

Chapter #3

PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

Comparative study of Russia and Japan

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ABSTRACT

Because of the increasing flow of information in modern society, perceptions of personal time are changing. Psychological time becomes the universal aspect of life that allows marking changes in personality in the era of globalization. The purpose of this study is to identify similarities and differences of subjective (psychological) time in two countries Russia and Japan, which are quite different on the political, economic, and cultural levels. The theoretical basis of the study is the model of time perception, according to T. Nestik (2016). According to this model, cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components of psychological time are studied among the students of regional universities in Russia and Japan (N=593). The results revealed differences in all components of psychological time. However, the impact of globalization is noticeable in such aspects as the desire to avoid uncertainty and willingness to live the moment. The results of the study can be used in advising students on their future professional choices as well as on how to live a psychologically healthy life in modern society.

Keywords: psychological time, Russia, Japan, future, past positive.

1. INTRODUCTION

Time has always been and remains one of the most mysterious phenomena. Although the resilience of the characteristics of objective, subjective, or psychological time is experienced very differently in various cultures and situations. The study of the psychological time of a person becomes especially important in the so-called era of globalization. The extensive use of Internet technologies has completely changed the perception of time and attitudes towards it. Today the emphasis on universal acceleration prevails in social and cultural theory (Weissman, 2019). This new temporality is described as the temporality of "immediacy, instantaneity, simultaneity, timelessness, chronoscopy or network time" (Weissman, 2019, p. 12). This time is also referred to as "iTime," and is described as manic, intrusive, heavily compressed, and carrying a heavy burden on the individual (Agger, 2011).

Because of the inflation of traditional values, the openness of social systems, unification of forms relations, and behavior under the influence of globalization, modern societies face certain mobility of perception and attitude toward time. Time and its subjective perception become a marker that highlights the trends of the global society: acceleration of the pace of life, erasure of the boundaries of the personal and professional sphere, and a permanent deficit of time as a life resource (Zabelina, Smirnov, & Chestyunina, 2016). In this regard, the study of psychological time in the conditions of globalization becomes more and more significant in terms of human wellbeing in modern society.

In particular, the research on the subjective (psychological) time of young generations of various countries is relevant, because young people are involved in globalization faster and more actively. At the same time, the more different cultural patterns of social communities, the more significant the evidence of globalization trends will be. That is why, for this study, we chose two countries with different, largely contrasting cultures - Japan and Russia. The aim of this study is to identify similarities and differences in the subjective (psychological) time of young people in these countries.

2. BACKGROUND

Psychological time has a wide definition. In this study, it is defined as "a perception and experience of the objective time of one's life, representations of time, caused both by personal experience of individual and group life, and by learned social, historical and cultural experience, awareness of time, personal attitude to time, psychological organization and regulation of lifetime" (Kovalev, 1988, p. 217). Psychological time also incorporates the past, present, and future of the ethnos, the state, and humanity to the extent that a particular person accommodates the national and universal culture in his consciousness (Mukhina, 2007).

One of the first attempts to develop the structure of the psychological time of a person was made by K.A. Abulkhanova and her colleagues. They advanced and proved the hypothesis of the three-component structure of the personal organization of time: 1) awareness of time; 2) emotional experience of time; 3) practical organization of time or organization of activity time (Abulhanova & Berezina, 2001, p. 19). Awareness of time consists of a set of time values, a generalized reflection of the mode of action in time, and the result of an activity. The component of emotional experience is represented by personal and situational anxiety that affects the speed and errors in an activity. Personal organizational strategies of dealing with time reflect the content of the third component – the organization of time of activity (Abulhanova & Berezina, 2001).

In many ways, a similar but more detailed model of the attitude towards time was later suggested by T.A. Nestik (2015). This model explains the structure of psychological time, both on an individual and group (social) level. This model includes four components of the relation to time. The value and motivational component include the subjective importance of time as an irreplaceable resource. The cognitive component is illustrated by time perspective, temporal aspects of identity, etc. Affective component reflects emotional relation to time, and behavioral one describes preferred methods of time organization (Nestik, 2015, p.100). In the present study, this model was taken as a conceptual theoretical basis.

Modern researchers agree that time in the perception of an individual may differ significantly from objectively existing (historical), by taking a subjective (personal, social) character. The social nature of time perceived by an individual is largely determined by the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the society of which he is a part. The basis for human perception of time seems to be laid in childhood, during the process of acquiring cultural values and, especially, through language acquisition. Some researchers believe that the attitude towards time developed in different cultures reflects the values of human existence (Boroditsky, 2015). On the other hand, cultural characteristics of perception of time are formed historically, during everyday activities, and depend on the type of occupation, beliefs, geographical characteristics of the area, experience of interaction with nature, etc.

The cultural markers that characterize psychological time in Japan are considered by researchers to be complex attitudes toward time such as "forever now" focusing on the present moment (a set of all possibilities in a single moment), fatalism, monochronicity, adherence to rituals (appropriateness) in the transition from one phase to another, and uncertainty and uncontrollability of the future (Iskabulova, 2018; Parieva, 2017). The peculiarities of psychological time in Russia can be considered as linear perception, fractionality and individualization of events, polychrony (existence in several chronotopes simultaneously), utilitarian attitude towards time, and orientation to the future (Zabelina, 2018).

3. METHOD AND SAMPLE

The theoretical model was verified in the study of students from regional Russian and Japanese universities. The sample included 593 people: 293 students aged from 18 up to 23 years from Russia, 75 males, 218 females, and 279 students from Japan, aged from 18 up to 24 years, 121 males and 158 females. All the students study in full-time faculties of humanities.

Inventory of Time Value as an Economic Resource by Usunier (Nestik, 2015) was used to explore the content of the value and motivational component of psychological time. To study the cognitive component of psychological time, the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (Mitina & Sircova, 2008) was used. In order to identify the content of the affective component of psychological time, Attitudes towards Time (Nuttin, 2004) was used. This technique is based on a semantic differential, allowing us to study emotional attitude to the past, present, and future. Inventory of Polychronic Values (Bluedorn, adapted by Nestik, 2015) was used to study the content of the behavioral component of psychological time.

The signs of globalization were not the subject of special study. We consider them as a given reality, as a social background in which young people are immersed, regardless of their location.

Before the main study, the techniques were translated from Russian into Japanese (direct and reverse translation), and all necessary validation procedures were performed. The forms of the questionnaires were presented to the respondents in hand copy. The data were processed using SPSS 24.0. statistical package. For the comparative analysis, the Mann-Whitney U criterion was used.

4. RESULTS

The results of the comparative analysis revealed differences in all components of psychological time. The results of the comparison of the cognitive component of psychological time are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Results of comparative analysis of a cognitive component of psychological time for Russians and Japanese.

	Mean rank		U	p
	Russians	Japanese		
Past Negative	262.53	344.08	34130	0.000
Present Hedonistic	279.37	781.50	38878.5	0.000
Future	303.82	308.79	45775.5	0.729
Past Positive	335.92	281.36	38234.5	0.000
Present Fatalistic	277.16	331.57	38256	0.000

The results show that Japanese students are more involved in the past, both positive and negative. They are more attentive to their experience, perceive joyful and sad events emotionally. At the same time, they are more focused on the present, on getting positive emotions from current events, to live the very moment fully. Furthermore, Japanese students more share the belief that what happens to them in the present is predetermined and does not depend on their efforts. At the same time, there were no differences in perception of the future: students, regardless of their cultural affiliation, worry about their future, make plans, seek to introduce certainty into them, and make their future more understandable.

The analysis of the differences in the affective component of psychological time showed that Japanese students as a whole are more restrained in positive emotions when assessing their time. Russian students, on the contrary, are more optimistic in regards to the past, present, and future (Table 2).

Table 2.
Results of comparative analysis of an affective component of psychological time for Russians and Japanese.

	Mean rank		U	p
	Russians	Japanese		
Attitude toward the past	254,33	364,32	31408.5	0.000
Attitude toward the present	279,02	342,33	38667	0.000
Attitude toward the future	236,03	380,63	26026.5	0.000

Japanese students assess their past, present, and future more neutrally: time appears as emotionally balanced (causing neither pleasant feelings nor unpleasant ones), quite eventful, passing at an average pace (neither quickly nor slowly). It is moderately difficult, moderately successful, and moderately interesting. For the Russian sample, the sense of personal control over the past, present, and future is more typical. They perceive their time as more meaningful, active, belonging to themselves. For the Japanese sample, on the contrary, such control is less expressed. In their minds, time is less meaningful, more passive, and refers, first of all, not to an individual, but to a certain social space.

The behavioral component of psychological time showed significant differences either. Russian students are more prone to the polychromic way of life than the Japanese ($U = 42940$; $p = 0.013$). If Russians are used to doing several things at the same time, pay attention to many things in one stage, the Japanese prefer to finish one task before taking on another.

The value and motivational component of psychological time also showed some differences ($U = 40766.5$; $p = 0.001$). Russian students more accurately determine the value of time as an economic resource, easily translate time into money, can count the cost of their time. For Japanese students, time is not linked so tough with money. For example, they are calmer about standing in line (a waste of time) because it is a part of the public rules.

5. DISCUSSION

The observed differences of psychological time in Japan and Russia, on the one hand, confirm the available data on the relationship between psychological time and culture (Graham, 1981; Hall & Hall, 1990; Levine, 1997; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997; Vale, Flynn, & Kendal, 2012), and on the other, clarify these data in the light of the processes of globalization.

Peculiarities of time perspective of the Japanese demonstrate the manifestations of perception of time due to culture. For example, for Japanese, time acts as a certain force which is not controlled by a person, and which subordinates a person to its will 時はすべてのものを貪り食う – «time devours everything» (Parieva, 2017). Moreover, one can observe such feature of the Japanese attitude as a focus on the present moment which is much more important, than the past or the future 昨日は今日の昔 "yesterday is the past of today." (Smirnov & Smirnova, 2019).

E. Iskagulova (2018) stresses the importance of the past for the Japanese. The existence here and now owes above all to the past, the history, and the experience of previous generations. In particular, in Japanese national self-awareness, linguistic analysis traces the treatment of the past as something sacral. In Japanese culture, a person is a debtor of the past, and every day the contact with other people increases his debt in the present (Iskagulova, 2018).

The results of the study indicate that culture continues to play an important differentiating role in the world, despite the processes of globalization. However, the impact of globalization is noticeable in such aspects as the desire to avoid uncertainty, the desire to live the moment. The results of the study can be used in advising students on professional choices, psychologically healthy lives in modern society.

6. CONCLUSION

This research enriches science with new empirical data on the features of the psychological time of an individual in a global society. The hypothesis about the similarity in the perception of psychological time in Russia and Japan has not been confirmed. Most probably, culture is that powerful factor which opposes globalization.

On the basis of the findings, we can offer a number of recommendations for parents, teachers, and psychologists in the field of education. In the context of increased polychronicity of the modern global world, it is necessary for the youth to develop the skills to understand and structure the events of their lives. It would be a good habit to occasionally "rethink" the value of specific events and set priorities between them. It is

important to teach young people how to use personal resources to the fullest extent in the events of the present, so that they would not be passive observers of events, but would participate creatively in their implementation. Before planning the future, young people need to deal with their past. It is important to reflect on past events from the perspective of what they provide for personal development. Young people need to develop a sense of gratitude for the past and the value of their experience as a resource for success in the future.

Cultural differences of perception and attitude to time as the most profound and basic ideas about the world could be a potential barrier to intercultural communication. It is necessary to take into account the differences in psychological time when building relations between countries.

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