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## Cross-national examination of teachers’ intercultural values

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### Abstract

The relevance of the studied problem is substantiated by the fact that social living conditions, the vector of society and human requirements development which predetermine transformation of modern teachers’ values changed in the post-Soviet area over a quarter of a century after the USSR collapsed. The research aims to single out cross-cultural features of social and professional values and valuable orientations of teachers - practitioners in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Armenia. The paper covers the results of comparative analysis of teachers’ social and professional values and valuable orientations hierarchy; system-forming values and valuable orientations in invariant models of a value system of teachers – representatives of different cultures are revealed. Obtained results of cross-cultural research enable to determine perspective directions of teachers’ professional activity efficiency increase.

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*Keywords:* intercultural values, social values, professional values, personality values, teachers.

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Actualizing the problem

The relevance of the studied problem is provided for by the change of modern teachers’ educational values perception in the context of the transforming society and new challenges of development. Many works are devoted to this problem; a certain level of value system study including teacher’s valuable orientation has already been achieved. It should be noted that the concept of value is the subject matter of various sciences, such as philosophy,

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sociology, psychology and pedagogy.

Modern philosophical literature considers values as part of spiritual culture (Zdravomyslov, 1986); characteristic of interrelation of natural and social phenomena with needs of the subject (Granin, 2014); human's life guidelines (Sagatovsky, 1972).

In sociology the concept "value" is considered in regard to a certain historical epoch, various social groups, national cultures and some individuals. A number of researchers (Shyukking, 1928) singled out universal human values (truth, kindness, usefulness, beauty) which possess an over-individual value. Sociology has a number of directions within which values are described from various positions: as ideas of the desirable (Parsons, 1997); as an object of demands (Becker, 2003).

Psychology and pedagogy have not yet developed an accurate conceptual differentiation between such concepts as "valuable orientations" and "values". Nowadays, the definition of values as an aspect of motivation and value orientations as subjective concepts or different attitudes (social sets) that take a comparatively high position in the hierarchical structure of personality activity regulation are the most accepted ones.

Ravkin's (1995) classification of values deserves certain attention. He specified socio-political values; intellectual values; moral values and values of professional-pedagogical activity. The social-pedagogical aspect makes the basis of some other scientists' approach to classification: insertion of pedagogical activity into the structure of society and social relations. In this regard, the authors determine public-pedagogical, professional-group and individual-personal values (Korotayeva & Matveychuk, 2012).

Values of professional-pedagogical activity are of special interest for us as they are the subject matter of our discussion. Issues of teachers' pedagogical values formation and functioning were considered by such Russian scientists as Isayev (2004), Andreyev (2005), Barbashova (2009), Petukhova (2013), Biktagirova & Valeeva (2014) and other researchers.

The issue of teachers' values is presented in various aspects in foreign researches as well. In Kwakman & Shapiro's (2003) works factors (including teacher's values) influencing teachers' participation in professional training activity are specified; influence of teachers' personality values on professional self-education is considered (Garnham & Williams, 1980); impact of valuable orientations on teachers' staff interaction and cooperation are studied (Basabe & Ros, 2005; Ning & Lee, 2015); influence of multiple goal orientation on learning motivation and learning teachers' behavior is considered (Li & Shieh, 2016); dynamics of values held by future sports teachers (Malinauskas, 2015).

A contemporary teacher must possess cross-cultural values, which include human and ethnic values. Cross-cultural values are system creating in the structure of social-professional values. Despite the fact that teachers' valuable-motivational sphere was of interest for many authors, social-professional values of the teacher as steady motivational-meaning formations in the context of successful teachers' pedagogical activity and professional development have not been studied sufficiently. In the context of our research teachers' social and professional values are understood as a dialectic unity of teachers' social, professional and personal values making the basis of their general cultural and professional competences. The structure of social-professional values includes: cross-cultural values - spiritual-moral, life, civil; and also intellectual and professional values.

Thus, the study of teachers' social-professional values, their correlation with values prevailing in the society can provide the clue for understanding psychological problems which the modern teacher experiences, and will enable to afford a psychological support of pedagogical activity.

## *1.2. Purpose of the research*

The research objective: to reveal cross-cultural features of social-professional values and valuable orientations of teachers - practitioners in Russia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Methods of research

The complex of complementary methods was used in the research: 1) theoretical methods: study and analysis of social, psychology-pedagogical literature on the research matter, synthesis, comparison, classification, systematization; 2) empirical methods: questioning, questionnaire, stating experiment; 3) data processing methods (quantitative and qualitative analysis).

### 2.2. Base of research

The experimental work aimed to study cross-cultural regularities of modern teachers' valuable sphere formation was conducted in different countries participating in the cross-national examination initiated by Kazan (Volga) Federal University (Russia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia). 118 teachers from Russia, 160 from the Republic of Belarus, 62 from the Republics of Moldova, and 100 from Armenia took part in the research.

### 2.3. Diagnostic tools

Teachers' survey was carried out in compliance with the technique "Diagnostics of teachers' social-professional values" developed by the authors (Drozdikova-Zaripova & Kalatskaya) and the questionnaire of the participant.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The list of values including two classes of values is offered: terminal and tool classes which have to be estimated on a 7-point scale (on the scale from 5 points to -1 point). Stimulus material of its each part is presented by a set of 40 values. According to the first list of values the importance of each value is estimated as the guideline principle in respondent's lives, the second list evaluates values due to the degree of their greatest realization in each testee's life (valuable orientations). Lists of values are designed according to the following principle: each value corresponding to a specified type of values alternates in a certain strict sequence (spiritual-moral, life, civil, intellectual and professional values), as a result all 40 values can be grouped in five types of values and each group of values consists of 8 values. Processing of results is carried out by calculation of mean points for each type of values (list 1) and valuable orientations (list 2) which show the degree of their importance for the testee according to the assessment scale.

## 3. Results

Such indicators as participants' age, their gender, pedagogical work experience and nationality (Table 1) were defined by the questionnaire in each sample of testees.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of international research participants' personal data (in %).

Countries	Gender		Age (years)				Pedagogical work experience (years)		
	Female	Male	≤ 30	31-45	46-55	>55	0-5	6-20	>20
Russia	93,2	6,8	18,6	27,1	40,7	13,6	18,6	18,6	62,8
Belarus	85	15	10,6	54,4	26,9	8,1	5	41,9	53,1
Moldova	90,3	9,7	9,7	33,9	24,2	32,2	6,5	32,2	61,3
Armenia	97	3	12	48	25	15	11	37	52

The national structure of the studied groups is the following:

- Russia (the Republic of Tatarstan): Russians - 44,1%; Tatars - 55,9%.
- Belarus: Belarusians - 95%; Russians - 1,8%; Ukrainians - 1,3%; Poles - 1,3% and Turkmens - 0,6 %.
- Moldova: Moldavians - 47%; Russians - 26%; Ukrainians - 16%; Romanians - 6%; Bulgarians - 1%; Gagauz -

2%; Germans - 2%.

- Armenia: Armenians - 100%.

The comparative analysis of teachers' survey results revealed types of values in the structure of teachers' social-professional values (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of types of teachers' values in different countries (ranks, points).

Countries	Types of values				
	Spiritual and moral	Life	Civil	Intellectual	Vocational
Russia	I (3,69 ±0,39)	II (3,61±0,64)	IV (3,42±0,34)	V (3,39±0,38)	III (3,59±0,31)
Belarus	I (3,7±0,38)	II (3,68±0,64)	IV (3,56±0,33)	V (3,32±0,39)	III (3,58±0,43)
Moldova	I (3,67±0,36)	II (3,62±0,65)	III (3,55±0,44)	V (3,4±0,37)	IV (3,53±0,35)
Armenia	I (3,93±0,29)	II (3,82±0,41)	IV (3,71±0,31)	V (3,65±0,26)	III (3,77±0,23)

Table 3 presents the results of distribution of valuable orientations types in the structure of social-professional values of teachers - participants of the international research.

Table 3. Distribution of valuable orientations types in teachers from different countries (ranks, points).

Countries	Types of valuable orientations				
	Spiritual and moral	Life	Civil	Intellectual	Vocational
Russia	I (3,88 ±0,23)	IV (3,48 ±0,386)	V (3,37 ±0,3)	III (3,49 ±0,13)	II (3,55 ±0,16)
Belarus	I (3,82 ±0,25)	IV (3,34 ±0,48)	V (3,32 ±0,21)	III (3,42 ±0,09)	II (3,5 ±0,18)
Moldova	I (3,88 ±0,21)	IV (3,41 ±0,58)	V (3,16 ±0,36)	III (3,45 ±0,09)	II (3,51 ±0,29)
Armenia	I (4,03 ±0,21)	II (3,81 ±0,31)	V (3,67±0,3)	IV (3,73 ±0,15)	III (3,78±0,23)

To obtain a better picture concerning features of teachers' valuable sphere structure, the correlation analysis of links between social-professional values and valuable orientations of teachers from different countries was conducted; highly significant correlation links of average and strong density were found on the studied indicators.

It was revealed that the following refers to system-forming social-professional values and valuable orientations in invariant models of the teacher value system :

- Russia: professional pedagogical ideals, leisure, love, national security, humanity, and also mercy, respect of intellectual property, civil liability and personalisation;

- the Republic of Belarus: homeland security, innovations, public order, social equality, science, and also intellectual activity and respect of intellectual property, erudition and patriotism;

- the Republic of Moldova: social equality, innovations, humanity, and also honesty, creative activity, endurance and self-control, creativity;

- Armenia: innovations, intelligence, public order, social contacts, prestige of a profession, and also independence in planning and organization of own activity and activity of children, sense of duty, goodwill, mastering pedagogical skills.

#### 4. Discussion

Within our research and on the basis of individual data, social portraits of the average teacher of the post-Soviet area are obtained. So, Russian teachers are presented by female teachers, the basic age group is from 46 to 55 years, pedagogical experience is over 20 years; the national structure of teachers depends on the region of residence in the Russian Federation. In particular, in the Republic of Tatarstan teachers of Russian nationality made nearly a half of the sample, and Tatar teachers made the rest.

Women of the Belarusian nationality aged between 31 to 45 years, having over 20 years of pedagogical experience prevail in the teaching staff of the Republic of Belarus.

The sample of teachers from the Republic of Moldova is presented by female teachers; they are mainly of the Moldavian nationality, of average age group and a retirement age, with a pedagogical experience over 20 years.

Teachers of Armenia can be characterized as follows: they are teachers of the Armenian nationality, aged between 31 to 45 years, pedagogical work experience is a little over 20 years.

The summary analysis of a ratio of values types (terminal values) in studied teachers showed that values types hierarchy in accordance with the degree of decrease of their importance in the structure of teachers' social and professional values in Russia, Belarus and Armenia are similar; the distribution of values types is the following: spiritual-moral, life, professional; civil and intellectual values take the last place.

It is revealed that for all studied teachers of the former Soviet Union spiritual-moral and life values are especially significant types of social and professional values; intellectual values take the last place.

According to criteria of expressiveness the leading terminal values in teachers of the studied countries are values of health and happy family life (they take the first and second position due to their importance), though in Russia the value of happy family life takes the third position in the hierarchy of teachers' values, and kindness has the second position.

For Russian, Belarusian and Armenian teachers, the achievement of Happiness as the greatest internal satisfaction with conditions, completeness and awareness of life and implementation of the human mission is especially important. At the same time teachers of Moldova believe that they need Internal harmony to achieve personal and professional self-realization; Professional pedagogical ideals are significant for Belorussian teachers. It is especially important to emphasize that the majority of teachers from different countries are guided by values of Peaceful life.

Public recognition and science (an opportunity to carry out scientific activity) are least valuable to teachers of Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Armenia. Besides, Russian, Belarusian and Moldavian teachers consider that the intellectual property and their authority are not significant values of the modern person. As for Armenian teachers a number of features have been revealed; in particular, in their opinion internationalism (friendship and cooperation between nations) and political freedom in modern conditions are of little significance as leading life principles.

Examination of valuable orientations (tool values) of teachers in Russia, the Republics Belorus and Moldova shows that spiritual-moral and professional values take the first and second positions, intellectual and life values take the third and fourth positions, and civil values take the last place in the hierarchy according to the degree of their realization. The difference with Armenian teachers is that they realize life valuable orientations in their life more often than professional and intellectual values.

The summary analysis of all types of tool values having social-professional content demonstrates that the most realized values in life of teachers from former USSR countries are spiritual-moral values, and civil values are less realized.

It was found out that Goodwill, Good Education, Honesty, Respect for themselves and others refer to the dominating value orientations in all teachers of the studied countries. It is possible to distinguish the following interesting facts: education and mastering pedagogical skills also refer to the group of leading valuable orientations in Russian and Moldavian teachers; Armenian teachers regard education and patriotism as leading valuable orientations, and teachers from the Republic of Belarus consider mercy and sense of duty as leading valuable orientations.

At the same time ideological-political conviction, high demands and social activity have the least value in regard

to valuable orientations in teachers - representatives of the studied countries.

The comparative analysis of system-forming social-professional values of the studied teachers revealed certain regularities, namely: for teachers of such countries as Belarus, Moldova and Armenia an innovation is a fundamental value (development, obtaining and introduction of objectively new knowledge). Values connected with professional characteristics (professional pedagogical ideals and prestige of a profession) refer to a number of fundamental values of the valuable sphere in Russian and Armenian teachers. It was specified that civil values are a determinant valuable sphere for Belarusian teachers.

It was established that the specificity of culture predetermines the realization of peculiar system forming values; so the coincidence on system-forming value orientations are found only in manifestation of respect for intellectual property in Russian and Belarusian teachers.

## 5. Conclusion

Cross-cultural examination of world's experience resulted in the following conclusions:

1. Women of middle age, with a pedagogical experience slightly over 20 years make the most of teachers' staff.
2. For modern teachers of the post-Soviet area (Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Armenia) spiritual-moral values are leading principles in their life, and are most realized ones.
3. The maximum proximity of social-professional values and valuable orientations hierarchy is revealed in Russian and Belarusian teachers.
4. Intellectual valuable orientations in teachers of the studied countries take more expressed leading positions in comparison with intellectual values-purposes.
5. According to criteria of expressiveness the leading terminal values of teachers in the studied countries are health and happy family life; public recognition and science are the least valuable ones.
6. Goodwill, good breeding, honesty, respect for themselves and others are key valuable guidelines realized in modern teachers' life; at the same time ideological and political conviction, high inquiries and social activity play an insignificant role in their life.
7. Revealed system-forming social-professional values (terminal and tool) of valuable sphere in teachers - representatives of various countries are not the leading values for the studied teachers according to the degree of importance. Thus, it should be noted that some values are not fully realized by teachers; there is a fact of divergence between declared valuable orientations and actual values, and, therefore, it is important to develop a system to realize local incentives to interest various categories of pedagogical workers to increase their social and professional values at various levels; it is recommended to pay special attention to innovative activity.

Among perspective directions of research it is possible to distinguish the following: study of the valuable sphere of teachers from other countries which are not a part of the former USSR republics to confirm the uniqueness of a valuable basis in professional development of teachers as carriers and regulators of society spiritual culture regardless their national identity, space and time; search of new perspective directions to increase and stimulate the efficiency of teachers' professional activity in the context of cross-cultural dialogue.

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