various situations.



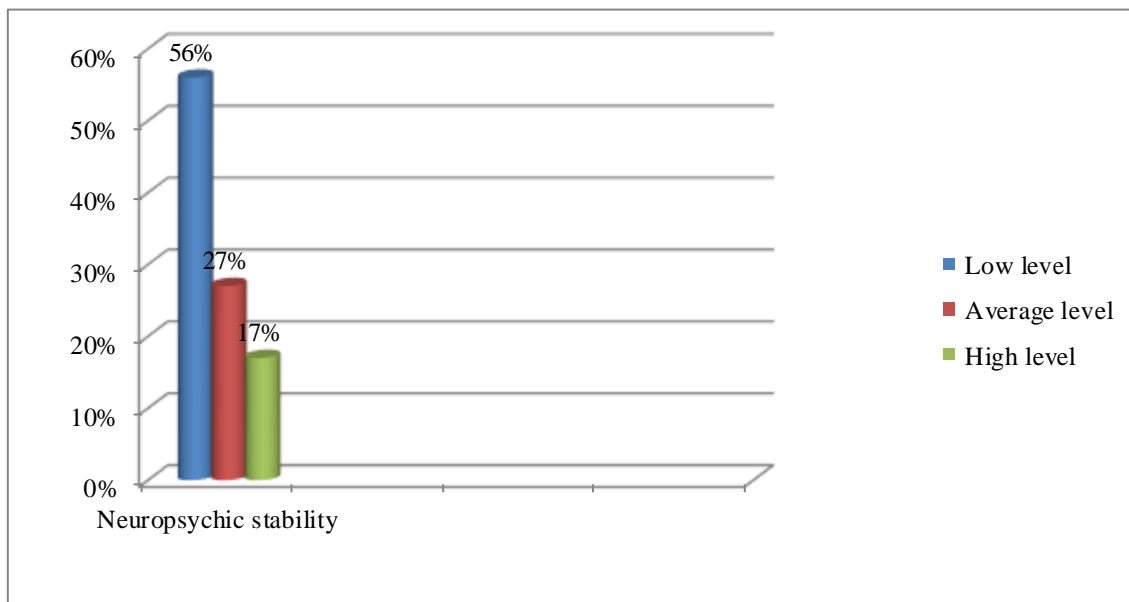


Fig. 1: Level of neuropsychic stability.

The indicators of neuropsychic stability of most first-year students showed a low level of behavioural regulation. There is a certain tendency to neuropsychic breakdowns, as well as lack of adequacy of self-assessment and realistic perception of reality (Figure 1).

Communicative features (communicative potential) are the ability to establish contact and mutual understanding with others, determined by experience and the need for communication, as well as the level of proneness to conflict.

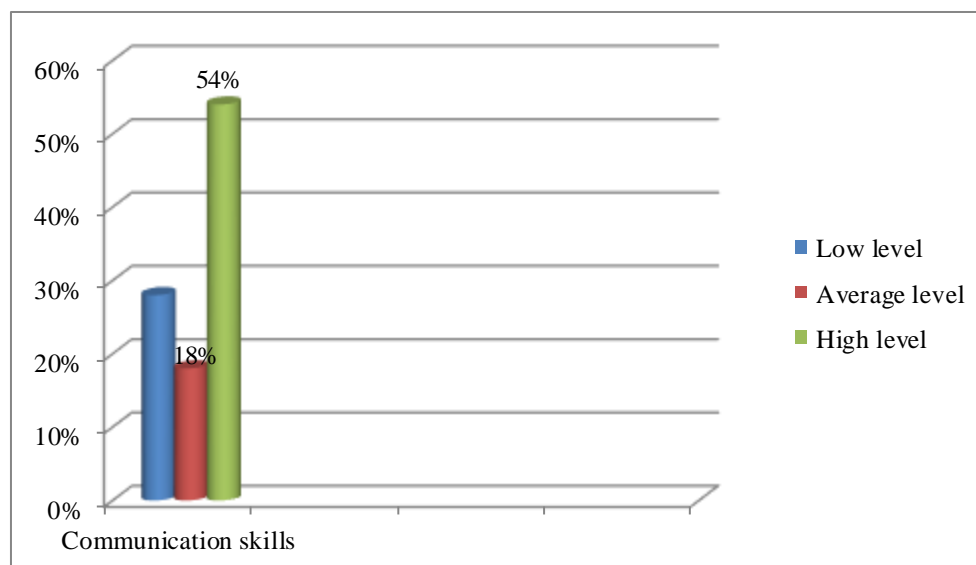


Fig. 2: Level of communication skills

54% of the students had a high level of communication skills; they easily established contacts with others and were not prone to conflict.

28% of the respondents had difficulty in establishing contacts with others, had a low level of communication skills development and demonstrated aggressiveness and increased

proneness to conflict (Figure 2).

Moral normativity reflects two main components of the socialization process: perception of moral standards of behaviour and attitude to the requirements of the immediate social environment.

Adaptation of First-Year Students to The Medical Academy

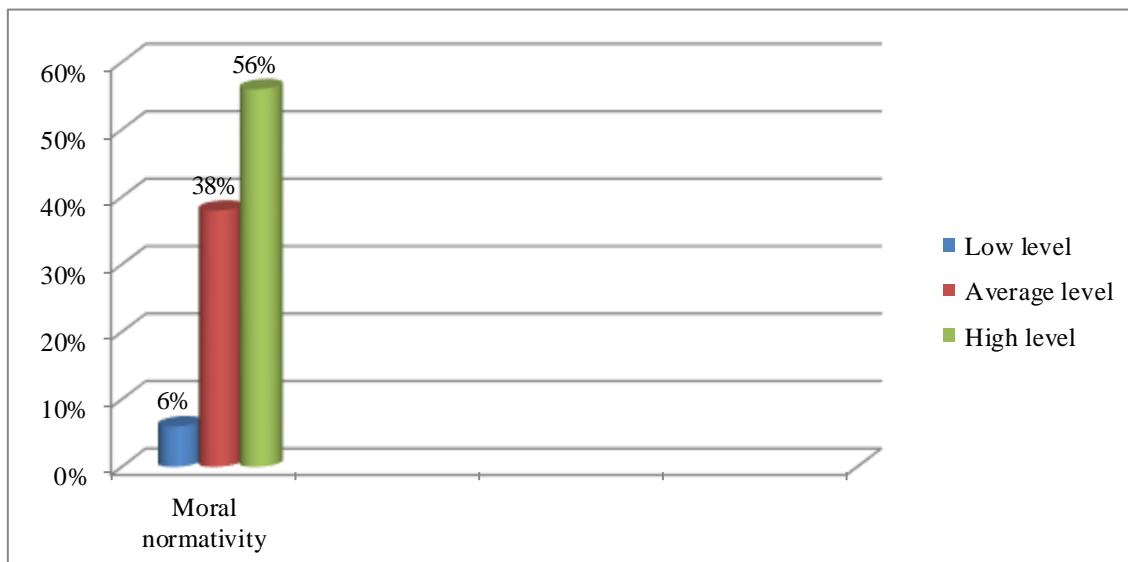


Fig. 3: Level of moral normativity.

It was established that the indicator of moral normativity of the subjects under study (56%) corresponded to a high level. Students realistically assessed their role in the team and were guided by compliance with generally accepted standards of behaviour.

The final score on the Personal Adaptive Potential scale was obtained by summing up raw scores of three scales: $\text{Personal Adaptive Potential} = \text{"Neuropsychic stability"} + \text{"Communication skills"} - \text{"Moral normativity"}$ (Figure 4).

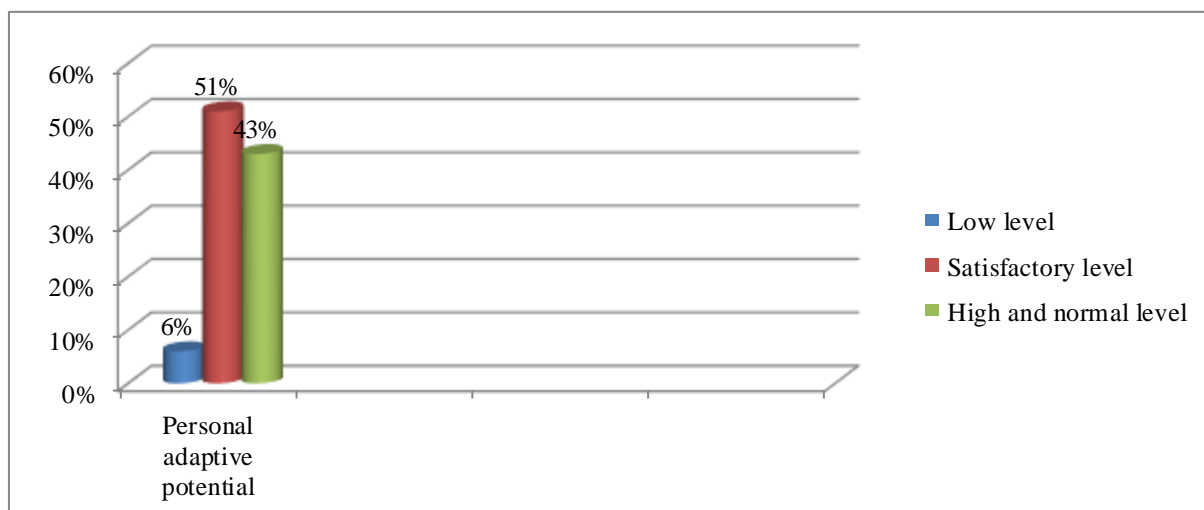


Fig. 4: Level of personal adaptive potential.

The respondents with a low level of adaptation (6%) show signs of clear accentuations and may have nervous breakdowns. Students having low neuropsychic stability are prone to conflict and may demonstrate anti-social behaviour.

The respondents with a satisfactory level of adaptation (51%) show signs of various accentuations, which in a familiar environment are partially compensated and can manifest when changing activities. Success depends on the external environment; they demonstrate low emotional stability. There may be breakdowns, manifestations of aggression and conflict. Individuals of this group require an individual approach, constant monitoring and corrective measures.

The respondents with a high and normal level of adaptation (43%) quite easily adapt to a new environment, quickly enter a new group, quite easily and adequately orient in the situation

and quickly develop a strategy of their behaviour. As a rule, they are not prone to conflict and possess high emotional stability.

Thus, our hypothesis concerning the relationship between the level of adaptation to the educational process and the indicators of moral normativity has been partially confirmed.

IV. CONCLUSION

In order to accelerate and improve the adaptation of first-year students to university studies, it is necessary:

1. To create conditions for cognitive and informational adjustment of students to the new environment and the structure of higher school;



2. To introduce the content of professional training at the university to form a positive attitude to the chosen specialty;
3. To train students in new forms and methods of learning and improve thematic educational programs;
4. To conduct a cycle of seminars aimed at increasing awareness about the difficulties in the period of adaptation, mastering methods to overcome them and developing constructive communication skills;
5. To provide social and psychological, as well as scientific and methodological support of curators' activities and conduct group sessions with first-year students;
6. To organize and carry out methodological workshops with curators of the first year concerning their mastery of the methodology for conducting seminars in student groups in the framework of the curatorial hour;
8. To organize individual and group counselling for students.

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