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GENERATIVITY STRUCTURE IN RUSSIAN SAMPLE: APPROACHES AND CONCERNS

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Abstract

Modern society experience complicated social processes cause by demographic changes: the life expectance increases, more generations co-exists and humanistic need to forward one's knowledge and experience to younger generations transforms into a demand for closer cooperation of different generations. In such conditions it is important to identify factors, predictors and mechanisms that support one's desire to translate his/her knowledge for the better of others.

The present study examines six characteristics of generativity, outlined by McAdams and de St. Aubin, in the Russian sample. We hypothesized that cultural specifics could, to some extent, impact implementation of the original structure. Particularly, we were expecting that people would be exprecing more generative concern than perform real actions. Thus, we tested three alternative models of generativity: one was the original model, suggested by MacAdams and de St. Aubin from theoretical and empirical backgrounds, and the other was based on our empirical data.

Russian participants (N=133) completed Loyola generativity scale, General behavioral checklist, Schwartz Value Survey and open-ended sentences. Structural analysis revealed that both models, to some extent, fit the data, but the original model indexes did not meet some of the criteria. On the other hand, the model adjusted to the empirical model revealed some specifics, particularly it showed great importance of Cultural demands in generativity structure.

Keywords: Generativity Concern, Generativity Structure, Adult Development

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1. Introduction

In the past few decades there was a drastic move from understanding the psychological process of development as a purely child-adolescent phenomenon to a lifespan development paradigm (Baltes, Reese, & Lipsitt, 1980; Lachman, Teshale, & Agrigoroaei, 2015). Nowadays, researchers in the field of lifespan development are concentrated on a variety of psychological mechanisms that can improve well-being and quality of life of an adult; and generativity is among the promising concepts.

Generativity, described by Erikson (1950, 1963) as a developmental task for middle-aged and "young" older adults, is a concern or strive to contribute to the well-being of the future generations. In the original concept generativity was expected to be expressed in three possible modes: (1) most evident mode is parenting and grandparenting, translation of experience, knowledge and values through direct interaction; (2) mentorship – also direct translation of experienced but in a more specific domain and in a more sophisticated way; (3) finally, generativity can be expressed through doing socially important work – public, social, governmental, voluntary etc. Research showed (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; Goodman & Silverstein, 2006; Grossbaum & Bates, 2002; Pratt, Arnold, & Lawford, 2009) that generativity is associated with purpose in life and meaningfulness, which are, to some extent, associated with well-being.

Although generativity has a clear association with psychological development of an adult, until recently there was few empirical research in the field, even less studies encompassed cross-cultural specifics.

In the Western studies we can see the dominant idea that social environment impacts the formation of generativity, but it still remains one's internal construct. Japanese researchers revealed different nature of the phenomenon: in the Japanese realm generativity is a social phenomenon that exists outside the person and appears to be an intergenerational connection that lies in the field of social and cultural paradigms (de St. Aubin & Bach, 2015). From this perspective, there is still a lack of research on the cultural specifics of generativity, although some attempts in the field had been done (Megumi, Takeshi, Asako, & Yasuyuki, 2015; Hofer et al., 2016). In Russian psychological scientific realm there is almost no data on generativity, its components, structure or any factors that can be associated with generativity. In terms of cultural specifics we hypothesize that Russia has some specific characteristics that do not allow applying existing data to generativity in the Russian sample. The Russian Federation has the biggest territory, but not the amount of square kilometers makes it so specific. Due to historical issues and collisions, for the last seven centuries the Russian Federation was a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country: it encompasses more than 100 ethnicities, all world religions and a great variety of cultures. As such, from psychological perspective it also shares different values, lifestyles and particularly tradition of intergenerational communication (Shagidaeva, 2015). Thus, we can expect that the generativity model for the Russian sample will also differ.

1.1. Generativity model

One of the most widespread generativity models used for the empirical research is the one suggested by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992). The model implies ultimate motivational sources that include cultural demand and inner desire; thoughts and plans, represented by generativity concern, belief

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and commitment; and the behavior, represented by generative actions. The original model implied that cultural demand and inner desire were the main sources that supported generativity concern, which is often conceptualized as the core construct of the generativity model – general disposition for generativity. Concern, in turn, might have a reciprocal association with commitment, which could affect belief in the nature of humans. Also, commitment had reciprocal associations with behavior that describes implementation of the generativity concern in real life.

While growing body of research is focused on positive outcomes of generativity (McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997; McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001; Cox, Wilt, Olson, & McAdams, 2010; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), few studies tried empirically replicate the model and describe culture specifics if any.

2. Problem Statement

Russia has a great territory with a diverse population sharing different ethnic, cultural, and religious traditions. Generativity in Russian sample being influenced at the same time by both Western and Eastern cultures, we supposed that generativity phenomenon may have its particular specifics for the Russian sample. We assumed that, due to this diversity, the nationwide sample may be too challenging to control for all possible factors, thus, as a baseline to estimate structure of generativity in the Russian sample, we tried to apply the generativity structure developed by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) to a sample from Saint-Petersburg, Russia. Historically and culturally, Saint-Petersburg is closely related to European culture, particularly to British, German, Dutch and, to some extent, Italian, so we supposed that this sample is likely to have most comparatively similar generativity structure with those from the Western studies as compared to the samples from other regions of Russia.

3. Research Questions

In the present study we tried to approach six basic structures, outlined in the McAdams and de St. Aubin model (1992): cultural demand, inner desire, concern, commitment, belief and behavior. We aimed to test these variables with two models:

(1) hypothetical model, replicating the theoretical model suggested by McAdams and Aubin (Fig. 1);

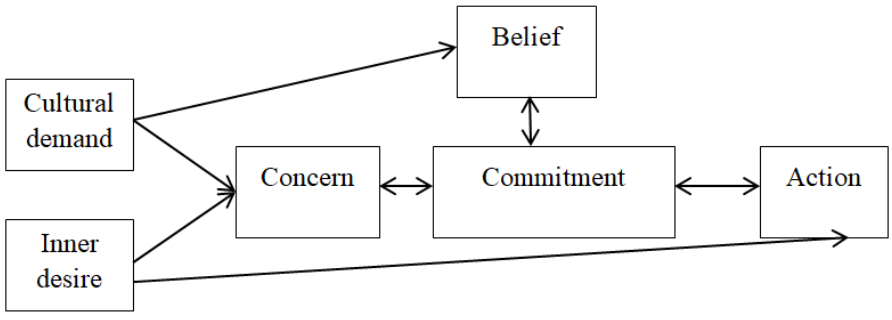

Figure 01. Hypothetical model. Adapted from McAdams, de St. Aubin (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992)

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(2) the empirical model that originates from preliminary correlation and regression analysis of the empirical data. We hypothesized that the second model will differ from original model and can reveal more culture specific paths of generativity in the Russian sample.

4. Purpose of the Study

Present paper focuses on the structure of generativity in adulthood. In Russian literature the concept of generativity exists as a theoretic concept with the Ericson developmental approach. We aim to follow MacAdams' model of generativity, identify variables relevant for such analysis, use structural analysis to test theoretical model.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Participants

In this study, 133 adults aged 23-57 completed paper-based questionnaires; 51 young adults, aged 23-32 (26 males, 25 females), 39 middle-aged adults, aged 34-41 (20 males, 19 females), 43 older middle-aged adults, aged 44-57 (21 males, 22 females). Participants were recruited from local community and University groups and participated in the study voluntarily.

5.2. Measures and Procedure

Based on the original concept by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992), we focused on six parameters of the generativity: cultural demands, inner desire, concern, belief, commitment, and action.

Concern was measured with Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), adapted and validated into Russian (Strizhitskaya & Polyakova, 2018). 20 statements were translated into Russian, the validation sample was 336 adults aged 18-75, α-Cronbach was .834; α-Cronbach for males and females was .825 and .839 respectively. LGS was scored from 1 to 4 on the Likert scale, and for the present study we used general score.

Action. To evaluate real generative acts, made by the participants, we used General Behavior Checklist (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) that consisted of 50 actions, somehow related to generativity. Out of 50 items 40 were describing generative actions and 10 were neutral. In the analysis only generative items were used.

Internalized cultural demand for generativity. Following the approach suggested by Hofer and colleagues (Hofer et al., 2016), we used Russian version of the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992; Karandashev, 2004) to estimate internalized cultural demands for generativity. In consistence with their study we also used items from the scales "benevolence" and "universalism".

To measure *Inner desire, Belief and Commitment* we used modified The Sentence Completion Test (Sacks & Levy, 1950). We used the principle of completing the sentences and analysing the outcomes with content-analysis. The sentences were developed with regard to the structure proposed by McAdams, Aubin. There were five uncompleted sentences for each of the measures.

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The sentences on cultural demands were designed to estimate one's perceptions about the societal expectations. The sentences in this block included such statements as "The society requires from a person…", "I can support society by…".

The sentences on inner desire aimed to look at internal motivation to help people. An example from this block is "I am helping other people, because…".

The sentences on belief were constructed to evaluate the specifics of one's attitudes to the other people in general. These sentences included the phrases like "I think other people are…".

The sentences on commitment were open-ended reports on goals and included the sentences like "Usually I try to …".

The model was estimated with the maximum likelihood estimation of path coefficients using Amos software, version 20.0.

6. Findings

6.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Measures of the Generativity Components

First, we tested our key variables and revealed that the parameters were highly correlated. The core variable according to correlation matrix is generativity concern: it was associated with most characteristics in the model. We also analysed age and gender effects: no effects were found.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations of measures of generativity components.

Table 01. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Cultural Demand, Inner Desire, Concern, Belief, Commitment and Action Measures.

Measurement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. Internalized Cultural Demand	–					
2. Inner Desire	-.11	_				
3. Concern	.29**	.03	_			
4. Belief	-.16	-.04	-.24**	_		
5. Commitment	.28**	-.04	.46**	-.20*	_	
6. Actions	.37**	-.17	.21*	-.12	.25**	_
M (SD)	16.62 (3.20)	1.60 (.76)	34.25 (8.79)	1.84 (.94)	30.68 (12.76)	1.44 (.49)
Measurement	1	2	3	4	5	6

* p < .05. ** p < 0.01.

Grounding on the McAdams' model we expected Internalized Cultural Demand and Inner Desire to be correlated with Generative Concern. Nevertheless, a preliminary correlation analysis revealed significant correlation between Internalized cultural demand, but no significant interactions between Inner Desire and Concern, or any other variable in the model. On the other hand, original model suggested that Concern affects only Commitment, while in our sample it was also negatively correlated with Beliefs. As such, we can assume that on the one hand, people who feel generative concern also experience commitment, but on the other hand, generative concern arouses for "bad" people. We argue that in this

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case “bad people” can be seen as people in trouble, and probably it is easier to help those who are in trouble rather than to help someone on no occasion.

6.2. Testing the Generativity Model in Application to Russian Sample

First, in our analysis we approached generativity structure from the perspective of existing model (Table 2, Hypothetical model). The data from SEM analysis showed that though our data somewhat fits the model, but at the same time the indexes were not good enough to conclude they describe structure of generativity in our sample and to the extent we can generalize these results, they did not describe the specifics of Russian sample. To note, we could predict these results from correlations obtained for our variables and described in previous section.

Thus, our next step was to build an empirical model based on preliminary analysis (Fig. 2).

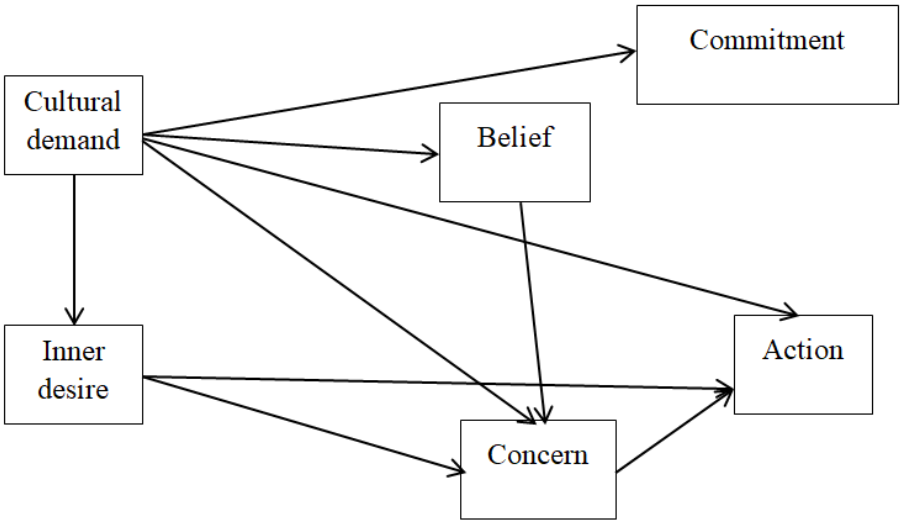

Figure 02. Empirical model

The empirical model revealed somewhat different picture. From the model we found that generativity in our sample was considerably affected by Cultural Demand. Data suggested that Cultural Demand predicted all components of generativity. Comparing with the MacAdams’ model, we did not identify associations between Concern and Commitment, and Commitment was not predicting Action. We could also mention that while in the hypothetical model Cultural Demand and Inner Desire predicted Concern, in the empirical model we also identified interaction between Cultural Demand and Inner Desire. Although from cross-sectional data we cannot establish the directionality of the interaction, we can assume from developmental perspective that the values that form cultural demands are internalized during early socialization and further on in a course of a lifespan. Thus, we can expect that Cultural Demand serves as a ground for formation of Inner Desire.

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Table 02. Fit indexes for hypothetical and empirical models of generativity

χ^2	*df*	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE	AIC
Hypothetical model 1					
13.00	6	.915	.094	.130	55.00
Empirical model					
7.11	6	.981	.037	.507	49.11

Note. Number of parameters to be estimated: 21 (Hypothetical model 1); 19 (Hypothetical model 2); 21 (Empirical model). df = degrees of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; AIC = Akaike information criterion; PCLOSE = p of close fit.

The analysis of fit indexes, presented in Table 2, demonstrates that the data we obtained is described best by the empirical model. These results suggested that in Russian sample generativity can be formed following somewhat different patterns, or some factors, such as Cultural demand, might play more significant role than it had in Western samples. In our empirical model we also found interaction similar to one discovered by Hofer et al. (2016), who tested the MacAdams' model on a diverse cross-cultural sample. Still, our results do not fully comprise their results and represent the model different from what was reported before.

7. Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was to broaden research on generativity by examining to what extent the model proposed by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) can be applied to Russian cultural specifics. Generativity as a theoretical construct is closely related to cultural lifestyles, values and stereotypes on intergenerational relationships and purpose in life, and as such it had to be associated with cultural specifics or diversity. Our results showed that in general the original model can be applied to the sample, but it had worse fit compared with empirical model. Our data argued that most influential component of the empirical model was Cultural Demand, consistently with Hofer et al. (2016) we demonstrated a direct association between Cultural Demand and Actions.

Our results add to the existing data evidence that while association of particular generativity constructs can demonstrate some stable interactions across cultural background, there was little research on a complex model, particularly with regard to culture specifics.

In the present study we need to acknowledge several limitations. First, though the sample size was enough for analysis it is far not enough to call it a representative study. Extension of the sample is needed to make the results more generalized. The second limitation is that the sample was collected in the same region. Although we listed some rationale for the sample specifics, future research could be broaden by examining possible differences by the region. The third limitation is in the cross-sectional nature of the data; we acknowledge that even using the SEM our results can be interpreted in both ways and do not exclusively describe the directionality of the interactions.

Other limitations are associated with the nature of the variables. First, we did the adaptation of the Loyola generativity scale, but the Checklist needs much more culture specific analysis and validation. Second, for some measures we applied open-ended sentences and following content-analysis. These

variables strive to the variables in original dataset, still they can provoke some undesired deviations and measurement errors.

Future directions in the study of generativity in Russia can be seen in broadening not only sample size, but adding information from different locations, lifestyles and subcultures existing in the country. Having a dramatic variability of geographic, ethnic, social and religious factors, Russian sample can offer a multidisciplinary platform for the future development of generativity structure.

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