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A RUSSIAN VERSION OF THE
SCHWARTZ VALUE SURVEY
(SVS) USING COGNITIVE
INTERVIEWING**

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VALUE SURVEY (SVS) USING COGNITIVE INTERVIEWING²**

The aim of this study is to validate a Russian version of the Schwartz Value Survey using cognitive interviewing. This paper aims to explore the issue of whether respondents interpret the values proposed in the survey in the way intended by the author. An analysis of the results reveals problems with understanding the wording, which are due both to subtle differences in translation and the cultural context. The findings of the qualitative analysis allow for a better understanding of the quantitative data. A number of recommendations are given to the researchers applying this Russian-language SVS.

JEL Classification: Z.

Keywords: values, SVS, cognitive interviewing.

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Introduction

Values have been a central concept in social sciences (Durkheim, 1976; Weber, 1958). Despite the widespread use of values, few approaches exist that describe their contents and methods of measurement (Inglehart, 1997; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz, 1992). One of the widely used theories of values is that of Shalom Schwartz. To understand the nature of values at an individual level (value functions and their interactions within an individual), Schwartz and Bilsky developed a theoretical concept in which values are viewed as some (often unconscious) criteria for a person for choosing and evaluating their actions as well as evaluating other people and events (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

Out of the three universal human needs (biological needs, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and the demands of group functioning) Schwartz and Bilsky derived the 10 basic types of human motivation. These types of motivation, according to the authors, direct both the concrete acts and the lifetime activity of an individual. Each motivation type has its own leading motivational goals:

Self-Direction. Defining goal: Independent thought and action (choosing, creating, exploring), deriving from an individual's interactional requirements of autonomy and independence.

Stimulation – a varied and exciting life. Defining goal: Novelty and challenge in life, deriving from the organismic need to maintain an optimal level of activity.

Hedonism. Defining goal: Pleasure, self-indulgence, and enjoying life, deriving from the necessity to satisfy biological needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them.

Achievement. Defining goal: Achieving personal success according to social standards, thereby obtaining social approval.

Power. Defining goal: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people, deriving from the need to dominate and control.

Security. Defining goal: Stability, safety, and harmony of society, family, and self. Security values derive from the need for adaptability and predictability in the world and reduction of the uncertainty.

Conformity. Defining goal: Restraint of actions and impulses likely to harm others or violate social harmony. Conformity values derive from a group the need for self-preservation and survival and an individual need for smooth interaction with others.

Tradition. Defining goal: Respect and commitment to the ideas of a certain culture or religion. Traditional behavior symbolizes the group's solidarity and expresses its unique worldview.

Benevolence. Defining goal: Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact. Benevolence values derive from the need for positive interaction for smooth group functioning and from the individual need for affiliation.

Universalism. Defining goal: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and for nature; the need for beauty, harmony and justice. This motivational type has been found empirically.

The relationship between different values reflects the psychological dynamics of conflict and congruence that individuals experience when following values in everyday life. The theory of dynamic relations for the leading types of human motivation (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) indicates that the relationship between these values is derived from the relationship between the motives of human behavior and their corresponding actions. Each type of motivation has its goal that defines the desires of an individual, which, in turn, lead to consistent and inconsistent actions. Thus, conflict or harmony between values defines the strategy of individual behavior. Two main contradictions between the values are as follows:

1) Conservation values, referring to security, conformity, and tradition, which contradict with openness to change, including the values of stimulation, self-direction, and hedonism.

2) Self-Transcendence values, meaning universalism and benevolence, which oppose the self-enhancement values of power, achievement, and hedonism.

Since the motivational content of values is the basic principle that organizes the priorities of people's values, it is assumed that the relative positioning of values along two bipolar dimensions should reflect this content. In this case, it is possible to divide the dimensions into separate areas that contain items representing each of the 10 values. In describing the structure of relations between the values, the observed dimensions form a circular pattern. Thus, the circular arrangement of the values represents a motivational continuum. The closer any two values stand in either direction within the circle, the more similar their underlying motivations are and, on the contrary, the more distant they are, the more antagonistic their motivations are (Schwarz, 2006).

According to the theory of Schwartz, values can be studied at the individual and cultural levels of analysis. This work is devoted to the analysis of values at the individual level. For individuals, values represent the motivational goals that serve as guiding principles in their lives (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). The first instrument for measuring individual values within the framework of this theory was the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992, 2005a).

This survey allows for the measuring of individual value priorities, as well as the relative importance of various individual values. In other words, the main object of analysis by Schwartz's methodology is the relative priority of a value in the respondent's individual hierarchy of values (Schwartz, 2005a, 2006; Schwartz, Cieciuch, Vecchione, et al, 2011).

The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), a methodological inventory based on Schwartz's theory, has gained wide popularity among Russian researchers. However, we have found no data on the construct validity of this method in the literature.

The author of this methodology carried out a range of procedures to determine the validity of instruments. While creating instruments, the author included in the indexes only the items which are interpreted in the same way by the respondents from different cultures. The data were obtained using multidimensional scaling (SSA; Schwartz, 1992, 1994, 2005a) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). The alpha reliabilities of the 10 values have an average of 0.68, ranging from 0.61 for tradition to 0.75 for universalism (Schwartz, 2005b).

The survey is a list of 57 values, consisting of two parts, selected in such a way as to represent each type of value described. The first part contains 30 items that describe potentially desirable end-states in the form of a noun, and the second part contains 27 items that describe potentially desirable ways of acting in the form of an adjective.

Respondents are asked to rate the importance of each value item as a guiding principle in their life. The scale ranges from -1 (rejected value) to 7 (of supreme importance). In order to make the meaning of each value more specific and clear, each item is followed with an explanatory phrase in parentheses. The number of items in the scale of each value ranges from three (Hedonism) to eight (Universalism), reflecting the conceptual complexity and breadth of values.

The following instructions are given to respondents:

In this questionnaire, you are to ask yourself: "What values are important to ME as guiding principles in MY life, and what values are less important to me?" There are two lists of values on the following pages. These values come from different cultures. In the parentheses following each value is an explanation that may help you to understand its meaning.

Your task is to rate how important each value is for you as a guiding principle in your life. Use the rating scale below:

0 - means the value is not at all important and that it is not relevant as a guiding principle for you.

3 - means the value is important.

6 - means the value is very important.

The higher the number (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), the more important the value is as a guiding principle in YOUR life.

- 1 is a rating for any values that are opposed to your guiding principles.

7 is for rating a value of supreme importance to you as a guiding principle in your life.

In the space before each value, write the number (-1,0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7) that indicates the importance of that value for you personally. Try to distinguish as much as possible between the values by using all the numbers. You will, of course, need to use numbers more than once.

The basic aim of our study is the validation of a Russian version of the SVS using cognitive interviewing.

Objectives:

1) To identify survey items that are “problematic” for understanding and evaluating, and try to determine what poses these problems (for example, translation problems or discrepancies in understanding the content of values).

2) To determine how the problem with understanding the meaning of values affects the selection of scores by respondents (value ranking).

3) To obtain a more detailed description of how the respondents understand all the 57 values through interviewing, which seems useful for the description and interpretation of quantitative data derived from studies using the SVS.

Despite a rather wide use of the SVS in Russia, there is no evidence in the literature that correlates the Russian version of the survey with the author’s English-language version. This study is the first attempt to investigate whether respondents understand the values that they rank while completing the survey as it is intended by the author. Understanding of the meaning of values in this case may be affected by subtle differences in translation and, of course, the cultural context.

Cognitive interviewing is the most applicable method for this kind of qualitative assessment of survey questions (Willis, 2005). Although this method has been described in the Russian literature (Rogozin, 2002), there are no publications describing the practical application of this technique in the process of creating or adapting survey questions.

The additional aim was to verify the explanatory power of our qualitative data. We tried to compare the obtained qualitative data with the results of the quantitative data of the Russian sample (N = 1723, 2010; Multidimensional scaling). This comparison allows to illustrate the value of qualitative data for interpreting the quantitative results.

Research Methodology

The participants

To validate the Russian version of the SVS using cognitive interviewing, an appropriate sample size was determined based on the analysis of the database of The International Scientific Educational Laboratory of Socio-Cultural Research at (a study from 2010). The study involved 1723 people from 3 age groups (15-25, 26-39, 40-74) and various levels of education. In accordance with the socio-demographic characteristics of the quantitative research, a sample was formed with a similar ratio of respondents by sex, age, and education for the qualitative study using cognitive interviewing. This study involved a sample of 20 respondents, whose characteristics are presented in Table 1.

It was important for us to form our group of respondents who participated in the laboratory survey in 2010 in compliance with the characteristics of the larger sample. There is a reason for this in that the SVS was used in every annual lab survey as an instrument for measuring individual values. Some problems with this method appeared particularly during these surveys; respondents had many questions and complaints about the survey. We also have a database with quantitative results that indicated some problems in that the findings received do not fit Schwarz's model. Therefore, as a second part of our research, we planned to compare our qualitative data with the results of one of the Russian samples and to try to explain these problems. For this reason, these two samples must be comparable.

Table1. The characteristics of the study sample

Age	15-25		26-39		40-74	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Education level						
General secondary school	1	1	–	–	–	–
Specialized secondary school	–	–	–	–	1	1
Some college	3	4	–	–	–	–
Undergraduate/postgraduate/doctorate	1	1	1	1	2	3
Total	5	6	1	1	3	4

Research methods

In the study we employed the Russian version of the SVS to study values at the individual level. The first investigations of personal value-motivational structure were done in Russia in

1999-2001 with the use of a Russian version of the SVS (Lebedeva, 2001). This work was carried out within the bounds of a project known as “The continuity and variability of basic values in Russian culture”, and also as a part of another project called “Sociocultural factors of economic development” (HSE, 2009). The description of the complete version of the questionnaire is given in the book ”Culture as a Factor of Cultural Progress (Lebedeva and Tatarko, 2009). The validation of this version of the Schwartz Survey was carried out through partial adaptation: A double translation of items and comparison of translations. By agreement with Schwartz, the final Russian version of the survey has been put together (Lebedeva, 2001). See the psychometric properties of the ten scales below. Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) is pointed out next to each scale: Power ($\alpha = 0.70$), Conformity ($\alpha = 0.61$), Benevolence ($\alpha = 0.68$), Security ($\alpha = 0.64$), Tradition ($\alpha = 0.66$), Universalism ($\alpha = 0.66$), Self-Direction ($\alpha = 0.66$), Stimulation ($\alpha = 0.70$), Hedonism ($\alpha = 0.52$), Achievement ($\alpha = 0.65$).

Method of cognitive interviewing:

One of the main goals of cognitive interviewing is determining the extent to which the meaning of the questions as written by the researcher is consistent with the way respondents interpret them. This is accomplished through testing and evaluating the quality of the question with special cognitive techniques: “Thinking-aloud”, paraphrasing, sorting, confidence judgment, and verbal probing. A more detailed description of the method, its theoretical foundations, applied techniques, requirements, and procedures for sample size can be found in relevant literature (Willis, 1994, 2005; Hak, Kees van der Veer, Jansen, 2008; Blair, Conrad, Ackermann, Claxton, 2006; Tourangeau, 1984; Pruefer, 2011; Rogozin, 2002).

This study employed the following cognitive interviewing techniques:

1) “Thinking-aloud” as the subject answers each survey question. In cases where the participants did not give comments to any of the survey items, the researcher did not try to elicit comments, since the procedure of completing the survey had to be as authentic as possible. If the respondent did not agree with the description of a word or a phrase, then he or she was asked to try to formulate their version of understanding or interpretation.

We have chosen this technique, because, on the one hand, thanks “thinking-aloud” we can get a lot of information about how participants understand questions, what problems occurred, and what may be a reason for this. However, on the other hand, the subject’s verbalization is guided only minimally, and respondents may provide information that is unanticipated by the interviewer.

2) “Verbal probing” consists of probing further into the basis of one’s understanding of the research question as a whole or individual terms (comprehension or interpretation probe). For example, “What does the term ‘devout’ mean to you?”, “How do you interpret the phrase ‘world of beauty’?”, and “Does your understanding correspond to the description in the brackets?”, or “Are all the main points mentioned in the interpretation?” This technique was also important for us because in the SVS many values are formulated through concepts or word combinations, suggesting that meaning can be understood in different ways.

Verbal probing also consists of category-selection probing, which is the question of why respondents choose this particular category of response. It has to be mentioned that during the interview there was almost no need for category-selection probing since all the information related to this could be obtained from the “thinking-aloud” protocols.

Of the two general approaches to probing – either after each item or after filling out the entire survey – we decided to choose concurrent probing. We have chosen this variant because the questionnaire was quite long, and by concurrent probing the information under question is still fresh in the subject’s mind at the time of probing. By retrospective probing, there is then a significant danger that subjects may no longer remember what they were thinking as they answered a question.

When analyzing data from a cognitive interview, both the issues identified by individual participants and the dominant “prevailing” tendencies manifesting themselves during the interviews are regarded as problems. In this paper, we focus on the description of the dominant trends in the responses of the subjects, as our task is to identify those problems in the survey that may be more likely to affect data quality. Unfortunately, the article format does not allow us to present the detailed results revealing a respondent’s understanding of each survey item in the form of detailed descriptions of the values that are useful for interpreting the data of large studies.

The procedure for the study:

Before conducting interviews, we obtained the consent of the participants to audiotape the interviews, guaranteeing their confidentiality and the use of interview transcript for research purposes only. Respondents were also informed that the conversation purpose is to validate a value survey. Next, the interview procedure was presented in detail to each participant:

- Introducing the questionnaire’s instructions and clarifying rules for filling out the forms;
- Completing the first part of the questionnaire, during which the respondent is requested to try to verbalize their thoughts while answering to the questions (“thinking-aloud”);

- In the process of filling out the forms, the researcher may ask additional questions for each item of the survey (“probing”);
- The second part of the survey is completed according to the same pattern;
- Upon the completion of the questionnaire, respondents can leave additional comments and views on the survey in terms of what was clear and what was not, what made it difficult or easy to complete, etc.

In the second part of our article we used the method of Multidimensional scaling to obtain quantitative data. The description of this data analysis is given in the section entitled “What does MDS tell us?”

Results and Discussion

This study identified some problems that the survey questions posed for respondents in terms of understanding and evaluating. One part of the problems related to the translation of the survey into Russian, while another part related to value-content and value-description interpretations by the Russian-speaking respondents. The identified problems in understanding the questionnaire items influenced the selection of scores by the respondents. In situations when an interpretation by the respondents did not coincide with the intended content, participants either graded their own understanding with high scores, evaluated the given statement with low scores, or put 2 different scores – one for their own interpretation and a separate one for the description provided in the survey. For example, in cases where the name and/or definition of the value were not clear to the respondents, rare words were used, or it was unclear what was meant by a particular value, the participants acted by rating their “misunderstanding”. Or, if the name of the value was unclear but the description in the brackets was more understandable, then a score was sometimes given only to the description given in the brackets. Also, respondents sometimes rated based on the relation they established between the value that was not very clear and another item from the list of values, which influenced the selection of scores.

Thus, it is clear that the problem of understanding the language describing the values affects the process of completing the survey and the selection of scores. In order to be able to carry out a quantitative analysis of the scores obtained through survey completion, we need to examine which of the survey items are the most problematic for the respondents in terms of understanding and then, perhaps, make some adjustments, or at least take into account the difficulties while conducting further research and interpretation of results.

Results of the analysis of understanding the SVS value names and definitions by subject

As criteria for indicating that the understanding of a survey item was problematic for the subjects, we looked at situations where two or more of the samples expressed disagreement with the wording of a value (see Table. 2).

Table 2. SVS values and difficulties of respondents in understanding them

10 broad values	
Security: - <u>social order</u> ** - <u>reciprocation of favors</u> ** - national security* - family security* - clean*	Self-Direction: - <u>creativity</u> ** - freedom* - independent* - curious* - choosing own goals*

Table 2. SVS values and difficulties of respondents in understanding them (continuation)

Conformity: - <u>obedience</u> ** - politeness* - self-discipline* - honors the parents and the elderly*	Stimulation: - <u>daring</u> ** - exciting life - a varied life
Tradition: - <u>humble</u> ** - <u>accepting my portion in life</u> ** - <u>devout</u> ** - respect for traditions* - moderate*	Hedonism: - <u>pleasure</u> ** - <u>enjoys life</u> ** - self-indulgent*
Benevolence: - <u>responsible</u> ** - honest* - loyal* - helpful* - forgiving*	Achievement: - <u>ambitious</u> ** - influential* - capable* - successful*

Universalism: - <u>unity with the nature</u> ** - <u>wisdom</u> ** - <u>social justice</u> ** - <u>broad-minded</u> ** - equality* - a world at peace* - world of beauty* - protects the environment*	Power: - <u>authority</u> ** - social power* - wealth* - preserving my public image*
Independent items:	
- <u>a sense of belonging</u> ** - <u>meaning in life</u> ** - <u>mature love</u> ** - inner harmony* - spiritual life* - self respect*	- social recognition* - true friendship* - healthy* - intelligent* - privacy*

Note: The degree of understanding difficulty:

****High** - understanding was problematic for half or more than half of the respondents.

***Low** - difficulties in understanding in less than half of the respondents.

Values of Conservation

Security:

The majority of respondents (70%) offered their own definition for the value “social order (stability of society)”. However, this value was understood in different ways, which is reflected in the fact that the participants chose very different criteria. Predominating were the criteria of “objective” character, when “social order” was interpreted as the existence and implementation of laws and norms in society, as well as absence of disorder and crime. Perhaps this diversity of opinion on “social order” is due to the fact that this topic is rather painful in our society, and sometimes provokes strong emotional reactions in people. Perhaps a more detailed wording in the description would contribute to a better and more unified understanding of this value.

“Reciprocation of favors (a desire not to feel indebted)”. A total of 65% of the participants expressed an understanding of the given value in a way that strongly differed from the survey’s definition. For the respondents, the value represented not “a desire to not feel indebted”, but a willingness to give something to other people without expecting anything in return, as well as providing mutual support and mutual assistance and a simple desire to help

others. In addition, it is important to note that the phrase “reciprocation of favors” was difficult to understand.

Conformity:

“Obedience (fulfilling obligations and being aware of one’s duty)”. Most respondents (70%) understood the value “obedience” in a different way, and the given wording was perceived as characteristics of a responsible person. An obedient man was understood by participants as a person obeying superiors without question, listening to someone, complying with the rules, obliging, and diligence. The reported problems related to the very title of the value. The word “obedient” was taken with a negative shade, which prevented respondents from giving a higher score to this value.

Tradition:

“Humble (temperate, preferring to stay in the shade)”. More than half of the participants (60%) did not agree with the survey’s description, especially with “preferring to stay in the shade”. In general, the given definition provoked, in their view, a negative attitude towards this value, whereas in fact “humility“ itself is perceived positively. The understanding of “humility“ by the participants differed from the meaning specified in the description, while at the same time the description criteria were diverse: A shy person who avoids public appearance or who is reserved; a person that does something not to be praised by others; understanding of humility as politeness and tact; a person realistically assessing oneself or one’s abilities and who knows his or her own worth; one who takes life as it is; a person without unrealistic demands; a temperate individual who knows how to behave appropriately in different situations.

“Accepting my lot in life (taking life as it is)”. About half of all participants expressed a negative attitude to the very name of the value – “accepting one’s lot in life“. This wording was regarded as pretentious and indicative of a person’s passivity, viewing oneself as a victim, and complaining about one’s life. At the same time, the phrase “taking life as it is” was consistent with the respondents’ notion of the value. For them, it meant a realistic view of life, satisfaction with one’s life, and, at the same time, the ability to change it and to strive for something.

“Devout (observing religious beliefs)”. In discussing the given item, it is important to note that the word “devout” is unfamiliar to people, and they often do not know its exact meaning (55%). Some of the participants perceived the word “devout” somewhat differently, not so much associated with religion, as it was given in the description. They interpreted the word more widely as following norms, rules of morality, principles, beliefs, and even as wisdom and understanding of life. Thus, if in this item the main emphasis is on the observance of religious beliefs, then the word “believer” or some analogues would be more understandable to people.

However, if a broader context is to be meant, it is desirable to find a more understandable and a more frequently used word to refer to this value.

Values of Self-Trancendence

Benevolence:

“Responsible (trustworthy, reliable)”. Many respondents (60%) felt that part of the definition – specifically being “trustworthy” – does not quite characterize a responsible person. Most participants viewed a “responsible” person as a person one can rely on, a person who keeps his or her word, who fulfills obligations, and who takes responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

There were no problems with the understanding of the value “honest”. As for the other three items – “loyal”, “helping others”, and “forgiving” – although most respondents agreed with the definitions of these values, most of the participants provided a broader interpretation of these items in describing their understanding of their meaning. For example, the value “loyal (faithful to his friends or group)” is understood not only as being loyal to friends and the group, but also being true to one’s family, words, and convictions. The value “helping others (benefit other people)” from the perspective of the participants was not only limited to the sense of benefiting and included caring for others, protecting, and compromising. In connection with the value “forgiving (ready to forgive the mistakes of others)”, respondents expressed two repeated ideas: a person should not only be ready to forgive the mistakes of others, but, crucially, also to recognize their own mistakes.

Universalism:

“Unity with the nature (‘dissolving’ into nature, harmony with it)”. The part of this definition about dissolution into nature seemed to be rather controversial and caused confusion or flat-out disagreement in a rather large number of the respondents. The most common option (45%) was to understand “unity with nature” as a respectful and caring attitude towards nature or regular interaction with it (outdoor recreation, etc.).

“Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)”:

More than half of the subjects (65%) did not agree with the definition of wisdom as “a mature understanding of life”, as this description not only failed to clarify the meaning of the word for them, but also made it more confusing. It is traditionally associated with age, but the respondents themselves did not relate to the notion of age while interpreting wisdom, assuming that children may also be wise, etc. Respondents described wisdom as the accumulation of life experience, the ability to understand the position of other people and look at the situation from

different points of view, the ability to see what others do not see, the ability to admit mistakes and to forgive the mistakes of others, and the ability to foresee the consequences of their actions.

“Social Justice (elimination of injustice, care for the weak)”:

Several major trends of understanding this value were identified. The one that was the most represented among respondents (70%) consisted in considering “social justice” in terms of equal rights and equal opportunities for all people, when merit and effort serve as the basis for a person achieving something, and when everything complies with the rules in a community. In addition, for some people “caring for the weak” was also included in the concept of social justice, but for others it was not. The second approach, which was less represented (20%), in contrast, regarded social justice primarily as a concern for the weak and the needy. It is worth mentioning that 25% of respondents noted that for them the value “social justice” intersected with the value “equality”, while some even regarded them as the same thing and believed that one of these values can be removed from the list all together.

“Broad-minded (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)”:

70% of the participants did not agree with the wording. The definition of “tolerant of different ideas and beliefs” was interpreted as a description of a tolerant and forbearing person. A broad-minded person was understood by the participants as one who can look at something from different points of view and who can listen to other people’s opinions. It is also an individual with vast knowledge in various fields, open-minded, able to go beyond the established limits, and find new solutions.

Openness to Change values

Self-Direction:

“Creativity (uniqueness, imagination)”. Most respondents (65%) did not agree with the description of creativity through uniqueness. “Creativity” was firstly perceived by them as a process of creating something, self-expression, or embodiment of some thoughts. Creativity may manifest itself not only in art, but also in any other thing (in a game, in creating a garden, etc.). Imagination in their understanding was also included in the concept of “creativity”.

Stimulation:

“Daring (looking for adventure, not afraid to take risks)”. More than half of the participants (60%) agreed with only half of the definition of the value “daring”: “Not afraid to take risks” disclosed to them the meaning of this item, while “looking for adventure” seemed quite inappropriate. A daring person in the view of respondents can take risks, if necessary, for

the sake of something important (friends, saving someone's life, defending their beliefs), and he or she will overcome difficulties if they arise.

The values "exciting life" and "a varied life" were clear to the respondents. It is important to emphasize that, despite the overall absence of understanding problems with each of these two values, 65% of participants believed that the values "exciting life" and "a varied life" constituted the same thing and did not see any difference between them.

Self-Enhancement values

Hedonism:

"Pleasure (satisfaction of desires)". More than half of all participants (65%) understood "pleasure" to mean a wider range of things than was set by the definition. In their view, a person can get pleasure in life not only from the satisfaction of desires (primary needs), but from a lot of different things: work, hobbies, etc. For many, "pleasure" even involves place spiritual satisfaction first and foremost.

"Enjoys life (enjoys food, sex, entertainment, etc.)". 65% of participants perceived "enjoying life" not in the way it was set by the definition, but rather more broadly, as in the case with the value "fun". It might refer to joy from totally different things: activity, work, family, sharing joy with another person, communication, friendship, reading, etc.

Achievement:

"Ambitious (working hard to succeed)". More than half of the respondents (60%) believed that an ambitious person does not necessarily work hard. Rather, an ambitious person is one who strives for success and social recognition and is ready to get results at any cost. An ambitious person is associated with a careerist, and so on. It is also important to note that some people (2 people, to be exact) had difficulty with understanding the word "ambitious" and were not sure that they understood its precise meaning.

In an explanatory dictionary of modern Russian language, "ambitious" means tending towards ambition. "Ambition" is understood as a desire for fame, honor, or wanting an honorable position (Ozhegov S.I.).

Power:

"Authority (the right to lead and give directions)". Most of the participants (75%) completely disagreed with the definition of "authority" as the right to lead and give orders, considering it rather as a characteristic of power. "Authority", in the understanding of the respondents, is respect and recognition from others; recognition of the competence of a person in

any area; or “informal leadership”, when people appreciate the opinions of a particular person and are drawn to him by some of his or her personal qualities.

The independent items that are not included as part of the 10 motivational types (groups of values)

“A sense of belonging (feeling that others care about me)”. The majority of the respondents (60%) perceived this value and its definition as quite different in meaning. Actually, “a sense of belonging” for them meant belonging to a certain group, such as a professional community, a nation, etc. The definition was interpreted by the participants as “care” from other people, understanding, acceptance, and empathy.

“Meaning in life (having life goals)”. Exactly half of all the participants agreed that “meaning in life” meant having life goals, while for the other half it constituted only a small part of the content of this value and not the most significant. For them, “meaning in life” stood for a deeper philosophical understanding of why a person lives, what their role is in the world and in life, and an awareness of their “mission” (30%). For a small number of people (10%), “meaning in life” implied having a worldview or principles on which one relies on.

“Mature love (deep emotional and spiritual intimacy)”. Many participants (55%) expressed surprise seeing the phrase “mature love” because the word “mature” in this context does not help one to understand the value, but instead makes it more complicated. And although more than half of the respondents agreed with the definition of the item, the interpretations of its meaning were extremely diverse and difficult to classify. Perhaps this is due to a very general formulation for this value, resulting in a more individualistic interpretation of the meaning behind it.

Understanding of the wording of the value “private life (the individual’s right to their own space)” did not pose problems for most participants. However, for almost all of them “privacy” implied not merely a person’s right to own private space, but a much wider range of rights: The right to their own space and territory (home), the right to non-interference from other people, and the right guaranteeing a person the opportunity to do what he or she wants.

Thus, the study identified those survey items that caused difficulties in understanding (or interpretations that are different from the set of definitions) for a large number of respondents, affecting their ratings of these values. On the one hand, based on the identified problems, adjustments can be made in the Russian version of the survey with the consent of the author (S.

Schwartz). On the other hand, the data can be taken into account when applying the current version of the Russian-language Value Survey.

In addition, the results of our study revealed not only problems with understanding the individual items of the value survey, but also more common problems that also affected the completion of the survey by respondents.

The general problems of the methodology identified in the study include the following.

The previous section described the study results that related to problems associated with the respondents' understanding of the names and descriptions of 57 values presented in the survey. However, it appeared that the problems in the process of filling out the survey may relate not only to difficulties in understanding the description of specific values, but also to causes of a more general nature.

A general problem was found in that items are perceived as not anchoring with each other (as concepts of different levels). The problem manifested itself in many ways. For example, it is difficult to evaluate some of the items because they are not perceived as values – they are either difficult to be perceived as values or they are perceived as needs (2 people). Also, some values are regarded as more “global”, while some are considered as being more “personal, internal”, which also makes their evaluation difficult (2 people). Some values are perceived as more “scientific”, and some as more “ordinary” (1 person). Finally, values are regarded as incomparable – as concepts of different levels (3 people).

Thus, this problem was stated by 8 out of 20 respondents, representing 40% of all participants. In connection with this problem – the difficulty of anchoring the items – there is a risk that respondents will evaluate each item not according to its significance in a series of other values, but as a separate value. Or perhaps respondents may put lower scores to some values, as was stated by some participants. This risk is increased by the fact that this survey is used in studies as a self-completion survey, without the presence of an interviewer.

Problems with understanding the instructions of the method (what to rate) are as follows.

While completing the survey, the respondents had some questions about the instructions.

1) “Should the respondent rate how he or she wants to be, or how something is actually arranged in his or her life?” Two respondents posed this question directly to the interviewer. Some others did not ask about this, but it was obvious from their responses that they rate the same values on two different grounds: On how he or she wants to be or on how something is actually arranged in his or her life.

2) “Should the respondents evaluate themselves or others?” Thus, either an individual values something or values being something, or he or she believes that other people should value something or being something. Seven respondents posed this question directly to the interviewer. Others did not asked about this, but it was obvious from their responses, that they rate the same values on different grounds: Some of them evaluated themselves, while some evaluated others.

Thus, a serious issue was identified relating to the fact that the respondents did not know what to rate at each point. First, the extent to which this or that value is currently, in fact, being implemented in their life, or the way they would like it to be. Second, to evaluate themselves or others, i.e. consider the importance of each value as a quality important in itself, or as a quality which the respondent wants to see in others. In fact, the second aspect of this problem occurs much more frequently than the first. Some of the participants raised these issues directly, while others approached the rating one way or the other, without discussing this with the interviewer. As a result, the content behind the scores that were given on various grounds will vary widely, and it will be incorrect to compare these data with each other. Of course, it is important for any survey that study participants clearly understand what they are required to evaluate. Perhaps this problem can be solved through a more precise formulation of these aspects in the instructions.

What does MDS tell us?

The results of this qualitative analysis can be used for a better understanding of quantitative data. The value survey has been repeatedly used in studies with large samples in Russia, such as the data obtained in a study by the International Scientific Educational Laboratory of Socio-Cultural Research at HSE in 2010 (Fig. 3). The sample size was 1,723 people from 3 age groups (15-25, 26-39, 40-74) and various levels of education.

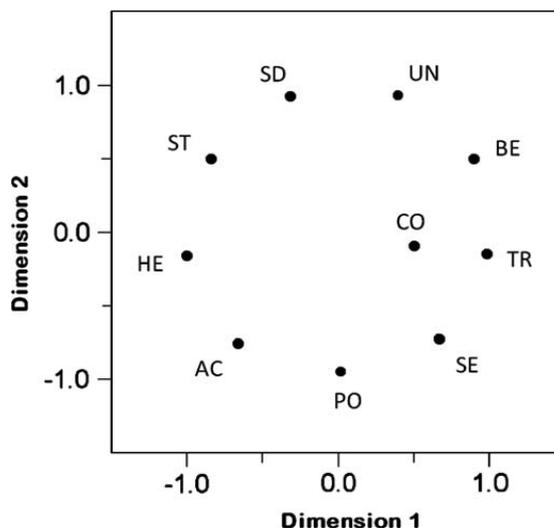
Data analysis. The structural analyses of the data values were accomplished with PROXSCAL (with z-transformation), a Multidimensional Scaling Analyses program (MDS) in SPSS 19.0. A more detailed description of this method (MDS) can be found in appropriate literature (Borg I. and Groenen P., 1997).

MDS is used for visual assessment of value structures and shows relations among items, based on similarities in how respondents rate them (correlations). This technique represents the values as points in multidimensional space such that the distances between the points reflect the empirical relations among values as measured by the correlation between their ratings of importance. The greater the conceptual similarity between two values, the more related they should be empirically, and hence the closer their locations should be in the multidimensional space.

Schwartz's theoretical model implies a circular, quasi-circumplex in which each orientation is close to (correlates positively with) those with which it is compatible, and distant from (correlates negatively with) those with which it conflicts. The *a priori* assignment of items to values guides the partitioning of the maps.

Figure 1 presents a theorized quasi-circumplex model (Cieciuch a Schwartz, 2012). The 10 values are represented in 9 sectors, with 1 sector divided into inner (conformity) and outer (tradition) subsectors. Following Bilsky et al (2011), Schwarz spaced the nine values equally around the circle because the theory specifies no particular spacing. Each of the nine sectors covers an angle of 40 degrees, enabling one to calculate theory-based coordinates for the items at index each value.

Figure 1. Location of values according to a design matrix in two-dimensional multidimensional scaling (Bilsky, Janik, and Schwartz, 2011). UN=universalism; BE=benevolence; TR=tradition; CO=conformity; SC= security; PO = power; AC = achievement; HE = hedonism; ST = stimulation; SD = self-direction.



MDS has been used to analyze SVS data (Fontaine, Poortinga, Delbeke, and Schwartz, 2008; Schwartz, 1994, 2006), as has CFA (Schwartz and Boehnke, 2004). These studies lead to the conclusion that MDS analyses generally confirm a circular structure. In addition, visual inspection of the two-dimensional MDS space usually suggests that 10 values can be distinguished (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. MDS: Individual-level Value Structure averaged across 68 countries.

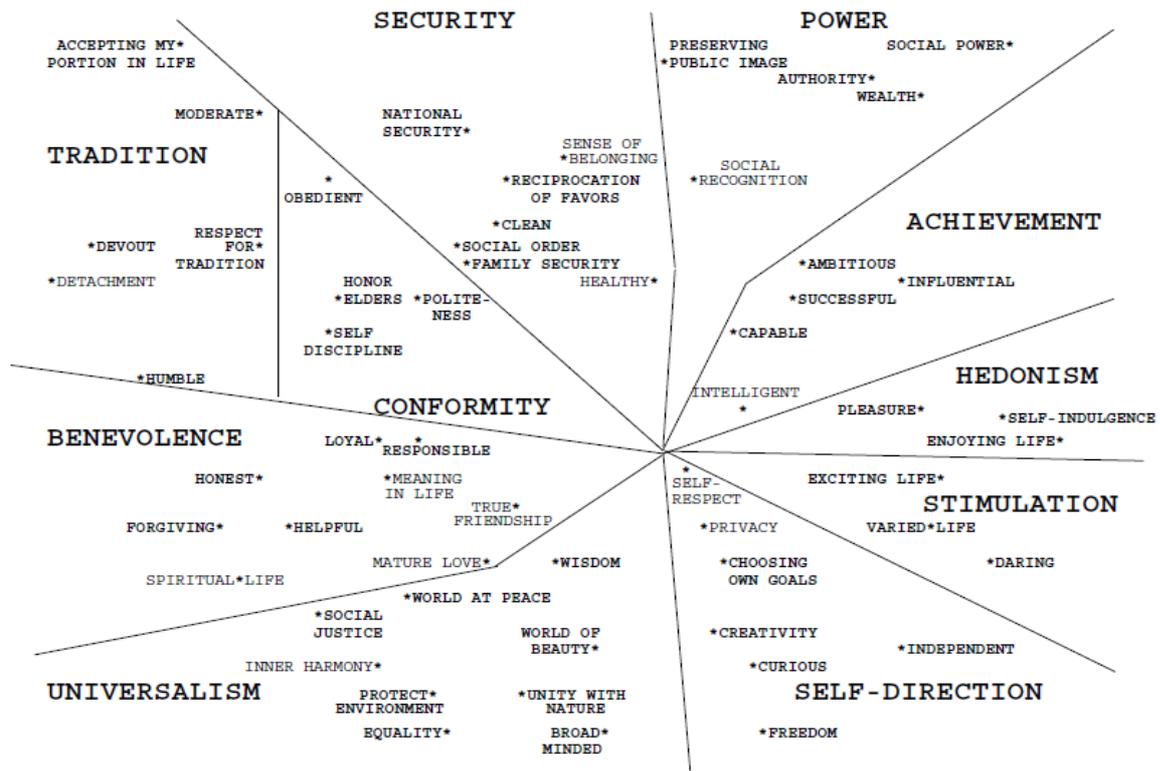
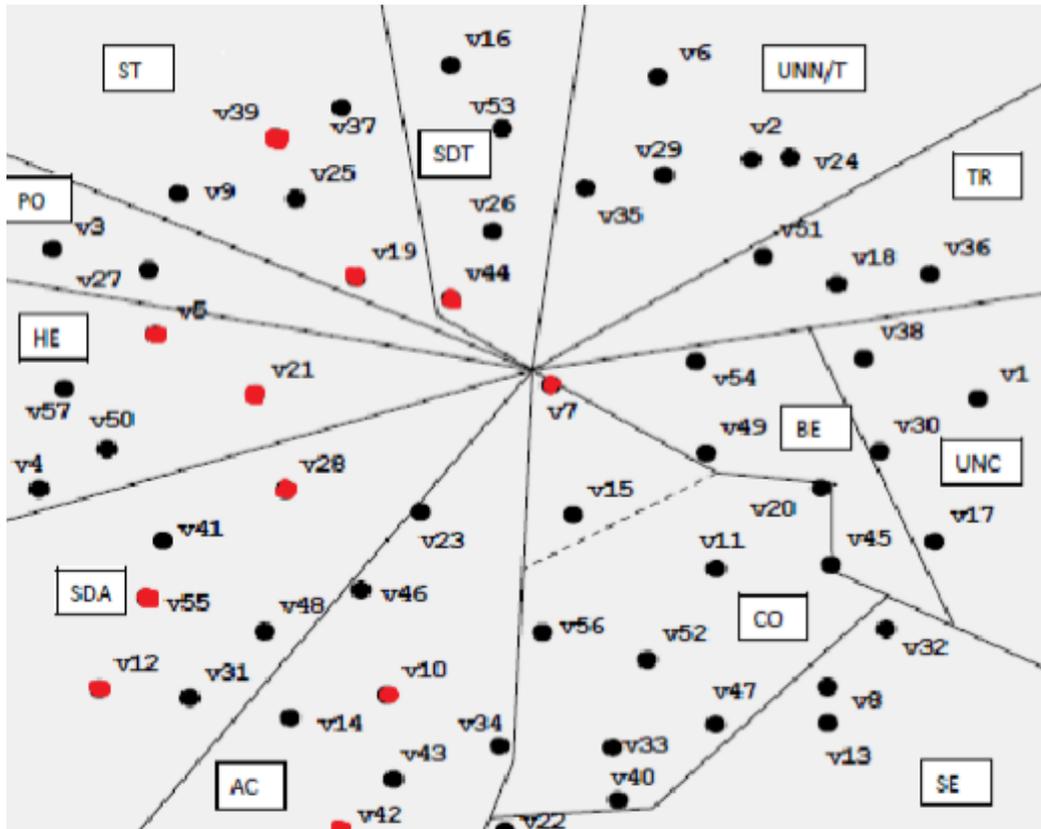


Figure 3 presents a two-dimensional projection of the value items from the SVS (for a Russian sample, 2010). The method of MDS revealed the layout peculiarities of a number of values that differ from their usual positioning in Schwartz’s model. Perhaps some of these will be easier understood in light of the data on how respondents understand certain values.

Figure 3. Multidimensional scaling, Russian sample (2010)



N=1,203. Stress 1 .37, DAF .86, TCC .93 2 Dim Torgerson: poor fit.

SDT – self-direction, thoughts; UNN/T – universalism nature/tolerance; TR – tradition; BE – benevolence; UNC – universalism care; CO – conformity; SE – security; AC – achievement; SDA – self-direction, actions; HE – hedonism; PO – power; ST – stimulation.

First, the obtained data revealed that some of the points (5, 7, 10, 12, 19, 21, 28, 39, 42, 44, 55) were located not in their usual places in the model. Interestingly, four of them, according to our data, fell into the list of values that were interpreted in a way that differed from the survey intent. These were the following items: “sense of belonging” (v7), “taking one’s lot in life” (v44), “mature love” (v19), and “meaning in life” (v10). For example, it can be noticed that, though the value “taking one’s lot in life” is usually among the values in the group “Tradition”, in this case it was closer to the values of the block “Self-Regulation” (together with the values “inquisitive” and “creativity”). Here, it should be mentioned that the interpretation of the value “accepting one’s lot in life” by the respondents is, in fact, closer to “Self-Regulation” as the respondents perceived as a value its description (“accept life as it is”) and not its name, and understood it not as passive acceptance of one’s life, in this sense close to the values of tradition, but as a realistic view of life, satisfaction with their lives, and, at the same time, the ability to change it and to strive for something.

The other two values – “freedom” (v5) and “private life” (v21) – were unexpectedly found to be close to the values of “hedonism”. On the one hand, these two values did not generally pose problems of understanding to the participants of our research. On the other hand, it is important to note that the values that belong to “hedonism” were interpreted in a way quite different from the one specified in the survey. Thus, “pleasure” and “enjoying life” were considered by the participants not as meeting primary needs, but much broader – as getting pleasure and joy from a large variety of things: Communication, family, friendship, work, hobbies, etc. That is, for many it included in the first place spiritual satisfaction. In this sense, we can see that both “freedom” and “private life” are close to this unit. “Private life” was interpreted not only as the right to one’s own space, but as a wider range of rights: The right to one’s own space and time, the right to non-interference from other people, and the right guaranteeing the opportunity to do what one wants. That is, a person is free in his or her choice of what to devote his or her time to and in how to receive joy in life. This interpretation of “private life” is close to the understanding of the value “freedom”.

Another pair of values – “wealth” (v12) and “success” (v55) – were located not among the values of “power” and “achievement”, but close to the values of “self-regulation”, specifically near the points “independent” and “successful”. In this case, we can note that in interpreting the values of “independent”, some of the participants mentioned the importance of such aspects as material or financial independence (20%). It can also be mentioned that such items as “successful”, i.e. a person who achieved something in life, and “determining life goals”, interpreted by most respondents as the ability to independently set and achieve their goals, appeared to be close to each other in their content.

In examining the location of the item “meaning in life” (v10), we noticed that it unexpectedly appeared among the values of the “achievement” block. However, according to many respondents (45%) the description of “meaning in life” through the phrase “having goals in life” was incorrect, and they offered their own versions. In this situation, the respondents chose what to evaluate – their understanding or the description given, while often choosing the latter. Then, if we consider “meaning in life” through the given definition as “having goals in life”, it is not surprising that this item appeared in the “achievement” block next to the values “ambitious” and “capable”, since these sub-items are also associated with the ability to successfully achieve one’s goals. Thus, this analysis showed that a different interpretation by respondents of a value affects its location in the structure of values.

Of course, the mentioned assumptions are only an attempt to explain some of the survey results. However, it is evident that the conduct of a qualitative analysis of the survey is

meaningful not only for making some adjustments to the methodology itself if necessary, but also for better understanding the data obtained using it.

Conclusions

1) As a result of the qualitative evaluation of Schwartz's value survey, we identified the survey items that did not cause any issues with understanding in the respondents as well as the items which were found to be difficult to rate due to problems with their understanding.

Difficulties in understanding the values and their descriptions related to translation issues, namely with words rarely used in the language or words substantially differing in meaning, especially when the description of the value that was originally designed to facilitate an understanding of the value's meaning did not fit as a description of the given item in the respondent's view. In some cases there were issues with the name of the value itself and not only with its interpretation. These difficulties had an impact on the process of selecting points.

2) Additionally, our study identified some problems of a more general nature related to the survey instructions. In the study, the participants encountered two major issues related to a) evaluating the real or the desired state of affairs (a person evaluates the way he or she wants to be, or how things actually are in his or her life); and, b) assessing oneself or other people (either an individual values something or values being something, or he or she believes that other people should value something or being something). The current wording of the instructions does not cover these issues and reads as follows: "While giving answers to this survey, you should ask yourself: Which values are more important to me as the fundamental principles of my life, and which are less important?"

3) The qualitative data are applicable for interpreting and understanding the quantitative data, as was demonstrated by MDS analysis: it was possible to find explanations of the positions of individual items in the overall structure of values that were not typical of the author's model.

4) The results show the importance of using cognitive interviewing for an analysis of survey instruments. In the future, it may be useful not only for analyzing the problem points in the results, but also for describing statistical data (Latcheva, 2011).

Recommendations

The findings of this study allow us to formulate some recommendations that should be considered when interpreting the results of the Russian-version of the survey:

1) It is recommended to take into account both which survey items are more reliable in terms of respondents understanding them in a similar way and agreeing with the meaning of these values, and which items are more problematic.

2) Since the study revealed difficulties in understanding instructions for the procedure, it is recommended to provide the respondents with a more detailed explanation of the task (either oral or written), thereby avoiding potential difficulties in completing the survey.

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