

**RPTSS 2018**  
**International Conference on Research Paradigms**  
**Transformation in Social Sciences**

**IMPACT OF APPERCEPTION OF FUTURE ON SOCIAL  
CONFIDENCE OF YOUNGER GENERATION**

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***Abstract***

The article analyzes and systematizes the findings of theoretical studies on the issue of the effect of future apperception on young people's social confidence. Interpretation and operationalization of the concepts "apperception" and "social confidence" are carried out; the necessity of studying the issue of young people's perception of the future with the use of methods of sociological diagnostics is grounded. The results of experts' survey among scientists and teachers of higher educational institutions of Belgorod and officials of state youth policy bodies are presented. The authors consider that construction of confidence is possible on the basis of applying the futuroceptive approach, which assumes the diagnosis of various attitudes and behavioral characteristics of young people through the prism of young people's conscious perception of their own future. The prospect of application of the futuroceptive approach within the framework of scientific researches, both theoretical and applied, is determined by a number of actual reasons. The application of this approach will make it possible to diagnose the impact of expectations from future events on current attitudes, normative values and behavior of young people to the utmost and at the same time to determine their reverse impact on the coming future..

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**Keywords:** Sociology of youth, apperception of future, social confidence, futuroception.



## 1. Introduction

The issue of dependence of young people's social confidence on many factors including apperception of their own future up to the present has never been the subject of large-scale research in sociology. At the same time the representatives of various scientific trends have created an extensive theoretical basis for such researches.

First of all, it is necessary to mention scientific works that reveal the essence of apperception - a clear and conscious perception of socio-cultural reality by an individual on the basis of individual values and experience. Consideration of perceptions being dependent on an individual's already existing system can be found even in the works of ancient thinkers Plato and Aristotle. However, the very term "apperception" was introduced into scientific discourse only in the New Times by G.V. Leibniz who divided the process of perception into perception in general (perception) and conscious perception, a clear perception of mind (apperception). I. Kant developed the concept of apperception indicating the integrity of perception due to the unity of the "first" and "new" concepts in consciousness (transcendental apperception). Thanks to W. Wundt who combined in the understanding of apperception all three aspects: awareness of the perceived, its integrity and its dependence on previous experience, the concept has become widespread in modern works on psychology (Ozerova & Popil', 2014).

In the field of psychoanalysis, a psychodiagnostic technique has been applied for quite a long time - Thematic Apperception Test. The purpose of this technique is to study the individual's dynamic potential, ambitions and motives. Although the technique was introduced relatively long ago (developed in 1930s by G. Murray and K. Morgan) at the end of the last century and in the current century a number of foreign researchers have proposed approaches to its improvement and application in new areas of psychology researches (Serfass, 2013). Interpretation of apperception is equally important for pedagogical science. Thus, explaining the dependence of the content of a new concept on the available fund of knowledge I.F. Herbart substantiated the pedagogical doctrine of the principles and methods of acquisition of knowledge, which is reflected in the works of modern native authors (Lavrova, 2014).

In A.V. Smooth's works, apperception is considered from the perspective of the humanistic paradigm in science (Gladkij, 2014); D.V. Shlyapnikov - through the prism of way of life (Shlyapnikov, 2008). However, the term "apperception" has not been developed in the sociological literature yet. In addition, specific sociological researches devoted to the study of the dependence of visualization of the future on apperceptive filters - personality characteristics (values, norms, attitudes, abilities for self-reflection, social experience) are not available yet.

Issues related to people's perception of reality in dynamics are in the field of close attention of representatives of various sciences including foreign sociology. These studies, in the first place, deal with the aspects of socio-cultural and professional adaptation in the course of cognitive development. A number of researches are aimed at studying the phenomenon of futurephobia that is associated with the expectation of evolution of threats for human vital activities. The concept of futureshock was introduced in the 1970s by E. Tofler. F. Polak was the first to undertake the difficult conceptual endeavour of clarify the role of the image of the future in the social process (Polak, 1973). In modern conditions of significant variability and dynamism of society development, this phenomenon is actualized to an even greater degree (Heggli, Haukanes & Tjoms land, 2013).

The vision of Russian residents' future is partially studied in the context of the issues of quality of life and social well-being and young people's perception of future prospects is revealed through such concepts as "life strategies"; "life self-determination"; "life orientations"; "life perspectives" and "life's ambitions," values and frames of reference, social expectations or young people's expectations (Mihajlova, 2010, p. 46). However, the apperceptive aspect of formation of such visions remains out of view of researchers including sociologists.

According to the authors, the visions of the future largely determine social confidence - a mechanism for reducing social uncertainty. In modern science, social confidence is traditionally considered in the context of psychology and pedagogy as a characteristic of a personality, individual activity through the correlation of self-regulation and ambitions and achievements. A.N. Bulkin attempted to provide conceptual analysis of social confidence from the perspective of philosophy. The special feature of his work is consideration of the issues and prospects for implementing the principle of social confidence in management of modern society (Bulkin, 2001). The work of A.Y. Alekseeva can be singled out among the representatives of Russian sociology. It deals with the issue of distinguishing between concepts of confidence, social and interpersonal trust (Alekseeva, 2007). The above-mentioned authors are in agreement that social confidence in its structure is a multi-component socially-conditioned phenomenon requiring further study.

Modern scientists pay attention to the fact that the future is predictable, but it provides so many scenarios that the degree of uncertainty not only decrease, but it increases under the pressure of understanding to what extent stochastic, random events can affect it. However, construction of such scenarios becomes possible only with reference to interdisciplinary knowledge.

Thus, within the social and human sciences the concepts of apperception and social confidence are traditionally applied separately in psychology and pedagogy. According to the authors, disclosure of the dependence of Russian youth's social confidence on their apperception of their own future will allow one to obtain new knowledge having theoretical and applied significance for sociology.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In modern conditions young people are increasingly exposed to various external and internal factors that reduce their social confidence. The low level of young people's social confidence in turn does not allow them to have clear understanding of general specifics of social connections being analyzed, to assess the real situation quickly, to make optimal decision readily, to calculate their behavior patterns, to act flexibly and skillfully in conditions of uncertainty.

This range of problems forms incompetent behavior and has a direct impact on the development of larger negative trends such as social passivity and lack of initiative leading in turn to the absence of long-term qualitative changes in Russian society.

Nowadays the need for the development of social confidence in the youth environment is a priority area of social construction (Ivanchenko, 2015, p. 608) because, firstly, the future belongs to the generation of young people since they will reproduce the culture, its values and norms of behavior.

Secondly, most representatives of this social group are objectively experiencing a period of socialization - personality development, assimilation of knowledge, social values and norms that are

necessary for further inclusion in society. In this regard, consideration of young people's behavioral characteristics including social confidence through the prism of young people's apperception of their own future seems to be a promising trend in science. Having carried out a meaningful analysis of modern youth's apperception of their future, one can get a more objective picture of understanding a particular social problem, as well as determine the prospects for its solution.

Thirdly, young people are potentially receptive to new ideas. Being a special socio-demographic group, young people are characterized by such specific qualities as openness to changes, initiative, readiness for risk. Having inadequate life experience including negative one, young people resist innovations more rarely, it is less common for them to have stereotyped thinking or to be "overcautious" in making decisions and carrying out actions (Guzenina, Sletkov, Ivanishin & Ezhov, 2015). It is these qualities that seem necessary to solve complex, at first view unsolvable tasks.

### **3. Research Questions**

Despite the attention of science to the role of the future in the now, researchers at best are focused on the description of prospects, while the technologies and mechanisms for forming and understanding the image of the future in the Russians' minds including young people and its impact on individual characteristics of social well-being in present days remain outside the scope of ongoing researches. At the same time empirical studies make it possible to establish a direct correlation between the respondents' assessment including the young ones of their own prospects and the degree of their satisfaction with life, social confidence nowadays.

On the other hand, modern authors note that a low level of social confidence of young Russians represents an urgent issue that requires scientific understanding and making specific managerial decisions. Otherwise, there will be further development of the following negative trends in the youth environment: a sharp decline in social and economic activity of young people, production of new social anxieties and fears leading to health deterioration, demographic crisis, spread of social anomies such as alcoholism, drug addiction and so on. Consequently, it is necessary to manage the process of building social confidence in young people.

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

The main purpose of the current study is to diagnose the impact of Russian young people's apperceptive visions of their own perspectives on their social confidence. In this case the object is young people's social confidence, and the subject is dependence of the level of social confidence on young people's apperceptive perception of their own future.

### **5. Research Methods**

To verify the author's concept, it was necessary to use a set of empirical methods. Firstly, this entails an expert survey aimed at obtaining specialists' opinions about the modern youth's disposition regarding their perception of the future and determination of the current level of social confidence that is inherent in most representatives of the younger generation, as well as identification of the most significant factors that have an impact on both the social confidence level reduction and pessimistic perception of

image of the future. The criteria for selecting experts were: length of research work in youth policy, availability of scientific publications on the research problem. Thus, the composition of the expert pool of this study includes scientists working in higher education institutions, officials of youth policy authorities at different levels (the total number of experts is at least 30 people).

The main tasks of the expert survey were:

- definition of the values that underlie the modern youth's life strategies;
- clarification of the concept "social confidence";
- evaluation of the level of social confidence inherent in the majority of modern youth;
- identification of factors that affect the level of young people's social confidence and construction of their rating depending on the degree of influence;
- definition of the image of the future that is typical for the majority of young people at nowadays;
- clarification of the concept of "an adequate image of the future that stimulates social confidence" and a way of perceiving the image of the future, which young people are supposed to strive for to achieve a higher level of social confidence;
- identification of the information sources that make it possible to form an image of the future;
- revealing the degree of reflection on their future among modern youth;
- definition of the list of individual qualities necessary for an adequate perception of the image of the future;
- identification of problems that cause young people's negative perception of their own prospects;
- clarification of negative social trends caused by young people's pessimistic perception of the future.

## 6. Findings

Almost two thirds of the experts (61.91%) who participated in the survey believe that most of today's youth have more or less low level of social confidence. Nevertheless, it should be noted that 30.95% of respondents believe that the level of young people's social confidence is rather high. However, only one expert determines it unconditionally. Among the most significant factors affecting the level of young people's social confidence in modern Russian society, the experts named parents' status (61.90%) and material security of the family (54.76%).

The second group of influential factors included: peculiarity of upbringing (33.33%), acquaintances and contacts (28.57%), knowledge and skills (28.57%).

Finally, the third group of factors by degree of influence included: a level of education (19.05%), innate psychological features (19.05%), health status (11.90%).

It is also necessary to note the fourth group of conditionally powerless factors, according to the experts. It included: the level of culture of the environment (9.52%), the content of the information environment (7.14%). The factors mentioned above undoubtedly have a direct impact on the level of young people's social confidence, but indirect influence is no less significant, it is expressed in formation of certain values in young people. So, according to the experts, modern youth is obviously career-oriented (this was the answer of two thirds of the respondents - 66.67%) and focused on material wealth (59.52%). Such values as family (28.57%), independence (28.57%), hobbies (26.19%), communication (21.43%) are

ranked in a class of quite important ones by a significant margin though. Young people are even less oriented to education (16.67%), personal security (11.90%), health (11.90%). The least significant and rarely manifested values are love (7.14%), religion (2.38%), benefit to society (2.38%).

The majority of the experts (97.62%) to some extent agree with the thesis that the level of social confidence of young people depends on qualitative characteristics of the perception of the future.

Only about one in ten experts (11.90%) unconditionally agrees with the fact that modern youth is characterized by reflection on their future. However, the majority of the respondents (52.38%) still believe that young people are more likely to have the reflection on their future than lack it. 28.57% of the experts assume the presence of this reflection, but apparently as an episodic phenomenon only.

As for the image of the future, which is typical for modern youth's perception, the experts' opinions were divided as follows. Almost half of the respondents (47.62%) supported the fact that the characteristics of the image of the future is ambiguous, it has both negative and positive features. Approximately one fifth of the experts (21.43%) believe that the image of the future in young people's perception is mostly favorable, at the same time about a tenth of experts (11.90%) spoke in favor of predominance of pessimistic perception of the future among modern youth.

Undoubtedly, the pessimistic or ambiguous perception of the future is due to the presence of certain problems that are inherent in the younger generation. The experts considered the following to be the most significant ones: difficulties in finding a job (76.19%), low living standards (57.14%), poor quality of social services (33.33%) and unfavorable conditions for starting and running private businesses (30.95%). The second group of less significant but still mentioned problems includes: lack of political freedom, low level of culture of the population, spread of social anomies (16.67% each) and bad ecology (14.29%). It is necessary to note the option suggested by the experts on their own - ineffectiveness of upward mobility. According to the experts, the most frequently mentioned negative trends of modern Russian society are: a decrease in social and economic activity of the population (75%), spread of social anomies (53.13%), political apathy (40.63%). The experts classified the second cohort of negative social trends: emigration (25%), demographic crisis (21.88%), deterioration of public health (21.88%).

It is obvious that the perception of an adequate image of the future depends on certain individual qualities of young people. Among the priority qualities the experts defined the following: general education (61.90%), responsibility for their own actions (57.14%). The following characteristics are named as a little less significant: analytical skills and information culture (33.33% each), morality and practical experience (30.95% each).

It is noteworthy that most of the experts chose the option: "the vision that takes into account the most probable problems in the future, to which it is necessary to prepare" as the definition of an adequate image of the future that stimulates social confidence (45.24%).

According to the experts, the use of the following information sources should help to create an adequate image of the future: communication with friends, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues (54.76%), news sites of Internet media (52.38%), social networks (52.38%). Literature sources (38.10%), official websites of government bodies (23.81%), television (21.43%) can also influence quite significantly.

At the same time, the real hierarchy of priority information sources, which modern youth uses, is significantly different. The absolute majority of the experts (95.24%) refer to social networks as the main

source of information for young people. Communication is on the second place (54.76%) followed by news sites (35.71%). Only a small part of the respondents mentions literary sources and radio (4.76%).

Almost half of the experts (45.24%) believe that young people should strive to build a positive image of the future and pay attention to the probable benefits that it contains. Approximately every fourth expert (26.19%) spoke in favor of critical perception focusing on possible threats.

## 7. Conclusion

In order to develop social confidence, the representatives of younger generation need an integrated science-based approach. One of the key components of such activity should be purposeful work on formation of a special category of values aimed at ensuring the harmonious entry of a young person into the surrounding society and his further productive participation in social activities.

Management of social confidence formation in turn is possible on the basis of the application of the futuroceptive approach, which assumes the diagnosis of various values and behavioral characteristics of young people, in this case social confidence, through the prism of young people's conscious perception of their own future. The latter can be interpreted as futuroception (apperception of the future) - a clear and conscious perception of the predicted sociocultural reality by the individual on the basis of individual visions, experience, knowledge and skills influencing one's current and future values and orientations.

The prospect of application of the futuroceptive approach within the framework of scientific researches, both theoretical and applied, is determined by a number of actual reasons. Firstly, the application of this approach will make it possible to diagnose the impact of expectations from future events on current attitudes, normative values and behavior of young people to the utmost and at the same time to determine their reverse impact on the coming future.

Secondly, the futuroceptive approach can later be used to diagnose the situation among other social groups in order to, for example, clarify their social well-being and to determine the prospects for the further development of Russian society. The results of such studies can be used in constructing social forecasts with different horizon depths including strategizing socio-economic development.

Thirdly, the need for the application of the futuroceptive approach is determined by the high rates of scientific and technological development and, consequently, by intensive and profound penetration of information and communication technologies into social environment, which transforms it radically within a short time. This process can be designated by the conditional term "the future is already today".

Fourthly, taking into account the interdisciplinary scientific and theoretical basis, the proposed approach can become a fundamental basis for the development of new scientific and theoretical concepts in sociology and in combination with sociological research methods - in related scientific fields.

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