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CONCEPTS OF "RESPECT" AND "RESPECT FOR PARENTS" IN
RUSSIAN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS

Alexandra M. Konovalova (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) Lomonosov Moscow State University, I.M.Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, Moscow, Russian Federation, konovalovaam@gmail.com

Abstract

The article is devoted to the semantic analysis of the concepts of "respect" and "respect for parents" as well as the comparison of the semantic profiles of these concepts in older adolescents and adults. The beginning of the article contains a theoretical review of the concepts of respect, shows the lack of development of this concept in psychology and the relevance of the study of respect for parents. The following are the results of an empirical study of the semantics behind "respect" and "respect for parents". Results obtained from Russian adolescents aged 14 to 18 (n = 164) are compared to those from Russian adults aged 22 to 70 (n = 220). The study is conducted using the techniques of semantic differential and a semantic scale of the concept of "respect" comprising 26 statements about the possible definitions and meaning of the concept. Semantic universals of the "respect" and "respect for parents" concepts are highlighted. The differences in the perception of these concepts between adolescents and adults are described. The discussion of the results leads to conclusions about a more positive and cooperative attitude of the respondents towards the concept of "respect for parents" in comparison with the concept of "respect", and about the difference between the views of adolescents and adults on these concepts. The results of the factor analysis enable us to conclude that respect for parents is interpreted either as a feeling of respect towards one's parents or the prescribed respectful mode of behaviour.

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Keywords: Respect; respect for parents; semantics; parent-child relationships; adolescents.



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1. Introduction

The concept of "respect" is widely used in various branches of knowledge: philosophy, ethics, pedagogics, psychology. However, there is no accepted generalized definition of the term. The empirical studies of respect have started relatively recently, and since 2000 they have proven to attract researchers' increasing interest. There started to appear studies dedicated to respect in the context of parent-child relations, psychology of groups, psychology of leadership, and psychology of conflict. In some studies the concept of "respect" is used without any description (Fiske et al., 1999), in other studies the concept is described, but its definition is not given (Frei et al., 2002; Morrison, 2006). In some studies, definition of respect is suggested, but there is no empirical testing of the proposed definition (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2008; van Quaquebeke et al., 2007). Some descriptions and definitions of respect are too broad (De Cremer et al., 2005; Simon et al., 2005). In general, there is a lack of empirical studies of respect in psychology.

Thus, as we began to consider respect in parent-child relationships, we faced the problem of the concept's insufficient operationalization. In our further research we plan to analyze the respect of children to their parents in an extensive series of studies, so we have deemed it necessary to proceed this by the clarification of the two concepts' semantics in Russian speakers and undertaken the task of comparing them.

1.1. The concepts of "respect" and "respect for parents" in psychology.

The concept of "respect for parents" is more common in queries addressed to practicing psychologists. In psychological dictionaries and reference books, the terms "respect" and "respect for parents" do not exist. This is an indirect indicator of the underdevelopment of these concepts in psychology. In addition, in specialist psychological and pedagogical literature the concept of "respect" is often mixed with other concepts, such as love and authority, which once again confirms the relevance of this study.

Maslow considers respect as an innate need and places it on the top of the pyramid of needs – between the need for love and belonging and the need for self-actualization. From the point of view of Maslow, all people need recognition, appreciation of their qualities, and respect from others. It is also necessary for the person to be able to respect themselves. Needs of this level are divided into two classes: 1) the desires and aspirations associated with the concept of "achievement"; 2) the need for reputation or prestige (Maslow understood it as the respect of others), the need in gaining status, attention, recognition, fame (Maslow, 1970).

From the point of view of E. Berne, respect relates to reliability, commitment, and trust. Respect is the attitude on the level of Adult–Adult (terminology of transactional analysis); it is based on direct interaction and execution of all types of agreements without excuses or reservations. Respect involves reliability, mutual obligation and trust, this trust being the basis for respect (Berne, 1970). In addition, E. Berne considered respect as one of the mandatory components of love: love involves respect, admiration, friendship, and intimacy (Berne, 1970).

For Fromm respect is also a necessary component of love. Love is an attitude towards yourself and others, involving care, responsibility, respect, knowledge, and willingness to let the other person grow and unfold (Fromm, 1964). Without respect for and knowledge of a loved one love degenerates into domination and possessiveness. Erich Fromm defines respect as follows: “respect is not fear and awe; it denotes ... the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality”. He adds: “To respect a person is

not possible without knowing him; care and responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge” of human individuality (Fromm, 1964).

In Russian psychology, A. Spivakovskaya and L. Pankova associate the concept of respect with love: A. Spivakovskaya – with parental love, L. Pankova – with sexual love. A. Spivakovskaya offers a three-dimensional model of parental love, according to which the type of love is determined by the combination of three indicators: like/dislike of parent to child; respect/contempt for the child; proximity/distance (Spivakovskaya, 1986). L. Pankova also includes respect in love and distinguishes three stages of love: 1) interest, sympathy, affection; 2) admiration, enthusiasm, love, passion; 3) adoration, respect, devotion. At this stage, love leads a man and a woman to the decision about marriage (Pankova, 1991).

The ideas about respect in general and respect for parents in particular are not always well connected with each other. Different researchers mean different phenomena as they speak about respect and/or respect for parents. Some researchers believe respect to be the component of love, some regard it as a separate feeling/attitude, some say it rather implies respectful behaviour. We conducted our study to clarify the content of these concepts.

2. Problem Statement

The concepts of “respect” and “respect for parents” are not developed well. It is necessary to study the content and specifics of these concepts to give their extensive and generic definitions and to better distinguish these concepts from others, related but different, such as “love” and “authority”.

3. Research Questions

1. What is the difference between the concepts of “respect” and “respect for parents” in adolescents and adults?
2. What is the content of “respect for parents” in adolescents and adults?
3. What are the age-specific differences in the notion of respect in adolescents compared to adults?

4. Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of the study was to identify the psychological content and specifics of the concepts "respect" and "respect for parents" in Russian adolescents and adults.

5. Research Methods

Since the studies of semantic concepts strongly depend on language, for our first study of personal meanings and beliefs about respect in general and respect for parents in the Russian psychology we decided to use the broadest possible methods to consider all possible connotations of these concepts. In a pilot study, we used the method of unfinished sentences. Given that our primary interest lies in the age-related features of the concept of respect for parents, for the main phase of the study it was required to select a methodology whose implementation would not make participation difficult for respondents of any age.

5.1. Subjects

In total, this study involved 384 people. The group of adolescents comprised 164 people aged 14 to 18 (mean age 15.5; standard deviation – 1 year). Among the respondents, there were 67 (41%) boys and 97 girls (59%). The group of adults comprised 220 respondents aged from 22 to 70 (mean age 39; standard deviation 12.5 years). Among the respondents, there were 94 (43%) men and 126 (57%) women. 142 (65%) respondents have children.

The study of adolescents was conducted within the facilities of several educational institutions in and around Moscow: school No. 29 (Podolsk, Moscow region), Lyceum No. 6 (Dubna, Moscow region), I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University.

5.2. Procedure.

In secondary education institutions the survey was carried out in classrooms, each taking 45 minutes. The collection of data from adult subjects took place either during personal meetings or via Internet, thus responses were received from people both in and outside the Moscow region. The study was conducted anonymously, on a voluntary basis. In this study we used 2 methods described below. Research results were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.

5.3. The method of semantic differential.

The method is to construct a semantic space, for which end subjects had to evaluate a set of objects on a set of bipolar graduated scales. This method reveals not only the conscious but also the unconscious connotations of the concepts under study, which in our case were "respect" and "respect for parents". We used the following bipolar scales: Pleasant–Unpleasant, Heavy–Light, Passive–Active, Excited–Relaxed, Stable–Changeable, Cruel–Kind, Concrete–Abstract, Short–Long, Suffering–Enjoying, Smooth–Jerky, Moving–Stationary, Healthy–Sickly, Unhappy–Happy, Rough–Gentle, Lively–Lifeless, Complicated–Simple, Limited–Unlimited, Conscious–Unconscious, Passionate–Indifferent, Strong–Weak, Dangerous–Safe, Rare–Frequent.

These scales were selected from the list of 45 scales proposed by V.F. Petrenko in 1983 and used in several of his studies by means of the method of the verbal semantic differential (Petrenko, 1983, 2005). When selecting the scales, we assessed the degree of their suitability for the assessment of feelings and attitudes. Respondents were given a 5-score evaluation system: -2, -1, 0, 1, 2.

5.4. Author's questionnaire for the content of the concept of respect for parents.

Also we were interested to see what respondents meant by the term "respect for parents". To accomplish this we created a questionnaire to reflect its content.

The questionnaire contains 26 statements summarizing the different perceptions of what respect is, what it means, what causes a person can have to respect their parents. In developing the items of the questionnaire we used our ideas about possible definitions of this notion and our experience with the incomplete-sentences-based survey, as well as an understanding of everyday ideas about respect. To this end, we studied a number of Internet forums which discussed the issue of children's respect for parents and

used some of the statements from these forums. Respondents were offered a 4-score grading system: totally disagree, rather disagree, rather agree, and totally agree.

6. Findings

6.1. Semantic differential

Using the method of semantic differential, we obtained semantic profiles of the concepts "respect" and "respect for parents" in adolescents and adults. There was no coincidence in the semantic profiles of these concepts in the respondents. This proves the quality of task performance by the subjects, as well as the high degree of differentiation of the proposed concepts in the minds of the respondents. When evaluating concepts by the scales the respondents used the entire range of scores.

Of the 22 semantic differential scales the evaluation of the concepts "respect" and "respect for parents" significantly differs in nine of them (The Wilcoxon signed rank test was used for two related samples): heavy–light ($Z = -5,064$, $p = 0,000$), excited–relaxed ($Z = -1,999$, $p = 0,046$), cruel–kind ($Z = -2,290$; $p = 0,022$), short–long ($Z = -2,709$, $p = 0,007$), moving–stationary ($Z = -2,882$, $p = 0,004$), tough–tender ($Z = -4,188$, $p = 0,000$), complex–simple ($Z = -3,311$; $p = 0,001$), dangerous–safe ($Z = -3,639$, $p = 0,000$), rare–frequent ($Z = -4,774$, $p = 0,000$). On average, respect for parents is perceived as easier, more relaxed, kind, long, immobile, tender, simple, safe and frequent concept than just respect, although in general both concepts are considered related.

Semantic universals (they point to 75 percent or more of the sample) for the concept of "respect" are pleasant and informed. Also very typical are (about 70% of the sample) such adjectives as long, healthy, happy, alive, and strong. Semantic universals for the concept of "respect for parents" are adjectives nice, long, healthy, happy, and alive. Also very typical (71-74, 5% of the sample) are adjectives sustainable, good, informed, and strong.

Next, the semantic profiles of older adolescents ($n = 164$) and adults ($n = 220$) were compared using the nonparametric Mann–Whitney test. Significant differences were found in regard to respect in scales passive–active ($U = 15322,5$, $p = 0,033$), moving–stationary ($U = 1477$, $p = 0,008$), lively–lifeless ($U = 15537,5$, $p = 0,049$). In regard to respect for parents, it was moving–stationary ($U = 13394$, $p = 0,000$), passionate–indifferent ($U = 14928,5$, $p = 0,034$). Semantic profiles of the concepts "respect" and "respect for parents" in older adolescents and adults differ slightly. Semantic universals for older adolescents and adults surveyed remained the same as those for the entire sample as a whole.

Older adolescents show statistical significance in perception of respect as more active, more moving and more alive than adult respondents. In addition, older adolescents show statistical significance in perception of respect for parents as more moving and not as passionate as adult respondents do. In general, we can suggest that the perception of these feelings by adolescents is more labile than by adult subjects. This fact may be associated with the fact that adolescence is the actual time when these feelings and value systems are formed.

6.2. Author's questionnaire for the content of the concepts of respect for parents

When assessing the statements of the questionnaire, respondents used the whole range of scores. There distribution of responses was normal (tested using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion).

Having received a large number of correlations between the scores of the different statements, we decided to apply factor analysis in relation to the entire semantics scale of the concept of respect. The number of respondents exceeds the number of variables more than 10 times. The value of the criterion of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample adequacy equals 0,810, which corresponds to a high level of adequacy. The p-level value of Bartlett's sphericity criterion equals 2188, 554; the significance level is 0,000, which also indicates the good quality of the data for factor analysis.

A sufficient number of factors was determined by the Kaiser criterion (all the factors with the value below 1 were rejected). We used principal component analysis and Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization (rotation converged in 12 iterations). See Table 1 for the resulting matrix of rotated factors.

Table 01. Rotated factor matrix for questions of the semantics scale of the concept of respect.

No.	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
r5	0,685*	0,150	0,122	-0,102	-0,126	0,138
r20	0,651*	0,230	0,177			
r8	0,620*	0,154		0,152		
r3	0,603*		0,198	0,208	-0,167	0,108
r2	0,545*		0,311	0,150	-0,170	0,155
r21	-0,529*		0,457	0,151	0,101	0,110
r14	0,501*	0,180	0,248	-0,358	0,123	0,152
r19	0,234	0,676*	0,144			
r13		0,608*	0,209	0,135		0,330
r22	0,352	0,596*			-0,165	
r12		-0,436	0,124	0,374	0,105	0,380
r1	0,149	-0,381	0,257	0,218	-0,168	0,355
r24	0,199	0,202	0,641*			-0,121
r17	0,129	0,383	0,585*	-0,102		
r16	0,201	-0,219	0,577*	0,188		
r7	0,327		0,386	0,200	-0,281	
r25	0,166	0,137		0,710*	0,152	0,136
r11	0,117		0,123	0,680*	0,141	
r4	-0,102	-0,117	0,164	0,550*	-0,143	0,253
r18		-0,115			0,769*	
r9	-0,226				0,696*	0,231
r6		-0,444		0,252	0,516*	
r15	0,227		0,395	-0,287	-0,500*	0,158
r10					0,149	0,737*
r26	0,202					0,682*
r23			0,152	0,291	0,281	0,475

Notes: * means high factor loading (> 0,5); factor loadings less than 0.1 are excluded.

Following is the description of the resulting factors.

1. "Respect is trusting someone's experience." In this factor we included the statements: *To respect parents means to fulfill all their instructions and requirements* (factor loading 0,685), *To respect parents means to always take into account their advice* (0,651), *A person who experiences respect for parents will keep the parents informed of what goes on in their life* (0,620), *Respect for parents is respect for their life experience* (0,603), *A person respecting their parents pays a lot of attention to them* (0,545), *Respect for parents does not include the acceptance of everything they do and say* (-0,529), *Respect for parents means fear that one can anger them* (0,501). Thus, the first factor describes one of the points of view on the content of respectful behaviour towards parents: the child must follow all instructions and requirements, listen to advice, keep the parents informed of what goes on in their life, devote a lot of time to them, fear to anger them and agree with everything.

2. "Respect is behaviour". This factor includes the following statements: *To respect parents is one's duty* (factor loading 0,676), *Respect for parents is the social norm which must be followed* (0,608), *Parents should be respected for the mere fact that they've reared children* (0,596). The second factor assesses the degree of obligation associated with respectful behaviour and differentiates the respondents who believe that respect for parents is mandatory (a cultural prescript). We think that respondents who speak of unconditional respect for parents do not mean the sense of respect (as a long-term, stable emotional experience based on subjective evaluation), but respectful behaviour towards parents.

3. "Respect is compliance". This factor includes the following statements: *Respect for parents does not include consent to everything they do and say* (factor loading 0,641), *To respect parents means to always consider their advice* (0,585), *To respect parents means to fulfill all their instructions and requirements* (0,577). The third factor is a bit contradictory: the respondents with a high score in this factor couldn't quite decide whether respect for parents demands full obedience and consent with them on everything.

4. "Respect is the recognition of accomplishments". This factor includes the following statements: *Only those parents deserve respect who raised their child, first and foremost, as a person* (factor loading 0,710), *Only those parents deserve respect who not only instruct children, but also allow them to have their own experience, learn from their mistakes* (0,680), *An individual should be respected for their actions* (0,550). The fourth factor describes the well-deserved respect for parents. It means it describes the actual reasons for the feeling of respect thus suggesting that respect for parents occurs when they are perceived as worthy of respect.

5. "Respect is not love." This factor includes the following statements: *A person can love a parent, and not respect him/her* (factor loading 0,769), *A person can respect a parent, and not love him/her* (0,696), *A child may lack respect for his/her parents, if there are reasons for it* (0,516), *Respecting parents and loving them is the same thing* (-0,500). The fifth factor, on the one hand, separates concepts such as respect for parents and love for them, and on the other, suggests that the sense of respect cannot occur if the parent does not deserve it. Respondents who gain a high score in this factor use the word "respect" to denote the feeling itself and clearly differentiate it from the feeling of love.

6. "Respect is status recognition". This factor includes the following statements: *Respect is enjoyed by authoritative parents* (factor loading 0,737), *Those parents deserve respect who have achieved high*

status (0,682). This factor describes one of the possible reasons for the formation of the child's sense of respect for parents, namely, the authority and status of the parent as foundation for such feelings.

The differences between adolescents and adults in the perception of respect for parents was tested using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test in regard to the six factor variables. Significant differences were found in the factors: 1. " Respect is trusting someone's experience " ($U = 14175, p = 0,000$), 3. "Respect is compliance " ($U = 15368, p = 0,013$), 4. "Respect is the recognition of accomplishments" ($U = 15160, p = 0,007$), 6. "Respect is status recognition" ($U = 15168, p = 0.008$).

On average, in comparison to older respondents, adolescents show significantly stronger perception of respect for parents as requiring obedience in all matters. While adolescents are significantly less likely to agree with statements related to the fifth and sixth factors, they interpret "respect for parents" as the prescribed respectful behaviour in a greater degree than the adults do.

6.3. Discussion of results

We have shown that, on the one hand, the concepts of "respect" and "respect for parents" differ in the minds of respondents; but in fact, these differences are not very significant. One can remark that the respect for parents is perceived slightly more positively than respect in general. In addition, it was easier for respondents to assess respect for parents, therefore their answers were more consistent, which was reflected in a larger number of semantic universals for this concept.

A more detailed analysis of the concepts of respect for parents allowed us to show that this concept is perceived by the respondents as extremely multifaceted. We identified several meaningful factors representing different versions of the perceptions of what constitutes respect for parents, what it is based on and what it contains. It is interesting to note that three of these factors are clearly associated with the idea of respect for parents as the feeling of subjective emotional attitude towards real relationships with one's parents and the characteristics of one's parents. The other two factors rather illustrate the understanding of respect as something that is mandatory and contains a large number of binding patterns of behaviour. This perception of respect, as we think, does not describe the actual feeling of respect. We think that those respondents who demonstrated such views use the word to denote the respectful mode of behaviour prescribed by culture.

We also analyzed the differences in the views about the concepts of "respect" and "respect for parents" in adolescents and adults. It is noteworthy that the concept of "respect" and "respect for parents" among older adolescents is considered significantly more mobile than among adults. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the sense of respect that has only recently emerged in adolescents is still not fully established and continues to develop, with the criteria of respect / disrespect still being perfected.

A more detailed analysis of the concept of respect for parents showed that among adolescents, it is more widespread than among adults to view respect for parents not as a feeling, but primarily as the respectful behaviour prescribed by the society and culture. It should be noted that other studies of respect for parents that we have carried out showed that in general in the older age of adolescence the feeling of respect for parents becomes more independent and is no longer linked to the other feelings.

7. Conclusion

1. The concept of "respect for parents" is semantically close to the concept of "respect", i.e. their semantic profiles have identical forms.

2. On average, the concept of "respect for parents" has a more positive assessment; assessments of respondents are more consistent than in relation to the concept of "respect", which may be linked with the simplification of the task due to the greater specificity of the object of evaluation.

3. Ideas about the concepts of "respect" and "respect for parents" in adolescents and adults are different, which is most probably explained by the fact that these kinds of feelings are still in formation in adolescents.

4. We can highlight several points of view on what constitutes respect for parents, what it is, what it is based on and what it contains. For some, to respect parents means to obey them in everything, for others it is to behave respectfully towards them, or to recognize their accomplishments, or to recognize their status. Therefore, we can say that the respondents understand the term "respect for parents" as a feeling of respect, as well as a respectful and culturally prescribed behaviour.

5. Adolescents more often than adults perceive respect for parents as requiring obedience in all matters; also, they understand respect for parents as the prescribed respectful mode of behaviour.

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