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MODERN UNIVERSITY YOUTH: KEY FACTORS OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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The paper addresses the issue of university students' personal and professional development, focusing on identifying its key factors from the cross-cultural perspective. Three major dimensions are supposed to be taken into account for exploring the interplay between personal and environmental aspects when analyzing the problem in question, namely culture-specific value orientations, self-determination and personal readiness for activity. The dimensions mentioned can be viewed as basic criteria to evaluate possible trajectories of university students' personal and professional development. The paper presents a cross-cultural study aiming at a complex analysis of university students' cultural values characterizing socio-economic and cultural aspects of their environments, their self-determination as a factor of one's own activity and parameters of their psychological system of activity viewed in terms of one's personal readiness for activity. The total sample (N=613) was made up of university students from Russia (Saint-Petersburg, Tomsk and Irkutsk), N=318, and Kazakhstan (Karaganda), N=295. The research tools involved a number of questionnaires aimed at evaluating cultural dimensions (G. Hofstede; R. Inglehart), self-determination in terms of one's needs for

relatedness, competence and autonomy (K. Sheldon, J. Hilpert), achievement and affiliation scales (D. Jackson) and one's personal readiness for activity (self-organization of activity (E. Mandrikova), systemic reflection (D. Leontiev), satisfaction with life (E. Diener)). The data collected were statistically treated by means of descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study findings showed a number of statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) differences between the subsamples (university students from Russia and Kazakhstan). For example, there was a difference in some cultural values, namely long-term orientation (G. Hofstede's measure) and traditional values (R. Inglehart's measure). In addition, there were between-group differences in purposefulness, achievement and affiliation. The study outcomes can contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between culture-specific personal and environmental factors of university students' personal and professional development to enhance their personal readiness for activity via adequate psychological support programs in higher educational settings. The study was conducted within the research project (18-013-00781) supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research