

FEATURES OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY REPRESENTATIVES' INTERCULTURAL UNIVERSALS

Nadezhda Telepova

Moscow City University: Samara Branch, Samara City, Russian Federation

Mikhail Telepov

Samara City Education Development Center of Samara City District, Samara City, Russian Federation

Abstract. *Issues of intercultural universals among different ethnic and cultural groups' representatives are becoming very relevant in various branches of scientific and applied knowledge. Religion is one of the factors of intercultural distance, which many ethnic psychologists stress in their research. On the other hand the features of intercultural universals among representatives of different religious groups are studied very little. The goal of the study is to consider intercultural universals and their degree among representatives of two religions: Islam and Christianity. To achieve this goal, we chose the following methods: diagnostics of the Cultural-Value Differential of a personality (CVD, G. Soldatova, S. Ryzhova), diagnostics of basic beliefs (World Assumption Scale, WAS, Janoff-Bulman), diagnostics on cultural preferences in the context of the universal "Individualism-Collectivism" (IC, M. Telepov, N. Telepova). The results of the study revealed that Christians and Muslims have a lot in common in manifestations of intercultural universals, which means that representatives of these religions have a serious basis for dialogue and building relationships. Statistically significant differences were found in terms of benevolence of world and self-control (according to diagnostics on the WAS). Statistically significant differences were also found in terms of peacefulness and openness among Christians (according to diagnostics of the cultural-value differential of a personality).*

Keywords: *Christianity, ethnic psychology, intercultural universals, Islam, religion.*

Introduction

The relevance of the research is based on the fact that different issues of intercultural interaction are becoming very practical in various sectors of public life. It is important to understand that they are components of the picture representing a great diversity of cultures and traditions, intercultural and interethnic space. It is so-called multicultural society, the phenomenon of which has become widespread now. Issues of intercultural universals among different ethnic and cultural groups' representatives are becoming very relevant in various

branches of scientific and applied knowledge: in teaching, psychology, sociology, and political science. This is the reason for the relevance of the topic chosen by us, as well as the fact that religion is one of the factors of intercultural distance, which many ethnic psychologists stress in their research. On the other hand the features of intercultural universals among representatives of different religious groups are studied very little.

In our study, we set *the aim* to consider intercultural universals and their degree among representatives of two religions: Islam and Christianity. To achieve this aim, we chose the following *methods and technics*: observation, conversation, diagnostics of the cultural-value differential of a personality “Cultural Value Differential” (CVD) (Soldatova, 2011), diagnostics of basic beliefs “World Assumption Scale (WAS) (Janoff-Bulman, 1989), diagnostics on cultural preferences in the context of the universal “Individualism-Collectivism” (IC) (Telepov & Telepova, 2017). Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results is carried out with methods of mathematical statistics (Mann-Whitney coefficient and Pearson χ^2 test).

Theoretical bases of the research of features of Islam and Christianity representatives' intercultural universals

In Russia the official beginning of this kind of research was started in the middle of the XIX century, when the geographical society was organized and famous scientists N. Nadezhdin (Nadezhdin, 2012), K. Kavelin (Kavelin, 2010) and K. Bear (Bear, 1981), heads of the ethnographic department, set out to develop a program to study the peculiarities of population. This society sent out instructions to all regions of Russia to describe “material life, everyday life, moral life, language”. K. Bear believed that the main thing was to conduct a comparative study of the relationships between state policy and ethnic characteristics (Bear, 1981); K. Kavelin thought that it is necessary to do research, traditions, beliefs and customs (Kavelin, 2010), N. Nadezhdin believed that the main thing in the study of ideals and value orientations of a particular ethnos (Nadezhdin, 2012). So issues related to religious education were immediately included in the circle of studies. Subsequently other scientists joined this scientific field. We'll name some of them. N. Danilevsky spoke about the “spiritual beginning” of each nation (Danilevsky, 2011). V.S. Soloviev believed that every nation has “a desire for holiness.” N. Berdyaev wrote about "Russian soul", comparing Russian people's perception of life with other nations (Soloviev, 2002). L. Gumilyov introduced the terms “passionarity” (impulse that sets ethnos in motion) and “passionary personality”. He viewed the life of an ethnos in parallel with life of a person, dividing it into specific periods: birth, growth, decline, death; at the same time, he spoke of spiritual state of the nation

(Gumilyov, 2007). At present, leading Russian researchers of multicultural space features such as V. Krysko (Krysko, 2017), N. Lebedeva (Lebedeva, 2011), G. Karanashvili (Karanashvili, 1984) and others consider religion as one of the main factors of ethnocultural distance (Krysko, 2017).

Issues of interethnic interaction and manifestations of multicultural universals are also widely studied abroad, which is reflected in many works. We'll name a few. M. Lazarus, a Swiss scientist, talked a lot about "spirit of the people" is a permanent substance, therefore, it is important to investigate not only the individual as a representative of a particular ethnos, but the community as a whole (Lazarus, 2018). V. Wundt in his fundamental work "The Psychology of Nations" speaks of ethnopsychology as a following up of individual psychology, he directs his research into the products of the creative spirit of the nation: language, customs, myths, as well as religious preferences (Wundt, 2013). French thinker G. Le Bon in his works emphasizes the stability of mentality of the people which was formed many centuries ago, he believed that the dead generations guide the people, descendants bear the brunt of the mistakes of their ancestors and receive awards for their virtues (Le Bon, 2000). German scientist F. Boas, studied the process of acculturation, the interaction of people from different cultures, he says that as a result of acculturation one culture is either perceived by elements of another, or new cultural phenomena arise (Boas, 2016). Modern researchers, such as R. Benedict (Benedict, 2005), A. Kardiner (Kardiner, 2014), M. Mead (Mead, 2001), also made a very significant contribution to understanding the foundations of the formation of ethnos and acculturation of representatives of different cultures, they pay much attention to spiritual, moral and religious state of people (Telepov & Telepova 2017).

Method and results

Our study was conducted on the basis of local religious organizations: the Muslim religious organization of professional Islamic religious education "Madrassa Nur (Svet)", "Samara Theological Seminary of the Samara and Syzran Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church", Samara United Methodist Church, Samara Branch of Moscow Teacher Training University. The study involved 140 people aged from 18 to 50 years. Respondents called themselves Christians and Muslims. We used a special questionnaire, which allowed us to select 40 non-nominal believers representatives from each religion. They are believers who in the questionnaire marked regular reading of Holy Scriptures, wearing religious clothes (attributes of their religion), daily prayers, regular fasting, serious attitude to religious holidays, knowledge of foundations of their religion,

intention to raise children in religious tradition, acceptance of religious leaders' authority.

To study cultural preferences in the context of the universal "Individualism - Collectivism" (IC) we used the questionnaire by M.N. Telepov, N.N. Telepova (Telepov & Telepova, 2017). The universal "Individualism - Collectivism" is based on dichotomy - individualistic vs collectivistic culture. Individualistic culture is the one in which individual goals of members are no less, and sometimes more important, than group ones. Collectivistic culture is characterized by the prevalence of group goals over individual ones. Purely individualists, as well as purely collectivists in a multicultural environment are not so common. But at the same time, the diagnosis certain cultural aspects and preferences is designed to help both the participants of intercultural interaction and psychologists to carry out high-quality support, prevent conflicts in the intercultural space and provide psychological assistance in psychological, social and moral issues. The questionnaire is to identify cultural preferences in the context of the universals "Individualism – Collectivism". This tool was developed and validated by us (Telepova N., 2010). The questionnaire consists of 17 statements with subsequent answer choices, from which people are asked to choose their preferences. We obtained the following results: 31% of Christians have individualistic preferences, and 66% - collectivistic preferences (3% of Christians revealed no preferences). As for the Muslims 27% showed individualistic preferences, 68 - collectivistic preferences (5% of Muslims revealed no preferences).

According to the Pearson χ^2 criteria, we carried out mathematical calculations and obtained the following result: $\chi^2_{\text{Emp}} = 0.09$

That is, χ^2_{Emp} is less than the critical value, which means that the differences between the distributions are not statistically significant (H_0 hypothesis). Consequently, statistically significant differences in the preferences of Muslims and Christians within the universal Collectivism-Individualism were not found.

We use World Assumption Scale (WAS) (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) in order to investigate the basic beliefs of Islam and Christianity representatives. This test diagnoses benevolence and meaningfulness of the surrounding world, the friendliness or hostility of people and the value of their own "Self". The test consists of 32 statements reflecting the assessment of eight main categories: benevolence of world, benevolence of people, justice, control, randomness as a principle of the existence of the world and events in it, self-worth, self-control, luckiness. The subjects are asked to mark the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each of the statements on a 6-point scale.

Calculation of statistical differences in the indicators of the universal of basic beliefs is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Calculation of statistical differences in the indicators of the universal of basic beliefs (using the Mann-Whitney test)

	U-criterion
Benevolence of world	356
Benevolence of people	668
Justice	713
Control	845
Self worth	894
Self-control	497
Randomness	917
Luckiness	913

Critical values: 557 ($p \leq 0.01$), 628 ($p \leq 0.05$)

The table shows that statistically significant differences were identified in terms of benevolence of world ($U_{Exp} = 356$), and self-control over events and lives ($U_{Emp} = 497$).

The indicators: control, randomness as a principle of the existence of the world, self-worth, justice, benevolence of people luckiness have not identified statistically significant differences.

The diagnostic tool “Cultural Value Differential” (CVD) was developed by G. Soldatova together with S. Ryzhova (Soldatova, 2011). The authors see the goal of this technique in four spheres of human activity: orientation towards the group, orientation towards power, orientation towards each other, and orientation towards changes in life. The scale “orientation towards the group vs orientation towards oneself” is measured with parameters (mutual assistance - disunity. Traditional values (loyalty to its traditions or the destruction of traditions) was studied in opposition to subordination to a group (independence or subordination). Orientation towards changes is considered in the range of “openness to changes and resistance to changes” by parameter: openness and isolation. Orientation towards future (aspiration for future or aspiration for past). Motivation to achieve (flexibility or rivalry). Orientation towards power goes in the range of “strong social control or weak social control” according to such parameters as (discipline-self-will) and the importance of the authority of society according to parameters (respect for authority vs mistrust of authority). The subjects chose their own characteristics and of their surroundings. Quality data are evaluated on a 4-point scale: 1 – no feature, 2 - feature is poorly expressed, 3 - feature is expressed moderately, 4 - feature is expressed fully.

The results of our research on the method of CVD we present in table 2.

Table 2 Calculation of statistical differences of CVD indicators for Christians and Muslims (using the Mann-Whitney test)

	U-criterion
Mutual assistance	999
Disunity	996
Closeness	899
Openness	625
Discipline	746
Peacefulness	320
Loyalty to tradition	895
Destruction of traditions	993
Respect power	879
Distrust of authority	987
Submission	965
Autonomy	689
Aspiration to the past	784
Aspiration for the future	792
Law abiding	986
Anarchy	988
Obedience	978
Rivalry	789

Critical values: 557 ($p \leq 0.01$), 628 ($p \leq 0.05$)

The table shows that statistically significant differences were found in terms of peacefulness ($U_{Emp} = 320$), and openness among Christians ($U_{Emp} = 625$).

The maximum similarity in the indicators of representatives of Islam and Christianity is revealed in other criteria intercultural universal CVD.

So according to most of criteria, Christians and Muslims are close in their indicators, primarily because of the similarity of religious traditions and teachings.

Discussion

In the universal “Collectivism-Individualism” (IC) no differences were identified. Collective orientation prevails both among Christians and Muslims: positive aspects of collectivist culture are clearly manifested: a high degree of development of family values; promotion of mutual care; the importance of values in the life of society as a whole and of each member. At the same time, the reverse side of the collectivist orientation is obvious: authoritarianism and pressure on the individual. It means that group membership and the attitudes of authorities in this group strongly influences the behavior of its members.

Questions like “are you more personal than the public?” are rhetorically condemning. Persuasion from authority is the best way to get the collectivist to do something. The change of group in most cases leads to a change in the behavior of a person, his or her opinion, views. The situation of rivalry causes discomfort, any activity (including playing) is preferred without implying individual victories. Collectivists spend more time in their group, on a visit. The large number of accompaniment is welcome, it is believed that this determines the status of the person. "Do not have a hundred rubles, but have a hundred friends" - a saying of collectivist culture.

Regarding diagnostics on the WAS statistically significant differences were found in terms of the benevolence of world and self-control over events and lives. It means that Christians are more optimistic about the surrounding reality, they value life and prefer to influence the living conditions. Muslims refer to earthly life as temporary and transitory between this world and the eternal world, and it seems that this was the reason for this difference.

According to such indicators as benevolence of people, Justice, control, randomness, self worth, luckiness we did not reveal statistically significant differences. Both in Christianity and in Islam there is a very serious teaching that man is sinful before God, Creator is sovereign, omnipresent and holy, which leads to understanding that believers should treat themselves with self-criticism. But at the same time, Christians believe in the benevolence of the world, as mentioned above/ It comes from their belief that God is love, therefore self-criticism for one's self does not prevent Christians from believing in benevolence of world and the possibility of self-control with the help of loving God. In Islam, Allah is perceived primarily as the Creator, who demands from people first of all obedience and meekness in His sovereignty (Ionova, 1993).

In the CVD universal in such criteria as: “mutual assistance”, “disunity”, “isolation”, “loyalty to traditions”, “destruction of traditions”, “discipline”, “submission”, “law-abiding”, “anarchy”, “compliance” we also did not reveal differences between Muslims and Christians. Such results can be explained by the fact that both religions teach a certain way of life, a certain way of thinking and attitude to the world around them. In relation to power or law-abiding, there were no differences due to the fact that both Christians and Muslims are neutral to those who have power, believing that their main authority comes from Above. Believers live under secular laws of the state, try not to violate the laws, but do not forget about their religious prescriptions. With respect to the criteria of submission there were also no significant differences due to the fact that believers are more inclined to subordinate to leaders of a religious group. In terms of the criteria about traditions destruction of traditions and loyalty to traditions also have no significant differences. Believers of both Islam and Christianity are equally trying to follow their traditions, which are connected

with their religious worldviews and customs (Zenko, 2009). According to such criteria as: “Discipline”, “Aspiration to the past”, “Aspiration to the future”, “Self-reliance”, and “Rivalry” we obtain results close to the border indicators. Christians are more focused on personal achievements, the analysis of their past successes and problems, more independent. The teaching in Christianity, despite the fact that the role of the church in the life of a person is very highly exalted, makes a bias towards the personal responsibility of each person before God for one’s actions, atonement for sins, and serving Christ (Zenko, 2009). In Islam, great importance is given, first and foremost, to the needs of the community and the instructions of the elders and trust (Ionova, 1993).

Differences between Christians and Muslims manifested themselves in a openness and peacefulness. A higher degree of openness of Christians can be explained by the specific orientation of Christian dogma: love is the basis of the Christian religion. It is through the prism of love that Christian person interacts with oneself, God and outside world. Muslims are more reserved in their openness when interacting with representatives of other religions, but they are very open to their fellow believers. The latter may also be due to the ambiguous position of Muslims in the modern world, the stereotypes connecting their religion with terrorism and violence are unpleasant for Muslims. Hence, there may be a tendency towards closure, distrust of the outside world.

As for significant difference in peacefulness we explain by the fact that Christianity basically places a high sense of love for the world and people who perceive God as a loving Father and Christ as the only Son of God, who out of love for the people redeemed them from sin (Zenkovsky, 2004). Setting their basis on this love, Christians are more peaceful. Muslims are less peaceful, most likely it comes from their relationship to earthly life, as temporary and transit between this world and the eternal world. Therefore, the vision and attachment to this life are completely different.

Multicultural existence is a reality of our society. Representatives of different cultures and religions co-exist in the same area. Christianity and Islam are two most powerful religions which influence all spheres of life. There are multicultural universals which are revealed in all the cultures and religions, such as Individualism vs Collectivism, Openness vs Closeness, Peacefulness vs Rivalry and others. Christians and Muslims have some differences but they also have a lot in common in manifestations of intercultural universals. It means that representatives of these religions have a strong basis for dialogue and building relationships. That starts with knowledge and understanding of these peculiarities and features.

The results of the study as well as theoretical material of the article can be used in many professional fields. Firstly, this data is of great help for teachers in educational institutions who work in the conditions of multicultural field and

need to know how to deal with students belonging to different cultures and religion. Secondly this data is very helpful for psychologists who work in the area of migration and intercultural communication. Thirdly parents need to know the features and peculiarities of representatives of different religion in order to help their children in communication. Fourthly the managers in different businesses and enterprises should take into consideration the multicultural universals' differences concerning religious sphere in order to communicate in a higher level.

Conclusion

In our study, we set *the aim* to study intercultural universals and their degree among representatives of two religions: Islam and Christianity. We used the following *methods and technics*: observation, conversation, diagnostics on cultural preferences in the context of the universal “Individualism-Collectivism” (IC) (Telepov & Telepova, 2017), diagnostics of the cultural-value differential of a personality “Cultural Value Differential” (CVD) (Soldatova, 2011), diagnostics of basic beliefs “World Assumption Scale (WAS) (Janoff-Bulman, 1989), methods of mathematical statistics (Mann-Whitney coefficient and Pearson χ^2 test).

In the universal “Collectivism-Individualism” (IC) no differences were identified. Collective orientation prevails both among Christians and Muslims.

Regarding diagnostics on the WAS statistically significant differences were found only in indicators of “benevolence of world” and “self-control over events and lives”. As for such indicators as “benevolence of people”, “justice”, “control”, “randomness”, “self worth”, “luckiness” we did not reveal statistically significant differences.

According to CVD we revealed a significant difference only in the universals “peacefulness” and “openness”. As for other criteria: “mutual assistance”, “disunity”, “isolation”, “loyalty to traditions”, “destruction of traditions”, “discipline”, “submission”, “law-abiding”, “anarchy”, “compliance” we did not reveal differences between Muslims and Christians.

Christians and Muslims have some differences but they also have a lot in common. That is a very important issue we should take into consideration to have a strong basis for dialogue and productive co-existence in the conditions of multicultural society.

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