

The influence of society and social groups on the development of personality



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Abstract This scientific paper seeks to identify and analyze various dimensions and structures involved in the development of personality. It delves into the interaction between the substance and assessment elements within personality development and scrutinizes its temporal aspects. Furthermore, the study explores theoretical aspects of personality development, discerning between individual and societal dimensions, and examines its growth over time in connection with social categorization processes. The research utilizes a thorough methodology in exploring the development of personality, encompassing psychophysiological, individual, social, and intrinsic factors. Different aspects and impacts of social surroundings on personality development are sorted according to criteria like encountering developmental challenges, resilience in decision-making, willingness to embrace new opportunities, among others. This categorization acts as a structure for examining the various manifestations and significant attributes of personality development. Research indicates that personality development is an ongoing, dynamic process that experiences both advancement and regression over a lifetime. It highlights the influence of social interactions and language acquisition on shaping personality, emphasizing how changes in one's social surroundings can impact personality development. Different facets of personality formation, such as ego development, formation within groups, and manifestations of both positive and negative traits, are thoroughly explored and analyzed. The research findings suggest that taking a comprehensive approach that considers psychophysiological, personal, social, and profound aspects is a promising direction for understanding how personality develops. This study enhances our understanding of the intricate and varied processes involved in personality development, going beyond simplistic categorizations. Moreover, it underscores the significant impact of social interactions and surroundings on the formation of personality, providing valuable perspectives for both psychological studies and real-world implementations.

Keywords: social environment, personality formation, social adaptation, socialization, social life, individual

1. Introduction

The fast-paced dynamics of society and the ever-changing landscape of global events necessitate individuals to continually adapt in order to effectively navigate their surroundings. Within this context, the social environment emerges as a pivotal element influencing the development of adaptive mechanisms during the process of socialization. It is through interaction with society that individuals establish, evolve, and realize their uniqueness, striving for fulfilment amidst the myriad contradictions inherent in social interactions. These contradictions stem from the subjective and practical nature of human engagement, wherein individuals and social communities act as both subjective agents and material entities within society. Rooted in a materialist understanding of history, these interactions are primarily driven by material needs, which manifest as interests, goals, and value orientations (Borghans, 2008). Thus, the spiritual aspect of human existence within society is inexorably intertwined with the material realities of life (Popov et al., 2021). The complex interplay between individuals and society gives rise to countless contradictions, each exerting an ambiguous influence on the outcome. Central to this dynamic is the tension between individualization and socialization, which lies at the heart of the present research, underscoring its relevance and significance.

2. Theoretical reference framework

Theoretical foundations concerning the influence of the social environment on personality formation have been outlined in the studies conducted by Denissen et al. (2019), Hoha (2019), Oresheta (2020), as well as the research of Wagner et al. (2019), and their respective followers. These works explore the intricate dynamics between social contexts and individual



development. Additionally, insights into individuals as active agents in shaping their own lives are provided by Lytovchenko (2013), Roberts and Wood (2006). Moreover, recent scientific papers, like those authored by Breil et al. in 2019 and Cook et al. in 2021, offer fresh insights into how social factors can shape deterministic elements of personality development. Lastly, the imperative of fostering each individual's maximum potential for personal growth is highlighted in the scholarly works of Adler (2012), Caspi et al. (2005), and Dries et al. (2008).

In contemporary sociology and psychology, significant emphasis is placed on exploring the challenges of socialization, particularly focusing on the social adaptation of individuals, as evidenced in the scholarly works referenced (Ferguson, 2010; Khomenko, 2011; Romanovskyi, 2011). Addressing the matter of personal adaptation within society, scholars concur that it remains a perennial question, destined to engage generations of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and educators in ongoing discourse and debate.

The dynamics of human interaction with the external environment are primarily shaped by the cultural and historical backdrop of civilization. A significant focus has been directed towards the cultural-historical framework of developing higher mental functions, elucidating how an individual's psyche evolves through the absorption of cultural experiences. This concept has been extensively explored in scientific literature (Greenaway & Kalokerinos, 2017; Neyer & Asendorpf, 2001; Tsaras et al., 2018; Lytvyn et al., 2022). Moreover, significant attention has been dedicated to understanding social adaptation within the context of cultural assimilation (acculturation). Since an individual's value system and motivations constitute the core of their personality, studies have delved into the motivational aspects of existence (Damian et al., 2019; McNair, 2007). Additionally, the individual's self-perception and causal attributions play a crucial role in shaping their interpretation of cause-and-effect relationships (Kobzeva & Tuzova, 2020; Moyseyeva, 2015; Sorrenti et al., 2020). By examining these factors' involvement in the social-cultural adaptation process of immigrants, researchers can gain insights into its unique characteristics.

The research aims to establish and elaborate on a comprehensive framework for understanding how the social environment shapes personality and fosters the development of an integrated personality structure using a hierarchical approach. This involves several objectives:

1. Examining the social factors and existing research in fields such as general psychology, differential psychology, social psychology, and philosophy related to the formation of personality as an integrated phenomenon. This includes identifying various approaches to studying personality formation as a psychological process with its own structure and logical progression.

2. Developing a continual-hierarchical model for understanding integral personality formation and outlining the concept behind it. This also involves analyzing the dynamics of development and transformation in integral personality formation over time.

3. Research methodology

The principles serving as the methodological foundation for the current research are delineated as follows:

1. The principle of systemicity and hierarchy asserts the primacy of the "metasystemic" level over the "subsystemic" level when interpreting the causes of personality phenomena. In this paper, this principle allows for the examination of personality maturation and development at the metasystem level, while considering the subsystem level as secondary conditions that characterize how formation is integrated into the metasystem (Tackett & Mullins-Sweatt, 2021).

2. The metasystemic stage of personality development entails the cohesion, broad applicability, coherence, and culmination of all its component subsystems and elements, operating as a unified entity known as integral personality formation. Within the subsystemic level of integral personality formation, there exists a delineation of its structural components, comprising formal-dynamic, substantive-personal, and imperative-normative subsystems, each with its own constituent elements.

1. The principle of continuity emphasizes the importance of maintaining a seamless, consistent, and cohesive development in the formation of an individual's personality. This concept draws upon the idea of uninterrupted progression, internal consistency, wholeness, and the inherent systematic nature of personality development. The term "continuity", derived from the Latin word "continuum", denotes the uninterrupted and extended nature of phenomena, as explored in philosophy and psychology.

2. The principle of integrity in studying personality formation emphasizes the interconnectedness of functional systems, ensuring systematicity and continuity. In psychological terms, "relationship" signifies the intricate connections between various objects and phenomena, where each element is linked through numerous transitions, influences, and mutual interactions. The cohesion of all functional systems within an individual's structure is upheld by the presence of overarching laws that bind everything together, creating a unified entity. Hence, this principle asserts that the components contributing to integral personality formation are perpetually connected and unified.

3. The principle of self-development asserts that understanding the causes of mature and fully-formed personality prioritizes the "future" over the "past". This implies that the impetus for integral personality development lies in the "future", while the "past" merely sets the stage, influencing the timing and specifics of mental phenomena as they unfold over time.

4. The principle of activity emphasizes the primacy of internal factors over external ones in understanding the origins of maturation and the development of a comprehensive personality. It suggests that the main driver behind the formation of a comprehensive personality is internal, while external factors merely influence the specifics of how this internal cause unfolds. Internal factors contributing to the establishment of comprehensive personality formation include the individual's active engagement in constructing their formation and the stability or variability of their real self-image.

4. Results

The contemporary focus in psychology and sociology often highlights the personal aspect of adaptation. This shift towards studying the psychological aspects of adapting individuals shapes the direction of theoretical analysis and empirical data collection. Central to this approach is the evolving personality, which holds a prominent position in describing and interpreting adaptive behaviours. Acknowledging the importance of personal regulation, one of its primary characteristics is the conscious understanding of an individual's potential capabilities and the selection of their adaptation strategy (Stieger et al., 2021). Personal regulation becomes especially apparent when individuals adjust to changing social and cultural contexts. This adaptation requires the harmonious integration and coordination of mental faculties to respond effectively to specific societal shifts. Moreover, it involves a self-driven process deeply rooted in both the dynamic and static aspects of one's personality.

The personality structure involves the interconnected and interactive stable components or facets of an individual. A deeper examination is needed to explore the elements and subsystems constituting a personality, along with their interrelations. Recent contributions from various experts in the field have advanced our understanding towards a more comprehensive and impartial perception of personality.

Light (2017) provides the most successful understanding of the structure of transitions from mental processes to mental states and from mental states to mental attributes. He supplemented his understanding of structure with psychological functions (senses, memory, etc.) and basic behavioral motivations in general (needs and attitudes). He described this series of structures in the form of five hierarchically connected substructures.

Drozdo (2013) proposed the notion of a dynamic functional structure of personality. This theory views personality as a dynamic entity that evolves over time, altering the arrangement of its elements and their connections while preserving their functions. The concept outlines four distinct substructures within personality:

The first aspect of personality structure is the orientation and attitudes, representing moral qualities. These traits reflect the individual's social consciousness shaped by upbringing and education, rather than inherent qualities. This socially determined aspect, known as personality orientation, encompasses motivations, preferences, interests, tendencies, values, perspectives, and convictions. These orientations unveil both moral attitudes and various needs of the individual.

The second aspect – the foundation of one's experience, integrates the knowledge, skills, abilities, and habits gained through personal learning, while also being significantly shaped by biological and possibly genetic personality traits. The elements comprising the foundation can be viewed as expressions of individual characteristics. This foundation forms through the process of training.

The third aspect involves the unique qualities of specific mental processes such as memory, sensation, perception, thinking, and will. This component takes shape through various exercises.

The fourth aspect biopsychic substructure integrates temperament traits or typological properties of personality, as suggested by Borovynska (2020). This substructure emphasizes traits that are primarily influenced by the physiological makeup of the brain, with social influences playing a secondary role. These traits are less malleable and can only be adjusted to some extent through training, if adjustment is feasible at all.

Certain personality traits are associated with specific substructures, while others emerge from the interactions between these substructures. Let's examine this distinction more closely:

In terms of personality orientation, scientists refer to a consistent set of motives that direct an individual's actions and are relatively unaffected by specific circumstances. This concept delineates the goals an individual pursues, their inherent aspirations, and the driving forces behind their behavior (Iatsyshyn et al., 2020).

Orientation can be broadly defined as the network of connections a person has with themselves, others (in terms of interaction), and the outcomes and accomplishments of their actions (pertaining to activity).

An individual's presence in the world isn't solely shaped by their thoughts, but also by their entire cognitive capacity. Their holistic understanding and interaction with reality, encompassing feelings, perceptions, ideas, and emotions, contribute to their worldview, which includes their comprehension and outlook on the world. While world comprehension primarily pertains to conceptual and intellectual aspects of worldview, the latter is distinguished by a deeper integration of knowledge and the inclusion of emotional and value-based attitudes towards the world (Bazylenko, 2016).

A worldview encompasses not just the content of beliefs, but also the manner in which one perceives reality and the guiding principles that shape one's actions. At its core, ideals serve as the cornerstone of a worldview, representing life goals

that culminate in a comprehensive life plan. These ideals imbue the worldview with potency, transforming mere thoughts into steadfast convictions about the correctness of one's chosen path.

The notion holds significant practical significance, impacting behavioral norms, work ethic, interpersonal relations, life goals, lifestyle choices, and personal interests. It serves as a spiritual lens through which we perceive and interpret our surroundings. Comprising a blend of intellectual and emotional elements, it shapes our understanding and awareness of the world. Intelligence and emotions intertwine within it, alongside the will to act, imbuing the worldview with a distinctive character. Components such as knowledge, values, and action plans, when integrated into the worldview, take on new meaning, reflecting personal attitudes, emotions, and intentions.

A person's worldview comprises inherent concepts within their psyche. The distinction between worldview and understanding of the world lies in the fact that the latter relies on linguistic tools, whereas worldview, as a representation of objective reality with images ingrained in an individual's psyche, can exist independently of them.

According to several researchers (Abele et al., 2016; Karpenko, 2020), personality development is influenced by three main factors: genetics, environment, and personal actions. While genetics plays a role in determining individual traits and serves as a foundation for development, and the environment (society) shapes social characteristics, personal actions influence the interaction between these two factors.

Several researchers (Necherda, 2021; Shelukhin, 2021) have outlined various contributors to personality development, including genetics, natural surroundings, cultural influences, social interactions, and personal experiences.

According to these scientists, the development of personality is primarily shaped by the genetic makeup inherited at birth. Hereditary traits serve as the foundation for personality development. An individual's inherent qualities, including temperament or physical characteristics, shape their character, their perception of the surrounding world, and their assessment of others.

The second factor that shapes an individual's personality is the influence of the natural environment, specifically the physical surroundings. It's evident that our environment consistently affects our behavior, shaping our attitudes and reactions, thereby playing a significant role in the development of our personality.

The third influential factor in shaping an individual's personality is the impact of culture. Each culture encompasses a specific set of social values that are commonly shared among its members. This set of values forms the basis for what is termed a moral personality, representing the collective cultural ideals instilled in individuals through cultural experiences. Thus, contemporary society utilizes culture to foster a social-cultural persona aligned with its expectations, such as being sociable and cooperative. The absence of these shared cultural models leaves individuals in a state of cultural uncertainty, where they may feel disconnected from society and struggle to grasp its fundamental norms.

The social environment stands as the fourth determinant shaping an individual's personality. It's crucial to acknowledge that this factor takes precedence in shaping personal attributes. During the process of socialization, individuals absorb the norms of their social circle, shaping their identity and allowing their distinct personality traits to emerge.

The fifth aspect shaping an individual's personality within society is their personal experiences. This factor's essence lies in the diverse array of situations each person encounters, exposing them to the influence of others and their physical surroundings. The sequence of these experiences is distinct for every individual, as they draw from past encounters, whether positive or negative, to navigate future events. Thus, one's unique personal experiences are among the most impactful factors in shaping their personality.

Langenberg et al. (2022) propose a similar concept regarding the elements contributing to personality formation. Ashton and Lee (2020) suggest that these factors can be discerned through the analysis of various aspects of social development, such as changes in civil, economic, and marital statuses, as well as shifts in social roles, values, and environmental influences. Additionally, Abramova (2015) emphasizes the significance of examining life events, conflicts, and achievements or setbacks in fulfilling personal goals to understand the development of personality traits.

Drawing from an analysis of contemporary scientific literature on the genesis, forms, and types of personality development, as well as the stance of psychology, it becomes evident that the process of shaping and evolving personality is influenced by a multitude of internal and external factors. Researchers such as Chala (2019) and Luhmann et al. (2021) have outlined several external influences on personality development, which can be summarized as follows:

- factors related to society and culture (such as educational attainment, social development, cultural background, and upbringing);
- external influences (such as natural calamities or the state of the environment);
- economic factors (economic prosperity, living standards, etc.).

Some researchers believe that the internal factors influencing personality development include the following:

- psychophysiology (gender, age, individual genetic characteristics, vegetative responses and body energy expenditure, etc.);
- personal psychology (emotional stability, impulsivity, externality, internality, reflexivity, judgment, fear);
- personal (self-esteem and self-confidence, personal attitudes, character, intelligence and other characteristics);

- social psychology (characteristics of micro-social interactions, degree of activity to achieve socially important goals, responsibility for events; levels of social needs, interests, motivations and value orientations, etc.).

Employing both comprehensive and differentiated methodologies is crucial in examining the factors contributing to the development and alteration of personality traits (Shavarskyi et al., 2022). By adopting an integrated approach, it becomes possible to discern key clusters in personality formation, while the differential approach facilitates the analysis of unique or uncommon factors affecting personality development.

These methods are rarely encountered in their most unadulterated state because of the complex interaction of multiple factors. Typically, these factors are not isolated but intertwined within a complex web, influencing not only personality formation but also each other. Furthermore, the impact of these factors is often indirect rather than direct. Additionally, the degree of influence varies and is contingent upon individual characteristics and family dynamics. These methodological approaches are crucial for analyzing the factors contributing to the formation and transformation of personality as they allow for the identification of psychological, psychophysiological, social-psychological, socio-cultural, environmental, economic, and other (both pathogenic and non-pathogenic) influences.

An individual's personality is a crucial aspect of the social fabric within society, which can be analyzed from various perspectives. According to Van Dijk et al. (2020), a person's personality is shaped by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors.

According to Van Scheppingen et al. (2016), personality is a complex construct that encompasses the conscious and active choices individuals make in their lives. These choices can range from accepting oppression to fighting against injustice, from dedicating oneself to societal causes to pursuing personal interests. The manifestation of these choices is influenced by various social and psychological qualities inherent to each individual. Understanding and acknowledging these qualities are crucial for comprehending the nature of personality.

Furthermore, personality development occurs along two primary axes: social development and self-development. Each axis entails distinct factors essential for its progression. For example, social development involves specific components, as illustrated in Figure 1.

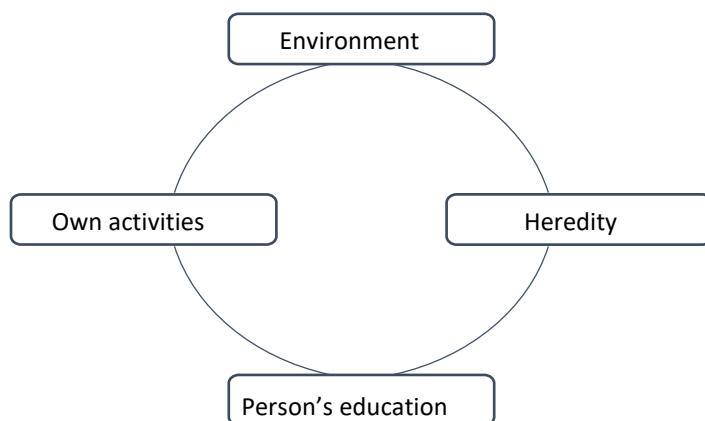


Figure 1 Components of social development and personality formation.

The impact of the social environment on personality formation is determined by a unique and permanent role played by each factor:

1. The future trajectory of an individual's development is significantly shaped by their presence within a specific environment. This environment encompasses various facets of livelihood, including natural surroundings, socio-economic conditions, and material resources within their household. By illustrating the characteristics of this environment, we can understand its influence on the social development outcomes of individuals:

- When someone is surrounded by a caring environment, they develop a tendency to care for others;
- When surrounded by praise, an individual experiences a sense of their own importance;
- When a person is in a hostile environment, he or she acquires negative personality traits;
- When a person finds himself in an environment of happiness and mutual understanding, he learns to share his happiness with others and help each other.

The specific conditions of a particular environment influence how an individual acquires and nurtures certain personality characteristics.

2. Heredity refers to the transmission of traits from one generation to the next, influencing individual development and structural characteristics. The laws governing heredity have been thoroughly examined and explored by Bleidorn and Hopwood (2019).

When these three laws converge, they give rise to an individual who autonomously chooses the essential character traits from their ancestors and imbues them with their own unique characteristics.

3. Education, viewed as a social phenomenon, embodies the impact of society on individuals. Socialization and education are tightly intertwined concepts. In a narrower sense, education refers to the structured interaction between teachers and students aimed at achieving educational goals within the pedagogical framework. This makes teachers' endeavors synonymous with educational activities. Education stands as a key influencer of personality development, with mental, moral, labor, and physical education constituting common classifications. A systematic and deliberate educational approach is essential for the comprehensive nurturing and growth of an individual's personality.

4. Each person autonomously selects their activities, each of which contributes to the development of their personal traits. While it's challenging to categorize all human activities, we can identify three fundamental ones that are universally experienced: play, education, and employment.

Let's examine the fundamental role of education in shaping the innate process of socialization. Breil et al. (2019) highlight the multifaceted nature of the term "socialization", suggesting that it can be interpreted in various ways. In contemporary discourse, socialization is increasingly viewed as a mutual exchange. On one hand, individuals gain social experience as they engage with new environments. On the other hand, they contribute to these environments by integrating their actions into the social fabric. This dynamic interaction serves as the foundation of social understanding, interpersonal connections, and engagements, ultimately molding personal identities. Significantly, this phenomenon relies on the constant influence of societal norms within various human structures, including educational pursuits. This highlights the significance of human-centered education, which involves acknowledging its crucial function in aiding individuals to adjust to different social contexts.

The concept of socialization presents an inherent paradox in its process and outcomes. According to Bublitz et al. (2017), an ideally socialized individual should possess the ability to resist societal norms or specific life circumstances. Yet, we often encounter individuals who appear fully integrated into society but lack the readiness or capability to actively engage with their environment or effect change within it.

Socialization, frequently addressed in scientific and popular literature, is commonly understood as the process of adapting to particular social circumstances. However, an alternative viewpoint exists, suggesting that socialization involves the integration into a particular environment rather than mere adaptation. According to Chikarkova (2016), there are two main types of socialization: adaptation and integration, both influenced by how individuals interact with their social environment. Adaptation involves passively adjusting to the social setting, where individuals feel at ease when the environment is stable. However, any changes or instability in the environment can cause personal discomfort, dissatisfaction, stress, and even major life difficulties.

Integration, as a form of interaction between an individual and their social environment, involves actively engaging with society. It reflects a person's readiness to independently make decisions in various situations and their ability to influence either their surroundings or themselves. The differences between socialization regarding adaptation and integration become especially noticeable when observing the paths of professionals in fields where age imposes limitations on the active phase of their careers.

Socialization is not merely about conforming to societal norms but also about embarking on a path towards self-discovery. It entails molding and honing one's distinct characteristics into a unified framework that guides personal decisions, aspirations, and the very core of one's being. Cultivating individuality enables individuals to navigate society independently and nurtures their creative endeavors.

The life of an individual unfolds within the structured confines of society, which dictates, forbids, and adapts different facets of their existence. The attitudes and norms upheld by society represent condensed lessons from humanity's history. Consequently, each succeeding generation, by inheriting and internalizing this collective wisdom, saves considerable time, energy, and resources, effectively carrying forward the legacy of their predecessors. This ongoing relay of generations within society forms the bedrock of its continuity and preservation.

The true progress of society is dependent on the dynamic balance between social integration and individual expression. As individuals engage with various societal influences and incorporate social norms, they filter them through their unique inner world, life experiences, and personal philosophies, contributing their own distinctiveness to their existence. This leads to a tension between conformity to social norms and the desire for individuality. People both adhere to social expectations while also striving to express their uniqueness, thus embodying a dual role as both products and agents of society. Consequently, individuals are not merely passive recipients of societal influences but active participants in shaping and transforming societal dynamics. Thus, the interaction between individuals and society is characterized by both continuity and innovation, tradition and creativity, emphasizing the pivotal role individuals play in societal evolution.

Each individual plays a distinct role in shaping social progress. Whether it's a significant contribution from notable figures or smaller ones from the majority, the essence of societal evolution lies in deliberate efforts to enhance individual growth. Although outstanding individuals and certain social groups may initiate revolutionary actions, the creative endeavors of the collective originate from individual efforts. The diverse and abundant personal potential within a society facilitates increased opportunities for advancement through creativity.

The relationship between an individual's personality and society develops through the interplay of their traits and actions. Rather than being solely influenced by historical and social circumstances, one's character and pursuits actively shape them.

5. Discussion

The development of each person's character is shaped by the specific historical context in which they find themselves, often beyond their control. While these circumstances are influential, they should not be seen as entirely deterministic. Individuals should acknowledge these conditions while recognizing the role of their unique traits and actions within society. Creating a link between one's identity and their engagement with the social environment is crucial for personal growth and fulfillment. When these elements harmonize, individuals can reach their full potential and find happiness in their chosen paths. In studying personality formation, three key factors stand out as significant.

a) the age factor is viewed as an inherent element influencing the development of personality throughout the stages of individual growth. this perspective highlights the distinct characteristics that emerge at various life stages. This perspective highlights the distinct characteristics that emerge at various life stages, resonating with the findings of Caspi, Roberts, and Shiner (2005);

b) the text explores how social-psychological dynamics interact with individual behaviors, emphasizing how alterations in social surroundings and personal choices influence the evolution of personality. It delves into the comprehension of how purposeful interventions can impact the shaping and organization of one's character. It delves into the comprehension of how purposeful interventions can impact the shaping and organization of one's character, echoing Adler's (2012) study on living into the story through agency and coherence in narrative identity development;

c) elements of transformation associated with self-improvement, self-development, and the formation of personal identity frameworks. This component aligns with the work of Stieger, Flückiger, Rügger, Kowatsch, Roberts, and Allemand (2021), who investigate changing personality traits with the aid of a digital personality change intervention, offering insights into the proactive endeavors individuals can undertake towards personal enhancement.

6. Conclusions

Consequently, we've explored the crucial elements that impact an individual's social development, crucial for significant and timely advancement. We've pinpointed that the motivational aspect of one's personality is central to the process of adapting to social and cultural environments, encompassing motivational direction, self-perception, and the quest for self-fulfillment. It's evident that the formation of this aspect is greatly shaped by the conditions of social and cultural adaptation. Furthermore, it has been observed that the process of social-cultural adaptation evolves over time, transitioning from quantitative changes to qualitative shifts in the relationships within the established structures. In the context of emigration, all components of the personality's value-motivational sphere become interconnected, forming a cohesive system. The dynamics of these structures among emigrants reveal a tendency towards an externalized, conformist, and individualistic motivational orientation. Additionally, it has been noted that the external aspect of social-cultural adaptation involves the development of various adaptation strategies aimed at actively altering the adaptive situation, while the internal aspect concerns the conscious mental efforts of the individual to attain subjective psychological comfort and alleviate tension and frustration.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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