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Cross-national examination of teachers’ intercultural values

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Abstract

The relevance of the studied problem is substantiated by the fact that social living conditions, the vector of society and human requirements development which predetermine transformation of modern teachers’ values changed in the post-Soviet area over a quarter of a century after the USSR collapsed. The research aims to single out cross-cultural features of social and professional values and valuable orientations of teachers - practitioners in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Armenia. The paper covers the results of comparative analysis of teachers’ social and professional values and valuable orientations hierarchy; system-forming values and valuable orientations in invariant models of a value system of teachers – representatives of different cultures are revealed. Obtained results of cross-cultural research enable to determine perspective directions of teachers’ professional activity efficiency increase.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Actualizing the problem

The relevance of the studied problem is provided for by the change of modern teachers’ educational values perception in the context of the transforming society and new challenges of development. Many works are devoted to this problem; a certain level of value system study including teacher’s valuable orientation has already been achieved. It should be noted that the concept of value is the subject matter of various sciences, such as philosophy,

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sociology, psychology and pedagogy.

Modern philosophical literature considers values as part of spiritual culture (Zdravomyslov, 1986); characteristic of interrelation of natural and social phenomena with needs of the subject (Granin, 2014); human's life guidelines (Sagatovsky, 1972).

In sociology the concept "value" is considered in regard to a certain historical epoch, various social groups, national cultures and some individuals. A number of researchers (Shyukking, 1928) singled out universal human values (truth, kindness, usefulness, beauty) which possess an over-individual value. Sociology has a number of directions within which values are described from various positions: as ideas of the desirable (Parsons, 1997); as an object of demands (Becker, 2003).

Psychology and pedagogy have not yet developed an accurate conceptual differentiation between such concepts as "valuable orientations" and "values". Nowadays, the definition of values as an aspect of motivation and value orientations as subjective concepts or different attitudes (social sets) that take a comparatively high position in the hierarchical structure of personality activity regulation are the most accepted ones.

Ravkin's (1995) classification of values deserves certain attention. He specified socio-political values; intellectual values; moral values and values of professional-pedagogical activity. The social-pedagogical aspect makes the basis of some other scientists' approach to classification: insertion of pedagogical activity into the structure of society and social relations. In this regard, the authors determine public-pedagogical, professional-group and individual-personal values (Korotayeva & Matveychuk, 2012).

Values of professional-pedagogical activity are of special interest for us as they are the subject matter of our discussion. Issues of teachers' pedagogical values formation and functioning were considered by such Russian scientists as Isayev (2004), Andreyev (2005), Barbashova (2009), Petukhova (2013), Biktagirova & Valeeva (2014) and other researchers.

The issue of teachers' values is presented in various aspects in foreign researches as well. In Kwakman & Shapiro's (2003) works factors (including teacher's values) influencing teachers' participation in professional training activity are specified; influence of teachers' personality values on professional self-education is considered (Garnham & Williams, 1980); impact of valuable orientations on teachers' staff interaction and cooperation are studied (Basabe & Ros, 2005; Ning & Lee, 2015); influence of multiple goal orientation on learning motivation and learning teachers' behavior is considered (Li & Shieh, 2016); dynamics of values held by future sports teachers (Malinauskas, 2015).

A contemporary teacher must possess cross-cultural values, which include human and ethnic values. Cross-cultural values are system creating in the structure of social-professional values. Despite the fact that teachers' valuable-motivational sphere was of interest for many authors, social-professional values of the teacher as steady motivational-meaning formations in the context of successful teachers' pedagogical activity and professional development have not been studied sufficiently. In the context of our research teachers' social and professional values are understood as a dialectic unity of teachers' social, professional and personal values making the basis of their general cultural and professional competences. The structure of social-professional values includes: cross-cultural values - spiritual-moral, life, civil; and also intellectual and professional values.

Thus, the study of teachers' social-professional values, their correlation with values prevailing in the society can provide the clue for understanding psychological problems which the modern teacher experiences, and will enable to afford a psychological support of pedagogical activity.

1.2. Purpose of the research

The research objective: to reveal cross-cultural features of social-professional values and valuable orientations of teachers - practitioners in Russia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

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