

## Research of value-and-sense system of youth as a basis for psychological resilience of a person to destructive religious movements

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**Abstract.** This article described findings of the research of value-and-sense system as a basis for psychological resilience of youth to new religious movements of an extremist nature. Relevance of this theme is related to the spread of various destructive religious ideas notably amongst youth. Therefore, today, prevention of corrupt influence of destructive religious ideas on youngsters and youth is as relevant as ever. Relevant conclusions were made on difference in interrelation between terminal and instrumental values as well as in the system of life meanings of youths as a basis for psychological resilience to new religious movements.

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### Introduction

So far, there are various destructive religious organizations and movements operating in Kazakhstan which have influence on different aspects of human life and modern society. Personal activity and motivational potential to handle emerging troubles are directly linked to the place such value takes in the values hierarchy and its reflection in the life strategy of future. Identification of the role of the value-and-sense system as a basis for psychological resilience of youth is required to determine the best ways of countering new religious movements.

The aim of destructive religious movements is to promote own system of values and to ensure total control over person's mind. In order to achieve this they practice psychological techniques aimed at manipulation of life experience through changes in the state of mind; suppression of thinking through loading with in-cultic activity; personality suppression etc. Besides, it is achieved not always by peaceful means but most often forcefully.

Modern Russian Psychiatrist F.V. Kondratiyev supposes that expansion of pseudo-religious doctrines is related primarily to the 'existential vacuum' intrinsic to the modern life, i.e., lack of sense-making values of existence, loss of moral and social commitment. For fear of insecurity of future and feeling of isolation some people try to find themselves in new religious movements since traditional denominations are unable to fill the gap in world outlook appeared after the collapse of

communist ideology and discrediting of scientific atheism [1].

In whatever representatives of alternative religious doctrines and destructive sects do, they give special attention to youth outreach in an effort to recruit particularly youth thereby reinforcing the destructive organization with young people full of energy and power.

Developmental psychology describes youth as a period of shaping of stable system of values, establishment of self-awareness and shaping of personal social status. Young mind is armed with especial susceptibility, an ability to process and adopt great flow of information. Exactly this period enables critical thinking, determination to make own judgments to various events, search of reasoning and original solution. At the same time this age already keeps some of affirmations and stereotypes pertaining to the previous age. This is due to that the period of active value-and-creational activity of a young person faces with the limited nature of practical and creational activity, incomplete involvement of young person in the system of social relations.

Therefore, the rising generation must be not only timely aware of threats and challenges coming with destructive religious movements but be mentally resilient to impact of those organizations.

The aim of this article is to identify features of value-and-sense area of youth as a basis for mental resistance of a person to destructive religious teachings.

Personal system of values as any other multiple value cross-disciplinary scientific term is variously interpreted by different authors.

In a number of researches the term of 'personal system of values' in essence is aligned with the terms describing motivational-and-need or sense sphere. So, A.Maslow actually didn't separate terms of 'values', 'needs' and 'motivation'; V.Frankl - 'values' and 'personal meanings'. In many Russian works systems of values as if absorbed by other more long-held psychological terms which are the major subject of research of one or another author [2]. As F.Ye. Vassiluk puts it: "when you get acquainted with Psychology's attempts to answer a question, what is the value, most frequently it appears that the main intention of these attempts is to get rid of values as a separate notion and reduce it down to emotional importance, standard, affirmation etc. But the 'value' can hardly fit into such narrow bounds"[3].

Systems of values determining human life goals respectively express what is the most important and has a personal meaning for the person.

K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya and A.V. Brushlinskiy describe the role of conceptual beliefs in arrangement of the system of values which is demonstrated in the following functions: adoption (or denial) and implementation of certain values; enhancement (or reduction) of their importance; retention (or) loss) of these values through time [4].

B.S. Bratuss determines personal values as "deliberate and adopted by a person reasons for being"[5, p.89]. He distinguishes personal values as deliberate reasons of being and declared, 'denominative' and external values "unsecured with "gold holdings" of relevant conceptual, emotionally experienced, personal attitude to life as such sort of values essentially has no immediate reference to the conceptual sphere"[5].

The concept of system of personal values as an hierarchy of its beliefs has spread as well as in the American social psychology. So, M.Rokeach determines values as "a strong belief in that the certain way of behavior or ultimate goal of existence is preferable from the personal or social standpoint other than opposite or backward behavior or ultimate goal of existence"[6, p.5].

According to him, personal values involve following signs:

- source of values are traced in culture, society and personality;
- impact of values is traced almost in all social phenomena worthy of study;
- the total number of values which are personal assets is relatively not too big;
- all people have one and the same values though to a variable degree;

- values are arranged in systems [6, p.3].

S. H.Schwartz and W.Bilsky give the same conceptual definition of values including the following formal signs:

- values are concepts of beliefs;
- values are related to the desirable final state or behavior;
- values has above-situation nature;
- values manage choice or appraisal of behavior and events;
- values are arranged by relative importance [7-10].

Therefore, systems of values appear as special psychological compositions anytime shaping hierarchy system and existing in personality structure as its element only. It's hardly thinkable of personal commitment to some or other value as a certain isolated composition without consideration of its priority, subjective importance against other values, i.e. outside the system.

Systems of values being therefore a psychological body, personal growth and development mechanism are of developing nature and represent a dynamic system.

Therefore this research was aimed at study of value-and-sense system as a basis for psychological resilience of youth personality to new religious movements of an extremist nature.

To achieve this "Systems of Values" (M. Rokeach) and study of life meaning system has been applied. 45 students of 2-3 years took part in the research, where 25 girls and 20 boys. Research participants' age is 18-20.

As a result, the "Systems of Values" (M. Rokeach) method revealed that amongst terminal values of 2-3 year students the 1<sup>st</sup> place is taken by happy family life and good health; the 2<sup>nd</sup> place is taken by love, financial well-being, learning, development and the 3<sup>rd</sup> place is taken by proactive exciting life, good and true friends, self-confidence.

Such values as life wisdom, interesting job, beauty of nature and art, entertainment, freedom, happiness of others and creativity has appeared insignificant.

These facts show that instrumental values for students are placed as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place: high aspirations, open-mind attitude, honesty and strength of will; 2<sup>nd</sup> place: accuracy, efficiency, good manners, tolerance, enjoying life, education, responsibility, self-control; 3<sup>rd</sup> place: promptness, self-dependence, courage to stand up for own standpoint.

This points to the fact concerning the 2-3 year students attitude to life at this stage of their activity.

As per the study of life meaning system we have got the following results: students defined life

meaning categories as: family, existential, communicative and status related.

Let's analyze these results. Let's consider visibility of life meaning categories with the students.

First of all it is required to note categories that dominate in the system of youth's life meaning. First of all, it is a self-actualization including self-improvement, self-realization, self-fulfillment. Secondly, communicative meaning of life. It may include: to enjoy communication with others, to wish to be with loved ones and to feel needed.

The next one having moderate significance than two previous ones is family life meaning. It includes living for own family and children as well as helping near and dear ones.

Now we consider categories thinly represented in the system of youth's life meaning. Firstly, it is a cognitive category including a desire to self-understanding, understanding of life and God. It is linked to the overall human world picture, his own view of the world. It follows that such world outlook concepts as 'who am I', 'what is life' should be developed with the youth as it is not embodied in the system of life meaning of our research participants.

Secondly, the category of altruistic meaning of life is weak as well. It includes: helping others, kindness and wish to improve the world.

This is due to that own personality is of high priority for young people. Everything else is as if fades into insignificance.

In such a way there are some clear differences in balance between terminal and instrumental values as well as in the system of life meaning.

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