

# Life Values of Modern Youth To the Issue of Institutionalization of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The article examines the education issues, which, as a social institution, forms the sociocultural self-determination of young people, contributes to the choice of a place in the system of social relations concerning the profession, family, moral norms, values. The purpose of the article is to consider the issues of institutionalization of education, which manifests itself in the progressive transformation of the value system of youth towards pragmatism. Based on a comparative analysis of the criteria for determining life success, life strategies and self-realization of students, it is proved that the social institution of education is a factor in the formation of the values of society, the spiritual sphere, and value components of the individual. The article provides a comparative analysis of the criteria for determining life success, life strategies and self-realization of youth. An attempt is made to prove that an essential component of training is the formation of stable skills of independent, creative activity of an individual, taking into account individual and social needs that contribute to the development of his social activity. The authors conclude that a feature of the consciousness of Russian youth is the formation of bipolar life strategies and value attitudes. In the minds of young people, success in life is associated with pragmatic interests, not social and collective ones.

**Keywords:** *Institute of education, Youth, security, Spiritual sphere, Life strategies, Values.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education, being a relatively autonomous system of social ties and interactions, still has a separate developmental trajectory in which the process of sociocultural self-determination of a young person functions, including a value orientation [1]. That is why education, as a social institution, not only ensures the development of the abilities and skills of the individual but also contributes to the choice of a potential place in the system of social relations concerning the profession, family, moral norms, values. As it is seen, at the present stage of Russian society development, the leading function of the social institution of family and education, which forms the young generation, is the function of broadcasting and disseminating culture, that is, behavioural norms at the personal and social level; practical, specialized, traditional knowledge; values of morality for youth. This is the system of values, norms, and behavioural models that mediates between generations and ensures the continuity of diverse types of social practices that allows a young person to navigate the world around him, which is also reflected in the study by I.V. Legostaeva [2].

## 2. PROBLEM FORMULATION

Sociocultural experience, enshrined in symbolic systems of interaction, is assimilated by the young generation in the process of socialization (upbringing and education), based on which individual systems of ideas about their place in society, about traditions, values, morals and norms are realized. But, generally, in the process of mastering the latter, the duality of social systems is observed. On the one hand, when entering a world where specific value components, social experience have developed, the person evaluates reality from the standpoint of established ideas about the object/objects of social reality. On the other hand, the person, introducing his vision into the object (social reality), into identifying the specific meaning that this object has for itself as a subject, is realized as a person through the act of comprehension. We also note one more important condition: education, as a social institution, is a social value that ensures the security of society through the formation of the spiritual sphere of both the individual and society, as indicated by Graham, J., Haidt, J., and Rimm-Kaufman, S.E. in work "Ideology and institution in moral education" [3]. Therefore, the importance of such elements of the spiritual sphere as values, spiritual

needs, relationships, spiritual production and consumption, varies in different cultures and naturally influence the effectiveness of the channel of social mobility - like education. This conclusion is based on the statement of P. Sorokin: "education, as a social institution, plays the role of a social sieve. Criteria for testing biological, mental, and moral qualities of a person are determined by social standards, reflecting "the degree of their relevance for the performance of certain social functions in a given culture" [4, p.250-251].

### 3. STUDY ISSUES

Let us formulate the questions: "Is there a transformation of the value system among modern youth?", "In what direction does the scale of life orientations of the young generation change?" Necessary to understand the problem of institutionalized education in the aspect of realizing its direct functions to answer these questions.

In current conditions, the value system transformation is traced, expressed in a change in the scale of life orientations towards a decrease in the importance of the social sphere and an increase in the importance of individualistic values. However, there is a positive aspect: the formation of an independent personality, actively striving for self-realization. There is also a negative moment, in particular, a person's need is being transformed not only in the desire to be necessary for people and society but also in ignoring the meaning of life in socially significant work. Unfortunately, modern domestic education has moved away from the designated positions, from the spheres of education of the spiritual component of the individual through activity, from the fundamental values of human existence - Truth, Goodness and Beauty, namely knowledge, art and morality [5, p.84, 6 p.27-31]. But the problem can be solved if education, as a social institution, is based on concepts based on "creative" components that form a creatively developed personality, its spiritual sphere.

The empirical data obtained confirm this, which speaks of the formation of consumer ideology.

Of course, social changes and crisis taking place in modern society have also affected the education process. This manifested itself in the devaluation of knowledge, a decrease in the professional and cultural level, in the reproduction of physical and spiritual forces and, as a result, unbalanced the social system. A young man, displaced from the sphere of primary production into the sphere of consumerism, occupied the social niche of a "consumer", not a "creator man", which led to negative tendencies expressed in:

a) changes in values, implying a deformation of the scale of values, the loss of moral criteria of behaviour, manifested in the strengthening of material and weakening of spiritual values. In a social, this leads to a

twofold process of spiritual production and spiritual consumption of other norms of law, morality, ethics, including labour, the strengthening of the consumer industry and the formation of a consumer mentality, with the extinction of cultural aspirations;

b) the weakening of collectivism and the growth of individualism, leading to the domination of personal interest and personal wealth over the interests of society. This confirms the change in the direction of the main vector of life attitudes: from social to the individual, which can subsequently lead to a conflict between personal and common wealth;

c) a radical change in the personal meanings of a young person, which is formed in a narrowly pragmatic educational environment, which is the reason for the loss of life-meaning and value orientations, factors for the selection of social ideals. But there is also a positive moment: economic rationalism, individualism and rivalry awaken activity, independence, expanding the boundaries of the development of abilities and creativity, contributing to the formation of personality subjectivity [7, p.105-110];

d) the formation of "specific" vital universal values among young people. Here the problem lies in the impossibility of increasing the role of the spiritual factor, its significance in extreme crises (as an example, obtaining high-quality knowledge in distance learning). It is important to remember that in conditions of uncertainty, generally, a person survives who has a formed spiritual world and persistent life orientations, who "should be focused on self-development, increasing their social status through the development of cultural achievements, the rise of spirituality, intelligence, significance in the life of society" [8, p.35]. Such a sociocultural personality type has the ability to "freely" move in many areas of the social system.

Since modern youth is in conditions of dynamism and a high level of instability of many social structures, erosion of social roles and boundaries of social statuses, it is characterized by such a stage in the development of strategic orientation when "the choice of a life strategy and its construction is realized based on a subjective reflexive position: a person's awareness of rational and irrational foundations of their own life" [9, p. 5]. In such a situation, it is appropriate to talk about the problem of institutionalizing the institution of education. To confirm our statement, we present the results of a sociological study.

### 4. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH METHODS

The article is based on a comparison of the results of a survey of young people in Smolensk, Russian Federation, "Life priorities and value components of students" (2016-2020, changes in the positions of freshmen were traced during four years of study). We

used the methods of a questioning, non-formalized, group interview. The questions of the questionnaire were developed, considering the typology of life strategies of attitudes to the systemic and life worlds: life well-being, life success and the strategy of self-realization. The first criterion refers to the cultural essence of personality strategies, the second - to the socio-organizational and the third - to the integral character [10].

The life values of student youth are analyzed in the context of the most and least important, their prioritization by years (2016, 2020). The general population is represented by student youth, of both sexes, the age criterion is 18–26 years. The region statistical data determine the sample quota. The total sample size was 820 people.

## 5. RESULTS ANALYSIS

Based on the empirical data obtained on young people's attitudes towards success in life and their views on self-realization, we present the results of a comparative analysis of studies carried out in two higher educational institutions (FSBEI HE "Smolensk State University (SmolSU)" and FSBEI HE "Smolensk State Agricultural Academy"). The percentage of the answers of students of the first and second educational institutions is presented through "/".

To the question: "Do you mean success in life in society?" - the answers were distributed as follows: a) yes, success in life is a significant value for me, and I will do a lot to achieve it - 41.4%/33.6%; b) success in life is significant, but I'm not ready to fight for it all my life - 34.7%/22.1%; c) no, success in life is not necessary to me, but I want to "live and enjoy life" - 18.2%/35.5%; d) did not think about it - 5.7%/8.8%.

The answers to the presented question correlate with the answers to the question: "Do you have life goals?" - more than half of the respondents (53.9%) of the Agricultural Academy answered that they do not have global goals that do not affect the immediate prospects, the percentage of university respondents is lower (42.7%). 39.4% of students have clear long-term goals that they want to implement, and, finally, 12.3% of respondents do not burden themselves with setting life goals, they are absent (the average percentage of student's responses from two universities).

The gradation of the goals of self-realization of students of the two universities practically coincide. Still, the life goals associated with family and parental relations among the youth of the Agricultural Academy come to the fore: "Create a family" - 23.1%/15.1%; "Becoming a good parent" - 13.3%/7.8%.

Based on empirical data, for half of the university students (52.5%), education guarantees success in life; for 1/3 of the respondents, education does not play a

significant role in achieving life success in life, but it is necessary to have it (27.1%). The data obtained indicate that a significant part of young people has chosen material well-being and enrichment as the goal and meaning of life, which forms the appropriate activity motivation that satisfies the value and life needs. The empirical data presented below confirmed our idea.

The respondents of both universities, interviewed in 2016, attributed to the most important life values: success, recognition - 68.8%/70.7%; material security - 67.5%/71.3%; work - 64.2%/48.3%; stability in society - 61.7%/59.8%; education and education - 53.3%/48.1%. To the least important: service to the Motherland, to the Fatherland - 62.1%/60.9%; love and love relationships (including sex) - 60.7%/65.1%; professional competence - 57.6%/49.2%; political events - 55.3%/51.6%; family and children - 49.3%/47.4% (see table 1).

According to some indicators, the priorities have radically changed among the young people surveyed in 2020, although some indicators remained in the same positions, in particular, the most important life values include: material security - 79.1%/83.2%; success, recognition - 72.8%/73.1%; political events - 69.0%/70.6%; stability in society - 67.9%/65.3%; work - 66.1%/39.0%; family and children - 55.5%/51.9%. To the least important: serving the Motherland, the Fatherland - 76.0%/79.5%; education and erudition - 74.4%/78.8%; professional competence - 62.5%/64.8%; love and love relationships (including sex) - 57.3%/58.0%.

One of the conclusions drawn from the analysis is that the young generation is dominated by pragmatic, personal priorities (to which attention was previously paid), but not collective, social, civil-patriotic ones.

The shift in the ranks of such indicators as political events, education and education from the most important to the least important, and vice versa, is explained by the following. The political events and reforms that have taken place in the country over the past four years directly affect the needs of young people related to stability in society, with their desire to realize themselves as a professionally active and socially demanded member of society. Young people who have different starting opportunities, double standards of values of society, and do not have stability in it, have no reason to be proud of their country. 69.6% are not sure that they will be in demand by the state after graduation, 20.3% are sure, and 10.1% consider themselves to be "superfluous people".

Another conclusion points to the concept of a "revolution of increasing expectations" [11], which is based on the assumption that any society experiencing a transition from a traditional state to a new, modern one necessarily forms a special subject-subjectivity of suddenly increased claims.

**Table 1.** Graduation of youth life values (%)

Answer options	Students (SmolSU), 2016		Students (SSAA), 2016		Students (SmolSU), 2020		Students (SSAA), 2020	
	significant	non significant	significant	non significant	significant	non significant	significant	non significant
Work (interesting, creative)	64.2	35.8	48.3	51.7	61.1	38.9	39.0	61.0
Love and love relationship (including sex)	39.3	60.7	34.9	65.1	42.7	57.3	42.0	58.0
Material security	67.5	32.5	71.3	28.7	79.1	20.9	83.2	16.8
Family, Children	50.7	49.3	52.6	47.4	55.5	44.5	51.9	48.1
Education and erudition	53.3	46.7	48.1	51.9	25.6	74.4	21.2	78.8
Success (recognition)	68.8	31.2	70.7	29.3	72.8	27.2	73.1	26.9
Professional competence	42.4	57.6	50.8	49.2	37.5	62.5	35.2	64.8
Society stability	61.7	38.3	59.8	40.2	67.9	32.1	65.3	34.7
Debt to the Motherland	37.9	62.1	39.1	60.9	34.0	76.0	20.5	79.5
Political events	44.7	55.3	48.4	51.6	69.0	31.0	70.6	29.4

Based on the empirical data obtained, we state that several urgent problems stand out among young people. The first group of problems is associated with their safety (political events and stability in society), the second - with the possibilities of self-realization, with a demanded profession and building a successful career, ensuring a decent level of personal and family well-being, and therefore, with obtaining a modern high-level education. Obviously, with the active participation of young people themselves, the identified problems can be solved. Consequently, an essential component of training is the formation of sustainable skills of independent, creative activity of the individual, considering individual and social needs. Hence, the central supporting positions in the upbringing and education of young people are freedom of choice and responsibility for it (self-determination, professionalism); freedom of expression, research, creativity.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Education, as a social institution, implements the functions of socialization and adaptation of the young generation, youth, translates values, norms and traditions, develops professional skills, mastering the rules of social self-regulation through value components, including life goals and strategies, creative potential, and civic position. The dual position of education is that, on the one hand, it is focused on the development of knowledge and skills, stimulating young people to obtain a speciality. On the

other hand, it contributes to the formation of aspirations and corresponding social positions.

The actual value component of education, as a social institution, is mainly manifested in the formation of life strategies, creative potential and citizenship of youth. The basis for building a life strategy is its self-determination, but this is connected with the problem of personal choice against the background of insufficient life experience. Empirical research data indicate that personal (pragmatic) rather than social priorities prevail when choosing a life strategy. These data confirm the validity of the concept of a "revolution of rising expectations" emerging in a transitional society.

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