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# The Comparison of Content and Dynamic Parameters Personal Value-meaning Systems of Kazakh and Russian Undergraduates

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## Abstract

The comparison of content and dynamic parameters of personal value-meaning systems of Kazakh and Russian undergraduates (n=88) has revealed some cultural differences among them. The content of value-meaning sphere of the Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are similar, while the dynamic aspect of this one reveal more differences in the both samples. Content specifics demonstrate differences only in the ranking of such values as love and interesting job within the general hierarchy of personal values. Dynamic specifics, in their turn, reveal themselves in a difference of perception of the attainability of values as well as in the level of realisability of values. The Kazakhs are more pronounced existential installation realisability values, thus the meaning type of values did not reveal significant differences. The fullness of life meaning is higher in the Russian sample. The research results are useful to create educational trajectories of undergraduates in poly-cultural educational space.

**Keywords:** *education, postgraduate, personality, values, personal value-meaning systems, realisability of personal values.*

## Introduction

### Relevance of the subject

Upon transition to higher stages of education, such as Master's degree program and postgraduate training program, the person once again encounters problems of self-determination and creation of new outlines of life. The solution of these tasks is regulated by the value-meaning personality sphere (Leont'iev, 1999). Its content aspect is set by the hierarchy of personal values, and its dynamic aspect is specified by the degree of sense fullness and the ratio between the importance of values and the assessment of their realization in life (Salikhova, 2010). The research of these aspects of value-meaning sphere is required to understand the patterns applying which the person regulates their life at new stages of education. In this context there arises a question of cultural specificity of these patterns due to their relevance in the epoch of globalization and integration of education systems in the world.

Each culture differs from another in a specific structure and hierarchy of values. In ethno-cultural traditions, values act as examples and moral standards to guide the person and define the direction and norms regulating their activity. As the person's development takes place in the course of the adoption of cultural and historical experience and values of a community they are included in, hence, value-meaning structures of people belonging to different cultures differ (Psychology and culture, 2001).

### Problem statement

Cross-cultural comparisons of values in psychology are quite extensive. They concern the detection of specific links between values and behavior (Schwartz & Butenko, 2014), moral attitudes (Vauclair & Fischer, 2011), the openness and self-transcendence (Kilbourne, Grünhagen & Foley, 2005), the study of the social context role (Fischer, Milfont & Gouveia, 2011) and influence of culture (Bardi, Goodwin, 2011) in the sustainability of valuable structures, etc. Nevertheless, content aspects of value-meaning regulation are mainly studied (Cieciuch, Schwartz, 2012; Rokeach, 1973, etc); researches of its dynamic sides remain single though their results testify to the existence of cultural specificity of this aspect (Salikhova, 2010). The peculiarities of feedback in the regulation of life revealed by the construct of personal values unrealisability-realisaibility are of special interest.

The unrealisability-realisaibility of personal qualities reflects the conflict between value-saturated existential expectations and the perceived degree of realization of personal values in life (Salikhova, 2010). The construct is set by two polar tendencies.

The first trend describes the alignment of important measures of value and their attainability. The distance between them is reduced either by external actions directed towards the achievement of a value, or by internal, compensatory actions, leading to a decrease in the importance of a value because of its inaccessibility. According to this trend, an individual realises and attains the things that they can in life, comes to terms with what they have, and decreases the value of the things that are not attainable («A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush»). The direct connection between importance and attainability of a value (RI) is its empirical indicator.

The second trend describes the polarization or misalignment of a value's importance and its attainability. The improvement of one of these parameters is correlated with a decrease of the other. Therefore, what is attainable goes unappreciated, and what is unattainable seems to be more valuable, as illustrated in a well-known proverb «We do not care for what we have, but when we lose it, we cry», «The best place to be is somewhere else». The fact that there is a barrier in the way of the realisation of a value increases its importance. The backwards connection between the perceived importance and attainability of a value (UI) is its empirical indicator.

This occurrence is the result of the internal processing of perceived differences between the importance and attainability of personal values. As a result, values acquire a particular connotation in the human mind. Various combinations of aligning (realisable) and misaligning (unrealisable) trends become the basis of the allocation of meaning types of values in the continuum of unrealisability-realisaibility (Salikhova, 2015).

The comparison of values unrealisability-realisaibility of American and Russian students showed that they have much differences and the distinctions are well explained by sociocultural specificity of education system (Salikhova, 2015).

The main course of values role study at different stages of education is connected mainly with the impact on educational or professional activity. The link of values with the goal orientation result has been found (Chantara, Koul & Kaewkuekool, 2014); the contribution of various values to the economy of efforts has been revealed (Sahin, 2013); the influence of values on the motivation to continue education according to Master's degree program (Peters & Daly, 2013), on the efficiency of vocational retraining (Chirkina, 2014), on the specifics of expectations and requirements to a future workplace (Singh, Bhandarker, Rai & Jain, 2011), on complete ideas of life have been obtained (Kasler, Izenberg, Elias & White, 2012). There are data on cross-cultural comparisons of value peculiarities of career success prerequisites (Holtschlag, Morales, Masuda, Maydeu-Olivares, 2013), preferences of alternative education (Valeeva & Vafina, 2014). However the dynamic aspect of value-meaning regulation of life connected with the feedback implementation is remained undeveloped.

May be suggested that there is culturally substantiated specificity of value-meaning regulation of life in the unity of its content and dynamic sides. Russian and Kazakh undergraduates have been chosen for the comparison. On the one hand, the Russians and Kazakhs live in the neighborhood and had a long history of joint life within the frames of the unified state that may lead to similarity. On the other hand, the Kazakh people unlike Russian are the epigones of steppe-nomadic culture

that resulted in the system of their ethnic values (Khamitova, 2008). Among the significant ones scientists specify values of human life, harmony, hospitality, communication, belonging to the species (Sakhiyeva, Berdibayeva& Garber, 2014). The identification of the Kazakhs factorial value structure has revealed competence, commitment and organization as the most important. There have been singled out the value system peculiarities of the Kazakhs living in the homeland and those left for Germany and China (Sakhiyeva, Berdibayeva, Atakhanova, Belzhanova, 2015).

Ethno-psychological features of the Kazakhs are studied most often in the context when they are compared with Russian ones, though there are also other comparisons. There has been brought out the national specific character of the Kazakhs behavior and features of interaction in comparison with the Russians (Danilevich, 2001; Ladzina, 2002; Nazyrova, 2001); there have been shown national peculiarities of relations in a family (Grischenko, 2010; Matskevich, 1999), features of protective mechanisms (Barabanova, 2010), ethno-cultural features of cognitive processes and specificity of hemispherical asymmetry (Zhumagaliyeva, 2002) and IQ manifestation (Grigoriev, Lynn, 2014), features of ethnic prejudices of the personality and psychological health in the multiethnic environment (Shomanbayeva, 2008). However comparative researches of value-meaning sphere of the Kazakhs at the highest stages of education are absent. We assume that there is culturally substantiated specificity of value-meaning regulation of life in the unity of its content and dynamic sides Russian and Kazakh undergraduates. The goal of this research is verification of the hypothesis.

### **Objective of the research**

Specification of the general and specific in the content and dynamic sides of value-meaning regulation of Kazakh undergraduates' life in comparison with Russian ones has become the research objective.

### **Methods**

#### **Data collection methods**

The following methods were applied for obtaining the empirical evidences.

1) Life-Purpose Orientations Questionnaire (LPO) including the following parameters: goals in life (Goals), emotional intensity of life (Process), self-actualization satisfaction (Result), life locus of control (LC-Life), Ego locus of control (LC-Ego), general meaningfulness of life (ML) (Leont'iev, 1992).

2) The M. Rokeach (1973) technique as modified by E. B. Fantalova (2001). In pairs subjects compared twelve terminal values by criteria of their importance and attainability. The list included the following values: active life, health (both physical and mental), interesting job, the beauty of nature and art, love (both sensual and spiritual closeness to a partner), wealth (absence of financial constraints), close friendship, self-confidence (absence of inner conflicts and doubts), cognition (including ability to extend knowledge and get new experience), freedom (independence of mind and action), happy family life, creativity.

The following criteria were defined in each group: 1) importance (I) as the number of cases when the value was chosen as a more important one in a couple; 2) attainability (A) as the number of cases when the value was chosen as more attainable in a couple; 3) the difference of importance and attainability (I-A); 4) personal realisability index (RI) of the values calculated as correlation between a value's importance and attainability for each undergraduate (Pearson's r); 4) mean value of individual indexes in each sample; 5) realisability (correlation between importance and attainability - RI) and unrealisability (correlation between parameters of importance and the difference between its importance and attainability - UI) indexes of each value according to group data.

#### **Description of the survey sample**

The current research has surveyed 88 undergraduates (36 % men and 64% women) at the age of 21 to 25 years, among them: Russian undergraduates of Kazan Federal University, n=46,  $M_{age} =$

23.0,  $SD_{age} = 1.3$  (Russia, Kazan) and Kazakh undergraduates of Kyzylorda State University,  $n=42$ ,  $M_{age} = 23.7$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.2$  (Kazakhstan, Kyzylorda). Participation was voluntary, with no compensation, and anonymity was guaranteed.

### Methods of data processing

The data were processed applying the descriptive statistics procedures, independent two-sample Student t-test, correlation analysis based on the Pearson's formula.

### Results

#### Results of the comparison of the importance of values for Russian and Kazakh undergraduates

The comparative analysis of hierarchy of values of the Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are presented in the table 1.

**Table 1.** *The comparison of the importance of values for Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

The values	Kazakh undergraduates		Russian undergraduates		Student's t-test
	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	
Active life	3,0 (2,27)	12	3,8 (2,52)	10	-1,41
Health	7,9 (2,91)	2	7,7 (2,69)	3	0,44
Interesting job	3,9 (2,23)	9	4,9 (2,17)	8	-2,19*
The beauty of nature and art	3,2 (2,28)	11	2,1 (2,25)	12	1,21
Love	5,9 (2,59)	6	8,0 (3,37)	2	-3,16**
Wealth	5,7 (2,77)	7	4,8 (2,72)	9	1,27
Close friendship	6,1 (2,47)	4	6,3 (2,44)	4	-0,29
Self-confidence	6,2 (1,92)	3	5,9 (2,18)	5	0,79
Cognition	5,1 (2,38)	8	5,5 (2,79)	6	-0,19
Freedom	5,9 (2,50)	5	4,9 (2,74)	7	1,19
Happy family life	9,7 (1,87)	1	8,4 (3,07)	1	2,47*
Creativity	3,4 (3,46)	10	3,1 (3,97)	11	0,23

Legend:  $\bar{a}$  – average,  $\sigma$  – dispersion; asterisks indicate statistically significant values at the level  $p < 0,05$  (\*),  $p < 0,01$  (\*\*).

#### 3.2. Results of the comparison of attainability values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates

The comparative analysis of value's attainability estimate of the Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are presented in the table 2.

**Table 2.** *The comparison of attainability values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

The values	Kazakh undergraduates		Russian undergraduates		Student's t-test
	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	
Active life	4,0 (2,66)	11	6,5 (2,13)	2-3	-4,91***
Health	6,7 (3,33)	2	4,7 (2,69)	10	3,27**
Interesting job	4,9 (2,73)	8-9	5,0 (2,65)	8-9	-0,04
The beauty of nature and art	4,9 (2,45)	8-9	5,9 (2,50)	4-5	-1,81
Love	5,6 (2,92)	7	5,9 (3,70)	4-5	-0,55
Wealth	4,6 (2,00)	10	2,7 (2,44)	12	4,31***
Close friendship	6,4 (2,95)	3	6,5 (3,20)	2-3	-0,11
Self-confidence	6,2 (1,86)	4	5,4 (2,89)	6	1,63

Cognition	5,9 (2,20)	6	8,5 (2,26)	1	-5,54***
Freedom	6,1 (2,54)	5	5,0 (2,56)	8-9	1,70
Happy family life	7,4 (3,66)	1	4,2 (3,55)	11	3,89**
Creativity	3,4 (3,26)	12	5,3 (3,06)	7	-2,89**

Legend:  $\bar{a}$  – average,  $\sigma$  – dispersion; asterisks indicate statistically significant values at the level  $p < 0,05$  (\*),  $p < 0,01$  (\*\*),  $p < 0,001$  (\*\*\*)

### Results of the comparison of the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates

The comparative analysis of the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are presented in the table 3.

**Table 3.** *The comparison of the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

The values	Kazakh undergraduates		Russian undergraduates		Student's t-test
	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	$\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	rank	
Active life	-1 (2,31)	6	-2,7 (3,18)	5	2,71**
Health	1,2 (3,73)	3	3 (3,48)	4	-2,55**
Interesting job	-1 (2,93)	5	-0,1 (2,89)	12	-1,70
The beauty of nature and art	-1,7 (2,63)	2	-3,3 (2,45)	2	2,39*
Love	0,3 (2,30)	9	1,8 (3,58)	8	-2,61**
Wealth	1,1 (3,21)	4	2,2 (3,40)	6	-1,75
Close friendship	-0,3 (2,38)	8	-0,2 (2,49)	10	-0,16
Self-confidence	0 (2,34)	11	0,4 (3,40)	9	-0,73
Cognition	-0,8 (2,16)	7	-3,1 (2,82)	3	3,57***
Freedom	-0,2 (2,11)	10	-0,1 (3,06)	11	-0,31
Happy family life	2,3 (3,31)	1	4,2 (3,41)	1	-2,08*
Creativity	0 (1,91)	12	-2,2 (2,76)	7	4,27***

Legend:  $\bar{a}$  – average,  $\sigma$  – dispersion; asterisks indicate statistically significant values at the level  $p < 0,05$  (\*),  $p < 0,01$  (\*\*),  $p < 0,001$  (\*\*\*)

### Results of the comparison of individual realisability indexes of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates

Comparing the individual realisability indexes are presented in the table 4.

**Table 4.** *The comparison of individual realisability indexes (RI) in groups of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

Parameters	RI $\bar{a}$ ( $\sigma$ )	Student's t-test	t-crit.	Statistical significant level
Kazakh undergraduates (n=42)	0,47 (0,21)	2,58	2,55 (p<0,01)	p<0,01
Russian undergraduates (n=46)	0,34 (0,19)			

### Results of the comparison of values realisability (RI) and unrealisability (UI) indexes among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates

The distribution of all measured variables in the sample was close to normal; it allowed applying the correlation analysis using Pearson's formula.

Comparing values realisability (RI) and unrealisability (UI) indexes among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are presented in the table 5.

**Table 5.** *The comparison of values realisability (RI) and unrealisability (UI) indexes among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

The values	Kazakh undergraduates		Russian undergraduates	
	RI	UI	RI	UI
Active life	0,57**	0,32*	0,07	0,74**
Health	0,29	0,52**	0,16	0,65**
Interesting job	0,31*	0,49**	0,29*	0,48**
The beauty of nature and art	0,37*	0,50**	0,48**	0,43**
Love	0,66**	0,29	0,43**	0,27
Wealth	0,13	0,79**	0,13	0,70**
Close friendship	0,63**	0,26	0,64**	0,16
Self-confidence	0,24	0,63**	0,12	0,54**
Cognition	0,55**	0,51**	0,39**	0,68**
Freedom	0,66**	0,41**	0,33*	0,62**
Happy family life	0,43**	0,09	0,48**	0,40**
Creativity	0,84**	0,38*	0,58**	0,43**

Asterisks indicate the values of reached statistical significance at the p-level  $p < 0,05$  (\*),  $p < 0,01$  (\*\*),  $p < 0,001$  (\*\*\*)

### **Results of the comparison of LPO questionnaire results among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

Comparing LPO questionnaire results among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are presented in the table 6.

**Table 6.** *The comparison of LPO questionnaire results among Russian and Kazakh undergraduates*

Groups	LPO Questionnaire's scales $\bar{a}$ ( $\square$ )					
	Goals	Process	Result	LC-Ego	LC-Life	ML
Kazakh undergraduates (n=42)	31.6 (6.5)	30.4 (4.9)	25.5 (4.7)	21.3 (4.8)	29.6 (6.5)	101.7 (16.2)
Russian undergraduates (n=46)	33.0 (5.6)	32.8 (6.2)	26.2 (4.6)	21.9 (3.8)	31.5 (5.8)	107.2 (15.1)
T-actual	-2.18	-2.80	-2.07	-1.87	-2.58	2.66
Differences' significance	$p < 0.05$	$p < 0.05$	$p < 0.05$	$p < 0.05$	$p < 0.05$	$p < 0.05$

## **Discussions**

### **Discussion of the comparison of the importance of values for Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

The comparative analysis of hierarchy of values of the Russian and Kazakh undergraduates revealed points common to all undergraduates with a number of differences (see table 1). Both groups mentioned *health*, *happy family life* and *close friendship* as high-ranking values, whereas *creativity*, *active life* and *the beauty of nature and art* were low-ranking values. Though the value of *family* is on the first place in both groups, its assessment as the most important one is more characteristic for the Kazakhs: they not only have an authentically higher indicator  $\bar{a}$ , but also the range of variations is narrower. The greatest difference in the values assessment, apparently due to cultural differences, was the ranking of *love* and *interesting job*. *Love* was more important to the Russian undergraduates (ranked two compared to a ranking of six in the Kazakh group). *Interesting job* was more important to the Russian undergraduates (ranked eight versus a rank of nine among the Kazakh undergraduates). In a number of the some values were founded differences, for the Kazakh sample the values such as *wealth*, *the beauty of nature and art*, *freedom* are less pronounced, as for the Russian sample the value of *active life* are more important.

### **Discussion of the comparison of attainability values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

In comparison with the hierarchy of value, the assessments of their availability in groups differ more considerably (table 2). Comparing each value's attainability estimate demonstrated that only *close friendship* and *interesting job* are weighted equally in both groups: the value of *close friendship* was in more attainable (2-3 rank), and the value of *interesting job* was among the less attainable (8-9 rank).

The most significant differences were revealed in the attainability of *active life*, *health*, *cognition*, *creativity*, *happy family life* and *wealth*, and in addition evaluate the attainability of other values also were varied, but that are less by the rank. The attainability of *health*, *happy family life*, *freedom*, *self-confidence* and *wealth* was higher among the Kazakh undergraduates, whereas *cognition*, *active life*, *love* and *the beauty of nature* was evaluated as more attainable by the Russian undergraduates.

### **Discussion of the comparison of the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values in the samples of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

The comparative analysis of the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values of the Russian and Kazakh undergraduates revealed a number of differences (see table 3). The most significant distinctions were revealed in the difference between the importance and attainability (I-A) values of *active life*, *health*, *love*, *cognition*, *creativity* and *happy family life*. The closest estimation of this difference was revealed only values: *freedom*, *self-confidence* and *close friendship*.

In general, in the Kazakh sample the divergence of measure of values' importance and availability is less in comparison with the Russian sample in which they disperse more considerably.

### **Discussion of the comparison of individual realisability indexes of Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

Comparing the individual realisability indexes demonstrated that they are much higher (at the level  $p < 0,01$ ) among Kazakh undergraduates compared with Russians (table 4). Kazakh undergraduates' value is highly what they already possess, approaching the values more realistically. At the same time they decrease the value of unattainable items. Russian undergraduates, on the other hand, estimate inaccessible values as more important ("two birds in the bush are worth more than one in the hand" principle).

### **Discussion of the comparison of values realisability (RI) and unrealisability(UI) indexes among Kazakh and Russian undergraduates**

Some distinctions are revealed when realisability and unrealisability indexes at certain life areas are compared (table 5).

For the majority of values in both samples dependence exists among levels of value's importance and difference between its importance and attainability (UI): 75% (9 of 12) in the Kazakh sample and 83% (10 of 12) in Russian sample.

The majority of the undergraduates in both samples (58%, or 7 of 12) assessed the importance of a value as directly connected to its attainability (RI):75% (9 of 12) in the Kazakh sample and 78% (8 of 12) in Russian sample.

Consequently the most values have the same meaning type in both samples: *health, wealth and self-confidence* – barrier meaning type, *interesting job, the beauty of nature, cognition, freedom, creativity* – barrier-implemented meaning type, *love and close friendship* – free-implemented meaning type. The most opposing values in this respect were *happy family life*(free-implemented meaning types in the Kazakh sample, barrier-implemented – in the Russian sample). It means, that Russian and Kazakh undergraduates have similar value-meaning contour of living space of a personality.

### **Discussion of the comparison of the LPO Questionnaire Results for Russian and Kazakh undergraduates**

The comparison of test results LPO testifies that indicators of each of test scales and the total test score are higher in the Russian sample in comparison with the Kazakh (table 6). Therefore, Russian undergraduates estimate their life as a more meaningful one. They perceive their present as more saturated and they are more satisfied with the productivity of the past. The future in their understanding is richer in goals, and they more highly appreciate their control over life than the Kazakhs.

### **Conclusions**

This research has revealed similarities, as well as differences, of content and dynamic parameters of personal value-meaning systems of Kazakh and Russian undergraduates. Generalizing all obtained results, it is possible to assert:

1) The content sides of the value-meaning sphere in Russian and Kazakh undergraduates are similar, only two values have differences - *love* and *interesting job* - in the hierarchy of values.

2) The dynamic sides of the value-meaning regulation revealed essential differences in Russian and Kazakh undergraduates:

- availability of values in life is estimated differently;
- the Kazakhs have a more expressed the realizability of the values;
- the Russians have a higher level of life meaningfulness than the Kazakhs.

Similarities could be explained by the fact that participants from both groups, all being undergraduates, belonged to the same social and age groups, whereas differences could be derived from the specific of Russian or Kazakh cultures.

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