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CULTURAL VALUES:
A CONCEPT AND RESEARCH METHODS

Having studied the basic theoretical approaches to the study of values, the authors came to the conclusion that there are various theories and approaches with their shortcomings, as well as important innovative provisions. The main objective of the article is to find a compromise between these theories, use them in practice and contribute to the study of values. The subject of the research is the most important methodological directions of the theory. The result was the isolation and theoretical justification of the application of these methods in science. A new methodology has been developed for studying sociocultural trends in social development, in particular, the transformation of the spiritual values of the Kazakhstani generation-Y society. It should be emphasized that the problem of the transformation of human values is very relevant for Kazakh culture at present and is the core of culture, because in the context of globalization, the main problems of spirituality remain in the shadow, and the market system (competitiveness and money) replaces all values and becomes the center of existence and essence modern man. The article can become the basis for developing a new original methodology for studying and determining the direction in the study of the phenomenon of value.

Key words: values, Kazakh culture, transformation, research methods and globalization.

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Мәдениет құндылықтары:
зерттеу тұжырымдамасы және әдістері

Құндылықтың құбылыс негіздемесі маңызды көзқарастарды анықтауды ұйғарады. Және әртүрлі әдіснамалық көзқарас тұрғысынан қалай түсіндірілетіндігі туралы сұрақтарды әзірлейді. Яғни мәдениет құндылықтар мәдениетінің негізі ретінде қарастырылады. Осы мақаланың мақсаты – құндылықты зерттеу әдіснамасының теориялық негіздемесі. Зерттеу пәні құндылық теориясының маңызды методологиялық бағыттары болып табылады. Оның нәтижесінде ғылымда осы әдістерді қолданудың іріктеуі мен теориялық негіздемесі болды. Зерттеу нәтижесінде зерттеу құндылықтарының бірнеше бағыттарының бар болуы анықталды. Әлеуметтік дамудың әлеуметтік-мәдени үрдістерін, атап айтқанда, қазақстандық Y-ұрпақтың қоғамдық рухани құндылықтарының өзгеруі бойынша жаңа әдістеме әзірленді. Адами құндылықтардың өзгеру мәселесі қазіргі кездегі қазақ мәдениеті үшін өте өзекті және мәдениеттің өзегі болып табылатынын атап өткен жөн, өйткені жаһандану жағдайында руханияттың негізгі проблемалары көлеңкеде қалады, ал нарықтық жүйе (бәсекеге қабілеттілік пен ақша) барлық құндылықтарды алмастырады, өмірдің орталығына айналады және қазіргі адамның мәні. Жалпы бағыттарға келетін болсақ, олардың әрқайсысында өз артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктері бар. Бұл мақала құнды зерттеу бағытын зерттеу және анықтау үшін жаңа түпнұсқалы әдіснаманы әзірлеу үшін негіз бола алады.

Түйін сөздер: құндылықтар, қазақ мәдениеті, трансформация, зерттеу әдістері, жаһандану.

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Ценности культуры: концепция и методы исследования

Изучив основные теоретические подходы по изучению ценностей, авторы пришли к выводу, что и здесь существуют различные теории и подходы со своими недостатками, а также важными новаторскими положениями. Основная задача статьи состоит в том, чтобы найти компромисс между данными теориями, использовать их на практике и внести вклад в изучение ценностей. Предметом исследования являются наиболее важные методологические направления теории. Результатом явились выделение и теоретическое обоснование применения данных методов в науке. Выработана новая методика изучения социокультурных тенденций общественного развития, в частности трансформация духовных ценностей казахстанского общества поколения–Y. Следует подчеркнуть, что проблема трансформации ценностей человека очень актуальна для казахской культуры в настоящее время и является ядром культуры, потому как в условиях глобализации основные проблемы духовности остаются в тени, а рыночная система (конкурентоспособность и деньги) заменяет все ценности и становится центром существования и сущности современного человека. Статья может стать основой для выработки новой оригинальной методики изучения и определения направления в исследовании феномена ценности.

Ключевые слова: ценности, казахская культура, трансформация, методы исследования, глобализация.

Introduction

Based on the literature review on values theories and values transformation in the other articles, the spiritual values seems to be fragmenting in many parts of the world. There is no doubt that the way in which values have been developing over the last half-century reveals some remarkable and fast-moving transitions in Western societies. In Kazakhstan, Generation-Y values and perception on values, values functioning, transformation, and responsibility seem rapidly changing as well. This article attempted to explore and examine critically contemporary theories of values transformation together with ideas about global values and their impact upon Generation-Y about spiritual values of Kazakhstani society. It seeks to illuminate the likely choices and behavior of Generation-Y concerning personal lifestyle and social life. This, in turn, might provide insights into future Kazakhstani society and the values transformation and related implications for social work and other service and policy planning more generally. This article first outlines the epistemological status of the study. Then it describes the research design and methods and examines their strengths and weaknesses as well as the particular approaches to analysis for each method.

Research methods and analysis

The study style comprised a cross-sectional multi-method qualitative and quantitative exploration of attitudes held by Generation-Y regarding values transformation in Kazakhstan, utilizing focus groups, surveys and individual interviews as the key analysis techniques. A self-completion questionnaire survey instrument, a guided list of themes for focus groups and semi-structured interviews for individuals were adopted as the suggests that for data collection. The methodological position of 'critical realism' was adopted to secure insights into complex processes and social systems that each up on and were formed by individual and group attitudes and beliefs (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:45). The research style could not reveal the totality of cultural processes that verify the institutional structures that organized the cultural worlds of respondents. However, it had been supposed that the study might offer a snap in time of the ways in which Generation-Y perceived their futures with reference to any responsibilities towards their life and particularly their ideas about preserving values of their own. Details of the three research methods and the strengths and weakness are examined as follows.

Concept of value

The world we live in is an extremely interesting and challenging place. The deepest threats to human existence only appear to be concrete – wars, disease, famine, natural catastrophes – and we have begun to move towards a post-material age, the threat from non-material factors, quite logically, has intensified. (Hankiss, Elemer, 2000:24). The phenomena impact on our world of meanings and devalue our existing forms of knowledge, with the result that we are beset by post-modern fears, a new set of unknowns (Bauman, Zigmunt, 1995:78). Identities are anchored around a set of moral propositions that regulate values and behavior. In every system of identity construction, there has to be a hierarchy of norms, as well as lateral, reciprocal relations and this requires people to be «judgemental», in as much as they must have the criteria to condemn certain kinds of behavior or values and approve to others.

(Schopflin, 2010:53).

Although the concept *of value, the articulation of identity, of collective norms and its criteria are encoded in various discourses. These modes of expression are specific to culture that has generated them and are simultaneously a form of recognition and an instrument of cultural reproduction.* Values are seen as the core of culture because they determine people's behavior. Values are believed to be defining a social institution, and norms, symbols, rituals and other cultural activities revolve around them (Enz, 1988). Each culture is characterized by a different system of concepts. (Sperber, 1996:67). The third concept of culture is termed, by Gyorgy Markus, the «anthropological concept». In the sense of the anthropological concept, all human societies are cultures insofar as they all provide their denizens with values, norms, stories, images, religions, and so on. (Markus, 2011). Every way of life is a culture (Heller, 1999:134).
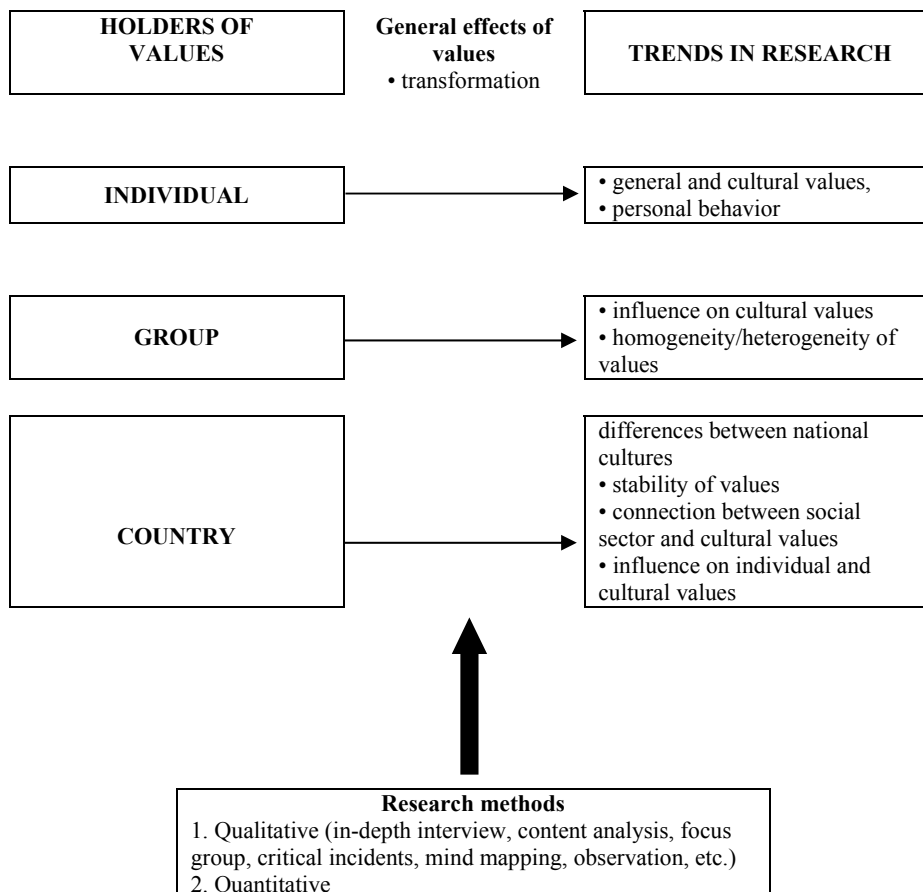

Figure 1 – Framework of values research. Constructed on the basis of Meglino, Ravlin (1988) and Roe, Ester (1999)

Values act as guidelines that help people to choose goals and make decisions about how to realize them. They specify an individual's personal beliefs about how he or she «should» or «ought to» behave. That means that values do not necessarily reflect how he or she wants or desires to behave or actually behaves, but rather «describe» his or her internalized interpretations about socially desirable ways to fulfill his or her needs (Meglino, Ravlin, 1998:354).

Values change, and actually value change driven by generational population. So it is important to analyze the changes and explore how these transformations are affected population replacement.

The focus groups

The focus group is an interview style designed for small groups of unrelated individuals, formed by an investigator and led in a group discussion on some particular topic or topics (Schutt, 2003). Using this approach, researchers strive to learn through discussion about conscious, semiconscious, and unconscious psychological and sociocultural characteristics and processes among various groups (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). The focus group has a unique feature, that is to use the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group encounter (Morgan, 1988a:11). The focus group can be used as a method on its own or in combination with other methods such as surveys, observations, single interviews. Morgan (1988b:17) sees focus groups as 'useful for orienting oneself to a new field; generating hypotheses based on informants insights; evaluating different research sites or study populations; developing interview schedules and questionnaires and getting participants' interpretations of results from earlier studies.

1st Focus Group – Sex

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Sex	Male	Working Status	Working	Marital Status	Married
	Female		Studying		Single
			Neither of Two		Cohabited

2nd Focus Group – Age

Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants	Other Variable	No. of Participants
Age	18-25	Educational Attainment	Post graduates	Living Region	Western Kazakhstan
	26-30		Under-graduates		Southern Kazakhstan
					Eastern Kazakhstan
	31-40		College		Northern Kazakhstan
					Central Kazakhstan

There are a number of significant advantages associated with the use of focus groups as a data-gathering strategy (Edmunds, 2000). These include high flexibility in terms of number of participants, groups, costs, duration, etc. It permits the gathering of a large amount of information from potentially large groups of people in a relatively short period. It can generate important insights into topics that previously were not well understood. It allows researchers to better understand how members of a group arrive at, or alter, their conclusions about some topic or issue and provides access to 'interactionary clues' (Berg, 2007a:148). Focus groups allow the researcher to develop an understanding about why people feel the way they do. It offers the opportunity of allowing people to probe each other's reasons for holding a certain view. They can elicit a wide variety of different

views in relation to a particular issue (Denscombe, 2003) and can be used to gather information from transient populations.

The moderator can explore related but unanticipated topics as they arise in the course of the group's discussion. Focus groups often do not require complex sampling strategies (Berg, 2007b:75). When effectively run they can be free flowing and allow safe argument amongst participants and for challenging group members' viewpoints. On the whole, the focus groups offers the researcher an opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of and construct meanings around a phenomenon (Bryman, 2004a:18) or as a quasi-naturalistic method for studying the generation of social representations or social knowledge in general (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996).

Focus groups also have limitations. Focus groups are difficult to organize, as the 'turn up' rate cannot be assured (Berg, 2007c:152). When compared with the individual interview, the researcher has less control over proceedings. It depends on how far the researcher can allow a focus group to take over the running of proceedings. It is also difficult to record the discussion that takes place as speakers interrupt one another and talk simultaneously (Bryman, 2004b:27). A specific problem is how to document the data in a way that allows the identification of individual speakers and the differentiation between statements of several parallel speakers (Flick, 2006). The data are difficult to analyze as a huge amount of material can be quickly produced, and the recordings are prone to inaudible elements, which affects transcription (Bryman, 2004c:48). Hence, the recordings are probably more time-consuming to transcribe than equivalent recordings of individual interviews. Regarding the group effect, there is also the possibility that people will be reluctant to disclose thoughts on sensitive, personal, political or emotional matters in the company of others (Bryman, 2004). Dominant personalities may overpower and steer the group's responses unless the moderator is active. The researcher needs to manage the event to avoid this happening (Berg, 2007). Generally, participants may be more prone to expressing culturally expected views than in an individual interview (Bryman, 2004).

The survey

For the quantitative aspect of the study a cross-sectional design and survey approach was adopted which involved sending self-completion questionnaires to a target sample of 1000 people in all regions of Kazakhstan. The survey would allow the capture of a large field of data on potential variations in Generation –Y perceptions about values transformation. Clear distinctions between cases can be made as well. The survey's cross-sectional design can provide a consistent and systematic way for establishing variations and make possible the examination of relationships or patterns of association between variables (Bryman, 2004). In addition, survey research tends to focus on data based on 'real-world' observations more than theory. It involves an active attempt by the researcher to go and structure an enquiry with a span of vision that can be wide and inclusive. Its breadth of coverage means that it is more likely than other approaches to get data based on a sample of sufficient size to allow some claim to relevance and ideally generalizability.

Table 1 – Values, attitudes, behaviors among Kazakhstani society related to transformation values Questionnaire

	Important	Not important
Independence		
Hard work		
Feeling of responsibility		
Tolerance and respect for other people		
Thrift, saving money and things		
Determination, perseverance		
Hospitality		

Surveys can lend themselves to future replication (Blaxter, 2001) and can produce large quantitative data sets in a short time for a low and reasonably predictable cost (Denscombe, 2003). However, the survey has its disadvantages when data reside solely in the form of tables, charts and statistics and without linkage to wider theories and issues. The researcher can become preoccupied with the data to the exclusion of an adequate account of the implications of the findings for issues, problems or theories. The data provide a snapshot in time rather than a focus on the underlying processes and mechanisms that generate the phenomena in question. In this sense the significance of the data can become neglected (Blaxter, 2001; Denscombe, 2003). The survey does not usually allow in-depth investigation of the topic and there is usually little opportunity to check on the accuracy or honesty of the opinions captured. The

researcher is often not in a position to check first-hand the understandings of the respondents to the questions asked. Lastly, the survey relies on breadth rather than depth for validity, which raises questions about the adequacy of small-scale studies (Blaxter, 2010:80).

The individual interviews

In regard to the individual interviews in the third stage of the study, these were informed by the results of the survey which helped to develop an interview guide. For example, the survey results revealed that both the Kazakhstani cultural values and the global western values had a mutual and reciprocal influence on Generation-Y values. In order to explore this and other interesting findings, ten respondents were purposively identified from the survey returns on the basis of varied socio-economic backgrounds and invited to participate in a semi structured interview in order to drill down in more depth about themes arising from the survey data. This part of the study incorporated discussion of global and Kazakhstani culture and values and people's perception of marriage, work and family responsibility. Semi-structured interviewing was the means of data collection and involved the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and special topics listed in an interview guide. These questions were typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers were allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared questions (Berg, 2007). A semi-structured interview guide is more structured than an informal conversational interview, because it relies on some general themes to be explored with all informants (Kumar 1996). These interviews were therefore relatively more

formal. Participants were asked to sign consent forms, agreeing to participate. These interviews also had a clear start and finish time and participants were given a list of themes to be covered in the interview. However, while there is some structure, the researcher could also ask probing questions and follow up on responses as needed to generate the depth required. The interview still relies on a conversational style because the themes explored operate as a checklist and are not posed as a set of questions that are asked in exactly the same way with every informant (Patton, 1987:111). There are notable merits to semi-structured interviews. The interviewee has the chance to elaborate his/her ideas and views. Flexibility is allowed and adjustments to the enquiry can be made during the interview process. Also, interviews require only simple equipment and build on the conversation skills of the researcher. Direct face-to-face contact can help the researcher to check for accuracy and relevance of data. A high response rate can be ensured as interviews are mostly arranged at a convenient time and place for interviewee (Denscombe, 2003).

Nevertheless, interviews have disadvantages: Data collection can be time consuming as can be analysis. Interviewees may give non-standard responses and data are not pre coded but have an open format. Hence, the considerable time spent on transcription and coding. The reliability of data is sometimes queried as consistency and objectivity are difficult to fulfill within the dynamics of the interview encounter. There are also some barriers which may hinder the accuracy and relevance of data. For example, the impact of the recording device may be uncomfortable or threatening for some interviewees. Finally, the costs of the interviewer's time, traveling expenses and other fees may be high if the interviewees are widely scattered (Denscombe, 2003).

Interview sample – key characteristics

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Characteristics
1	Male Female	18-25 26-30 31-40	Working Generation-Y with higher education attainment (bachelor degree or above), high skill level or professional (e.g. managers or supervisors, accountant…)
2	Male Female	18-25 26-30 31-40	Generation-Y with no job, no study
3	Male Female	18-25 26-30 31-40	Generation-Y working overtime (work more than 60 hours a week) or with continuing education (e.g. taking short-term or long-term course or advanced studies)

Conclusion

Bryman (2004) points out that the argument against multi-strategy research tends to be based on the idea that research methods carry epistemological commitments and that quantitative and qualitative research being separate paradigms should not be conjoined. Quantitative research has traditionally been informed by positivism and the hypothetic-deductive method. The theory drives the research and the aim in the first instance is to disprove the theory, that is, a process known as 'falsification' by showing that there is no relationship between the variables of interest (Abercrombie et al., 1988, cited in D'Cruz and Jones, 2004:63). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is said to rely on emergent theories and inductive reasoning that stems from the inter-subjective nature of the social world. Nonetheless, in recent years, the use of more than one cultural research method has been encouraged to support the constitutive structuring of interpretation in the analytic process. Nevertheless, it was important to be alert to the probability that multi-methods might lead to a similar analytic direction but are unlikely to meet at some precise, unequivocal point in their accounting for cultural reality. Hence, a cautious position was adopted which avoided any presumption that the use of methodological triangulation could prove that the data or analyses were absolutely correct (Denscombe, 2003).

For this research, quantitative analysis of the survey was more bounded and discrete as the data were the product of statistical techniques based on mathematics and probability. Nevertheless, statistical tests of significance gave some credibility in terms of interpretation and confidence in the findings. Furthermore, large volumes of data could be analyzed quickly using advanced and well prepared computerized procedures. Easy and clear representations were made possible by computer software, which saved time and other resources that in turn reduced the cost of research. In spite of the advantages of quantitative analysis, there were also demerits. For example, the researcher might become preoccupied with statistics and the search for significance and might ignore the very research purpose to attempt a more rounded interpretation of the phenomena. With regard to the strengths of qualitative analysis in the form of focus group and semi-structured in-depth interviews, we can say the data and the analysis is more likely to be grounded in human experience and have their roots in complex social existence. Moreover, thematic analysis of transcripts can provide detailed, in-depth and thick description about complexity which quantitative analysis may not achieve.

Another merit of qualitative analysis is the acceptance of ambiguity and contradictions as this is inherent in the social world. It also draws on the interpretative skills of the researcher and inevitably opens up alternative explanations. It allows that different researchers might come up with different conclusions about the nature of social existence. However, there is a weak generalization in a qualitative analysis as data may be less representative. Hence, it is imperative not to oversimplify the explanation of the findings. Moreover, the interpretation of data implicates many personal factors such as the researcher's identity, background, and beliefs. In this sense, the findings and conclusions are unavoidably selective and a creation of the researcher rather than a discovery of 'fact' per se. With hindsight, we believe mixed methods to have been complementary rather than contradictory within this particular study. By adopting two types of research methods with different kinds of data analysis, the study became more comprehensive, in both width and depth. On one hand, the study was able to test out key concepts using quantitative research and on the other hand was able to generate insights into the same conceptual fields from the perspectives of participants gathered in individual and group contexts. Hence, both firm and reliable data were developed via quantitative research and rich deep qualitative data were collected in the qualitative design. Of course, quantitative research is typically highly structured and can present a static image of social reality with its emphasis on relationships between variables, whereas the less structured qualitative approach brings out processes or unfolding events over time and the interconnections between the actions of participants of social settings. It is in light of these caveats about and merits of mixed methods that the thesis now presents key findings as outlined in values surveying.

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