



POLICY NOTES OF THE WORKING PAPER 5.9

Values and Social Capital as Predictors of Attitudes Towards Innovation

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of this report is to provide an empirical evidence of the role of individual values and social capital play in people's attitudes to innovation in different regions of Russian Federation.

1238 participants from 4 federal districts of Russian Federation 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 and regional surroundings.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Goals of the research:

- To reveal the relationships between individuals' values, social capital and attitudes to innovations on regional level;
- To identify the characteristics of the relationship between social capital and attitudes towards innovation in Russia.
- To construct an empirical model of the relationship of values and social capital with attitudes towards innovation in Russia, using structural modeling with latent variables (SEM).

Method

The participants: The study involved 1238 participants from four federal districts (Central, North Caucasus, Far East, Volga), aged from 19 to 40.

Methods of research: socio-psychological survey using SVS measure of values (Schwartz, 1992), a measure of attitudes towards innovation (Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2009), a method of assessing social capital (Tatarko, 2011), profound statistical methods (correlational analysis and structural equation modeling).

POLICY VALUE

The main findings:

- Values of Openness to Change positively correlate with attitudes to innovation;
- Such components of Social capital as General Trust, Tolerance and Perceived social capital positively associate with attitudes towards innovation;
- Values of Conservation and Self-Transcendence, expressing the interests of a group, positively correlate with the dimensions of Social capital;
- Social Capital, both directly and through values of Openness to Change, positively influences attitudes towards innovation;
- The identified relationships of values and Social capital with attitudes towards innovations require the consideration of contextual characteristics in planning and implementing innovations in different regions of Russian Federation.

This study confirms the ideas of our predecessors [Amabile, 1990; Rudowicz & Yue, 2000], stating that in order to obtain a better understanding of the psychological nature of innovation, it must be studied, just as creativity, in the context of the interplay of individual and socio-cultural variables.

The empirical model obtained by means of a structural equation modeling demonstrated the positive impact of the values of Openness to Change and perceived social capital on attitudes towards innovations in Russia. The strong relationship of the value of Openness to Change with the attitude towards innovation is indicative of the need for creating conditions to form the given value as a powerful value-motivational basis of individual creativity and innovativeness. In this model, perceived social capital performs to some degree the function of a mediator. Trust relationships in the group, both directly and indirectly through the value of Openness to Change, promote the adoption and support for innovation. Thus, this empirical study proves once again that the socio-cultural context and the dominant values in society play a significant role in attitudes to innovation, and it is essential to take them into account while designing and implementing innovation policies at any level.

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. Develop social capital on every level (group, organization, society) which support and promote innovative activity.