



POLICY NOTES OF THE WORKING PAPER 5.8

Values and Attitudes Towards Innovation Among Canadian, Chinese and Russian Students

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to provide an empirical evidence of the role of culture and individual values play in people's attitudes to innovations in different cultural groups with particular focus on Russian sample. The main goal of the research was to investigate relations of basic personal values to attitudes towards innovation among students in Russia, Canada, and China.

444 college students from the three countries participated in this study. The findings of the research presented in this working paper provide the results that can serve as both an empirical and theoretical backdrops for the SEARCH project and ENP policy for implementation of innovations in different cultural surroundings.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Goals of researches:

- To reveal cultural differences in values and attitudes toward innovation;
- To reveal the relationships between individuals' values and their attitudes to innovation;
- To test the extent to which the values promoting positive attitudes towards innovations in the three groups are universal or culturally specific.
- To test whether the effects of gender and age on attitude towards innovation are fully or partially mediated by values and do they operate in the three countries in the same way?

Method:

Participants. College students from Canada, Russian Federation and China (N=444):

- a) Saskatchewan University, Saskatoon, Canada; Canadians (born in Canada), N=207;
- b) National Research University 'Higher School of Economics', Moscow, Russia; ethnic Russians, N=137;
- c) Harbin Normal University, Harbin, China, Chinese, N=100)

Methods of research: socio-psychological survey using SVS measure of values (Schwartz, 1992), a measure of attitudes towards innovation (Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2009), meta-analysis of the relationships of values and innovations, profound statistical methods: multiple regression and structural equation modeling (the Multiple-Group Multiple Indicators Multiple Causes Model (MGMIMIC)).

POLICY VALUE

The main findings:

- There are cultural differences in value priorities: Russians prefer the values of **Self-Enhancement** more often than the Canadians do, but the latter prefer values of **Self-Transcendence** more often than Russians do. Chinese students prefer values of **Conservation** more often than the Russians and Canadians.
- Russians and Canadians prefer values of **Openness to Change** more often than Chinese students do. These differences, in our opinion, reflect differences in the Traditionalism-vs.-Modernism continuum, with the Chinese culture tending to be closer to the pole of Traditionalism, whereas the cultural patterns of Russians and Canadians lean towards Modernism.
- There are significant cultural differences in **innovative attitudes** among Canadian, Russian and Chinese college students. The Canadians' and Russians' attitudes towards innovation are more positive, while the Chinese' ones are less positive. We may explain it by different conceptions of creativity and innovations in Western and Eastern traditions (Raina, 1999; Paletz, Peng, 2008) and implicit cultural norms and behavior prescriptions in the Chinese culture (Leung and Morris, 2011).
- There are certain universal relationships in the three cultural groups, with the values of Openness to Change being conducive to innovative attitudes, and the values of Conservation impeding them. This conclusion is compatible with the results obtained by other researchers (Shane, 1992, 1995; Dollinger, Burke & Gump, 2007).
- There are culturally specific features in some relations of values and innovative attitudes: thus, among Russians the values of Achievement positively relate to innovative attitudes, among Canadians, values of Benevolence negatively relate to innovative attitudes and among Chinese values of Self-Direction have no relations with attitudes towards innovation. We explain these differences by culturally specific value priorities and implicit theories of creativity and innovation.
- The type of Values-Innovation mediation is different in the three countries. Whereas in Russia and Canada values fully mediate the effects of gender and age, this is not true for the effect of gender in China, which also has a direct effect on innovation.
- The regression coefficients of age and gender on values differ between Canada, China and Russia, which reflect cultural differences in the impact of age and gender on value priorities.

We may suppose that in societies where people value tradition, security, conformity (values of Conservation in the Schwartz 'model) any innovation can cause fear, anxiety and mistrust, therefore it is obvious, that values of Conservation are negatively connected with acceptance of innovation. Values of Openness to Change as contrary positively influence acceptance of innovation. Gender differences might

play their role in cultures that are more traditional: women tend to be more suspicious toward innovations.

The findings that there are culturally specific and gender –related relations of values with attitudes about innovation means that we must consider specific features of a culture when introducing innovative patterns to it.

Policy recommendations:

1. Support and encourage in school education value priorities of Openness to change (self-direction, stimulation), which are the main predictor of acceptance of innovations.
2. Take into consideration the more conservative attitudes to innovation of women in traditional cultures when implementing innovations.