

Values of generations in the context of inter-generational communication

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Abstract. The review of scholarly research on generations is presented in the article. First, authors consider theoretical and methodological problems of studying the generations. Second, the main directions and results of empirical research on communication between generations are presented. The paper demonstrates the existence of a gap between generations in different countries. Results allow to conclude that now in Russia, communication between generations gradually loses a role of relaying cultural values, which leads to limitations in communicative chains in the inter-generational space and to violation of sociocultural continuity of generations. Third, the review of empirical researches of generations confirms that in the world differences in values of representatives of different generations are observed. In the West traditional values, the senior generation are replaced with secular (rational) values, and in the East – the senior generation is more committed to collectivism values, and the younger – to individualism values.

1 Introduction

Interest in the theory of generations and volume what impact of difference between generations can be exerted on efficiency of work, learning, consumer behavior, the relations in family, etc. recently constantly grows. However, it should be noted that in the field practice precedes science. Consultants and the practicing experts offer services, and their decisions accounting of differences between generations are at the cornerstone. And similar offers are in demand. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that scientific research of generations is still insufficient for justification of effects of their influence on various aspects of life of the person.

S. Lyon and L. Kuron claim that the growing volume of research on differences between generations still has generally descriptive character, but doesn't assume the creation of a theoretical basis of a research on generations. As a result, the data obtained by different researchers are separate, contradictory and difficult comparable among themselves [1].

Researchers haven't provided enough convincing data on why there are generations, whether there are real distinctions between generations, or why these distinctions have an impact on life of people.

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In this article, we have decided analyze the research on inter-generational communication and differences between generations. The choice of a subject is caused by the fact that despite a wide circulation of opinions between representatives of different generations, there are differences in values and worldview. Moreover, scientists still couldn't prove consistently and convincingly their existence. At the same time, many practicing psychologists, journalists, marketing specialists, and researchers have assumed that the worldview of such big social groups as generations not only differs from each other, but also is the reason of various phenomena and efficiency of communication.

In particular, the conflicts of generations [2, 3], tensions are explained in a workplace [4] and in family [5], and also other problems of inter-generational communication are interpreted by differences in valuable orientations [6].

Analyzing the publications devoted to studying of differences between generations, we have come to a conclusion that all of them can be conditionally divided into 2 groups: 1) the works discussing theoretical and methodological problems of studying generations; 2) empirical researches of communication between generations and values of representatives of different generations.

The researches which have got to a sphere of our attention expand the understanding of generations and offer new prospects. We will give results of the conducted analysis separately for each group of researches below.

2 Theory and methods: the first group

The psychology of generations is rather young direction of psychological researches. Still debatable are many questions concerning the conceptualization and methodology of studying the differences between generations and opportunities of using the gained knowledge in practice.

Earlier, we already addressed the analysis of those aspects of the theory of generations which raise questions: it is a problem of defining the concept "generation," as well as quantitative and qualitative characteristics of generations and a problem of differentiation of generations [7].

C. W. Rudolf and H. Zacher [8] also begin the analysis with consideration of various approaches to definition of the concept "generation." At the same time, they address researches of generations within sociological, biological, and psychological sciences. It is interesting that authors often call into question correctness of comparative researches of generations and existence between them essential distinctions [8, 9, 10, 11]. They explain the doubts with shortcomings of methods of empirical researches.

The main criticism of researchers comes down to the fact that the existing quasi-experimental studies. First, they do not allow to differentiate effects of age, birth time, and experience [8, 12, 13, 14]. Second, they do not allow to explain the reasons of emerging the intergenerational distinctions [8, 14].

W. K. Kember and others specify that in the research on generations, as a rule, cross-section and cross-time methods of comparison are used. The cross-section method assumes comparison of people of different age (for example, given rise from 1945 to 1965 and given rise from 1965 to 1980). Such an approach, at the same time, takes effects of age and experience, but not the temporary period. The cross-time method means comparing the data obtained at a research of people of identical age, but at different times (for example, it is possible to compare values of 18-year-old people in 1965 and 18-year-old people in 1988). It allows to reveal influence of the temporary period and experience, but not age [13].

For overcoming shortcomings of the existing methods of studying generations, researchers suggest to pay attention to constant factors of development of life [8], as well as to consider with what generation people identify themselves [7, 8, 15, 16].

The problem of self-determination of the personality through reference to a certain generation is traditionally considered in Russia as a problem of social identity [17], and in foreign literature, the special term of “generational identity” is used [18]. In scholarly literature, only separate researches are devoted to the problem of generational identification. So, S. Lyon and L. Schweitzer have found considerable heterogeneity in identification with generation [15]. Results of a research by N. V. Sivrikova have also shown that the age of the person cannot coincide with type of generation as which he/she ranks him/herself. It has allowed the author speaks about existence of different types of generational identification: congruent (the age of respondents coincides with identification type), incongruent (the age of respondents doesn't coincide with identification type), and diffusion (lack of identification with a certain generation) [17].

It is necessary to recognize that the general experience as a basis of generations' differentiation, represents the difficult phenomenon which is connected not only with age and the historical period of growing, but also with other factors of the environment (for example, a floor, nationality, the place of residence, etc.) [16]. As a result, it should be noted that in the different countries owing to differences in their history society is divided into different generations. In the western countries 6 various generations are allocated: Veterans (1925-1942); Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960); Generation X (born 1961-1981); Generation Y or Millennials (born after 1982) and Generation Z or Post-Millennials (born after 2001) [10]. In Russia, it is possible to meet the different points of view on typology of generations. M. I. Postnikova speaks about 5 generations: pre-war and military (1923-1956); generation of “men of the sixties” (1957-1964), generation of “stagnation” (1965-1982); generation of “reorganization” (1983-2000); the Post-Soviet generation; the generation of Putin's stabilization (2001-2018) [19]. V. I. Pishchik identifies 3 generations of Russians: the Soviet one (till 1985), transitional (1986-1995), and Post-Soviet (1996-2018) [20].

In the different countries, not only types of generational groups but also the nature of interaction between them differ. In particular, in O. A. Maximova and K. A. Hamzina's research on cross-cultural differences in dialogue of generations of parents and children supports this statement [21].

Despite essential methodological difficulties of studying the generations, many researchers are sure that similar work is necessary [9, 12, 15]. They note that when studying generations, the problem consists not in lack of the facts proving distinctions between and in generations, and in lack of an opportunity to compare data of different researchers among themselves [12].

3 Discussing the empirical research

The second group of the researches had included works in which results of empirical studying of various effects of generations are presented. In this part, we focus on those researches who shed light on features of communication between representatives of different generations and for a role of values in this communication.

3.1 Communication between generations

The empirical research on generations concentrate generally on differences between them. At the same time, identification of distinctions isn't end in itself of researchers, and it is used for an explanation of various effects of intergenerational communication. It is connected with the fact that the relations between generations belong to those social problems which press psychological studying. The scale of an object of a research allows to

carry it to the macropsychological researches promoting creation of an image of society, and, therefore, to development of technologies of social engineering.

Characterizing the relations which have developed between generations now researchers speak about two opposite types of communication: dialogue [19-22] and conflict/gap [5, 23-25]. Scientists analyze communication between generations in business [3, 26] and personal [19, 21, 24, 27] spheres.

M. J. Urick and colleagues studied a role of perception of other person in formation of the intergenerational conflict. In particular, they investigated how young and elderly workers perceive representatives of other age group. Researchers claim that the conflict between generations happens because of stereotypes of perception of values and the style of behavior of representatives of other generation. At the same time, they insist that the intergenerational conflict won't surely lead to negative consequences. Tension between generations, from the point of view of authors, can result also in positive effects, such as cooperation or expansion of opportunities [23].

A number of researchers consider that in stereotypes of perception of representatives of other generations, there is the understanding of differences between them [10, 15]. Independently from each other, they conclude that the stereotypes relating to age exert visible effect on perception of other people and themselves (since they are connected with generational identity).

E. L. Soldatova investigates stereotypes of perception of age from positions of the cultural and historical theory of development. In her concept of standard crises, the image of age is considered as a specific feature set and values, which is supported by carriers of a certain age subculture and is broadcast as an ideal or a stereotype to representatives of other age. Entering the following age stage, a person opens an ideal form of the development, including in the sociocultural task of the following age presented in his/her consciousness in the form of an age stereotype. E. L. Soldatova investigated the maintenance of stereotypes of youth and maturity as development stages. It has turned out that the activity and innovation are specified as characteristics of youth; and as characteristics of a maturity - wisdom and experience [5]. The set tasks are broadcast by sociocultural from the senior generation to younger and act as a dialogue basis between them.

E. Venter considers that conflict between generations can be the cornerstone of difference in a way of communication with other people. In particular, misunderstanding can arise because the youth (generation Y) rely on information technologies more and more as intermediaries in communication. And elderly people (generation of baby boomers) prefer personal communication face to face [25]. S. Blatnik with coauthors, on the contrary, considers information and communication technologies as a resource for improvement of communication between generations [28].

Ya. Kolarov, etc. also states the rate of life of the younger generations is higher, than it is in the elderly people. According to the researchers, the modern youth uses technical developments to conform to requirements of time, but it alienates them from the senior generation. Communication problems between representatives of different generations are aggravated because of a lack of sympathy on both sides, misunderstandings of a way of life of each other [29].

A. V. Gavrilova, investigating inter-generational interaction in the system "teacher - student," comes to a conclusion that generations of teachers and students can study each other in the course of pedagogical interaction, in dialogue, relying on the general basic values. According to the author, the value of the personality is in this case of particular importance, and development by the senior generation of information and communication technologies pulls together values of generations and promotes the best communication [30].

In Russia, in recent years, researchers pay much attention to the inter-generational relations in family. L. V. Taykova and S. M. Taykov offer the following classification of the inter-generational relations in family: mutual acceptance; maintaining family memory; tension of the relations; alienation of generations [31]. M.A. Sizova on the basis of the analysis of results of a technique “Inter-generational stories” and objective data has come to a conclusion that communication to honey by generations in family can be: kept, broken and unilateral. In families with safe inter-generational continuity, there is a bilateral exchange of experience between representatives of different generations, and inheritance is characterized by sensibleness. In families with the broken continuity, the process of transfer of experience between generations – from the senior to younger, and in families with unilateral transfer – from younger to the senior, is complicated. Violation of inter-generational communications in many respects is defined by the existence in parental families of spouses with emotional and communicative dysfunctions [32].

A. V. Kolmagorova studied features of communication between grandmothers and grandsons. She has shown that intensions of communicants in such communication have contradictory character. In opponents, a specific means of a discourse is observed. Grandmothers resort to game aggression or the help at communicative failure. Grandsons use communicative sabotage [33].

O. A. Maximova and K. A. Hamzina have revealed cross-cultural differences in the Russian and French discourses between children and parents. In particular, it has turned out that between children and parents in Russia have more close and dependent relations, than it is in France [21]. N. B. Gorbachev have come to the same conclusion: the Russian young men and girls need the help of parents in the material, emotional, and physical aspects, counting on their support in the future [34].

Thus, researches of inter-generational communications at work and in family show that they play an important role in life of each person and can get different forms: from mutually beneficial cooperation prior to the conflict. The factors aggravating communication problems between representatives of different generations are stereotypes, differences in the preferred means of communication, lack of sympathy, specific barriers in communication. At the same time, both cooperation, and rivalry between generations bear in themselves a certain positive potential and can be used for developing and increasing the efficiency of their activity.

The most important characteristic of the relations between generations and the good indicator for tracking of processes of the social and individual change are the values. They play an important role in the system of the inter-generational relations. In the system of communication between generations, there is a transfer of values and their transformation. However, if this process is broken, differences in values of generations lead to a gap between them. According to E. L. Soldatova, now in Russia, communication between generations gradually loses a role of relaying of cultural values that by all means results in limitation of communicative chains in inter-generational space and to violation of sociocultural continuity of generations [5]. Therefore, we observe essential differences in values of representatives of different generations to the studying of which numerous researches are devoted.

3.2 Value of generations

For assessing the role of values in communication between generations, the understanding of the differences in the valuable and semantic sphere of different generations is of great importance. Research in this direction is conducted by authors from the different countries.

E. L. Soldatova speaks about change of values which follow change like society. According to the author, in the traditional society, the values of primogenitors focused on

the past dominate; in the industrial society, the values of mature generation focused on the present dominate; and in the post-industrial society, the youth values focused on the future dominate [5].

R. Inglehart and V. E. Bayker in 1990 carried out the review of the values worldwide and stated that the beginning of industrialization in society had caused the whole complex of the connected changes, from mass mobilization before reduction of gender distinctions. As a result of industrialization, according to the authors, people around the world refused traditional values in favor of secular (rational) values [35]. Research results by the Chinese psychologists show that in their country, the younger generation has already passed from traditional to modern values. The new generation has more secular character, more selfishly, and considers self-development the most important thing in life [26].

Comparing the values of different generations and psychologists in Russia, M. I. Postnikova demonstrates that the values of military and post-war generations gravitate to conservative values, which represents collectivism values in Russia. And values of generation of an era of stagnation and generation of reorganization gravitate to values of individualism and openness to changes. As a result, it is possible to draw a conclusion that representatives of the senior generations differ in a certain conservatism, their course of life is connected with constant difficulties and their overcoming, not easy to be built in by him a modern rhythm of public changes, at the same time they were and remain collectivists on spirit (the main slogan of their life was and remains “earlier think of the Homeland, and then of yourself”). And the youth is open for changes, is mobile, pragmatic, focused first of all on the solution of own problems, but not problems of the country. M. I. Postnikova comes to a conclusion that the generational hierarchy of values revealed by her having pan-cultural character is a factor of successful functioning of society [19].

P. Yu. Tazov claims that sociocultural processes of the 60th have set in Russia “romanticism” in valuable consciousness of the youth, which further, in process of disappointment in the ideas of creation of a communistic society in the late seventies, began to give way to individualism gradually. Transition to market society enhanced the individualistic orientation in the youth values, and destruction of “collectivist” morals and lack of cultural and social integrators of society strengthened the atomization of young people’s identity. The author allocates the key values characteristic of different generations of the youth in 1960-2010. The high importance of value was characteristic of generation of the 60th to bring “benefit to society,” for modern youth values of individual success and personal efficiency are more significant [37]. Similar results have been received by V. A. Goldyreva [38], I. Yu. Liasina, etc. [39], T. K. Rostovskaya [40], L. V. Rozhkova [41]. The research conducted in the last 10 years shows that the younger generation of Russians differs from the senior generation in orientation to personal success and comfort, strengthening the importance of personal values over public, significant increase in values of material prosperity. These tendencies are reflected also in distinctions of professional values of representatives of different generations.

Pragmatical labor motives are characteristic of representatives of generation of reorganization and Post-Soviet generation: the main labor value for them is good money. In addition, great values are an interesting work and reliability of the place of work to representatives of new generation. The Post-Soviet generation, except salaries and self-realization, places great demands on the quality of work: good working conditions, social guarantees, labor ethics are necessary for them. In consciousness of transitional generation, the prestige of work is permanently connected with the high salary, and in consciousness of the next generation – with self-affirmation [41].

The data obtained by L.E. Petrova, studying professional values of the doctors belonging to different generations, are of interest. According to her research, it has been established that the more senior generation appreciates rather altruistic, traditional

components in the work: work in collective, respect, prestige, stability. Meanwhile, the younger generation is mainly interested in a structure of the person, an opportunity to secure itself and relatives, to realize the potential [42].

Besides distinctions, authors have noted also the values that are general for the majority of the Russians. They note that the following values are very considerable in life of representatives of different generations: family and high financial position [39-41]. At the same time, the family and children are at the top of the list of the vital purposes both for men and women.

Thus, various research conducted in different countries demonstrate that values of representatives of different generations have essential distinctions. Values of representatives of the generations born in the Soviet Russia sometimes have opposite character to the values of the generation born after the collapse of the USSR. The similar picture leads to misunderstanding and serves as the soil for conflicts in inter-generational communication both at work, and in family.

At the same time connection between generations in Russia still remains rather strong successfully to impart family value to representatives of new generation. Presence of the general values can act as a resource for forming of dialogue between generations in various spheres of activity.

4 Practical recommendations and concluding thoughts

The purpose of this article consisted in the critical analysis of the research devoted to intergenerational communication. We study this problem in the context of distinctions of values of different generations.

It is possible to conclude that, despite an active discussion, existence of generations as big social communities aren't denied by researchers. Also, it should be noted that between representatives of different generations there are significant differences in values, lifestyle, and worldview.

Studying these distinctions is connected with a number of objective difficulties. The existing methods and approaches do not allow to differentiate the effects of time, experience, and age.

Therefore, it is possible to say that empirical studying of differences between generations remains rather a new area of knowledge. The saved-up data concern either distinctions of different age groups, or differences between the people of one age received during the different historical periods. We believe that at this stage of studying of a problem, scientists and practicing experts have to be especially critical to the possibility of using the theory of generations as units for understanding complex relationship between people in professional and family spheres.

In our opinion, studying the features of inter-generational interaction is carried out in the context of studying the values of generations since the last act, on the one hand, as the most important characteristic of human relations, and, on the other hand – as the indicator of social and individual changes, playing an ambiguous role in the system of the inter-generational relations. The unity of values of different generations is provided with the process of their transfer from the senior to younger generation and strengthens dialogue between them. The cardinal differences in valuable orientations observed now at representatives of different generations generate the conflicts and misunderstanding between them.

The fact that in Russia the transformation of values (which is expressed in the empirical fact that the representatives of the senior generations differ in commitment to collectivism values, and representatives of the youth generation – to individualism values) explains

difficulties of intergenerational communication in our country. It demands more careful studying of generations' values.

The analysis carried out by us allows to make a number of recommendations to with respect to further research in this field. We propose to consider not only age of the respondents, but also features of their social identification. Such an approach will allow researchers to consider not only inter-generational distinctions, but also distinctions in generations. Also, while working on a research design, the combination of cross-time and cross-section plans could be also very useful.

Change of approaches to the use of research results on the values of generations is represented useful. So, it is important not just to state the existence of distinctions, but to aim efforts at finding resources for inter-generational communication, through recognition of dynamic interaction between age, experience, and standard tasks of a stage of development (for example, considering dynamics of the importance of business and personal spheres of life in ontogenesis).

Considering that researchers of the different countries have already recorded the direction of changes of valuable orientations upon transition from generation to generation (from traditional to rational, from collectivism values to individualism values), further researches have to be based on these results and assume identification of the reasons and consequences of these distinctions. Results of the carried-out analysis emphasize importance of systematic consideration of the changing nature of society, namely the transformation of values. The analysis of the values of representatives of different generations provide the effective solution of this task.

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