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**THE VALUES AND PURPOSE-IN-LIFE ORIENTATIONS OF
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RUSSIA AND TRANSDNIESTRIA**

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Abstract

The article reports the results of a study of values and purpose-in-life orientations of university students in Russia and Transdnistria. The study covered 79 students of the Russian New University (Moscow) and 88 students at the Shevchenko Transdnistria State University, Tiraspol. Both groups were polyethnic. The students are studying for degrees of psychologist and pedagogue-psychologist. The Rockeach Value Orientations Test was used to study values. To study the purpose-in-life orientations of students the Crumbaugh and L.Maholick purpose-in-life orientations test adapted for a Russian language sample by D.A. Leontyev was used. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to assess the significance of the differences revealed. The study has revealed the peculiarities of value and purpose-if-life orientations of students in Russia and Transdnistria. An analysis of terminal values has shown that in the Transdnistrian sample the values are arranged as follows in order of importance attached to them: "health," "love," "freedom," "self-confidence," "material well-being." The most prized values in the Russian sample were as follows: "happy family life," "having good and loyal friends," "life wisdom," "health" and "love". Among instrumental values the following were named as significant in the Transdnistria sample: "good manners," "cheerfulness," "education," "punctuality" and "responsibility". The Russian students singled out as significant, along with "cheerfulness" and "good manners" the values of "strong will," "independence" and "self-control".

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1. Introduction

Scholars have exhibited a keen interest in the value and purpose-in-life sphere of young people as the object of research. The interest of research in this field stems from the awareness that the youth is an important resource of society which has a high potential and determines the future of the state.

In considering the categories of values three approaches can be identified in the literature. In the first approach, value is understood as significance, meaning. In the second approach value correlates with objects that meet an individual's needs. In the third approach value is seen as individual reality connected with motives, needs and interests of the individual (Leontyev, 1996). According to Leontyev (2003), the values of an individual manifest themselves at the stage of activity "motive formation." They are reflected in the structure of specific motives and their meaning characteristics. Personal values form the meaning with regard to the motives of activity, meaning dispositions and meaning constructs of the individual (Leontyev, 2003).

The individual's value orientations manifest themselves in a selective and differentiated attitude to society's spiritual and material values. It is a system of individual convictions, preferences and attitudes mediated by personal meaning and manifesting themselves through behavior and activity. The individual's value orientations provide a link between the individual's internal world and the external world (Yanitskiy, Seryy, & Pelekh, 2013).

Rockeach (1973) has found that a person has within his/her purview a small number of values by which he/she is guided. In the view of Rockeach values are guiding principles of life, criteria for people in making their choices, taking decisions and acting, in assessing themselves, the surrounding people and events.

Rockeach (1973) defines value orientations as abstract ideas that can be assessed as positive or negative, are expressed in the individual's convictions concerning preferred goals and types of behavior but are not connected with a specific object or situation. People can have similar values but to differing degrees.

Rockeach (1973) divides values into two classes: terminal and instrumental. Terminal values are the individual's convictions or values-goals the individual considers to be necessary and worthy. Instrumental values, in turn, are seen as values-means, as a mode of actions preferable from the individual's point of view.

According to Schwartz (1994), all the values are above situations and represent concepts or convictions arranged in order of their significance. They pertain to a person's behavior and influence the choice and assessment of results. Differences between values, according to Schwartz, depend on the type of motivational goals they express.

The individual's purpose-in-life orientation is a system, a complex entity that brings together a number of components: the individual's sense of purpose, satisfaction with life and possibilities of fulfilling his/ her potential in life and the meaning of life. The purpose-in-life orientations are formed in the process of reflecting on the values, consistently and step-by-step, gradually acquiring stability and independence from the conditions and may have a substantial impact on a person's life (Leontyev, 2000).

A large proportion of the studies of values and purpose-in-life orientations of the individual are aimed at identifying the links of these psychological phenomena to other psychological characteristics of

the individual: with the learned helplessness of the individual phenomenon (Dubynin & Vedeneyeva, 2014), with the students' self-esteem (Sayko & Guslyakova, 2013), with anxiety as an indicator of emotional discomfort of youth (Likhacheva, Ognev, & Kazakov, 2013), with a tendency to violate social norms (Smotrova & Gritsenko, 2009), with life strategies and way of life (Beletskaya, 2011), with religious identity (Dvoynin, 2011), with the attitude to oneself (Kuzmina, 2018) and self-determination of the individual (Petrovskiy, 2013).

Thus, values are understood as goals, meanings and ideals that may determine the overall direction of the individual's activities. The purpose-in-life orientations is a complex psychological phenomenon that comprises a number of components: the individual's sense of purpose, satisfaction with life and possibilities of fulfilling one's potential in it.

2. Problem Statement

The ongoing political and economic changes in Russia and Transdnistria, the new freedom of citizens' movement, choice of lifestyle and pluralism of cultures make an imprint on modern society, including the young generation. The character of international relations and Russia's social policy at present (orientation towards strengthening family, support for encouraging people to have children, etc.) and, in turn, the special position, political and socio-economic problems of the Republic of Transdnistria which is unrecognized in the world, the clash of the traditional original culture and Western trends may have an impact on the value and purpose-in-life orientations of Russian and Transdnistrian students. No previous studies aimed at revealing and comparing the differences of value and purpose-in-life orientations of Russian and Transdnistrian students have been carried out. The features revealed may confirm or deny the influence of the cross-cultural factor on the value and purpose-in-life orientations of the individual.

3. Research Questions

What characterizes the life plans of Russian and Transdnistrian students after graduation? Are there differences in the values sphere of students in Russia and Transdnistria? Are there significant differences in purpose-in-life orientations between Russian and Transdnistrian youth?

4. Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of the study is to find out the life plans of Russian and Transdnistrian students upon graduation from university.

The second purpose of this study is to reveal the distinguishing features of the values of Russian and Transdnistrian students.

The third purpose is to reveal the features of purpose-in-life orientations of students in Russia and Transdnistria.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Subjects

The study was carried out at the Russian New University (Moscow) and Shevchenko Transdnistria State University (Tiraspol). The study covered 167 students.

Let us describe the features of the samples in more detail. The sample of Russian students was represented by 79 students of the Russian New University (Moscow) in their first and second year at the faculty of psychology and pedagogy (79 students). The Russian sample is polyethnic, with Russian students accounting for the larger part (65.8%). It has to be noted that the sample includes only those students born on the territory of Russia who consider Russia to be their motherland and call themselves Russians. The average age of the students surveyed is 18.98 years.

The sample of Transdnistrian students included 88 students in various years at the faculty of pedagogy and psychology at Shevchenko Transdnistria State University (Tiraspol). Part of the teaching at this university is conducted in Russian so that there was no doubt that one and the same diagnostic toolkit could be used in the survey. The sample of Transdnistrian students is polyethnic and is represented mostly by Russians (45.5%), Ukrainians (25%) and Moldovans (13.6%). The sample of Transdnistrian students included only those students who were born on the territory of Transdnistria and consider it to be their Motherland. The average age of the respondents was 20.1 years.

5.2. Procedure

The study was carried out in 3 stages: 1) Survey and collection of data on the respondents. 2) Diagnosis of the values of respondents. 3) Diagnosis of purpose-in-life orientations of the respondents.

At the first stage the students were asked to answer questions with two variants of answers: 1) Where are you planning to live after graduation: are you planning to stay in your country or go abroad? 2) What are you planning to do after graduation: to work in the profession you have been trained for or acquire a new profession? At the second stage the Rockeach Value Orientations Test was used to study the values of Russian and Transdnistrian students (Rockeach, 1973). At the third stage purpose-in-life orientations of students were studied in accordance with the Crumbaugh and Maholick purpose-in-life test as adapted by Leontyev (2000) for the Russian sample. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to assess the significance of the value and purpose-in-life differences that have been revealed.

6. Findings

6.1. The plans of Russian and Transdnistrian students after graduation

The results of the survey of students to reveal their plans upon graduation are presented in Table 01.

Table 01. Results of the survey of students “what are you planning to do after graduation?”

Variants of answer	To work in the profession acquired Number of persons/%		Variants of answer	Acquire a new profession Number of persons/%	
	Russian sample	Transdnestrian sample		Russian sample	Transdnestrian sample
Stay in the home country	69/ 87.34%	28 / 31.8%	Stay in the home country	6/ 7.59%	13/ 17.4%
Go abroad	1/1.28%	39 / 44.3%	Go abroad	3/ 3.79%	8 /6.5 %

It will be seen from Table 1 that the majority of students in the Russian and Transdnestrian samples would prefer to work in the profession for which they have been trained (70 Russian students and 67 Transdnestrian students respectively). Only 9 Russian students and 21 Transdnestrian students wanted to acquire a new profession and be retrained.

It will also be seen from Table 1 that 75 students of the Russian university and only 41 students of the Transdnestrian university would like to stay in the home country. More than half the students in the Transdnestrian sample (47) are planning to go abroad.

6.2. Features of value orientations of Russian and Transdnestrian students

The Rockeach method makes it possible to diagnose the individual’s terminal and instrumental values.

6.2.1 Features of the terminal values of Russian and Transdnestrian students

Let us analyze the results of the methods of diagnosing the individual’s terminal and instrumental values. The significance of the differences in terminal values between the samples was determined by applying the Mann-Whitney U-test. These results are presented in Table 02.

Table 02. Results of the average group analysis and ranking of indicators of terminal values of the respondents (Rockeach)

Terminal values	Mann-Whitney U-test	Transdnestrian students		Russian students	
		Mean value	Rank	Mean value	Rank
Active life (fullness and emotional content of life)		7.76	6	6.85	6
Life wisdom (mature judgment and common sense gained by life experience)	6.32***	9.14	9	4.94	3
Health (physical and mental)		4.04	1	5.04	4
Interesting job	-5.34***	7.89	7	10.92	12
Beauty of nature and art (experiencing beauty in nature and art)	3.887***	12.65	18	10.05	8
Love (spiritual and physical closeness to the loved person)	-3.32**	4.54	2	6.49	5
Material comfort in life (lack of financial difficulties)	-8.42***	7.73	5	13.84	17

Good and loyal friends	4.82***	11,71	13	4.89	2
Social recognition (respect of surrounding people, the work collective, workmates)		10	11	10.71	11
Learning (possibility to enhance education, broaden mental horizons, general culture, intellectual level)	-3.19**	9.59	10	11.77	13
Productive life (the fullest use of one's opportunities, potential and abilities)	-3.6***	8.56	8	11.84	14
Development (self-improvement, constant physical and intellectual improvement)	2.5*	12.52	16	10.14	10
Leisure (pleasant, not taxing life, absence of obligations)		10.34	12	12.27	15
Freedom (independence of judgments and acts)	-4.22***	5.61	3	13.08	16
Happy family life		12.51	15	4.2	1
Other people's happiness (well-being, development and improvement of other people, the whole nation, humankind)		12.61	17	14.08	18
Creativity (opportunities for creative activity)	3.58***	12.35	14	9.97	7
Self-confidence (inner harmony, freedom from inner contradictions and doubts)	-3.48**	7.41	4	10.06	9

Note: only the values of significant differences are indicated

* $p \leq 0,05$

** $p \leq 0,01$

*** $p \leq 0,001$

Table 2 shows mean indicators of terminal values, i.e. the values most closely linked with the purpose in life as well as the ranking of values of Transdnistrian and Russian students.

A comparison of ranks reveals that the most important values for students in the Transdnistrian sample are: health, love, freedom, self-confidence, material well-being. In turn the most significant values for students in the Russian sample are: happy family life, having good and loyal friends, life wisdom, health and love.

6.2.2 Features of instrumental values of Russian and Transdnistrian students

Let us compare the instrumental values of the respondents. Instrumental values are values-means, i.e. values seen as instruments for achieving goals. These data are presented in Table 03.

Table 03. Results of mean group analysis and ranking of instrumental value indicators of the respondents

Instrumental values	Mann-Whitney U-test	Transdnestrian students		Russian students	
		Mean value	Rank	Mean value	Rank
Neatness (tidiness), ability to keep things in order, orderly pursuit of affairs	7.59***	7.24	4	13.06	16
Good manners		5.0	1	4.56	2
High demands to life and high ambitions	5.99***	12.68	17	7.33	8
Cheerfulness (sense of humor)	3.04**	6.26	2	4.33	1
Readiness to perform one's duty (discipline)	6.4***	9.65	10	13.99	17
Independence (ability to act independently and decisively)	3.89***	9.71	11	6.92	4
Intolerance of shortcomings in oneself and others	5.55***	13.63	18	16.97	18
Education (breadth of knowledge, generally high cultural level)		6.89	3	7.39	9
Responsibility (sense of duty, keeping one's word)	4.29***	7.47	5	10.85	13
Rationalism (ability to think rationally and logically, to make rational decisions)	4.79***	9.55	9	12.46	15
Self-control (restraint, self-discipline)	4.23***	9.45	8	7.01	5
Boldness in upholding one's opinion and views		10.47	14	11.01	14
Strong will (the ability to stand one's ground, not to be deterred by difficulties)	4.02***	9.35	7	6.89	3
Tolerance (of the views and opinions of others, ability to forgive others' mistakes and delusions)		10.58	15	10.76	12
Breadth of views (ability to understand the others' point of view, to respect the tastes, customs and habits of others)	4.11***	11.57	16	8.96	10
Honesty (truthfulness, sincerity)		8.15	6	7.24	7
Efficiency (industry, productivity in work)		10.22	12	9.95	11
Ready sympathy (capacity to care)	4.22***	10.45	13	7.13	6

Note: only the values of significant differences are indicated

* $p \leq 0,05$

** $p \leq 0,01$

*** $p \leq 0,001$

As seen from Table 3 the respondents in the Transdnestrian sample prize most of all good manners, cheerfulness, education, neatness and responsibility. The students in the Russian sample, along with cheerfulness and good manners, prize strong will, independence and self-control.

6.3. Specificities of purpose-in-life orientations of Russian and Transdnestrian students

Let us consider the results of the empirical study carried out. First let us look at the results of the application of the Crumbaugh and Maholick purpose-in-life test as adapted by Leontyev. The data obtained are presented in Table 04.

Table 04. Results of average group analysis of purpose-in-life orientations of Russian and Transdnestrian students

Indicator	Mean values by sample		Mann-Whitney U-test
	Russian sample	Transdnestrian sample	
Purposes in life	34.82	31.34	2.646**
Life process	32.28	30.08	1.808
Results in life	27.41	25.5	2.425*
Control locus: myself	23.02	21.11	2.884*
Control locus: life	33.87	30.64	3.23**
General indicator of life orientation	110.89	102.42	2.913**

Note: levels of significance

* $p \leq 0,05$

** $p \leq 0,01$

It will be seen from Table 4 that the purpose-in-life orientation indicators of students in both samples are within the average level (average norm). However, on most parameters and the general indicator of purpose-in-life orientations of the individual the group of Russian students surpasses its Transdnestrian opposite numbers on 5 and 1 % levels of significance. This may be due to the fact that the Russian sample included younger students who have still the “all-or-nothing” attitude of youth. The only exception is the “process of life” parameter for which the difference falls short of the significant level. The data obtained indicate that both groups of respondents are by and large satisfied with their present life.

The students see the process of their life as interesting, emotionally fulfilling and meaningful. The most significant differences, as seen from Table 4, have been recorded on the “control locus: life” scale, the difference being in favor of students of the Russian sample.

Thus, students in the Russian sample are more given to controlling their life and self-fulfillment than the students in the Transdnestrian sample who are more inclined to doubt the possibility of fulfilling their potential under the current circumstances.

7. Conclusion

The study carried out has revealed the specificities of the life plans, values and purpose-in-life orientations of Russian and Transdnestrian students.

1. The revealed intention of students in both samples upon graduation to work in the profession they are being trained for suggests that the students have chosen the professions of psychologists and pedagogues-psychologist consciously and in accordance with their individual interests.

According to the data obtained there is a difference between Russian and Transdnestrian students in choosing the place where to live after graduation. Thusly Russian students see opportunities for fulfilment in their home country while Transdnestrian students associate their life perspectives with going abroad. We believe that this is due to the difficult political and economic situation that prevails in Transdnestria.

2. The revealed differences in terminal values give an idea of the current needs of Transdnestrian and Russian students. In the Transdnestrian sample “self-confidence” and “material well-being” are significant which may also be due to the difficult political and economic situation in the republic which has not been recognized in the world. Russian students lean towards collectivist values of “happy family life” and “having good and loyal friends”.

The study has also revealed the features of instrumental values of the students of Russian and Transdnestrian universities. In the Transdnestrian sample, along with the values of “good manners” and “cheerfulness” respondents stress the importance of achieving their own aims: “neatness” and “responsibility”. The students in the Russian sample, unlike the Transdnestrian students, feel that if they are to achieve their own goals the priorities are “strong will,” “independence” and “self-control” which require the development of the subjective qualities of the individual to implement their plans.

3. The study has shown that the students of the Russian university have higher indicators of purpose-in-life orientations of the individual than the students of the Transdnestrian University. This warrants the conclusion that the conditions in which Russian students study and live are more conducive to the development of a sense of purpose, more profound understanding of life, and confidence in the possibility of self-fulfillment and of taking important life decisions.

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