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КУЛЬТУРНЫЙ ШОК

Культурный шок является одной из многочисленных проблем гуманитарных знаний. Культурный шок затрагивает тему, в которой выражена потребность в социокультурном анализе состояния общества, осваивающего динамичный стиль жизни. Между тем, культура остается инертной социальной системой. Человек может постоянно обновлять свой предметный мир, но оставаться верным с детства затверженным нормам и традициям.

In order to define culture shock, I must first define "culture". The word culture has numerous meanings. An early definition was provided by E.B. Taylor (1967), who treated culture as a complicated whole of our social traditions and as prerequisite for us to be a member of the society. Culture can be a set of fundamental notions, practices, and experiences of a group of people that are metaphorically transmitted generations to generation through a learning process. Culture may as well refer to beliefs, norms, and attitudes that are used to conduct our behaviors and to solve human problems. Besides, we can look at culture from an interpretive and performance perspective by viewing it as a system of expressive practices and mutual meanings joined with our actions. Michael Agner, in his book, *Language shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation* (1994), argues that, conventionally, people view cultures as static, fixed 'possessions': "Usually people think of 'culture' as something that a particular group of people have. Cultures roll around the planet like so many billiard balls, self-contained objects that might collide or bounce off the cushion but still retain their perfect round shape".

Culture shock is the loss of emotional equilibrium that people suffer from when moved from an environment where they have learned to function easily and successfully to an unfamiliar one that is less easily negotiated. The effects of culture shock may range from mild uneasiness or temporary homesickness to acute unhappiness or even, in extreme cases, psychological panic. Irritability, hypersensitivity and loss of perspective are common symptoms. Cultural shock occurs for immigrant groups (e.g., foreign students and refugees; businessmen on overseas assignments) as well as for Euro-Americans in their own culture and society (e.g., business institutions undergoing reorganization; populations undergoing massive technological and social change; and staff, clients, and public in schools, hospitals, and other institutions).

The circumstances provoking cultural shock and the individual reactions depend on a variety of factors, including previous experience with other cultures and cross-cultural adaptation; the degree of difference in one's own and the host culture; the degree of preparation; social support networks; and individual psychological characteristics. The multivariate nature of cultural shock requires the development of programmes of preparation, orientation and the acquisition of culturally appropriate social skills. For example, helping students manage their cultural shock experiences is fundamental to their success.

Most experts in intercultural communication agree that the basic cause of culture shock is the abrupt loss of the familiar, which in turn causes a sense of isolation and diminished self-importance. It is brought on by the loss of understood signs of social intercourse. These signs include numerous ways in which we orient ourselves towards the daily life: when to shake hands, what to say when we meet people, when to take statements seriously, how to know someone is joking, and how to interpret facial expressions and body language.

Speaking about culture shock I cannot but mention language shock that is the frustration and mental torture that results in being reduced to the level of a two-year-old in one's ability to

communicate. And the key that unlocks the secrets behind the doors of cultural understanding is language. Without a good control of the language a person is doomed to continual, perennial culture shock. Still it is possible to shorten the duration of culture shock and/or minimize its impact. So, there are some suggestions that may help. They are as follows:

1. Be aware that culture shock will probably affect you one way or another but it does not last forever.

2. Accept the idea that while it may be somewhat painful, culture shock may be a very valuable experience, a mind-stretching process that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight yourself and wider tolerance for other people.

3. Try to remember if and when you become thoroughly disenchanted with your surroundings, that the problem is not so much in them as it is in you.

In conclusion I would like to say that adjusting to a new cultural environment is a developmental episode that requires proper strategies to overcome the obstacles caused by the new culture. Certainly race, class, gender, personality, age, and other factors will take a role. The environment or situation might be seen as more or less “friendly” to adaptation. It can help if the new environment is closer to the home culture. Potential results can embrace psychological health, functional, and the development of an intercultural identity with full integration into the culture.