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**SOCIAL STATUS AND BELONGING TO THE SUBCULTURE IN A
STRANGER'S IMAGE STRUCTURE**

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Abstract

Social status is a cumulative characteristic of a person, reflecting a certain set of features by which a person is evaluated in order to determine his position in the society or subculture. The identification of the place of the social status in the structure of a stranger's image, as well as the analysis of significant elements for this phenomenon can allow to establish the components of the world's picture, which reveals a number of its features both at the individual level and at the level of social processes. In the present study (n=101) the correlations between estimates of the perceived social status and socio-economic status in society were revealed, including the structure of the components of a stranger's image associated with the attributed social status. People were found to be able to determine the social status of an unfamiliar individual with high accuracy, and connections were found between estimated social status and a number of attributed personal traits. A stranger's image is determined by a number of personal traits (commitment, confidence, wastefulness and others), which are associated with the person's social status. In further studies, it is necessary to establish what is primary - the assessment of objective indicators and personal traits, and after this process the social status's attribution occurs, or giving personal characteristics occurs after determining the social status based on the analysis of the specific manifestations (income, profession, education, etc.).

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1. Introduction

The study of the structure and hierarchical organization of the society and subculture is an important area in various fields of scientific knowledge: sociology, psychology, anthropology and others. Subculture is understood as some independent part in society; it determines a set of psychological manifestations and behavioral patterns, influences the lifestyle, sets norms and values for its members (Mudrik, 2000). At the same time, this phenomenon is characterized by features observed in large social groups: specific value orientations, rules for building relationships, status structure, language, lifestyle and others (Mosienko, 2011).

2. Problem Statement

Social status is an important component of the image of another person, which is attributed during perception process (Andreeva, 2008; Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2016a). This indicator is a cumulative characteristic that includes various manifestations (Nayebi & Abdollahyan, 2006). It is noted that these elements are a set of objective qualities that determine the position of a person in a large or small group, and which, in turn, are evaluated by other people, it leads to the appearance of a subjective component in this phenomenon (Andreeva, 2008).

Different sets and combinations of significant attributes are distinguished in a number of approaches: prestige, education, income, wealth, profession and other (Diligenskiy, 1996; Giddens, 2005; Radaev & Shkaratan, 1995). However, these concepts, are developed within the framework of sociological science, and they are used for building the structure of the society on objective assessment in order to create a hierarchical model of society. The subject of the perception may not use these categories in the process of forming a person's image. At the same time, psychologists emphasize the fact that the social status is assessed in the acquaintance situation and it is taken into consideration when a person chooses a strategy of interaction with others (Aronson, 1998; Ridgeway, 1987; Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006).

Further, Johnson (2013) notes that the components relevant to assessing social status are a reflection of value elements of the modern society's worldview or the subcultures. Accordingly, the analysis of significant components for social status attribution can reveal such elements for modern Russian society.

So there is a need, on the one hand, to check the conformity of an objective assessment of the social status and the perceived position of a person in society; on the other hand, it is important to identify the components associated with this indicator in the process of forming a stranger's image. In the previous stages of the study, the features significant both for the youth subculture and for wider social groups were established (Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2016b). In the described study, an attempt is made to identify categories, which are associated with the process of a stranger's image forming and determining his social status.

3. Research Questions

In this study we try to verify next hypotheses:

3.1. A stranger's estimated social status is significantly associated with his socio-economic status indicator.

3.2. Characteristics of social status in a stranger's image indirectly correlate with his perceived social status.

3.3. A number of categories which were identified as important for determining social status on the previous stages of the research, has no correlation with the attributed status and other important components.

3.4. Personality traits of the perceived person have significant relationship with the estimated social status as well as the objective (sociological) characteristics.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between the assessment of perceived social status and socio-economic status in society, as well as to determine the structure of the components of a stranger's image associated with his attributed status.

5. Research Methods

Videos were used as the stimulus material, they were selected at the previous stages of the study using the method of expert assessments (Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2016b). Speakers differed in the following parameters: age (young; older generation); gender (male, female); socio-economic status (low, average, high). The social status of speakers was initially assessed on the basis of criteria used in sociological research (position, income, education, marital status, etc.) (Giddens, 2005), 24 videos were selected at this stage. Further, information on all indicators was provided to experts in order to determine the social status of participants. Experts were specialists in the field of psychology (two experts - phd, senior researchers), a specialist in sociology (PhD, researcher), a specialist in Economics (PhD, researcher). A total of 12 videos were selected.

The Respondent was offered to view three videos, he answered questions about the speaker after each video of the study: to assume his age, professional area and social status, as well as to assess the person on a number of scales. The scales were based on the results of the previous stages of the study. Thus, a set of components was identified using various methodological tools, these components are spread among the youth subculture and are associated with the social status of the perceived person. During the interview (n=15) the main interpretations of this phenomenon by young people were revealed, as well as the categories that are evaluated as significant for its definition (Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2016b). The main components of the images of representatives of different statuses were identified by the author's questionnaire (n=141), we evaluated images of typical representatives of each status (n=70) and individual representatives using the modified Kuhn-McPartland method (modification of Bogomolova (1991)), which allowed us to identify common trends for the definition of this phenomenon (Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2016b). Further, the model of social representations among the youth subculture (n=122) about the social status was constructed; the categories having special value for this phenomenon were

defined (Fedotova, 2015). Finally, the essay method (n=50) revealed images of typical representatives of different statuses, as well as significant elements for them (Folomeeva & Fedotova, 2018).

Accordingly, it was found that the most important elements of the status are: education, income and abundance, availability of work, attitude to money (economy, wastefulness). At the same time, there were a number of categories that characterize different qualities of personality or external manifestations: purposefulness, mind, confidence, strength, education, interest in various fields of knowledge, emotional state (sad, cheerful) and others. In addition, some categories dealt with the aggregate assessment of the achievements of the individual: success and peculiarity (or ordinariness). This set of indicators was taken as a basis for the questionnaire.

It is important to note that the respondents gave these categories in different modalities for representatives of different statuses. Thus, the low status was attributed to the negative pole of these categories (not purposefulness, laziness, lack of work and others), in turn, a high-status individual, on the contrary, was described in a positive way. For the study, only those scales were selected which were mentioned with a high frequency for two or more statuses, including with different modalities (hardworking-lazy; silly-smart and others). A total of 15 scales were selected, which were arranged in pairs on a scale of 5 points. In order to control the effect of material presentation we varied sequence of videos, scales, their poles, as well as the order of the first three questions (age, professional field and social status). Finally, in order to test one of the particular hypotheses about the impact of the question about the speaker's social status on his image and evaluation of the proposed categories, an additional sample (n=47) was carried out, which did not attributed social status to the speakers.

In total, the study involved 101 people aged 15 to 75 years, the average age-32.5 (sd=14.2); 21 - male, 80 - female; 71 - with higher education; 21 - receive higher education; 8 - with secondary education; representatives of various professional fields (Economics, law, sociology, psychology and others) and different cities (Nizhny Novgorod, Izhevsk, Nevel, Irkutsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg and others) took part in this study.

Spearman and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to process the data.

6. Findings

The estimated social status has a significant correlation with the socio-economic parameter of this phenomenon ($r=0.41$; $p=0.001$), which may indicate a sufficiently high accuracy of attributing a person's position in society. In addition, the data analysis did not reveal significant differences in the estimated scales between the main group of respondents who answered all the questions and the additional group of respondents who did not attribute the speaker's status. Accordingly, the data obtained can be considered reliable, not related to the research procedure.

Further, the estimated social status of high-status speakers has significant correlations with the following scales: educated ($r=0.53$; $p=0.001$), intelligent ($r=0.47$; $p=0.008$), rich ($r=0.48$; $p=0.003$), successful ($r=0.46$; $p=0.004$), happy ($r=0.41$; $p=0.01$), confident ($r=0.39$; $p=0.02$). The average status is characterized by the following relations with the scales: age ($r=0.45$; $p=0.001$), rich ($r=0.8$; $p=0.001$), confident ($r=0.55$; $p=0.001$), neat ($r=0.53$; $p=0.001$), purposeful ($r=0.68$; $p=0.001$), strong ($r=0.57$; $p=0.001$), saving ($r=0.7$; $p=0.001$), successful ($r=0.65$; $p=0.001$), unusual ($r=0.43$; $p=0.002$). Finally, the

image of low status is characterized by the following links: age ($r=0.5$; $p=0.001$), uneducated ($r=0.6$; $p=0.001$), poor ($r=0.7$; $p=0.001$), sloppy ($r=0.45$; $p=0.001$), unselfish ($r=0.37$; $p=0.008$), weak ($r=0.49$; $p=0.001$), unsuccessful ($r=0.47$; $p=0.001$), unemployed ($r=0.41$) and ill-mannered ($r=0.48$; $p=0.001$).

Especially it worth noting the scales that have meaningful relationships with only one status. For high status such connections are: "smart" and "happy"; for low – "unemployed" and "ill-mannered"; for the average – "normal". Scales "lazy/hardworking" and "indifferent/inquired" have no direct, significant connections with the assigned social status. In turn, all statuses have relationships with the categories "poor/rich" and "unsuccessful/successful".

The data verifies our fourth hypothesis that a special place is occupied by personal traits in the images of people with different social status – "happy/sad", "purposeful/not purposeful", "smart/silly", "confident/uncertain". Accordingly, it can be assumed that the position in society is determined not only by a certain set of objective characteristics, but also by a certain set of internal qualities of a person in Russian society.

The presence of correlation between the attributed average status and the category "normal" confirms our previous data, in which the image of a typical average status's representative was endowed with this characteristic, this category did not appear in the images of the representatives of other statuses.

At the same time, the free descriptions of the videos' speakers also had the high-frequency characteristics that were attributed to them. So, for high-status such characteristics were: "sociable" (17.8%), "confident" (16.8%), "kind" (9.9%), "emotional" (8.9%), "cheerful" (6.9%) and others. For low status the following qualities were: "kind" (14.8%), "uncertain" (11.8%), "modest" (6.9%), "hardworking" (6.9%) and others. Finally, the following categories were given for the average status: "purposeful" (11.8%), "uncertain" (9.8%), "confident" (9.8%), "strict" (7.9%) and others.

First of all, it is important to note the ambivalence of the people's image with average status: the categories "confident" and "uncertain" were noted in these images with the same frequency, this fact can indicate the ambiguity of perception of such people.

In addition, this characteristic "confident" ("uncertain"), which is found in all images with a high frequency, indicates the importance of this quality for the image of a stranger, while the respondents didn't give clarifying description of what is meant by this category. In our previous studies, this category also appeared in the people's images with different statuses, it characterized the non-verbal behavior (open posture, active gestures, look at the interlocutor, smile) of participants in videos.

The respondents attributed profession to the speakers: to the high-status person – an actor (15.8%), an entrepreneur (13.9%) and employment in the arts (7.9%); average status individuals – jobs in education (25.7%), a director (7.9 %) and trade-related activities (6.9%); finally, the profession of people with low status were – military (11.8%), mechanic (11.8%), security guard (9.9%), law enforcement (9.9%) and factory worker (9.9%).

Figure 1 shows a model of correlations between the characteristics of people's images with different social statuses. First of all, there are objective characteristics that have a direct connection with the estimated social status: "rich" ("poor") and "educated" ("uneducated"). In addition, social status is also associated with such qualities as: "confident", "accurate", "strong", "purposeful", "successful" and "saving". Accordingly, these data confirm our hypothesis that social status is associated not only with the

assessment of certain human achievements, but also with a number of personality traits and subjective categories. We assume that social status does not simply reflect the position of a person in society on the basis of significant indicators, but it is a complex person's property, reflecting his personal characteristics, objective achievements and external manifestations. This fact raises the need to establish how person's social status is attributed when these categories are not associated with each other.

The estimated social status is indirectly related to such characteristics as: "sad/happy" (through the category "confident"); "lazy/hardworking", "well-mannered/ill-mannered" and "smart/silly" (through the category "educated"). These categories are personal traits, which, in turn, are manifested in the education and confidence of the person. There was no correlation with the categories "age", "employed/unemployed", "ordinary/unusual" and "inquirer/indifferent". Age and employment are objective characteristics that have been attributed to low social status (for both categories) and to average status (for the category "age"). This may indicate that these elements are specific and their evaluation is carried out after the decision to exclude a person from high status.

It is important to note the category "Neat/sloppy", which is associated with the appearance of the perceived person; it has a direct relationship with the estimated status, as well as confidence and education.

The category "confident/uncertain" has the largest number of connections, this fact confirms our assumption that this characteristic is of particular importance for the process of forming the stranger's image. This quality has meaningful connections with such scales as: "successful/unsuccessful", "rich/poor", "strong/weak", "happy/sad", "purposeful/not purposeful" and "neat/sloppy". These characteristics can be those elements which are evaluated in the analysis of the person's confidence.

Thus, a correlation model of assessing a stranger's image and attributing to him social status was revealed; the key elements associated with this process were analyzed, and the categories which do not have correlations with the estimated status or have indirect links with this phenomenon were determined.

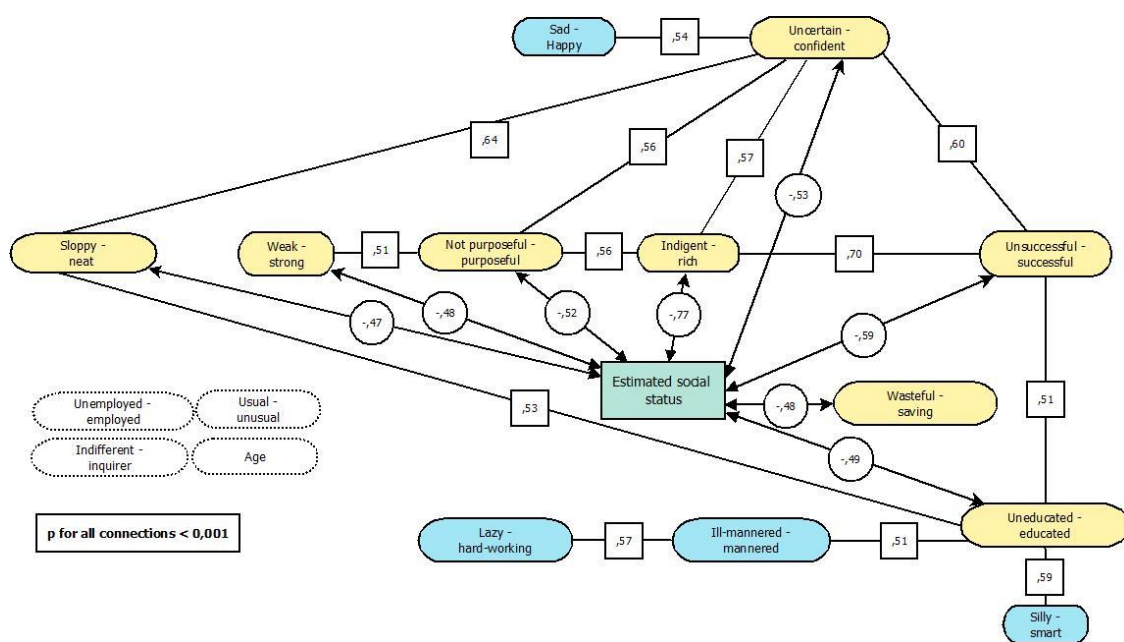


Figure 01. Model of correlations of a stranger's image components

7. Conclusion

7.1. Social status is a cumulative characteristic of a person, which is evaluated in the situation of acquaintance. People are sensitive to objective (sociological) signs of social status (income, education) and accurately determine a stranger's status.

7.2. The construction process of a stranger's image is determined by a number of personal traits (purposeful, confidence, wastefulness and others), which are associated with the attributed individual's social status. In further studies, it is necessary to establish what is primary - the assessment of objective indicators and personal traits, and after this process the social status's attribution occurs, or giving personal characteristics occurs after determining the social status based on the analysis of specific manifestations (income, profession, education, etc.).

7.3. The category "confidence" occupies an important place in the estimated stranger's social status and forming his image. This indicator can be associated with both the personality and non-verbal behavior; it becomes the central characteristic in the stranger's image.

7.4. People's images with different social statuses have special characteristics: high status – smart and happy; low – unemployed and ill-mannered; average – normal.

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