THE INTERACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOSITY AND AXIOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to reveal the specifics of interactions between axiological characteristics and the characteristics of individual religiosity in students. Participants in the study were fourth-year students (N = 61). Axiological constructs of personality were measured by the 'Morphological test of life values' (MTLV); individual religiosity was studied by the method of defining the structure of individual religiosity. In order to check the hypothesis that axiological orientations of students with various levels of individual religiosity are significantly different, we used the method of contrast groups. In this method, the object of the study includes two groups of individuals, who have the maximal differences in averaged group values of the criterial variable, which, in this case, was students' individual religiosity. The experimental sample was divided into three sub-groups by the level of individual religiosity, which included students with high (CG1) and low (CG2) level of religiosity. We used the following methods of mathematical and statistical analysis: methods of descriptive statistics; Student's t-test (for independent samples); Pearson's correlation coefficient. The data analysis was conducted with Statistic 8.0 and SPSS 19.0 for WINDOWS. The results of the correlation analysis solidly demonstrate mutual dependence of axiological orientations and characteristics of individual religiosity in students (80 out of 126 possible correlations, i.e. 63.5%, were statistically significant). Within the array of significant correlation, the prevailing level of significance was $p \leq 0.01$ and 0.001 (in 80% of correlations), which characterizes the robust nature of the relations between the studied intra-psychological personality phenomena. The use of Student's t-test showed that the studied characteristics of students' axiological values are significantly different in 12 cases of measurements out of the possible 14. Moreover, students with high level of individual religiosity also have high scores in the axiological values characteristics. The exceptions included the values of high material status and personal life.

Keywords: individual religiosity, axiological orientations, value scales, personality values, mutual definition

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1. Introduction

The significance of the study of mutual dependence between axiological orientations and characteristics of individual religiosity in students in the changing world is defined by the transformation of the fundamental principles of humanism, spirituality and religiosity. There is a new cultural-cognitive field of addressing the problems of general human morality in religious and secular culture. Inconsistency of the phenomenon of religiosity becomes the characteristic that defines the influence of religiosity on affirmations, values and practices. These conclusions have been made by multiple researchers.

We will list the works published in the past thirty years, which have been available to us. These works present general values of religious tolerance [1], as well as specific values of the peers of the end of the XX century [2], and specific levels of individual religiosity [3]. In the very beginning of the XXI century, other successful attempts have been made to generalize the life values [4], reveal the moral bases [5] and show the values and crises of the youth [6]. The works of the past decade present rather useful conclusions about the need of an integral approach to studying religiosity [7, 8]; about the genesis, current specifics and occurring tendencies of the modern religious conscience of the Russians [9], about religiosity and its consequences in axiological-normative field [10].

In the past two years, specialists were able to describe the attitude of the youth towards different religious confessions in dependence from their religious identity [11] and religiosity of the modern students [12]. They revealed the essence of axiological approach to the development of individuality of student's personality [13] and paradoxes of religiosity in the developed societies of the modern age [14] and systematized the main paradigm of the true religiosity on the turn of the XX-XXI centuries [15].

We based our study on these authors' comprehension of the categories of individual religiosity and axiological-essential field of a personality. Individual religiosity reflects religiosity as an individual's quality, which manifests in faith and worshiping of the sacred on the level of conscience, behaviour and relationships, as well as affiliation to certain religious ideas and values, along with a certain religion and religious group. Axiological-essential field of personality is described as a systemic formation, which reflects subject's attitude towards a phenomenon, life fact, object and subject, and their acceptance as having life significance.

2. Methods

Systemic approach to studying the values implies their systematization upon two groups of scales (Table 1). Individual religiosity was studied with nine characteristics. Participants in the study were fourth-year students (N = 61).

Axiological constructs of personality were measured by the 'Morphological test of life values' (MTLV) [4]. The main construct of MTLV is terminal values, which represent goals, ideals and meanings of life.

Individual religiosity was studied by the method of defining the structure of individual religiosity [3].

In order to check the hypothesis that axiological orientations of students with various levels of individual religiosity are significantly different, we used the method of contrast groups. In this method, the object of the study includes two groups of individuals, who have the maximal differences in averaged group values of the criterial variable, which, in this case, was students' individual religiosity. The experimental sample was divided into three sub-groups by the level of individual religiosity, which included students with high (CG1) and low (CG2) level of religiosity.

We used the classical methods of mathematical and statistical analysis: methods of descriptive statistics; Student's t-test (for independent samples); Pearson's correlation coefficient. The data analysis was conducted with Statistic 8.0 and SPSS 19.0 for WINDOWS.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1 combines the results of the correlation analysis. We revealed 80 statistically significant correlations out of the possible 126 (63.5%).

Within the array of significant correlation, the prevailing level of significance was $p \leq 0.01$ and 0.001 (in 80% of correlations), which characterizes the robust nature of the relations between the studied intra-psychological personality phenomena.

Qualitative analysis allows noting that the most significant mutual dependence of axiological orientations of personality is found for such individual religiosity characteristics, as 'attitude towards religion as philosophical paradigm', 'tendency to search support and consolation in religion' and 'attitude to religion as an example of moral norms of behaviour'.

The revealed correlation is positive, i.e. the higher the listed characteristics of students' individual religiosity, the higher the level of students' axiological orientations in all fields of their life activity.

We would like to point out separately that the insignificant number of statistically significant correlations between the characteristics of terminal values and such components of individual religiosity structure, as 'attitude to magic' and 'interest towards mysterious phenomena'.

From the perspective of axiological values' characteristics, the majority of significant correlations with individual religiosity was found for social and spiritual values, as well as creativity values – 'self-development', 'spiritual satisfaction', 'creativity', 'active social contacts', 'achievements' and 'preservation of one's own individuality'. On the other hand, the values of egocentric nature, such as 'own reputation' and 'high material status' have almost no statistically significant correlations with the characteristics of students' individual religiosity.

Table 1. Correlations of axiological orientations and characteristics of individual religiosity in 4th-year students (N = 61).

Groups of value scales		Characteristics of individual religiosity structure								
		1. PHIL	2. MAG	3. SUP	4. EXT	5. PAR	6. DIV	7. SELF	8. MOR	9. GIR
Group of scales of life fields values	1. Field of professional life	0.372(*)	-0.126	0.398(**)	0.351(*)	0.389(**)	0.433(**)	0.439(**)	0.646(***)	**0.412(**)**
	2. Field of education	0.468(**)	-0.274	0.501(***)	0.244	0.375(*)	0.372(*)	0.232	0.539(***)	**0.448(**)**
	3. Field of personal life	0.428(**)	-0.021	0.388(*)	0.223	0.288	0.55	0.159	0.267	**0.232**
	4. Field of social activity	0.391(*)	-0.093	0.406(**)	0.185	0.278	0.524(***)	0.454(**)	0.628(***)	**0.613(***)**
	5. Field of hobbies	0.268	-0.205	0.232	0.212	0.248	0.439(**)	0.248	0.469(**)	**0.508(**)**
	6. Field of physical activity	0.405(**)	-0.227	0.481(**)	0.271	0.113	0.254	0.22	0.556(***)	**0.412(**)**
Group of personality values scales	1. Self-development	0.661(***)	-0.241	0.628(***)	0.576(***)	0.183	0.591(***)	0.641(***)	0.552(***)	**0.729(***)**
	2. Spiritual satisfaction	0.695(***)	-0.249	0.675(***)	0.616(***)	0.148	0.425(**)	0.643(***)	0.606(***)	**0.662(***)**
	3. Creativity	0.513(***)	-0.238	0.547(***)	0.399(**)	0.186	0.493(***)	0.491(***)	0.567(***)	**0.677(***)**
	4. Active social contacts	0.586(***)	-0.327(*)	0.617(***)	0.514(***)	0.163	0.560(***)	0.620(***)	0.567(***)	**0.705(***)**
	5. Own reputation	0.404(**)	-0.117	0.394(*)	0.28	0.23	0.206	0.251	0.399(**)	**0.325(*)**
	6. Achievements	0.561(***)	-0.332(*)	0.533(***)	0.490(**)	0.189	0.28	0.465(**)	0.461(**)	**0.488(**)**
	7. High material status	0.121	0.153	0.047	-0.073	0.223	-0.051	-0.007	0.128	**0.145**
	8. Preservation of one's own individuality	0.399(**)	-0.257	0.425(**)	0.395(*)	0.161	0.466(**)	0.501(**)	0.504(***)	**0.564(***)**

Note: N(n) – number of subjects; method of Ch. Pearson * - p ≤ 0.05, ** - p ≤ 0.01, ***- p ≤ 0.001

Legend: 1. Attitude towards religion as philosophical paradigm (PHIL); 2. Attitude towards magic (MAG); 3. Tendency to search support and consolation in religion (SUP); 4. External signs of religiosity (EXT); 5. Interest towards mysterious phenomena, perception of which depends on faith much more than on knowledge (PAR); 6. Tendency to believe in the Creator and accept the existence of the Divine power that created the world (DIV); 7. Presence of religious self-conscience (SELF); 8. Attitude to religion as an example of moral norms of behaviour (MOR); 9. General index of religiosity (GIR).

Further statistical comparison concerned the characteristics of axiological orientations of students with high and low level of religiosity. Groups contrast by the characteristic of 'general index of religiosity' was confirmed statistically upon the comparison of means (Student's t-test – 8.746423 with $p \leq 0.000000$).

The software we used calculated the levels of statistical significance for each individual case. The lowest standard level of statistical significance was $p \leq 0.05$.

The comparison of mean scores of axiological orientations in students with different levels of individual religiosity (N = 47) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of mean scores of axiological orientations in students with different levels of individual religiosity (N = 47).

No.	Criteria and characteristics of psychological adaptation	Contrast groups		Student's t-test
		M-CG1	M-CG2	
General index of religiosity		7.750	3.555	8.746***. $p \leq 0.000000$
Group of scales for life fields values				
1.	Field of professional life	7.166	5.111	2.490*, $p \leq 0.022172$
2.	Field of education	8.250	6.333	2.672*, $p \leq 0.015047$
3.	Field of personal life	6.916	6.0000	1.295573, $p \leq 0.210642$
4.	Field of social activity	6.500	3.111	4.126***, $p \leq 0.000573$
5.	Field of hobbies	7.000	5.333	2.429*, $p \leq 0.025227$
6.	Field of physical activity	6.666	4.111	3.742***, $p \leq 0.001379$
Group of scales for personality values				
7.	Self-development	7.333	4.666	4.035***, $p \leq 0.000706$
8.	Spiritual satisfaction	7.250	4.666	4.363***, $p \leq 0.000334$
9.	Creativity	7.166	4.222	3.448**, $p \leq 0.002690$
10.	Active social contacts	7.250	4.777	3.331**, $p \leq 0.002690$
11.	Own reputation	6.833	5.000	2.203*, $p \leq 0.040130$
12.	Achievements	7.083	4.666	3.060**, $p \leq 0.006433$
13.	High material status	7.083	6.666	0.555796, $p \leq 0.584836$
14.	Preservation of one's own individuality	7.000	4.777	3.001**, $p \leq 0.007334$

Legend: M – mean scores, CG1 – control group with high level of individual religiosity, CG2 – control group with low level of individual religiosity; t – Student's t-test of the significance of differences; p – level of statistical significance

Student's t-test showed that the addressed characteristics of axiological orientations in CG1 and CG2 students are significantly different in 12 cases of measurements out of the possible 14. Moreover, students with high level of individual religiosity also have high scores in the axiological values characteristics. The exceptions included the values of high material status and personal life.

Axiological orientations of students' personality, which connect its internal world with the surrounding reality, create a complex multi-level

hierarchical system of categories. These categories shape such functions of person's religiosity, as belief, creation of meanings, communication, psychotherapy and integration, and embody the essence of human being [16-20]. System of person's values is dynamic, to a large extent it is defined by the changing social environment, as well as by the present level of person's development. In case when person's axiological development is actualized within the horizon of directions, defined by religious world-view, it gains higher stability and concordance. A religious person is more prone to striving for spirituality, self-development, communication and socialization, while the priority of material well-being and balanced personal life are not defined by the factors of student's individual religiosity. The main value within the religious systems is personal moral self-perfection and salvation; they state the merit of freedom and work (in Christianity), moral orientations and ideals. Religiosity has a vivid potential for satisfying the cognitive needs and developing moral directions. The study allowed confirming the hypothesis about the tight link between religion and axiological-essential field of personality.

4. Conclusions

The use of correlation method as a method of statistical evaluation of the form, valence and proximity of the link between the studied characteristics or factors allowed exploring the relation (link) between the variables, which was not affected by our interference or manipulation with these variables.

The presence of statistically significant correlations between the studied variables became the statistical validation of the suggestion that axiological orientations of a personality are significant characteristics of its individual religiosity.

Qualitative analysis of the obtained results allows concluding that axiological orientations of a personality, being mediated by religious conscience, are in the conditions of constant actualization and are aimed at person's spiritual and social development.

The obtained results of the study of axiological orientations in students with different levels of individual religiosity are significantly different in the characteristics of axiological orientation. Namely, high individual religiosity of a personality corresponds with higher manifestation of its axiological orientations in comparison with a personality with low level of religiosity.

The revealed specifics confirm the existing comprehension of religious institutions as one of the main sources of axiological development of a personality. On the other hand, it is important to understand that the way of developing a personality under the influence of religious institutions is not the only alternative, because there are also various essential secular paradigms of axiological-moral establishment and perfection of a personality, and the choice of the most appropriate model should be defined by the subject himself.

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