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# RELIGIOUS APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IN V.V. ZENKOVSKY'S ORTHODOX PEDAGOGY

**Dinara Ramazanova<sup>\*</sup>, Aigulden Togaibayeva, Klara Turebayeva,  
Meiramgul Yessengulova, Zhainagul Kartbayeva and  
Zauresh Imzharova**

*Aktobe Regional State University named after K. Zhubanov, Department of Psychological,  
Pedagogical and Special Education, Aliya Moldagulova Avenue 34, Aktobe, Kazakhstan*

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## Abstract

The modern reality is characterized by a shortage of spiritual values and moral and ethical constants. The strengthening of pragmatism in the cultural environment and the popularization of consumer psychology in the media have caused a negative trend in the formal attitude of the individual to spiritual growth, both one's own and other people's. A thorough study of the history of different approaches to education will contribute to overcoming these negative trends, as well as the practical implementation of the tasks facing the integral education system in Russia. The article analyses V.V. Zenkovsky's pedagogical research and organizational activities conducted in emigration, the main problems of raising children and youth presented in his pedagogical research, as well as the basic postulates of the holistic concept of Orthodox pedagogy created by him.

*Keywords:* educational, anthropology, student, behaviour, Christianity

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## 1. Introduction

Modern society not only generates difficulties but also opens up unique opportunities because today's socio-cultural conditions are a real element for the formation of an independent and autonomous personality. At the same time, the desire to reduce all the processes of society to the foundations of morality through the inclusion in the processes of education of the value aspects of moral education of the individual has been quite clearly manifested in the last decade. In particular, this concerns those value aspects, which being part of the national pedagogical heritage are inextricably combined with universal humanistic ideas [1]. Consequently, not only the search for solutions but the problem definition makes the study of the religious approach to education in the system of Orthodox pedagogy relevant. One of its brightest representatives was V.V. Zenkovsky (1881-1962) - a representative of academic scientific thought,

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<sup>\*</sup>E-mail: dinara.zh.ramazanova@mail.ru

philosopher, teacher, psychologist, Church and state figure, author of many works on the history of education and culture, and one of the most prominent representatives of Russian post-revolutionary emigration.

The article aims to reconstruct the socio-political development of society by studying the religious approach to the problem of education in Zenkovsky's system of Orthodox pedagogy based on complex scientific processing of the identified sources and existing studies. Achieving this goal involves the following tasks: to reveal the degree of scientific development of the topic; to reveal the main factors influencing the formation of Zenkovsky's religious approach to education; to reveal the leading ideas of the scholar's Orthodox pedagogy.

Analysis of recent publications on Zenkovsky's activities suggests that the topic under discussion has not yet become the subject of special research. Zenkovsky's scholarly and literary-journalistic works of the 1920-60s [2-7] became a noticeable phenomenon in emigrant literature and gained recognition. Fundamental works, published mainly in France, became available with the fall of ideological prejudices in Russian pedagogy [5, 6]. This created favourable conditions for the further development of modern scientific thought and expanded the possibilities for researchers to use original documents for the rehabilitation of the name of the scholar and the revival of his ideas in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The study of Zenkovsky's pedagogical heritage was carried out in works of such Russian scholars as O. Kirdyashova [8, 9], who pays attention to the analysis of Zenkovsky's pedagogical conception as a whole, S.A. Kolesnikov [10, 11], whose studies are devoted to the relationship between the school and the Church in the Christian education of the younger generation, as well as A.V. Sukhorukikh [12], who revealed the foundations of spiritual education in Zenkovsky's conception; T.A. Muravitskaya [13], who analysed the anthropological foundations of the pedagogical concept of V.V. Zenkovsky. A brief analysis of research on the pedagogical heritage of V.V. Zenkovsky is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Analysis of research on the pedagogical heritage of V.V. Zenkovsky.

No.	Author	The main thing in the pedagogical heritage of V.V. Zenkovsky
1.	E.V. Kirdyashova [8, 9]	Personality is the main value of education; the idea of personality as a god-like image, the main factors in the formation of which are the unity of biological, social and eschatological principles of education.
2.	S.A. Kolesnikov [10, 11]	The central place of the Church in the educational process
3.	A.V. Sukhorukikh [12]	The principles of personal orientation of the educational process, the priority of upbringing over education; the priority of spiritual education over empiricism and naturalism of cognition, the correspondence of educational tasks to the stages of person's spiritual development
4.	T.A. Muravitskaya [13]	The foundation of Pedagogy is Christian anthropology as a set of ideas about the nature of man, the meaning of his life, and his freedom.

## **2. Zenkovsky's pedagogical research and organizational activities in emigration**

The emigrant period of Zenkovsky's life and work is of particular interest in the framework of the study since it was at this time that his pedagogical conception of education was finally formed.

In contrast to the Soviet science, which corresponded to the goals of communist construction and denied any other approaches to its development, the pedagogical thought of emigration was presented in two directions: idealistic (professor S. Hessen) and religious (professor Zenkovsky).

The leading direction of Zenkovsky's scholarly research was the theoretical justification of all spheres of human life, based on its religious perception. The result of this activity was the publication of 'Psychology of childhood' in 1924 in Leipzig [14]. The search for a connection between the concepts of faith and knowledge in the development of the spiritual world of children raised the question of the structure of personality. Recognizing that there is a deep connection between various spheres of the soul, Zenkovsky argued that a purely empirical understanding of the individual does not provide an opportunity to explain the development of the mental life of the child. This position prompted him to formulate a metaphysical concept of personality. The substantiation of the theory of extra-empirical components of personality, which caused the search for their discovery and, at the same time, could not be fully implemented, revealed a new aspect of psychological research determining the development of a religious approach to the problem of education in the system of Orthodox pedagogy [15]. Zenkovsky was engaged in the development of the latter in the following years of his activity [5, 16].

The board of the Union of Russian Academic Groups, which included Zenkovsky, decided to create the Pedagogical University named after John Amos Comenius in Prague in September 1922, which became the centre for the scientific development of relevant problems in emigration. Zenkovsky was invited to head the Department of Experimental and Child Psychology in 1923 [17].

Zenkovsky was elected the head of the first pedagogical congress of emigration in the spring of 1923, after which the Pedagogical Bureau for Primary and Secondary School Abroad was created in April 1923 and Zenkovsky was also elected the head of it. The Pedagogical Bureau headed by him established its representative offices in 13 European countries, keeping in touch with the United States [18].

On the pages of the journal *Russian School Abroad*, Zenkovsky attached great importance to religious upbringing and education [19]. Without denying the educational function of the school, he highlighted the nurturing role of this institution, which came down to finding a way to the full implementation of the creative powers of students.

In the report 'Prerequisites for the construction of the new school' [20], Zenkovsky put forward the following tasks of the new school: consciously and stubbornly fight the primacy of intellectualism in school and make the transition from modern pedagogical voluntarism to emotionalism. This provided for the social development of the child to realize their moral growth, strengthening their religious spirit and aesthetic creativity.

Zenkovsky combined work at the Pedagogical University named after John Amos Comenius in Prague and the Theological Orthodox Institute named after S. Radonezhsky in Paris until 1926. Engaged in active scientific activity and paying attention to child psychology, namely the factor of Orthodox and national socialization, Zenkovsky, taking advantage of the scholarship provided by the Rockefeller Foundation and the invitation of the Young People's Christian Union, left for the United States in 1926 to study the experience of introducing a religious education system in this country. The observations made in the United States are reflected in his article 'Church and school' [21].

The Pedagogical Bureau, headed by Zenkovsky, having become the centre of Russian cultural and educational activities abroad, convened the first out-of-school congress in Prague in 1928, in which representatives of educational organizations from different countries took part [22].

### **3. 'Worldview pedagogy' in Zenkovsky's works**

In the 1930s, the problem of 'worldview pedagogy' interested many emigrant researchers. Several articles on this subject [23, 24] were directed against the totalitarian pedagogy of Italian fascism and German nazism and the authoritarianism of the Soviet pedagogical system. Zenkovsky supported criticism of totalitarianism, giving a new direction to the discussion of this issue in the work 'The root problem of modern pedagogy' [25].

Studying the uniqueness of the social and psychological status of emigrant children and environmental factors, Zenkovsky continued consideration of these problems in pedagogical publications. Advocating for the spread and development of extracurricular religious work, he argued that helping children and adolescents provides something more than what school or even family can give - strengthening the spiritual life of the younger generation through various types of culture and creativity. At the same time, the religious-pedagogical problem cannot be isolated from the general problem of returning to the ideal of creative culture. The spiritual health of children cannot be ensured without the creation of an integrated system of creative culture. It is possible to seriously raise the question of religious upbringing and education only along this path.

In the article 'Facts and reflections' [4], Zenkovsky came to the conclusion that for a serious and productive influence on young people, it is necessary to turn to life based on religious grounds. Islands of Christian culture should be opened at the heart of modern culture as a return to a holistic church life that combines freedom and loyalty to Orthodoxy, creative spirit, and traditionalism. He spoke of the same thing in Paris in September 1927,

proposing to rebuild the school on a church basis and to see the task of each teacher in religious education. The scholar argued that school should be the very life of children while teaching should be linked to Christian experience and not limited to theory. Zenkovsky insisted that lessons should be not passive perception of the finished material but the actual experience of children a religious reality, which should include both the attitude to the teacher and among themselves [4].

#### **4. Creation of a holistic conception of Christian (Orthodox) pedagogy**

An analysis of the scholar's works suggests that Zenkovsky purposefully turned to the religious justification of educational problems in the late 1920s. By the end of the 1930s, the scholar had formulated a holistic conception of Christian pedagogy.

One of the most significant studies by Zenkovsky, in which the basic postulates of his conception of Orthodox pedagogy were formulated, is the work 'Problems of education in the light of Christian anthropology', published in Paris in 1934 [5]. Pointing to the weakness of the development of the theoretical base of modern pedagogy in connection with its penchant for empiricism and the latest philosophical scientific constructions that are consistent with the principles of naturalism, he believed that the corresponding concept of education could be found only in the system of Orthodox anthropology.

According to Zenkovsky, the religious nature of Pedagogy does not fit into the system of philosophical ideas of the day, thereby creating internal problems in this science. The way out of this situation is to turn to Christian anthropology to understand the pedagogical experience accumulated over the years, where the discrepancy between the progressive search and the weak development of the ideas of Orthodox pedagogy is reduced to an integral system. Based on this, Zenkovsky defined the task of exploring the historical paths of Christian education and restoring the potential of the latter, focusing on its most significant aspects. Zenkovsky argued that they all come down to three forms: naturalistic, where the creative self-determination of the individual is not manifested, transcendental, where the dependence of man on higher forces is not determined, and religious - the only true, according to the scholar, which gives one an explanation of higher forces and goals [26].

From the pedagogical point of view, the main role in education, in his opinion, belongs to the spiritual life, outside of which "religious consciousness can degenerate into a barren cold work of pure intellect" [26, p. 122]. As Zenkovsky noted, "the religious sphere is central to the hierarchy of spiritual forces and there is no psychological need to saturate the religious sphere with pure religious material" [26, p. 136]. Accordingly, Zenkovsky saw the general task of education in the Christian spirit in the development of spiritual forces and requests from children and adolescents. All other tasks should be subordinated to this main task of education.

Here is a quote, based on which, in our opinion, Zenkovsky's understanding of the spiritual and moral education of a child may be an explanation of today's trends of the post-secularization significance of the spiritual and moral education of youth. As Zenkovsky noted, "The main process in human life should be recognized from not the physical and not the mental side of it, but the spiritual side, which is deeper than the separation of the physical and mental world and which carries the guarantee of integrity. The study of various mental phenomena shows that the spiritual process has in itself the key to understanding everything that happens in a person. The spiritual development of the child is subject to a certain rhythm due to different ages and changes and the task of educational influence changes in this regard. Awareness of the spiritual life in its rhythm should be the basis of pedagogy, not moral, but the religious spiritual process of growth creates the true and final theme of educational impact on children. The doctrine of the child's soul should contain both teachings (pedagogical naturalism and I. Kant's doctrine of the 'radical evil' of human nature), subordinated to the doctrine of the image of God and the doctrine of spirituality, which entered human nature and which must be eliminated through revelation and spiritual strengthening of a person, which is possible only in the church and through the church. In this regard, the goal of pedagogical influence can be considered as the disclosure of the image of God in children through their preparation for life in this world and for eternal life." [26, p. 142-143]

Thus, the methodological basis of the pedagogical concept of Zenkovsky was Christian philosophical anthropology. This includes the idea of the Creation, a person as an image of God, the Church as a conciliar unity of free spiritual personalities in God, original sin, and resurrection. The philosopher defined the way out to the problems of Pedagogy as follows: "Man in the metaphysical sense is the idea of original sin. The resurrection of people in the Kingdom of God restores living wholeness lost through death." [27, p. 442] The path to this begins already in the period of earthly existence through the liberation of the individual from the power of ordinary actions and the spiritualization of their totality, which means preparation for the 'triumph of the eternal life of man'. Orthodox pedagogy should play an important role in this. Its principles formulated by Zenkovsky combined Christian moral ideals and universal values. Zenkovsky did not adhere to the ideology of the Orthodox religious direction, which considered Theology to be the main tool of Pedagogy. According to the scholar, Pedagogy has three foundations - Anthropology, Philosophy and Orthodoxy. Zenkovsky's Christian pedagogy is considered one of the holistic pedagogical systems of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As a teacher, Zenkovsky considered the features and difficulties of all age periods in his works. The scholar attached special attention, as a separate topic in the study of pedagogy, to the period of youth, or 'late childhood'. Zenkovsky repeatedly addressed, in particular, the issues of sex education in this period. He published the work 'Conversations with the youth on gender issues' in 1929, the subsequent processing and addition of which led to the publication of the new

study 'On the verge of maturity' in 1952 [28]. Zenkovsky substantiated his ideas with the latest knowledge about the personality, in particular, from the field of psychopathology, emphasizing that the doctrine of man has always contained Christianity as a separate kind of knowledge. According to Zenkovsky, it not only approved the principle of monogamy, contributed to the humanization of relations between men and women, and increased their spirituality but also raised the idea of virginity. Christianity condemned the avoidance of marriage and sanctified it.

Analysis of the pedagogical heritage of V.V. Zenkovsky presented in his works, made it possible to formulate the main provisions underlying his pedagogical views (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The main provisions underlying the pedagogical views of V.V. Zenkovsky.

No.	Field of study	Basic principles
1.	Worldview pedagogy	dissemination and development of extracurricular religious work
		strengthening the spiritual life of the younger generation through various types of culture and creativity
		restructuring the school on a church basis through the children's experience of religious reality
2.	The concept of Christian (Orthodox) pedagogy	appeal to Christian anthropology
		the main role in education belongs to spiritual life
		education based on a Christian worldview
		orientation of the educational process to the personality of the educated person
		personality education as a process of subordination of the human hierarchy: spirit-soul-body
education taking into account age, spiritual, psychophysiological characteristics, and special attention should be paid to the period of adolescence		

Zenkovsky's attention to the history of pedagogy, as well as preliminary coverage of the relevant views of K. Ushinsky [29], determined the writing and publication of the essay 'Russian pedagogy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century' [30], in which Zenkovsky set a goal to identify the internal dialectics of Russian pedagogical thought, the understanding of which was complicated by the events of 1917, and to determine the direction of further development, which should lead it on the path of the revival of Russia. Despite the fact that the above work describes only the Russian pedagogical thought and the theme of the Russian school, its forms and evolution deliberately left without consideration, it played a significant role in the further development of pedagogical science. S.V. Dunin and N.E. Sadovnikova note that at that time, the characteristics of Russian pedagogical science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century had not exist in literature and the available research on the history of pedagogy had been one-sided [31].

Highlighting three directions in the development of Russian pedagogy - naturalism, idealism, and religious direction, the scholar traced its connection with the development of the psychological and philosophical science of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which led to the emergence of the Orthodox aspect of pedagogical science [32].

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian pedagogy, Zenkovsky, according to researchers of his work, attached great importance to the idea of organic synthesis, developed by K. Ushinsky and the motive of freedom of L. Tolstoy [33], which played a leading role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century educational thought. These ideas led to a general religious turning point, which was prepared in the philosophy and literature of F. Dostoevsky and V. Solovyov and was embodied in the ideas of pre-revolutionary metropolitan Christian-philosophical societies [34]. However, as Zenkovsky noted, the religious pedagogical direction found its scientific expression only in emigration [30].

Considering that the system of Soviet pedagogy had already been formed, Zenkovsky carried out its holistic disclosure. He noted philosophical contradictions, utopianism, pragmatism, and mono-ideologism in it, which he considered the main prerogatives of communist ideology as a kind of atheistic attitude. Zenkovsky, according to O.T. Ermishina [35], trying to give an objective analysis of the philosophical pluralism of various systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian pedagogy, highlighted historical and pedagogical problems from the standpoint of religion.

## **5. Conclusions**

In accordance with the goal, we analysed the religious approach to the problem of education in the system of Zenkovsky's Orthodox pedagogy, as well as made a brief analysis of research on the pedagogical heritage of V.V. Zenkovsky; considered the problem of 'ideological pedagogy' in the works of V.V. Zenkovsky, and studied the works of V.V. Zenkovsky on the creation of a holistic concept of Christian (Orthodox) pedagogy.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the unity and independence of three factors of scientific and spiritual interests - religious philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology, where the common idea was to deny the ideology of Bolshevism and focus on humanism, were the basis of Zenkovsky's Orthodox pedagogy. An important direction of his psychological conception was the idea of the hierarchical construction of the human personality and soul. Of all Russian educational researchers, Zenkovsky most fully expressed his position on the essence of raising a child on the basis of Orthodoxy, becoming the creator of a holistic conception of Christian pedagogy.

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