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# **PSYCHOLOGY IN RUSSIA STATE OF THE ART**

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The third issue of the annual series *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* presents a collection of articles which reflect the current directions of research in Russian psychology. This volume samples a range of theoretical and methodological works together with empirical studies in cognitive and social psychology, psychophysiology, labor, developmental and educational psychology, clinical and personality psychology, and psychoanalysis.

This yearbook will be of interest to psychologists, philosophers, and educational researchers, as well as anyone concerned with the recent achievements of the psychological science.

## INTRODUCTION

This third issue of the yearbook *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* is timed for the XXVIIth International Congress of Applied Psychology (11th-16th July 2010, Melbourne, Australia). The aim of the issue is to acquaint foreign colleagues with a broad spectrum of theoretical and applied research conducted by Russian psychologists in the last few years.

Russian psychology is developing intensively today. To a very large extent this is determined by the great interest Russian society shows for psychology in general and for the possibilities of its practical application. An ever increasing number of organizations employ professional psychologists in Russia, and there is an ever increasing demand for scientifically sound innovations in management, production, education, and entertainment. In the last years, the quantity of popular psychology books has been steadily increasing, which is an unequivocal evidence for a rising concern of the Russian population with psychological issues. Although Russian psychology always was interested in solving applied problems, the dominance of applied research can today be regarded as one of its most characteristic features.

The applied orientation of contemporary Russian psychology does not mean that there is an unbridgeable gap between applied and fundamental psychology in Russia. Russian psychology retains its orientation to the methodology of psychology. Usually, methodology means the discipline of development and application of research methods. However, in Russia the meaning of the term is much broader and includes theoretical and even philosophical foundations of science. In this respect it is interesting that even the most “down-to-earth” applied works in today’s Russian psychology are firmly grounded in scientific and methodological theories, to which they usually make explicit reference. In this sense the famous dictum “There is nothing as practical as a good theory” is fully relevant to the majority of Russian psychologists.

The works presented in this issue reflect another tendency of contemporary Russian psychology. It is characterized by the appearance of a significant number of interdisciplinary research. In this issue, the reader will find reports on work crossing the boundaries of work and organizational psychology, psychology of thinking, social and educational psychology, etc.

This interdisciplinary stance corresponds well to the universal understanding that applied and theoretical problems the psychologists of the world face today are almost always very complex and require a joint effort of professionals from various branches of psychology in order to be solved.

Beside the mentioned integrative tendencies in the content of contemporary Russian psychology, there is also a tendency to more organizational integration. This is an understandable reaction to the rising need for more regulated psychological research and practice in Russia. The central role in the organization of Russian psychology lies with the Russian Psychological Society (RPS), which is the largest and the oldest union of professional psychologists in Russia. Today, RPS is working hard in order to improve the standards of psychological research and practice in Russia.

In the last years, RPS has focused on several crucial issues. For example, RPS is very concerned with rising the quality of psychological testing in Russia. RPS is in a dialog with test developers, test publishers and test users in order to prevent improper and unethical use of psychological tests. Following the efforts of the Psychodiagnostics Commission installed by RPS, the first test library was created in 2009. RPS is also in a dialog with the International Test Commission regarding the proper usage of copyrighted test materials in Russia.

Today, RPS also finishes the development of a national certification system for practical psychologists. The voluntary certification is based on a multi-level attestation procedure (including computerized testing, oral examinations and solution of cases) and is aimed at significantly improving the quality of psychological services offered to the Russian public. One major step in this direction was the creation of the Ethics Committee through the Board of the RPS, which is concerned with the implementation of the RPS' Ethics Code. RPS also works on introducing the European Psychological Certificate EuroPsy in Russia in the next future.

RPS represents Russia internationally, being a member of leading psychological organizations like IUPsyS, EFPA, and ITC. RPS sees its mission in developing cooperation between Russian and foreign colleagues in all areas of psychological research and practice. An important event for Russian psychology was the "Russian Day" organized by the RPS and the Norwegian Psychological Association at the XIth European Psychological Congress (July 2009, Oslo, Norway), to which a representative Russian delegation attended. The tendency for a more close integration of Russian and international psychology is reflected in the rising number of joint research (some examples can be found in this issue). More and more,

Russian psychologists publish their work abroad, and foreign authors are translated into Russian. With the publication of this yearbook, RPS hopes to make contemporary Russian psychology even more accessible to the foreign colleagues.

The present issue of the yearbook consists of 4 parts, which are devoted to different directions of psychological research in today's Russia. The first part reflects the strong interest for a deep analysis of existing methodological approaches in psychology and for the development of new ways to solve psychological problems. This interest is quite traditional for Russian psychology. The second part presents fundamental research, first of all, research on cognitive processes. The third part includes works which address some practical problems relevant to the contemporary Russian society. As stated above, this does not mean these works are purely applied and deprived of the theory. Last, the fourth part contains works that take a more general stance and analyze the problems of the modern society, as well as the role of psychological science in today's Russian culture.

The reader will find in this issue works by disciples and followers of many famous Russian psychologists of the 20th century. Psychological schools founded by Vladimir Bekhterev, Lev Vygotsky, Sergey Rubinstein, Alexander Luria, Aleksey Leontiev, Petr Galperin, Bluma Zeigarnik, Vladimir Myasishev, Volf Merlin, Oleg Tikhomirov, Evgeny Sokolov, Lev Vekker and others are still shaping Russian psychology. However, Russian psychology tries not only to preserve its traditions, but also to further develop the legacy of its outstanding representatives. The progress of psychological science brings new data and new directions of research, and the society presents psychology with new tasks and problems to solve. This leads to further development and enrichment of classic theories and approaches in Russian psychology. We hope that the publication of this issue will allow the international reader to get a more detailed understanding of psychological research currently done in Russia.

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