

Religiosity, personal values and psychological health of students

Koteneva ANNA^{1*}

¹ Doctor of Psychology, Professor of Moscow State University of Psychology and Education, Moscow, Russian Federation

*Corresponding Author

E-mail: akoteneva@yandex.ru

Received: April 04, 2017

Accepted: June 13, 2017

Abstract

Religion and personal values are important factors of human existence. Psychological health of the man means the maturity of the personality, her activity, selfactualization. Research generally finds a positive relationship between religiosity and mental health, life satisfaction, well-being and happiness, feelings of stress, psychological security. Despite the increasing number of published investigations, the relationships between religiosity, personal values and psychological health of students not researched during the last years. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between these qualities among 59 male and female orthodox students of Russian universities aged 17 to 23 years. "Individual Religiosity" Questionnaire of I. Shemet, "Hierarchy of Personality" Questionnaire of E.V. Shestun, E.A. Morozova and "Psychological Health" Questionnaire of A. Kozlov were used in this research. The results indicated that there was a positive meaningful relationship ($p < 0.001$) between religiosity and spiritual values, and between religiosity, spiritual and a family of spheres of psychological health ($p < 0.001$). Based on the results there is meaningful negative relationship ($p < 0.001$) between religiosity and mental, bodily values. The results of factor analysis indicated that spiritual values and the importance of family explain religiosity. We found that high levels of religiosity is the basis of spiritual development of man, family, creativity, helping behavior, and relates with values of love, forgiveness, altruism and compassion. Students with low levels of religiosity planned their activities better and were more active in expressing their views. All the students desired to build interpersonal relationships based on social norms and had motives for intellectual development.

Keywords: mental health, personal values, psychological health, religiosity, spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

The religious faith for many people is an important sphere of existence in which they try to find the meanings of life and mental strength necessary for coping with stress [1],[2]. Religion and moral values – love, faith, charity, kindness, compassion – are the personal resource to preserve the integrity of the person, its health and psychological well-being [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9]. Values and religious beliefs have a strong influence on the formation of personality, psychological security, mental health, motivation and behavior [10], [1], [11], [12]. Religiosity is one of the fundamental qualities of man that characterize his relation to God, to the world and himself. Religiosity of a person manifests in religious identity, the assimilation of values, norms of spirituality tradition and involvement in church activities [13], [14]. The problem of formation of a healthy personality is becoming increasingly important and a priority for society last years. The health of person means his ability to carry out his mission, realize his potential in the professional, creative and family spheres of life. The concept of health is not identical to the concept of mental health, mental, bodily states and development of mental processes in psychology. The health of a personality is a psychological health. Psychological health means the presence personal qualities, values, aspirations, allowing man to function in society fully. The concept of psychological health originated in the foreign psychology in the humanistic approach to understanding personality. In the works of A. Maslow, G. Allport, K. Rogers, E. Fromm the psychological health means the personality maturity, activity of man, his freedom and creativity, self-actualization and personal growth. In

the transpersonal psychology (A. Maslow, C. G. Jung, S. Grof) personal health is identified with spiritual health. The leading characteristics of this phenomenon are the spiritual goals in life, the experience of transcendence and finding spiritual integrity [2], [15].

In Russian psychology (B.S. Bratus, A.A. Gostev, A.V. Koteneva, V.A. Shuvalov) personality health is considered in the context of comprehensive human development, seeking to realize their physical, mental and spiritual resources and talents. Orthodox Tradition characterize the healthy personality as a person who realizes Christian spiritual-moral ideal in his life [16], [2], [17]. Today, it is important to study the psychological factors affecting the psychological health of students – future professionals, from which depends the prosperity of the society. In psychology the components of psychological health of students, the relationship between of psychological health and personality, psychological well-being, meaningfulness and life satisfaction are studied [18].

The purpose of this work is the study of the relationships between of religiosity, personal values and psychological health of students. Traditionally the religious values were the basis of creating a family, the realization of talents, mercy and helping behavior in the Russian and Western culture. The hypothesis of the study is that the most significant differences of psychological health and values are revealing in these spheres of human activity between students with different levels of religiosity.

METHOD

The study sample was 59 orthodox students of Moscow universities aged 17 to 23 years. "Individual Religiosity"

Questionnaire of I. Shemet was used to diagnose the level of personality religiosity in this study [13]. It defines three levels of religiosity: high, medium and low. The level of religiosity means religious identity, the strength of religious faith, the depth and intensity of emotional experiences, activity in the performance of religious rules, rituals, reflects the degree of proximity to the ideal of personality formed in a specific spiritual tradition. The "Hierarchy of Personality" Questionnaire of E. V. Shestun, E. A. Morozova used to assess the degree of manifestation the spiritual, mental and bodily values in the personality structure [11]. The applying of "Psychological Health" Questionnaire of A. Kozlov allowed to determine the vectors of the personality health - strategic, prosocial, I-vector, creative, spiritual, intellectual, family, humanistic. [19]. The U - Manny-Whitney criterion, factor and correlation analyses were used to data processing in the reseach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of students groups with different levels of religiosity

The first group with low level of religiosity students have a formal religious affiliation and low religious identity (32.2% of respondents). The second group comprises 44.1% of students with medium level of religiosity. A characteristic feature of representatives of this group is the discrepancy between the awareness of themselves as believers in God men and their irreligious behavior. Students turn to God in prayer and resort to religious rituals only in stressful, difficult and extreme situations. 23.7% of respondents were in the third group with a high level of religiosity students. All of them baptized, have a religious identity and confessed Orthodoxy. Students of this group regularly attending church services, observing fasts, praying constantly. That is, the person manifest the faith in God at the level of ideology and at the behavior.

Religiosity and personal values of students

The application "Hierarchy of Personality" Questionnaire of E.V. Shestun, E.A. Morozova helped to identify the ratio of spiritual, mental and bodily values in the personality structure. The spiritual values include faith in God, a spiritual mission, creativity, altruism, love, self-sacrifice, conscience and prayer. The mental values include the values of communication, social contacts, family, intellectual development, emotional life, self-development and cognition. The bodily values combined material success, physical comfort, physical health, vital needs and recreation.

The results of the survey show that spiritual values dominate over the mental values and the latter over the bodily values in the group of students with a high level of religiosity (Table 1). All the respondents of this group have this ratio (100%) , while in the groups with medium and low levels of religiosity, only a small number of students (respectively, 15.8% and 15.4%). There are ideas about personality norm in the Orthodox Tradition: spiritual level determines the mental and bodily levels in a harmonious personality [2, p.228]. Comparison of the average based on the criterion U - Manny-Whitney shows that indicators of spiritual values in the group with high levels of religiosity significantly higher than those in the groups with medium and low levels of religiosity (Table 2; $p < 0.01$; $p < 0,05$).

Religiosity and psychological health of students

All spheres of psychological health by the method of "Psychological Health" Questionnaire of A. Kozlov,

distributed almost evenly in the life of students and correspond to the average level [12, p. 116]. There are some differences between groups. The importance of spheres for students with a high level of religiosity of life is reduced in the following order: spiritual (7.9), strategic (7.4), family (7.1), intellectual (6.9), prosocial, creative and humanistic spheres (5.7) and in last place - I-vector (4.7). The strategic sphere (7.3) is in the first place of significance, in the second place is intellectual sphere (6.8) for students with a medium degree of religiosity, then prosocial, I-vector and family spheres (5.8, 5.7) and in last place - creative (5.5) and humanistic (5.4) spheres. The most important for students with low levels of religiosity are strategic sphere (8.4), intellectual (7.6), then prosocial, spiritual, and I-vector (respectively, 5.5, 5.4 and 5.4). Humanistic (4.9), creative (4.7) and family spheres (4.6) are at last places.

High indicators on the scale of the strategic vector means that the person is able to set an adequate level goals, is flexible in achieving them, is well tuned to the working state, able to make unconventional decisions, maintain balance and manage their emotions, to rely on own strength.

Table 1. The average of personality values and psychological health of students with different levels of religiosity

Indicators	Levels of religiosity		
	High	Medium	Low
<i>Personality values</i>			
Spiritual values	49.7	29.9	25.4
Mental values	30.3	37.8	38.2
Bodily values	12.4	24.6	26.2
<i>Vectors of psychological health</i>			
Strategic	7.4	7.3	8.4
Prosocial	5.7	5.8	5.5
I-vector	4.7	5.7	5.4
Creative	5.7	5.5	4.7
Spiritual	7.9	6.6	5.4
Intellectual	6.9	6.8	7.6
Family	7.1	5.7	4.6
Humanistic	5.7	5.4	4.9

This indicator has high values for all students and, as mentioned above. Students implemented largely the resources of psychological health in purposeful activities, what is necessary to master the professional knowledge, skills and abilities in the learning process at the University. However, the empirical value of U - Manny-Whitney criterion indicates that the students with low levels of religiosity have higher rates on this scale compared to students with medium and high levels of religiosity (table 2).

This fact means that there are differences in the understanding of the sources of activity of a person between students with different levels of religiosity. The lower the level of religiosity, the more students are relying on their own strength and capabilities. The higher the level of religiosity, the more students understand that their activity, success is the result of synergy, that is the joint effort of God and man [20, Jn. 15: 4 - 6].

Prosocial vector determines the degree of orientation of the person in interpersonal communication, the observance of social norms of behavior and choices of constructive ways of solving conflicts. There is no significant differences between the groups. All students regardless of their worldview are able to follow social norms in their behavior and strive for positive interaction.

Table 2. Empirical values of U - criterion of Mann-Whitney comparison of personal values and psychological health of students with different levels of religiosity

Indicators	Levels of religiosity		
	high/ medium	high / low	m e d i u m / low
Empirical values of U - criterion of Mann-Whitney; ** – p<0.01; * – p<0.05.			
<i>Personality values</i>			
Spiritual values	0**	0**	162 *
Mental values	43**	30**	229.5
Bodily values	6**	10**	205
<i>Vectors of psychological health</i>			
Strategic	172	80*	173.5*
Prosocial	176	124	218
I-vector	113*	92	244.5
Creative	165	87*	186.5
Spiritual	113*	32**	144**
Intellectual	179	103	193
Family	81**	35**	163.5*
Humanistic	166	87*	195

The higher the score on a scale of I-vector, the more a person expresses his position, is able to argue, attracts attention to himself. High levels of religiosity leads to the fact that students tend not to express their views and to be the center of attention. Christ is in the center life of a believer person [20, Gal. 20]. According to Orthodox Tradition, I of person is a manifestation of pride and an obstacle to God and to spiritual transformation [2, p. 289]. The creative vector in the structure of mental health means that a person has different hobbies and interests, engaged in creative work, perceives his way of life as a way of realizing his talents. Students with high levels of religiosity reveal themselves better in the creation than students with low level of religiosity. The religion promotes self-realization of personality and her talents according to the Bible and Christian culture. The realization of creative potential is even the duty of a Christian, which is inexcusable to bury their talents in the ground [20, Mt. 25: 14-30; 8].

The spiritual vector reflects the dominance of human spiritual needs and aspirations over the others, the presence of a spiritual mentor, the importance of spiritual support in a difficult situation. The indicators on this scale are significantly different between all groups. The higher the level of religiosity, the more a person use the resources of psychological health for spiritual growth.

The intelligent vector is a characteristic of the people, who are easily learn new activities, showing interest in the knowledge in different spheres of life. The significant differences by this scale between groups of students not revealed. All of the students are highly motivated in intellectual development that is a prerequisite for the successful formation of a future professional.

The family vector characterizes a person who puts family interests above their own interests, takes part in all family affairs, who shows patience to all family members. The higher the level of religiosity of the person, the higher the importance of family values. The family is the domestic Church for the believer [20, 1 Cor. 16: 19; Col. 4: 15]. Christianity always consider the family as a school of love, charity and education. Humanistic vector peculiar to those people who are able to listen to the other person and to assist him in difficult situations, who know how to

give emotionally support another person, to sacrifice their interests for somebody else. There are significant differences by this scale between students with high and low levels of religiosity. The religiosity contributes to formation a helping behavior of a person, contributes to the manifestation of such qualities as love, forgiveness, sacrifice and mercy [20, 1 Cor. 13: 3 – 8].

The results of correlation analysis (Table 3) show that there are significant positive relationship between indicators of religiosity and indicators of spiritual values ($r=0.686$), spiritual ($r=0.491$) and a family vectors of psychological health ($r=0.551$). As growth in faith and involvement in religious activities among the students increases the importance of such spiritual values as altruism, love, service and sacrifice. The religious students implement their resources of the psychological health primarily in the family and in the spiritual spheres. The religiosity and spirituality are the base of family among young people. The higher the person have the aspiration for God and desire to follow Christian norms and rituals in life, the less significant for him are have the mental ($r=-0.481$) and bodily values ($r=-0.553$), the less a person relies on its own strength to achieve the set goals ($r=-0.218$). Also revealed mild positive connection between religiosity and social vector ($r=0.117$), creativity ($r=0.158$) and humanistic vectors ($r=0.118$). The higher the religiosity of the person, the greater the likelihood that he will realize his talents and help others in a difficult situation.

Table 3. The values of coefficients of correlations of indicators of religiosity, personality values and psychological health

Indicators	Religiosity	P
<i>Personality values</i>		
Spiritual values	0.686	0.000
Mental values	-0.481	0.000
Bodily values	-0.553	0.000
<i>Vectors of psychological health</i>		
Strategic	-0.218	0.049
Prosocial	0.117	0.189
I-vector	-0.140	0.145
Creative	0.158	0.117
Spiritual	0.491	0.000
Intellectual	-0.146	0.136
Family	0.551	0.000
Humanistic	0.118	0.186

The factor structure of religiosity, personal values and psychological health

The application of the method of Principal Components with the rotation of the selected factors on the principle of Varimax and the Kaiser normalization allowed us to identify four factors, explaining in total 68.26% of the dispersion (Table 4.). The first general factor “Spiritual goals of students” included 6 scales: spiritual values (0.903), religiosity (0.831), family and spiritual vector of psychological health (0.637 and 0.634), mental and bodily values (-0.737 and -0.760).

The religiosity of person, the desire to transform his life based on Christian norms and traditions increases as his spiritual growth. Spiritual growth of person involves finding his own ministry, mission and family. Spirituality leads to a change in mental and bodily spheres of the human being, to a lesser emotionality and rationality, to lower values

egocentric, vital needs.

Table 4. Factor loadings obtained for the indicators of religiosity, personal values and psychological health

Indicators	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Religiosity	0.831	-0.093	0.096	-0.079
<i>Personality values</i>				
Spiritual values	0.903	0.072	0.258	0.034
Mental values	-0.737	-0.005	0.182	0.161
Bodily values	-0.760	-0.161	-0.340	-0.284
<i>Vectors of psychological health</i>				
Strategic	-0.094	0.679	0.004	0.196
Prosocial	0.137	0.821	0.128	-0.093
I-vector	-0.190	0.549	0.095	0.422
Creative	0.103	-0.062	0.808	0.418
Spiritual	0.634	-0.087	0.137	-0.213
Intellectual	-0.027	0.184	0.014	0.897
Family	0.637	-0.119	-0.308	0.141
Humanistic	0.083	0.309	0.744	-0.298

The second factor "Social behavior of the students" brought together three scales of psychological health: prosocial vector (0.821), strategic vector (0.679) and I-vector (0.547). The base of successful social behavior of students are the ability to observe the norms of interpersonal communication and interaction, desire to express their views, to set adequate goals, to keep emotional balance.

The third factor of "Human creativity" consists of two scales of psychological health: creative (0.808) and humanistic vectors (0.744). The creativity takes its significance not only for the sake of realization of the plans of person. Person seeks to find a solution of those problems in the creativity that can benefit another person. In this sense, it has a pragmatic orientation.

The fourth factor included one scale "Intellectual vector" (0.897). All the students regardless of their level of religiosity, the nature of personal values, other resources psychological health is focused on the development of their intelligence. The development of intelligence is a prerequisite for the formation of the future professional and, therefore, occupies an important place in the structure of the psychological health of a modern student.

Conclusions

1. The religiosity of students is an important factor of their existence. We found that, as strengthening in the faith and religiosity of a man his spirituality values begins to dominate above mental and bodily values that is to promote the formation of harmonious personality.

2. The degree of religiosity of the students affects all spheres of realization of their resources of psychological health. High levels of religiosity becomes a factor in the development of the spiritual sphere of the person, such values as altruism, conscience, service. Religiosity is the basis of family relationships, promotes self-realization and the unfolding of his talents. Such qualities of love as forgiveness, sacrifice and mercy are the result of Orthodox religiosity of man.

3. Students with low levels of religiosity more rely on own strength to achieve their goals, in social activity, more likely to express their ideas and views in behavior. The students with high and medium levels of religiosity rely on not only their abilities and resources in activities, but count on God's help. They perceive own I as a barrier to spiritual

growth.

4. The study identified universal tendencies in contemporary students: the desire to build interpersonal relationships based on established social norms, the interest in the development of their intellectual dispositions necessary for the formation of professional competences in the learning process at the University, the focus of creative activity for the benefit of another person and society.

REFERENCES

- [1] Emmons, R. (2004). The Psychology of highest aspirations. Motivation and spirituality in personality. Moscow: Meaning.
- [2] Koteneva A.V. (2013) Psychological defense of personality. Moscow: Moscow state mining University.
- [3] Abdel-Khalek, A. (2013). Mental health, subjective well-being and religiosity: Significant associations in Kuwait and USA. Journal of Muslim Mental Health, 7(2), 63-76.
- [4] Aflakseir, A. (2012). Religiosity, personal meaning and psychological well-being: A study among muslim students in England. Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 10(1), 27-31.
- [5] Chokkanathan, Srinivasan (2013). Religiosity and well-being of older adults in Chennai, India. Aging & Mental Health, 17 (7), 880-887.
- [6] Damiano, Rodolfo F., & Costa, Lucas A., & Viana, Marcos Tulio S. A. (2016). Brazilian scientific articles on "Spirituality, Religion and Health". Archives of Clinical Psychiatry, 43 (1).
- [7] Ismail, Z., & Deshmukh, S. (2012). Religiosity and psychological wellbeing. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 11, 20-28.
- [8] Saleem, S., & Saleem, T. (2017). Role of Religiosity in Psychological Well-Being Among Medical and Non-medical Students. Journal of Religion and Health, 56(4), 1180-1190.
- [9] Townsend, M., & Kladder, V. & Ayele, H. (2002). Systematic review of clinical trials examining the effects of religion on health. Southern Medical Journal, 95 (12), 1429-1434.
- [10] Bonelli, Raphael M., & Koenig, Harold G. (2013). Mental Disorders, Religion and Spirituality 1990 to 2010: A Systematic Evidence-Based Review. Journal of Religion & Health, 52 (2), 657-673.
- [11] Shestun, E. V., & Morozova, E. A., & Podorovskaya, I. A., & Ustyuzhaninova E. N. (2010). The Method of "Personality's Hierarchy" and Its Potential of Personality's Levels Diagnostics. PsyJournals.ru, 1, 69-81.
- [12] Weaver, AJ, & Flannelly, KJ, & Case, DB. (2004). Religion and spirituality in three major general medical journals from 1998 to 2000. Southern Medical Journal, 97 (12), 1245-1249.
- [13] Gustova, L. V., (2012). A study of the relationship between level of religiosity and integrative personal qualities. Kostroma, 152.
- [14] Koteneva A.V. (2017) Especially the experiences of spiritual crisis among students with different levels of religiosity. Educational psychology, 3, 45-65.
- [15] Vasilyeva, O. S., & Filatov, F. R. (2001). Psychology of human health. Moscow: Academy.
- [16] Gostev, A. A. (2014). Psychological and moral health of the individual: some of the modern symptoms of "disease". Psychological health of a person and spiritually-moral problems of contemporary Russian society. Moscow: Publishing house "Institute of psychology RAN", 132-153.
- [17] Shuvalov, V. A. (2012). Health of the person: philosophical and methodological aspects. Modern

personality: Actual problems and ways of their solution. Moscow: Publishing house "Institute of psychology RAN", 76-99.

[18] Volochkov, A. A. (2014). Psychological health and student activities. Vestnik of Perm state humanitarian-pedagogical University. Psychological and pedagogical science, 1, 57-68.

[19] Kozlov A.V. (2014). The Technique of diagnostics of psychological health of the personality. Perspectives of Science and Education, 6 (12), 110-117.

[20] The Bible. The Holy Scriptures of the old and New Testament. (1988). Moscow: Edition of Moscow Patriarchy.