

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Age-related differences in values and economic attitudes among Russians

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Analyses of the connection between cultural values and economic development have changed many times in different countries and in different periods. In Russia, which is constantly undergoing economic and social transformations, this issue is especially relevant. One can say that culture, to some extent, bears responsibility for economic development, and so it is to be expected that different generations of the Russian people would perceive questions related to the connection of cultural values and economic attitudes in different ways. This article presents the results of research dedicated to revealing the correlation between cultural values and economic attitudes among different generations of Russians ($N = 110$ people). The participants were youth (18–25 years old) and adults (37–63 years). I found that, for the adult generation, the “power-distance” index (a measure of the level of dependence on power structures) was positively correlated with economic self-determination and the desire to have money. For the younger generation, neither the power-distance index nor the “masculinity” index was associated with economic autonomy, while the “uncertainty-avoidance” index encouraged economic autonomy but did not create additional opportunities for increasing personal income. In the study economic paternalism was expressed more by the younger generation; they were also more ready to invest energy in business, but they were not as interested as the adult generation in the state of the economy.

Keywords: culture, values, economic attitudes, intergenerational differences

Introduction

Nowadays, increasing attention is being paid to the correlation of cultural parameters and indicators of social and economic development. In Russia, which has constantly been undergoing economic and social transformations, this issue is espe-

cially relevant. It is to be expected that different generations of the Russian people would perceive questions related to the connection of cultural values and economic attitudes in different ways. The younger generation has different values, and young people adapt more easily to new life conditions. Only the young people in Russia have already gotten used to these new conditions; they can change their attitudes toward cultural and economic values faster than the adult generation, which grew up in different country (the USSR) and thus had to adapt during their adulthood to the social and economic changes that were occurring at the time. Russian society has been in a period of political, cultural, and economic transformations that have brought many changes to the way of life and the mentality of the Russian population. People have had to elaborate their own behavioral standards and to find their way around in an evolving situation. Obviously, the young people turned out to be more interested in and open to new practices and transformations than were people of the older generation. Today's young generation is an indicator of the social and economic alterations that have occurred since the turn of the century. Russians' values, their philosophies, and their ideas of what is important in their lives and what is not form the core of the national identity.

The practical significance of this research consists in the measurement of inter-generational differences in cultural values and economic attitudes. At first glance, it may seem that this article does not fit into the subject matter of a publication about psychology, but categories like *cultural values* and *economic attitudes* are psychological constructs. The tradition of studying a person's cultural values was established in psychology and sociology a long time ago and still exists. At the beginning of the 20th century, the first studies appeared in which the influence of cultural factors on the economy was examined. One of the first scholars to address this problem was Max Weber.

The concept of value may be considered one of the most complex categories in psychology, as it is both a cognitive and a motivational construct (Andreeva, 2007; Lebedeva, 1991a; Lebedeva, 1999b). Cultural variety affects such processes as selecting information at the moment of communication, choosing strategies, settling conflicts, interacting with others, and building social relations. To understand the culture a person belongs to, it is necessary to try to understand its basic values (Lebedeva, 1999b). Norms, politics, and everyday life reflect the values of a society. Relative stability is an important characteristic of values; but an increase in wealth or adaptation to technological advances can lead to changes in value priorities (Andreeva, 2007, p. 70). Value orientations have a central place in the social sciences (Inglehart & Rabier, 1986). Kluckhohn (1951) was one of the first to define values. He thought that values are what an individual or a group desires. Values prevailing in a society are the key element of the culture, and the value priorities of a person are expressed in his or her main goals and behavior.

Studying values is especially important for contemporary Russia. Russia is a multicultural country, and its territory is inhabited by various ethnic groups that have quite a long history of co-existence; for this reason, one can speak of their cultural affinity, a certain closeness of their cultural values and the direction of changes in those values in the recent past. Lately, intergenerational changes have become of increasing interest to psychologists, and a series of studies of this phenomenon

has been conducted. For instance, Magun and Rudnev (2010), together with other scholars who worked later, came to the conclusion that contemporary Russian society is building the values of “openness to change” and “self-enhancement,” whereas Soviet society stressed the values of “conservation and care” of people and nature (Magun & Rudnev, 2010; Postnikova, 2012). Other research has revealed intergenerational differences in value priorities at the individual level. The average “benevolence” level is higher among the adult generation, and “self-direction” is higher among youth (Goldyreva, 2013). Analysis of the results of another empirical study (Koroleva, 2011) has allowed the formation of a cluster of seven value orientations that prevail with the majority of Russians, including happy family relationships, material welfare, spirituality, and a good reputation. Significant values that are necessary to achieve life goals are freedom, interpersonal connections, and reliance on one’s own resources.

My research is based on the method of measuring values that was created by Geert Hofstede and is the first to obtain his measurements as a result of an empirical study. Using the results of factor analysis, he identified four main indicators that help to characterize and describe systems of values that exist in different countries and ethnic groups: “masculinity,” “uncertainty avoidance,” “individualism,” and “power distance.” Later, a fifth indicator was added and named “long-term orientation.”

As was already noted, the beginning of the 20th century was marked by the first in-depth studies of the cultural factors that influence the economy. One of the first scholars to think about this problem was Max Weber. He attempted to find out whether there was a connection between religion and economic success. According to Weber, Protestantism was the key factor in the modernization of Europe. He emphasized that the Calvinist version of Protestantism encouraged the establishment of norms that were favorable for economic success; the Protestant system of beliefs undermined the religious norms that had provided the cultural basis for pre-industrial societies and that were impeding economic development. Later, Granato, Inglehart, and Leblang (1996) demonstrated that cultural and economic factors play complementary roles in the explanation of economic growth. Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales (2006) made a significant contribution to the study of how cultural factors influence the degree of development of a country, as they tried to prove the cause-and-effect relationship between economy and culture. Their first step was to research the influence of culture on beliefs: they took religion as an instance of culture and observed how it influences beliefs concerning trust. In the second step, the authors explored the effect of this belief (about trust) on economic results and came to the conclusion that religiosity has a positive influence on the level of trust, and trust positively affects the level of development.

Economic attitudes reflect people’s attitudes toward their own financial situations. Specialists frequently speak of orientation to economic autonomy and orientation to economic paternalism. Subjective economic status is an indicator of how people perceive their own financial situations and is a component of personal identity. The problem of property relations and well-being has become one of the most important problems in today’s Russia. Interactions in the economic and microsocial environment are influenced by people’s ideas of their financial situation. Russians

have both a tendency toward economic paternalism and a tendency toward economic autonomy, but the orientation to economic autonomy is prevailing because Russians mostly are striving for economic independence, and they are relying on the government less than they did before. Nevertheless, years after the Soviet regime, economic paternalism has found a secure place in people's consciousness: decades ago, the state provided citizens with apartments, trips, summer residences, bonus pay, and many other benefits. Time has to pass before people stop believing that the government must give them things. Paternalism in contemporary Russian society is thus a holdover from the old days. Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–1920/1958) called those who are not able to change their strategies (and, subsequently, attitudes) in new conditions “philistines.” They wrote that unexpected and crucial changes of life circumstances make those people's behavior disorganized, and, up to a certain point, they keep using old, time-tested schemes (pp. 1854–1855). So, economic paternalism is a splinter of the broken Soviet past, and it is supported, as a rule, by people who, for various reasons, have not been able to adapt to the new economic conditions. Today, orientation to economic autonomy is found mostly in the young people and orientation to economic paternalism, conversely, in the older generation. Our research shows that orientation to economic autonomy was almost equal in these two groups, and orientation to economic paternalism was found much more in young people than in adults.

Psychologists have repeatedly raised the issue of an individual's life satisfaction. Hashhenko (2011), for example, notes that life satisfaction is the sum of satisfaction with one's financial situation, employment, environment, health, and so forth. K. Riff has proposed a universal multicomponent model of psychological well-being (as discussed in Fedotova, 2015). She believes that well-being is, to some extent, a result of personal development, self-acceptance, and of having a purpose in life, positive relations with others, and the ability to control one's living situation. This proposed model of psychological well-being includes five components: caring and trusting relationships with others, goals that give meaning to life and a sense of fulfillment, the opportunity to follow one's own beliefs, the ability to successfully cope with the demands of life, and a positive attitude toward oneself and one's past. Another problem is subjective economic well-being. An aspect of life satisfaction, subjective economic well-being, is among the few developed scientific concepts in this area. The term is usually not found in modern dictionaries, and, in its occasional appearances in scientific publications, it is often used without definition. For a long time the concept of *economic prosperity* was considered to be the prerogative of economic science, where it is regarded as a synonym for the objective characteristics of wealth and of the material, financial, and social conditions of human life in general (Hashhenko, 2011; Ljasina, Sokolov, & Hvan, 2014).

In 2013 research was conducted with the aim of identifying the relationship between the cultural values and economic attitudes of Russian students from two faiths: Christianity (Orthodox) and Islam (Sunni). The researchers tried to find differences between individual values and economic attitudes. Students of Moscow and Kazan universities were chosen as representatives of the secular and theological orientation of the two denominations. The sample size was 217 people (Orthodox Christian 113, Sunni Islam 104, average age 19 years). The results revealed sec-

tarian differences in individual values. The values for “conformity,” “tradition,” and “conservation” among the Muslim students were significantly higher than among the Christian students. The value for “hedonism” was significantly higher among the Christian students than among the Muslim students. However, regardless of the respondents’ religious affiliation, the values of “independence” and “achievement” were related to productive economic attitudes and notions (Efremova & Lepshokova, 2013).

It is often said that, in the Russian tradition, wealth is condemnable and suspicious, while poverty is a virtue. Today, however, the value of a person is being determined by the quantity and the quality of the items that he or she owns. We should remember that wealth and poverty are relative and temporary, especially in Russia. A study (Ljasina, Sokolov, & Hvan, 2014) on wealth and poverty in Russia has demonstrated that a number of wealthy people do not believe in principled and decent work as a basis for wealth and well-being. Some poor Russians, also, do not consider making an honest living a source of material well-being.

Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi (2001) have shown that older people tend to declare that they are satisfied with their own income, even though it may have significantly decreased. In addition, in this study the 30-year-old respondents were the most satisfied with their work; for the 20-year-old respondents, satisfaction with work was lower. Also, some changes occur in how people value interpersonal relations: with aging, these relationships became increasingly important.

To summarize, the research shows that orientation to economic autonomy is almost equal in these two groups, and orientation to economic paternalism was found much more in young people than in adults. Adults are finding that their well-being is deteriorating, and they suppose that this tendency will continue in the future. For Russians, money is the source of confidence, of status, of pleasure, and of security. This idea of money has replaced the idea of money as a source of help, of self-improvement, and of enhanced life conditions. At the same time, people in Russia do not believe that money is the source of happiness. Advantaged Russians are full of initiative and energy; they yearn for power and may be characterized as quite greedy, not too clean-living, educated people who, while working hard, do not really care about the future of Russia. Sympathy is their dominant feeling toward their poorer fellow citizens (Efremova & Lepshokova, 2013; Fedotova, 2015; Hashhenko, 2011). My hypothesis is thus the following: there is a correlation between values and economic attitudes, and this correlation is not the same for different generations of Russians.

Method

The goal of my research was to reveal a correlation between cultural values and economic attitudes among different generations of Russians. It involved 110 respondents. The younger generation was represented by those 18–25 years old, and the adult generation by those 47–63 years old (see Table 1). The sample included residents of Perm, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Nizhny Novgorod, including students of the Higher School of Economics (HSE) – Moscow, HSE – Perm, HSE – St. Petersburg, HSE – Nizhny Novgorod, Ural Polytechnic Institute, and Perm State Medical Academy.

Table 1. Social and demographic characteristics of the respondents

	Adults	Youth
Number	54	56
Men	23	22
Women	31	34
Average age	49 years	22 years
	Max – 63	Max – 18
	Min – 41	Min – 25

The principal research method was the administration of a survey that consisted of a specially prepared questionnaire based on the method of “subjective economic well-being” (K. A. Khashchenko) and the method of measuring cultural values associated with Geert Hofstede’s Values Survey Module. Khashchenko’s questionnaire consists of 26 statements with five possible answers each, where 1 corresponds to «do not agree with the statement» and 5 corresponds to «totally agree.» The statements are related, for example, to satisfaction with financial situation, economic autonomy, economic paternalism, attitude toward competition, willingness to invest energy in business, importance of money, interest in the economic situation. Hofstede’s questionnaire consists of 57 statements and is also based on a Likert-type scale with the same rating system as Khashchenko’s. Four scales are calculated: power distance (PDI), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), individualism (IDV), and masculinity (MAS). Processing of the data was performed using the SPSS 21.0 software package. To establish the intergenerational differences between values and economic attitudes I used methods of mathematical and statistical processing: the method of comparison mean values using Student’s t-test. To calculate and analyze the performance of individual values I used methods of descriptive statistics: median, arithmetic mean, standard deviation. To identify the relationship between variables I used Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.

Results and discussion

Intergenerational differences in values

Analysis of the respondents’ answers allowed calculating mean values for each of the variables (see Table 2).

Previous study of the value priorities of different cultures has demonstrated that Russia, because of its level of individualism, has a middle position between the West and the East on the degree of dependence on power structures: Russia has one of the highest power-distance levels (Fedotova, 2015; Zlatanov, Krysanov, & Sekareva, 2014). I obtained a result of 2.7 for power distance in the young people and a result of 2.5 for adults; respondents mentioned that it was important for them to have a good business relationship with their boss, who, in turn, would ask these staff members for advice before making an important decision. Moreover, subordinate staff members were sometimes afraid to express their disagreement with the boss. As described by E. Danilova and M. Tararukhina (in Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2007), the power-distance indicator should not be seen as describing how

Table 2. Intergenerational differences in values at the individual level (based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test)

Values	Youth		Adults	
	Mean value	Standard deviation	Mean value	Standard deviation
Power distance (PDI)	2.7*	.30	2.5*	.30
Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	2.3	.25	2.7	.30
Individualism (IDV)	2.8**	.62	2.3**	.07
Masculinity (MAS)	2.8**	.11	2.2**	.39

Note: ***— $p < .001$, **— $p < .01$, *— $p < .05$

democratic or authoritarian the management is, but as reflecting people's ideas of social justice (in the Russian tradition, social justice exists in connection with the concepts of equality and inequality). The power-distance index takes into account a typical Russian paradox: there is a strong dependence on power structures, but it is not based on respect for the authorities, but on fear of them.

The value of the uncertainty-avoidance index was 2.7 for the adults and 2.3 for the young people. Hofstede's studies of Russian culture using the uncertainty-avoidance index demonstrated a very evident orientation to certainty (as described in Zlatanov et al., 2014). In conditions of general instability, workers' anxiety about the uncertainty of the situation grows stronger, and they feel the need to have precisely formulated rules. So, the establishment of rules, even strict ones, is generally welcomed by workers. And a strong desire to avoid uncertainty leads to conservatism and a lack of willingness to change life habits and lifestyle.

The individualism index gave values of 2.3 for the adults and 2.8 for the young people. The older respondents more frequently answered "very important" or "rather important" to questions concerning the time they dedicated to personal and family life and to questions concerning advantageous work conditions; at the same time, it was not so important for them to have a job that involved elements of risk and lots of variety. Why? Older people like to have emotional, financial, and professional stability, which means less risk and variety at work. Family and family values are also part of this desire for stability. These data contradict the widespread stereotype of Russians' "collectivism." Researchers have noticed that in Russia, and even in the Soviet Union, individualism is quite strong, as a collective is understood by Russian workers as an instrument that allows them to achieve their individual goals and gives them an opportunity to use informal relationships for their own profit (Zlatanov et al., 2014).

The masculinity index returned a coefficient of 2.2 for the adult generation and 2.8 for the younger generation. Respondents answered that they found it important to work with people who cooperate; they appreciated the opportunity to get career promotions; and they usually viewed life failures as the result of their own mistakes. The value obtained for the younger generation, as one can see, was high; this result indicates that, in Russian culture, material values and power prevail. Although, in the opinion of foreign researchers, Russia can be definitely seen as a "feminine type" culture (Andreeva, 2007), the results obtained disconfirm this idea.

Intergenerational differences in economic attitudes

Let us examine the mean values for the economic attitudes of different generations of Russians (see Table 3).

Table 3. Intergenerational differences of economic attitudes (based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test)

Economic attitudes	Adults		Youth	
	Mean value	Standard deviation	Mean value	Standard deviation
Satisfaction with one's financial situation	2.6**	.08	1.9**	.11
Economic autonomy	3.4**	.12	3.5**	.50
Economic paternalism	2.1	.24	3.2	.41
Attitude toward competition	2.7*	.37	3.9*	.08
Willingness to invest energy in business	4*	.05	4.3*	.05
Importance of money	4.3**	.17	4.5**	.19
Interest in the economy	3.4***	1.34	2.7***	.13
Attitude toward wealthy people	3.9*	.13	4.2*	.09
Attitude toward the poor	3	.06	4.2	.54

Note: ***— $p < .001$, **— $p < .01$, *— $p < .05$

People's satisfaction with their own financial situation is an important component of their subjective well-being. In the study, for the adults, the mean value for the statement "I am satisfied with my financial situation" was quite low. This result can be explained by the fact that the average age of these respondents was 49, which is when people are expecting financial well-being in order to buy flats and cars and to build houses in the countryside. Besides that, this is the age when one starts thinking about life after retirement. Correlation analysis carried out previously demonstrated that subjective economic status and satisfaction with one's own financial situation have a highly important connection. People who have a high income but are unsatisfied with it may underestimate their economic status (Andreeva, 2007). In addition, people's subjective perception of their well-being is a serious indicator of the economic development of the country.

For economic autonomy, the numbers for the adults were quite high. Most respondents tended to think that their well-being depends, for the most part, on their own effort. Basically, Russians strive for economic autonomy and independence, and they rely on the state less than before. The economic position of "attitude toward competition is directly connected to economic autonomy. In other words, if people believe that their well-being depends in a large way on their own effort, they should become competitive because the wish to be successful and to achieve financial well-being is shared by a great number of people. Supposedly, people who are oriented toward competition have a higher degree of masculinity than those not oriented in that direction. Although, as mentioned, many foreign

researchers believe that Russian culture belongs to the “feminine type,” this research demonstrates the opposite: the indicators associated with such positions as economic autonomy, the importance of money, and attitude toward competition give evidence of the fact that in Russia the valuation of material things, power, and appearances prevails.

This study obtained high numbers for the importance of money (4.3 for the adults). The older people used their money to help others and to improve themselves. For them, money was not a source of pleasure, but did provide help in achieving and getting what they wished for. Almost a third of these respondents were higher school graduates, and material well-being was very important to them because it implies education and a certain status.

The calculated mean values for the same indicators for the younger generation indicate that most young people in Russia are not satisfied with their financial situation, as in most cases they do not have a permanent job and stable earnings, although they believe that their well-being depends on their own efforts. They are also ready to invest energy into business and take economic risks in order to increase their incomes. One phenomenon is rather strange: on the one hand, money is highly valued by Russian young people; on the other hand, the younger generation is not particularly interested in the economic situation of their city and the country.

Correlation of cultural values and economic attitudes

The next step was to reveal the correlation of Hofstede’s cultural values with economic attitudes for different generations of Russians (see Table 4).

Table 4. Correlation of values and economic attitudes: adults

Indexes	PDI	UAI	IDV	MAS
Economic autonomy	.371*	–	–	.429**
Economic paternalism	–	–.424**		–.317*
Willingness to invest energy in business	–	.359*	.355*	–
Willingness to take economic risks for the sake of raising revenue	–	–.442**	–.558*	–
Optimal degree of economic risk		–.348*	–	–
Interest in the economy of the country	–	–.404**	–	–
Interest in the economy of the city	–	.400*	.359*	–
Attitude toward economic changes in the country	–	–.328*	–.400*	–
Current level of business activity	–	.315*	.367*	–
Desire to have money	.313*	–	–	.449**

Note: ***— $p < .001$, **— $p < .01$, *— $p < .05$

For the adults, power distance was connected with economic autonomy and the wish to have money. Avoiding uncertainty, the adults were ready to invest their energy in business and became interested in the economic situation of their city. However, avoidance of uncertainty did not favor economic paternalism and did not

lead to the optimal level of economic risk. Individualism inspired the adult generation to invest their energy in business. However, individualism was not connected with the adults' desire to have money or to take the optimal degree of economic risk. Masculinity, in its turn, was correlated with the wish to have money and with economic autonomy.

Table 5. Correlation of values and economic attitudes: youth

Indexes	PDI	UAI	IDV	MAS
Satisfaction with financial situation	–	–	.464**	–.458**
Economic autonomy	–.338*	.446**	–	–.376*
Attitude toward competition	–	–	–.338*	–
Willingness to invest energy in business	–	–	.467*	–
Importance of money	.405**	–	–	–
Possibility of increasing personal income	–	–.352*	–	–
Optimal degree of economic risk	.334*	–.313*	–	–
Interest in the economy of the city	–	.323*	–	–
Attitude toward the poor	–	.314*	–	.348*
Desire to have money	–	.355*	–.332*	–

Note: ***— $p < .001$, **— $p < .01$, *— $p < .05$

For the youth, the power-distance index had a positive correlation with the importance of money and the optimal degree of economic risk. However, this index correlated negatively with economic autonomy. The measure of uncertainty avoidance was positively correlated with an orientation to economic autonomy, with an interest in the economic situation of the city, with a positive attitude toward people in need, and with the wish to have money. It was negatively correlated with the possibility of increasing personal income and with the optimal level of economic risk. Individualism significantly correlated positively with satisfaction with one's financial situation and with the readiness to invest energy in business; it had a negative correlation with one's attitude toward competition and wish to have money. In other words, individualism encouraged the willingness to invest energy in business but did not encourage competition. There was a negative correlation between masculinity and satisfaction with one's own financial situation. Masculinity was also negatively correlated with economic self-determination.

Conclusion

The concept of *value* is one of the most complex categories in psychology. Cultural values do not remain the same because social institutions, leaders, and legislation change. Through changes in the system of values, cultural changes occur, and social institutions change as well. Today's younger generation is an indicator of social and economic transformations. Economic attitudes reflect people's attitudes toward their own financial situation. Subjective economic status is an indicator of how people perceive their own financial situation, and, at the same time, it is a compo-

ment of personal identity. The present research demonstrated that the adults were rather satisfied with their financial situation, while the young people were sure that their well-being depends mostly on their own effort. Economic paternalism was expressed more by the younger generation, while the older generation was somewhat more interested in the economic situation. However, the younger generation gave more importance to money and was more willing to invest energy in business. For both the younger and the older generation, we can observe a high power distance. Uncertainty avoidance was more likely to be observed among adults. A higher degree of masculinity and individualism was present among the younger generation. These data confirm the findings of earlier research (Ljasina et al., 2014; Mastikova, 2013; Zlantov et al., 2014).

As we have found, there is indeed a positive correlation between cultural values (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity) and economic attitudes. For example, the power distance of the adult generation had a positive correlation with economic self-determination and the wish to have money; uncertainty avoidance correlated with the current level of business activity and the readiness to invest energy in business. As for the young people, power distance was not related to their satisfaction with their financial situation; uncertainty avoidance was positively connected with economic autonomy but did not give the further possibility to increase income; individualism was related to the readiness to invest energy in business but did not favor competition; masculinity was not connected with economic self-determination.

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