

# Variability of the Russian educational axiosphere of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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**Abstract.** Being the subject of interest of many scientists, the evolution of education is considered as a process, as a set of values that are reflected in the works of educators of each era. In this case, the object of the study is the first half of the 20th century, as the most controversial era in terms of values, represented by a wide range of pedagogical ideas and trends. The article analyzes various texts of educators of the early 20th century to form a holistic view concerning the axiological field of education at that time. The applied methods of analysis and synthesis, generalization, abstraction, classification, and modeling, as well as the historical and structural method were dictated by the purpose of the study. The conducted work has resulted in the clarification of the concept of the axiosphere, its components and objective laws, the description of the educational axiosphere of the declared era through the analysis and synergy of values and meanings of educators of that time. The reliability of the result is ensured by the reference to the author's text of the studied educators, which allowed formulating their values in their own language, so to speak in the first person. The attempt to present the value dominants of different educational figures of the same time as components of a single axiosphere is a fundamentally new approach, since traditionally in the history of education, it is customary to oppose the author's pedagogical concepts and consider them as autonomous, sometimes contradictory systems.

**Keywords:** axiological approach, value, axiosphere, history of education.

## 1 Introduction

The history or evolution of Russian education is the subject of study of a fairly large number of scientists-philosophers [1–3], sociologists [4], educators [5, 6], psychologists [7], philologists-linguists [8], and historians [9]. The most significant contribution to the study of the historical and pedagogical process was made by a special group of scientists who consider themselves historians of pedagogy [5, 10]. In the last decade, they have actively mastered the axiological approach to the study of the evolution of domestic education, created different

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classifications of values, as well as periodized education formation and development using a value-based approach.

However, the axiosphere of Russian education in the context of specific historical conditions is still not fully represented [11]. Not every historical period is characterized by a variety of values, including pedagogical or educational ones. The beginning of the 20th century, with its revolutionary transformations in all areas of public life, is a good historical period for a voluminous display of the axiosphere of Russian education. The authors decided to turn to exactly this period and analyze the existing and emerging values in the field of public education.

In contemporary science, the axiosphere is understood as the world of values in general, and specifically, the subjective world of value representations and value consciousness.

The term axiosphere is interpreted quite widely, and thus it requires certain clarification. The axiosphere can be viewed from three perspectives. First, the world of values, even subjectively reflected, exists in reality. Secondly, in the minds of people, it exists in the form of ideas, patterns, norms, and assessments. And third, which is very important for this study, the results of the activities of people who master objectively existing values, as well as create their own new values, can be attributed to the axiosphere. These values can be found in their teaching activities and their scientific and pedagogical works.

The axiosphere contains the unity and diversity of values, their mutual influence, the system-structural connection between them, and their “peaceful coexistence”. Besides, it allows separating the value for a given axiosphere from the value-insignificant. However, this should be a soft separation, without border posts and an iron curtain, but with mutual influence and gradual penetration. Sometimes such influence continues for years and even decades.

The term axiosphere can be used to denote the relations between the sphere of values with other spheres, for example, culture or religion spheres. In this research, the authors address the education sector.

## **2 Methods and sources**

Besides the general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, generalization, abstraction, classification, and modeling, the historical and structural methods were used as well, which allowed identifying the main system-forming components of the axiosphere in the scientific works of educators of the early 20th century in Russia. The authors of the present study focused on the works of P.F. Kapterev (1849-1922), K.N. Ventsel (1857-1947), N.K. Krupskaya (1869-1939), and S.I. Hessen (1887-1950).

The choice of these educators and their works was because each of them experienced the revolutionary changes of the period under consideration, but experienced differently, and formed their own pedagogical axiosphere. Their influence on education in Russia was also manifested in different ways, which allowed showing the variants of life cycles of the axiosphere of the pedagogical ideas and theories.

## **3 Discussion**

The authors start considering different versions of Russian pedagogy of the early 20th century with an analysis of the works of Kapterev, as an educator and a person strongly associated with the pre-revolutionary period of Russian education. The creator of the history of Russian education, the theory of the pedagogical process, the foundations of pedagogical psychology, the theory of family, preschool, general and pedagogical education, Kapterev has devoted

more than 50 years to practical pedagogical activity. Essentially, he was the last minister of education of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Kapterev's pedagogy is based on a single anthropological basis, a natural scientific worldview. He consistently defended the principles of the autonomy of the pedagogical process from any political transformations.

The essence of his value preferences is best seen in the article "Pedagogy and Politics", first published in the Petrograd journal "Pedagogical Thought" in 1921. He was calling for "declaring the school a nonpolitical institution, and therefore demanding that the political parties would not encroach on it, leave it alone". It is clear why the journal "Pedagogical Thought" was closed the following year [12]. "The school is not a henchman of political parties, it is above them, the school is based on the eternal laws of the development of the human body. Political squabbling, political internecine strife do not concern it, it has its own true, eternal god – the science of human nature and its development, which it should serve and worship; prayer to political idols, which today offer sacrifices and tomorrow will be thrown either in the mud and trampled underfoot, or in the stove and burned, is unworthy of a real educator" [12]. Thus, Kapterev's axiosphere included the values of natural sciences, the autonomy of pedagogy and school, and the independence of school from politics. His powerful intellectual influence on the national education of the country remained in the pre-revolutionary past. The Bolsheviks, who came to power, did not forgive Kapterev for such apolitical behavior, his legacy was simply hushed up for many years.

No mutual understanding was reached either between the Soviet government and Ventsel. This educator is today called the prophet of free education, the theorist of cosmic pedagogy. Throughout his long life, he passionately fought as far as it was possible, for the free development of a human, against all kinds of spiritual oppression of man by man, and was creating a free school.

The core of Ventsel's axiosphere was freedom. He was the first in the history of mankind to create a Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1917. "Every child has the right to the free development of all the powers, abilities, and talents inherent in him, i.e. the right to upbringing and education according to his personality. The exercise of this right should be guaranteed free of charge by providing him with appropriate upbringing and educational institutions at all ages of his life, where all aspects of his nature and character would receive the most favorable conditions for their harmonious development", reads one of the paragraphs of the document created by Ventsel [13]. Thus, Ventsel's axiosphere includes a child as a free independent person entitled to harmonious development.

More than 80 years will pass, until in 1990, the United Nations, and then Russia, will commit to respecting the rights of the child. The contemporary document has no fundamental differences from the historical Ventsel's formulation. Thus, the Ventsel's axiosphere influenced the public and pedagogical opinion not only in Russia but also in the whole world after eight decades!

The Russian educator S. Hessen, who by fate found himself in exile in Prague in 1921, became world-famous. In Russian pedagogy, Hessen appeared in 1995 with the textbook "Fundamentals of Pedagogy. Introduction to Applied Philosophy" [14] and immediately became an indisputable authority among educators and scientists. The Russian philosophy of education was created by Hessen, while culture in its applied meaning to education became the core of his axiosphere.

"The task of any education is to introduce a person to the cultural values of science, art, morality, law, economy, and to transform a natural person into a cultural one. The division of culture also determines the division of education into its types. Accordingly, pedagogy, as a general theory of education, is divided into a corresponding number of sections: the theory of moral, scientific, artistic, religious, and economic education" – writes Hessen in the article "Pedagogy as a Science" [15]. The article was published in the journal of the Ministry of

Public Education of the government of Admiral Kolchak. The journal was published in a single issue in Tomsk in 1919. In Russia, the emigrant Hessen was unknown solely for political reasons. But new generations of educators have yet to discover Hessen's pedagogy in all its depth and find ways to use it correctly in contemporary school.

The axiosphere of the authoritative educator and public education organizer of the first years of Soviet power, Krupskaya, was built on the verge of pedagogy and politics. Marxism, as a philosophical and ideological basis, Lenin's teaching, the revolutionary struggle – these, and similar values determined Krupskaya's worldview and allowed her to rebuild the Russian school and re-educate the younger generation.

Krupskaya was able to set goals, to organize young people to fight for the ideas of the party. "You, comrades, want to become Leninists, for this, you must learn to serve the ideas of the emancipation of the working people, to serve the ideas of communism. You need to connect your life with work for the ideas of communism, be guided by revolutionary theory, soberly look life in the eye, not be afraid of hard work; then you will be able to become Leninists. Comrades of the Komsomol, you have your whole life ahead of you, you are living in a moment of tremendous social change, so take the banner of Lenin and, going toe-to-toe with the masses, go ahead of the masses, go to a great goal" [16]. In this appeal to the younger generation, the main values of the new Soviet pedagogy are clearly manifested.

Krupskaya was an absolute authority in public education in the 20-30s of the 20th century. The Soviet school was created under her leadership. However, with the change of ideology and politics at the end of the 20th century, her influence disappeared, her name was forgotten, and her works are no longer published in Russia.

## 4 Conclusion

In this short but significant period covering the early 20th century, the authors have found and presented the values of various educators, who left a significant mark on the history of education in Russia and formed the educational axiosphere of their time. At the same historical period, a single value field contained the views of Kapterev's natural scientific anthropological pedagogy, Ventsel's humane pedagogy of free education, Hessen's philosophical cultural pedagogy, and Krupskaya's class and party pedagogy.

Each of these authorial systems developed independently in time and place, the interaction between them was excluded. However, each has become part of a single indivisible educational axiosphere, providing its unprecedented variability, which even today continues influencing the development of education in Russia.

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