Features of adaptation of fifth graders at school

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the discussion of topical theoretical aspects of the problem of adaptation of fifth graders, the features of their development and the process of adaptation, diagnostics, and analysis of methods aimed at studying anxiety, self-esteem, state in the lesson. By creating adaptive situations, the school is the bearer of the richest social experience, including the adaptation of the student to the content and form of education. The analysis showed that the main task of the educational institution is to create conditions for the successful adaptation of students, which is the key to high-quality education of the individuals, their further improvement and self-development. For each stage of the research (theoretical, empirical, interpretative), its own group of methods is defined: theoretical: collection of information, generalization, systematization, analysis of scientific literature; empirical: ascertaining research, testing, questioning; psycho-diagnostic: testing according to the method of diagnosing the level of school anxiety by B.N. Phillips, questioning according to the method of studying the emotional state of students “Subject-feelings” by T.E. Kovina, A.K. Kolichenko and I.N. Agaforonova, testing by the method of diagnostics of general self-esteem G.N. Kazantseva. A sample of 120 fifth grade students of the Municipal Autonomous Educational Institution Secondary School No. 138, Chelyabinsk, was formed. It was revealed that increased levels of anxiety are observed to a small extent, the majority of fifth-graders do not experience mental discomfort and anxiety, they are balanced and emotionally stable. The average value of the index of emotional positivity of fifth graders during class attendance is observed in 74 %, which indicates their satisfaction in most subjects, a fairly comfortable internal climate in the classroom. In general, the process of adaptation of fifth graders in the middle level can be considered satisfactory, but there are students who have low emotional positivity to learning – 26 % and low self-esteem – 19 %. The recommendations compiled based on the results of the study can contribute to the effective adaptation of fifth graders to study in a general education organization and can be useful to both parents and all subjects of educational relations.

Keywords: younger teenagers, emotional positivity, anxiety, self-esteem, adaptation

1 Introduction

Being in a dynamic and changing world, facing changes in society and in personal life, people react to them differently, which is caused by their level of adaptability.

The apogee of adaptation is a social type inherent only in human society, which is characterized by adaptation to the conditions of the social environment. This form of adaptation is characterized by interaction between a person and a group in a social environment, consisting in the assimilation of norms and rules, the ability to perform biosocial functions and form an adequate system of relations with others [1].

In the process of adaptation, people can change their roles and value orientations. And the interaction of the individual and the social environment leads to a harmonious relationship between the goals and values of the individual and the group [2].

There are numerous technologies that contribute to socialization, meeting the needs of an individual, a group, and help to comprehend their behavior in specific conditions [3]. The use of these technologies contributes to the intensive development of the external environment by the individual, through the inclusion of his individual abilities, predispositions, hobbies, in which the individual enriches his experience of mastering adaptive situations, leading to development. Such technologies, according to researchers, can be implemented in a social institution – at school [4].

School technologies are changing depending on numerous innovations in both the educational environment and the educational process, the standards by which it is necessary to implement the education of children are changing, leaving an imprint on the acquisition of knowledge, academic performance and the state of students. By creating adaptive situations, the school is the bearer of the richest social experience, including the conscious adaptation of the student to the content and form of education.

The contribution of conscious self-regulation, engagement, and motivation to the academic performance of schoolchildren in different periods of
study is characterized by a number of differences [5]. Adolescence is divided into younger adolescence (11–12 years) and older adolescence (13–14 years). In early adolescence, thinking, abilities and interests, self-knowledge, independence, self-esteem, interpersonal communication with peers, mutual understanding develop especially intensively, the features of gender-role behavior change [3].

Adaptation of fifth graders is understood in the study as a multifaceted process characterized by the ability of students to apply new ways of behavior depending on the current situation [6]. The transition from primary to secondary level involves the complication of educational material, changes in the content of the educational process, higher requirements are imposed on students in educational activities [7].

Students need to adapt to a new learning environment, new school requirements, a more complex curriculum, new classmates and teachers. Adaptation for each student proceeds in its own way, the reasons for this are their developmental characteristics [8]. Also, the pace of the adaptation process depends on many factors, such as the intensity of the educational process, its organization, requirements for the abilities of students, the situation in the classroom. The combination of these factors leads to a decrease in academic performance, disorganization, instability of emotional state, fatigue, aggravates the causes of anxiety significant for schoolchildren regarding the transition to the fifth grade [9] and exacerbates the clinical and psychological characteristics of fifth grade students of secondary schools [10].

Therefore, the main task of the educational institution is to create conditions for the successful adaptation of students, which is the key to high-quality education of the individual, his further improvement and self-development. And the task of the psychological and pedagogical service is to maintain the mental health of students and ensure their adaptation in the educational space and support for psychologically safe intra-family relationships in the family [11]. The above is integrated into the purposeful psychological and pedagogical support of the adaptation process of fifth grade students to secondary education [12]. Identification of the factors causing difficulties in the implementation of these tasks and the search for means for effective socio-pedagogical support of students during the transition to the secondary level is a priority in the activities of psychologists and teachers.

2 Problem Statement

The successful development of the personality of a fifth-grader depends on his adaptation to the conditions of an educational institution, this is stated in many studies of adaptation processes of fifth-graders during the transition to the main stage of general education in the context of the introduction of the Federal State Educational Standard, however, its optimal level, including a positive attitude towards school, the presence of educational motivation, low levels of anxiety, positive self-esteem of students, has not been fully explored yet.

3 Research Questions

To study the adaptation phenomenon of fifth graders during the transition to the next stage in psychological and pedagogical research.

Theoretically substantiate the features of the adaptation process of fifth-graders in the educational environment.

- To determine the stages, methods, and techniques of research.
- To characterize the sample and analyze the results of the study.
- To develop recommendations for parents and teachers on accompanying fifth grade students in the process of adaptation.

4 Purpose of the Study

Theoretically substantiate and experimentally test the features of adaptation of fifth graders during the transition to the basic stage of general education in the conditions of the introduction of the Federal State Educational Standard.

5 Research Methods

The stages of research activity were organized according to the classical model [11].

The theoretical stage consisted of determining the research topic, studying and analyzing scientific literature, studying approaches. Also at this stage, the research problem was identified, the relevance was formulated, the main working concepts, the object and subject of research were defined, the hypothesis and goal, research objectives were formulated.

Experimental (empirical) stage. At this stage, a psychodiagnostic examination procedure was carried out. For this purpose, we have chosen methods and research techniques suitable for the topic. A sample of 120 fifth grade students of the Municipal Autonomous Educational Institution Secondary School No. 138, Chelyabinsk, was formed.

The interpretative stage (analytical) is characterized by the presence of primary processing, systematization and generalization of the empirical data obtained. Based on the results, the hypothesis is confirmed or refuted, and recommendations are formulated.

For each stage of the study, its own group of methods is determined, corresponding to the logic of the study and allowing us to effectively solve the tasks.

For our study, we have applied the following methods:

1. Theoretical: collection of information, generalization, systematization, analysis of scientific literature.
2. Empirical: ascertaining research, testing, questionnaire.
3. Psychodiagnostic: testing according to the method of diagnosing the level of school anxiety by B.N. Phillips, questioning according to the method of studying the emotional state of students “Subject-

Since the research topic consists of studying adaptation of fifth grade students in an educational institution, an ascertaining experiment was conducted in the study aimed at diagnosing the formation of this property.

All students were tested using three methods. The students listened attentively to the tasks and were ready to ask questions.

6 Findings

In the course of the psychodiagnostic method for diagnosing school anxiety by B.N. Phillips, the primary results presented in Figure 1 were obtained.

Based on the results presented in Figure 1 and obtained using the Phillips test, 35 % (31) of adolescents (Figure 1, Scale 3, high level) out of the total number of subjects – 89 people have a high indicator in the scale of “Experiencing social stress”. This indicator was exceeded in 65 % (58 people), no normal indicator was found in any student, which is a reason to pay attention to this fact, because it means that it is difficult for students to form social contacts. Perhaps this is situational, and occurs selectively, as the students have shown themselves to be a friendly team. There are also high indicators in the “Frustration of the need to achieve success” scale – 44 % (39 people), this indicator is slightly exceeded in 51 % (45 people). Also, students have difficulties in dealing with teachers, these indicators are increased in 40 % of people (36), high in 45 % (40) people.

Overall anxiety at school was slightly increased in 29 % of the subjects (26 people).

The normal level of anxiety at school (Fig. 1, scale 1) was indicated in 62 % (55 schoolchildren); 9 % (8 people) had high anxiety, which indicates their maladaptation.

The technique of “Subject-feelings” by T.E. Kovina, A.K. Kolechenko allows diagnosing the emotional state in the classroom. Nineteen students from the 5th “A” class, 25 from the 5th “B”, 23 from the 5th “C”, 22 from the “D” took part in the study using this method. The data obtained as a result of the study are presented below (Fig. 2).
All numerical intervals of the emotional positivity index were manifested in our sample (0.75–1 is a high index of emotional positivity. 0.55–0.75 is the average index of emotional positivity. 0–0.45 – low index of emotional positivity).

The average indicators in “A”, “B” and “C” class are 0.57; 0.58; 0.58, respectively. The index for all grades was 0.54, which means that there is no negative attitude among fifth grade students to the subjects.

The results of the self-esteem diagnostics of students according to the method of G.N. Kazantseva (Fig. 3).

A person with an average level of self-esteem adequately assesses himself in all manifestations of the academic, extracurricular workload and daily routine of fifth grade students [13]. He realizes his both positive and negative qualities, is able to adapt and adjust to new conditions. He is ready to accept new things and learn from mistakes. With normal self-esteem, a person tries to set for himself those goals that he can realize in practice.

With overestimated self-esteem, a person has an idealized image of his personality and capabilities, he thinks that he is very valuable, has a high opinion of himself.

Such people are confident in their own infallibility, it is quite difficult to interact with them, since they are not ready to accept the words of others, any remark is perceived acutely as a nitpick. They think they do not make mistakes. Among the fifth graders, 25 % of such students (22 people) were identified.

Low self-esteem is characterized by self-doubt and timidity. Such students have difficulties in realizing their abilities. Students do not set difficult goals for themselves, they are too critical of themselves. Low self-esteem is characteristic of people who tend to doubt
themselves. Thus, 19% of fifth-graders (17 people) had low self-esteem.

According to the results of self-esteem diagnostics by the method of G.N. Kazantseva in Figure 3, most of the fifth-graders have an average self-esteem – 56% (50 people).

The results of the diagnostics allow us to formulate the main conclusions:

The level of general anxiety within the normal range is observed in 62% (55 people) of students, which is the optimal indicator of an adequate response of students to the occurrence of difficulties.

A high level of anxiety is observed in 8% of fifth-graders, which indicates that they experience anxiety, discomfort that may prevent them from adapting to educational conditions. Increased indicators of anxiety are noted to a small extent, because most fifth-graders do not experience mental discomfort and anxiety, they are balanced and emotionally stable. The average value of the index of emotional positivity of fifth graders during class attendance is observed in 74%, which indicates their satisfaction in most subjects, a fairly comfortable internal climate in the classroom. In general, the process of adaptation of fifth graders in the secondary level can be considered satisfactory, but there are students who have low emotional positivity to learning – 26% (23 people) and low self-esteem – 19% (17 people).

Thus, the adaptation of fifth-graders during the transition from primary to secondary school in our sample is at an optimal level. However, there are comments that should be corrected by teachers and psychologists. Based on the results obtained, recommendations were developed aimed at adapting younger adolescents to the conditions of an educational organization, taking into account the interrelation between school anxiety and motivation for learning activities at the stage of adaptation to learning in the 5th grade [14]. Subject teachers need to attend lessons in primary school to familiarize themselves with teaching technologies, forms, and methods of organizing educational activities to use a similar model in the fifth grades.

Attendance of lessons in the fifth grades should be carried out by primary school teachers to control the course of the adaptation period and to jointly discuss the recommendations of primary school teachers to fifth-graders on working in the classroom, taking into account the peculiarities of psychological adaptation of students during the transition from the fourth grade to the fifth [15].

Analysis by teachers of their activities, updating methods and techniques in order to implement a personality-oriented approach to students.

Familiarization of students in the fourth grades by teachers with the list of subjects that will be taught in the fifth grade. Teachers need to think about how to interest students, how to present future subjects in an interesting way, talk about the features of secondary school education in an emotionally favorable tone to reduce the anxiety of schoolchildren. It remains important to study individual typological features, the relationship of conscious self-regulation, psychological well-being [16].

It is also necessary to conduct excursions around the school, show classrooms, organize correctional and developmental work with fifth grade students by means of extracurricular activities [17].

Teachers and the head teacher need to form characteristics for all students, which reflect their psychological and physiological characteristics, information about their family. Psychologists should conduct systematic psychological and pedagogical diagnostics of communicative universal learning activities in fifth grade students [18].

Assessing the achievements of schoolchildren should take into account the best models in the traditional and developmental education systems [19] and all the difficulties of the adaptation period of fifth grade students [20]. Assessing the achievements of schoolchildren in traditional and developmental systems of education: at the beginning of training, it is necessary to explain in detail to schoolchildren why they get this or that mark. Assessing activities should be stimulating and supportive in nature and solve the problems of teaching students independent, control and evaluation activities, tracking their progress, and maintaining a regimen.

7 Conclusion

The study showed that the increased anxiety indicators of fifth graders are noted to a small extent and most students do not experience mental discomfort and anxiety, they are balanced and emotionally stable. In order to preserve this state among schoolchildren, teachers need to take into account that the leading activity of the child – study – is being replaced by a new one – communication. Therefore, it is necessary to develop communication motivation, create conditions for students to cooperate with each other, maintain authority in the classroom, move from a reproductive to a productive level of education; organize common events, holidays, sports competitions with fifth-graders; plan assignments for students with low self-esteem, in which they would be successful.

In addition to the school, a significant role in the adaptation of fifth graders to secondary education is given to the family. In this regard, it is necessary to actively work with parents to support the adaptation of fifth graders to learning during the transition from elementary school to secondary school.

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