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#### SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES OF YOUTH AS A BASIS OF SOCIAL ORIENTATION

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#### *Abstract*

The paper describes the results of sociological study “Cultural and leisure interests, as well as spiritual and moral values of modern youth” conducted in Stavropol Krai in September-October, 2018. The survey of 1,231 respondents from 18 to 30 years old revealed cultural and leisure interests alongside with spiritual and moral values of modern youth. Ranking and grouping of spiritual and moral values of young people made it possible to create the models of social orientation of young people of different age groups. In terms of their content the priorities in the list of spiritual and moral values are defined differently by young people of different age groups – for 16-17-year-old the TOP-3 values include the desire to have friends (9.6 points on a scale from one to ten), respect of people (9.3 points) and openness to have a close-knit family, to raise children (9.2 points). The more senior age groups, on the contrary, put the family first whereas the desire to have good friends and benevolent relations take the second position with 9.3 and 9.3 points respectively. Third, it is important for 18-23-year-old people to gain high social status, while the 24-30-year-old ones have more realistic desire – to have interesting and exciting work. In fact, the received data is critical to develop regional and social youth policy, to define potential opportunities of education, culture, youth organizations of Stavropol Krai and the South of Russia in general.

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**Keywords:** Values, youth, social orientation, model, spiritual moral guidelines.



## 1. Introduction

Personal identity is formed in the conditions of social relations caused by the level of social development of a certain historical era. The issue of substantial understanding of spiritual and moral values of young people as a special social class plotting the vector of development for public relations in the long term seems quite relevant. Spiritual and moral values affect social reference points of young people in the present and define their social development in the future.

Spiritual and moral values form consciousness and everyday practices of social interaction among young people, which are implemented at the qualitative level of behavior. Sustainable development of the society and the associated moral and ethical patterns ranging from high technologies (genetic engineering, genetically modified products, artificial intelligence, nuclear physics, etc.) to deviant behavior of an individual young man (alcohol abuse, drug addiction, all acts of antihumanity, etc.) depend on core values of a personality formed in childhood and teenage years and fixed in social practices of the younger generation.

## 2. Problem Statement

The problem of spiritual and moral values is diversely presented in various fields of scientific knowledge: philosophy, social philosophy, sociology, pedagogics, etc.

Within the system of values, the basic values, including such values as spiritual and moral values characterizing the quality of behavior of a person according to universal spiritual, moral and ethical standards, serve a conceptual core of the consciousness of the wider population (Kosharnaya & Tolubaeva, 2013).

Scientists of the whole world pay much attention to the study of spiritual and moral values of various population groups, including the youth, which is confirmed by the review of scientific publications (Wium & Dimitrova, 2019; Chen-Bouck, Patterson, & Chen, 2019).

As an example, it is possible to give the results of the study described in the article *Developmental assets predictors of life satisfaction in adolescents* (Soares, Pais-Ribeiro, & Silva, 2019). The relation between satisfaction with life of teenagers and personal attributes of teenagers, including their values-based orientations, was analyzed. The following were defined as independent and significant determinants of satisfaction with life: good family relations, tenacity, care of people, active position in an educational organization, positive relations with adults.

Positive leisure practices and their influence on development vectors of youth are highlighted in the study *Care-experienced youth and positive development: an exploratory study into the value and use of leisure-time activities* (Quarmby, Sandford, & Pickering, 2019).

The study *Building the European identity: A look at youth attitudes and the role of education* (Viejo, Gómez-López, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2019) showed that young people are committed to democratic values, they understand cultural diversity and respect of human rights. Education is perceived as an institute ensuring the development of these values, which eventually determines the identification attributes in the social group of young people.

Thus, the issue of development and determination of spiritual and moral values of young people is relevant, multidimensional and requires thorough study (Farrugia, 2019; Sortheix, Parker, Lechner, & Schwartz, 2019).

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the study is to define the structure of spiritual and moral values and models of social orientation of modern youth within the regional context.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to specify the structure of spiritual and moral values of young people living in Stavropol Krai and to define models of social orientation within this social group of the population.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study was based on the questionnaire-based survey of the population of Stavropol Krai from 18 to 30 years old following a stratified random sampling. Types of settlements in Stavropol Krai and types of activity of the young population were the conditions of stratification. The questionnaire-based survey as a method of collecting initial sociological information based on the principles of anonymity and random sampling allowed obtaining significant information on the structure of spiritual and moral values of the young population of Stavropol Krai and defining the models of social orientation of strategically important social group of modern society – the youth.

### **6. Findings**

The questionnaire with a list of 17 spiritual and moral values was given to participants of the survey in order to assess each position by the degree of importance, using a ranking scale from one to ten, where 10 points – the most significant indicators, and 1 point – something that almost does not matter, not important. The average indicators for each position in the list were calculated: to have a close-knit family, to raise children; to have good education; to maintain honor and dignity; to live in conditions of social justice and stability; to have an opportunity to travel, to see the world; to have interesting and exciting work; to gain high social status; to have a lot of money, a car, an apartment, a summer house; to enjoy life, to experience something exciting; to have good friends, benevolent relation and mutual understanding with people; to be the leader, to be in the lead position among other people; to realize talents and potential; fit in; to deserve respect of people; to gain glory, popularity; to make a career; to have personal independence, an opportunity to act by choice.

The values-based orientations of young people were analyzed depending on the age of young people. For this purpose we used the grouping within the analysis of social and demographic characteristics of respondents (Table 01).

**Table 01.** Core values of youth depending on age groups (average score on a scale from one to ten, where 10 points – the most significant indicators, and 1 point – something that almost does not matter, not important)

No		Total	Under 17 years old	18-23 years old	24 years old and above
1	To have a close-knit family, to raise children	9.4	9.2	9.3	9.5
2	To have good education	8.7	9.0	8.6	8.7
3	To maintain honor and dignity	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.8
4	To live in conditions of social justice and stability	8.2	8.0	8.0	8.7
5	To have an opportunity to travel, to see the world	7.6	6.9	7.4	8.4
6	To have interesting and exciting work	8.9	8.5	8.8	9.3
7	To gain high social status	8.6	8.5	8.9	8.2
8	To have a lot of money, a car, an apartment, a summer house	8.5	8.8	8.5	8.3
9	To enjoy life, to experience something exciting	7.2	6.9	6.9	7.6
10	To have good friends, benevolent relation and mutual understanding with people	9.2	9.6	9.0	9.4
11	To be the leader, to be in the lead position among other people	6.9	7.1	6.7	6.9
12	To realize talents and potential	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.6
13	To fit in	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.4
14	To deserve respect of people	8.9	9.3	8.8	9.0
15	To gain glory, popularity	5.1	6.3	5.9	6.2
16	To make a career	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5
17	To have personal independence, an opportunity to act by choice	8.9	9.1	8.7	9.1

The grouping into age categories showed that there are certain distinctions due to some highlighted features. First of all, this concerns the group of young people aged under 17 years old. For them the desire to have friends (9.6 points on a scale from one to ten) is on the first place, respect of people (9.3 points) – on the second and openness to have a close-knit family and to raise children (9.2 points) – on the third. The more senior age groups, on the contrary, put the family first whereas the desire to have good friends and benevolent relations take the second position with 9.3 and 9.3 points respectively. Third, it is important for 18-23-year-old people to gain high social status, while the 24-30-year-old ones have more realistic desire – to have interesting and exciting work.

The grouping of values makes it possible to define the preferred model of social orientation typical for the younger generation, which is linked to the issues of personal identity (Table 02).

**Table 02.** Model of social orientation of young people

Ranking	Values	Points
	<b>Model of wellbeing</b>	
1	To have a close-knit family, to raise children	9.4
2	To have good friends, benevolent relation and mutual understanding with people	9.2
5	To have good education	8.7
7	To have a lot of money, a car, an apartment, a summer house	8.5
9	To live in conditions of social justice and stability	8.2
11	To enjoy life, to experience something exciting	7.2
10	To have an opportunity to travel, to see the world	7.6
	<b>Model of self-fulfillment</b>	
3	To have interesting and exciting work	8.9
4	To maintain honor and dignity	8.8
3	To have personal independence, an opportunity to act by choice	8.9
8	To realize talents and potential	8.4
	<b>Success model</b>	
3	To deserve respect of people	8.9
7	To make a career	8.5
6	To gain high social status	8.6
12	To be the leader, to be in the lead position among other people	6.9
13	To gain glory, popularity	5.1

Thus, in the system of values

- the model of self-fulfillment takes the first place,
- the model of wellbeing – the second,
- the success model – the third.

## 7. Conclusion

Summing up the results of the analysis of spiritual and moral values of modern young people based on the results of the survey in Stavropol Krai it is possible to conclude the following: in terms of their content the priorities in the list of spiritual and moral values are defined differently by young people of different age groups – for 16-17-year-old the TOP-3 values include the desire to have friends (9.6 points on a scale from one to ten), respect of people (9.3 points) and openness to have a close-knit family, to raise children (9.2 points). The more senior age groups, on the contrary, put the family first whereas the desire to have good friends and benevolent relations take the second position with 9.3 and 9.3 points respectively. Third, it is important for 18-23-year-old people to gain high social status, while the 24-30-year-old ones have more realistic desire – to have interesting and exciting work. The grouping of values makes it possible to define the preferred model of social orientation typical for the younger generation: model of self-fulfillment, model of wellbeing, success model.

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