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**SATISFACTION WITH LIFE OF RURAL YOUTH IN WESTERN
SIBERIAN REGION OF RUSSIA**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the satisfaction of the economically active group of rural youth (age category is 23 - 35 years) in various aspects of life. The paper analyzes the results of the sociological study implemented within the framework of the comprehensive study of rural areas in Tyumen region. A feature of the structure of satisfaction of the group under consideration is revealed. Secondary data analysis is used, during which the results of the study are compared with the satisfaction the Russian youth and the Russians in general. The comparison shows that in almost all aspects rural youth satisfaction is higher than that of Russians as a whole. If one compares the rural youth of the Tyumen region with the Russian youth, it can be noted that the differences are less significant and are in the higher satisfaction of the villagers with economic, as well as partly recreational and aesthetic aspects. Socio-demographic and geographical factors which affect the satisfaction with various aspects of respondents' lives are revealed. It is shown that respondents' satisfaction is not affected by gender and age with rare exception. The authors make the conclusion about the heterogeneity of modern rural youth as a social group, which requires a special approach when implementing state policy affecting its interests.

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Keywords: Rural youth, sociological research, satisfaction with life, hierarchy of needs, social well-being.



1. Introduction

As a large socio-demographic group, young people have a number of characteristics. On the one hand, young people are characterized by a high level of mobility, intellectual activity and good health, which distinguishes them from other members of society. On the other hand, the new generation faces many difficulties: it overcomes the obstacles associated with socialization, integration into the economic, political and socio-cultural space. It is at this age that a person has to make a family, solve material and housing problems, get education, adapt to the realities of independent life. There is a stage when it is necessary to be responsible not only for themselves, but also for close people. This makes the youth socially vulnerable in comparison with other population groups and requires close attention to it from the base institutions. Accumulating the transformations that take place in public life, young people can be considered as an indicator of the current state of society.

2. Problem Statement

Sociology of youth in Russia is one of the central places in human sciences. The problems of rural youth were studied both in the sociology of youth, and in the sociology of the village. The greatest attention was paid to young villagers in the Soviet period of the country's history. There was even a socio-political magazine "Rural Youth", which was issued by the publishing house "Young Guard" from 1935 to 2000.

The accumulated knowledge, public recognition of a number of scientific schools, the formation of a professional community contributed to the study of many aspects related to the life of this group (Zubok & Chuprov, 2008). At the same time, the problems of certain categories, in particular, rural youth, remain insufficiently disclosed. Some researchers even point out that the study of this territorially demographic group "did not have a systemic character and did not take into account a number of immanent characteristics inherent in it" for a long time. As a consequence of this, it resulted in "methodological and methodological errors in the characterization of the problems of young people, both at the theoretical and practical levels, admitted because of the mechanical transfer of regularities, typologies, processes of certain categories of youth to its other detachments, groups and cohorts" (Chigrin & Chigrina, 2014).

In the post-Soviet period, the interest reduced and the rhetoric of most of the publications which the author had to face came to describing the numerous problems of young villagers and their consequences: migration to cities, deteriorating quality of life, alcoholism, etc. The brief review of contemporary works on the subject conducted by the author showed that today the nature of publications has not changed significantly (Ivanova, 2013).

Meanwhile, in recent years the situation in the countryside has changed. There is a noticeable restructuring of the agricultural sector; the state pays more attention to the agro-industrial complex, especially in the light of the sanctions policy conducted towards Russia on the international arena. So, in 2016 a record harvest of grain amounting to 117 million tons was collected in the country. Agricultural production is becoming a high-tech industry, where advanced production and management technologies are introduced. These processes and phenomena qualitatively change the face of the modern village and

the young people who inhabit it. Taking into consideration modern realities, a problem associated with the need of studying modern Russian rural youth arises.

3. Research Questions

Today, it is quite difficult to single out a group that could be uniquely ranked among young peasants. The processes of urbanization, suburbanization and urbanization blur the line between city and countryside, and the mass character of higher education "draws out" young people for several years, turning villagers into "half-dwellers". The development of transport infrastructure that promotes mobility also influences this process - today it is no longer surprising that young people go to the city for shopping or spending leisure time. The spreading and improving of the quality of telecommunications services in rural areas contribute to information saturation. The rural downshifting is gaining popularity (an example of reverse migration), when the membership of rural youth is undergoing qualitative changes (Ovechkina, 2013). How do young villagers feel in the changing conditions? Are there any transformations in their attitude and value orientations? How do young people adapt to the changes? Are there any differences in different types of rural settlements? To answer these questions, the authors initiated and carried out a sociological research.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study was to study the satisfaction of young people with various aspects of their lives. Satisfaction as a social characteristic is a part of a number of important integral indicators capable of assessing the influence of societal conditions and changes in the life of the country (Andreenkov, 2010). Such indicators are, for example, "subjective well-being", which is defined as "a broad category of phenomena which are the emotional reaction of people, their satisfaction with certain spheres of life and their judgments about the quality of life as well" (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999) or "social well-being". And practically all existing approaches to its definition are realized through the concept of satisfaction (Krupec, 2003).

5. Research Methods

Over the past several years, the council of municipal entities of Tyumen region, with the participation of the author, has been carrying out a complex interdisciplinary study of rural municipalities in Tyumen region. In the summer of 2016, another stage including a sociological research of rural youth was realized. The research was carried out by the survey method. The quota type of the sample implying a purposeful proportional allocation in a selective set of groups possessing key differentiating features characteristic of the general population was used. Such signs were: gender, age, and also the type of rural settlement.

Here it is necessary to make a little explanation. The data obtained at the previous stages of the above-mentioned comprehensive study have led to creating a center-peripheral structure of the region settlements. The results showed that the level of socio-economic well-being of municipalities is not the same and depends on a number of factors, primarily geographic (Sheludkov, Rasskazov, & Farakhudinov

2016). So, the social and economic development of the municipal formation, and, accordingly, the standard of living of its population, depend significantly on the location of the key "nodes". These include cities, highways, large enterprises, etc. As a result, the authors have identified several types of settlements, which will be discussed in more detail below. At the planning stage of the survey, the authors tried to cover maximum of all the selected types with the help of the sample.

As a result, residents of 6 districts (14 rural settlements), of all types were interviewed. The volume of the sample was 892 people. The ratio of respondents by sex was 41.8% (men) to 58.2% (women). The age of respondents was 23-35 years old (an economically active group). The structure and volume of the sample correspond to the requirements for the quality of the quota sample with the existing volume of the general population and the key differentiating features. Data processing and analysis were carried out in the statistical package SPSS.

6. Findings

In the process of formulating the block of questions that allows respondents to assess satisfaction with various aspects of life, it was decided to use the findings of the "Levada Center" in the "Courier" monitoring project. In future, this allowed the authors to compare the results obtained with the all-Russian data.

The full distribution of answers throughout the block of the indicated questions is presented in Table 1. The data show that modern rural youth, for the most part, is satisfied with almost all aspects of their life. The lowest level of satisfaction is related to the material situation, and the highest one – with the range of communication and relationships in the family.

Among other features of the presented frequency table, one can note a high percentage of those who found it difficult to answer the questions related to work activity. This is explained by the choice of this option by those who did not have a job at the time of the survey.

Table 01. (Satisfaction with different aspects of life of respondents)

	Completely satisfied	Rather satisfied	Rather not satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Difficult to answer
1. Relationships in your family	52.1	35.0	6.2	2.8	3.9
2. The state of your health	30.8	48.3	14.7	2.6	3.6
3. The circle of your communication (friends, neighbors, acquaintances, colleagues)	45.5	43.7	5.7	1.3	3.8
4. The position that you occupy in society	37.9	42.2	10.7	2.8	6.5
5. Your work as a whole	32.8	36.8	14.6	4.8	11.0
6. Relationships at work	33.9	38.2	12.3	3.7	11.9
7. The education you received	37.8	36.7	14.4	4.6	6.5
8. The way you spend your free time	39.1	39.0	13.3	2.6	6.1
9. The financial situation of your family	23.6	38.0	22.0	10.8	5.6
10. The way your family is fed	42.2	36.1	13.4	3.1	5.2
11. Housing conditions of your family	35.6	35.6	16.8	7.0	5.1
12. The state of the environment where you live	36.6	40.7	12.6	5.0	5.2
13. Your life as a whole	40.7	42.0	8.8	2.4	6.2

Having grouped together the variants of answers with positive ("completely satisfied" and "rather satisfied") and negative ("rather unsatisfied" and "not at all satisfied") values and presenting them by way of decreasing, one can notice an interesting feature. The positions in society are grouped according to the spheres of life of the respondents. Thus, aspects of life, which expressed the respondents' satisfaction to the greatest extent (80% - 89.1%), can be relatively attributed to social ones (1). This is a circle of communication, relationships in the family, life in general, ranks in society as well. The sphere of life associated with basic physiological (2) needs (satisfaction with "health" and "nutrition") takes the second place in the rating presented. The third most popular group can be designated as recreational-aesthetic (3). It includes the satisfaction with spending free time and the environment. And, finally, the fourth group, connected with the economic (4) aspects of the life of young villagers, includes satisfaction with education, work relationships, housing conditions, work as a whole, material situation.



Figure 01. (Ranking and grouping of satisfaction with different aspects of life of respondents)

To interpret the results, the authors turned to a secondary analysis of the data. It made it possible to compare their results with the data of the survey conducted using the all-Russian sample. The source of the secondary data was the "Courier 2013-1" database. This is a repeated study carried out by the ANO Levada Center in January 2013 using a nationwide sample (N = 1601). The database in the SPSS format was downloaded from the EESP. For the reasons mentioned above, the compared variables were completely comparable.

The comparison was carried out both with data for the entire sample, and separately for young respondents (23-35 years). As a result, the table was formed (Table 2).

Table 02. (Comparison of satisfaction with different aspects of life of rural youth, the Russian youth and the Russians)

Aspects		Rural youth	Russian youth		Russians	
1	The circle of your communication	89,2	89,4	≈	93,2	≈
	Relationships in your family	87,1	88,4	≈	92,8	≈
	Your life as a whole	82,7	69,1	↓	76,3	≈
	The position that you occupy in society	80,1	70,2	↓	77,5	≈
2	The state of your health	79,1	65,6	↓	90,4	↑
	The way your family is fed	78,3	65,8	↓	73,1	↓
3	The way you spend your free time	78,1	66,3	↓	78,3	≈
	The state of the environment where you live	77,3	50,9	↓	52,2	↓
4	The education you received	74,5	71,7	≈	71,9	≈
	Relationships at work	72,1	58,4	↓	66,7	≈
	Housing conditions of your family	71,2	57,8	↓	51,4	↓
	Your work as a whole	69,6	51,4	↓	59,8	↓
	The financial situation of your family	61,6	38,2	↓	45,8	↓

Considering the results, it is important to bear in mind that the compared studies were conducted with the 3-year difference. During this period (2013 - 2016), many events took place both on the external and internal political arena. This could affect both the structure of satisfaction of the Russians and the degree of their satisfaction with certain aspects of life.

From the table shown, it is clear that the order of the allocated blocks is similar. The basic needs related to economic well-being are satisfied much less than social needs. The exception is the fact that there are above-mentioned "state of the environment", "health status", which varies in groups, as well as "education", the satisfaction of which within the all-Russian sample is significantly higher than within each of the youth samples (although the values for all compared groups are approximately the same). Thus, one can state that the structure of satisfaction among rural youth is identical not only to the Russian youth, but also to the Russians in general.

Let us move from comparing the structure of satisfaction to evaluation of various aspects of respondents' lives. For convenience, some pictograms have been added in columns with the data of the Courier study, indicating that there are differences in the nature of the data compared to the control data (the results of our study). If the data differ within the statistical error, then the symbol "≈" with a yellow filling is indicated. If the value is higher, the symbol "↑" - with a red one; if lower, then, respectively, "↓" - with green.

The comparison shows that in almost all aspects, the rural youth satisfaction is higher than that of the Russians as a whole. The exception is that there are only three variables, the values of which are practically the same. If one compares the rural youth of Tyumen region with the Russian youth, it can be noted that the differences are less significant and consist in the higher satisfaction of the villagers with economic (housing, work, material situation), and also partially recreational and aesthetic aspects. Satisfaction with the social component of life of young people in both studies is approximately the same.

Psychologists say that satisfaction with life is closely linked to self-determination, which, in its turn, contributes to the formation of internal motivation (as the basis for autonomous, non-adaptive human behavior), to increasing the level of complexity of the tasks performed, harmonizing relations with

other people, and reducing the level of stress (Martynova & Bogomaz, 2012). The results show that rural youth has a significant potential, which can be realized when creating the appropriate conditions.

The next step in the analysis was the study of homogeneity of satisfaction within various subgroups of rural youth. For this purpose, the conjugation of respondents' answers with their socio-demographic characteristics was considered.

Gender distributions did not reveal any significant differences - men and women express approximately equal satisfaction with almost all aspects of their lives. Minor discrepancies are observed only in such sphere as "work in general". The difference in estimates here is just over 5% in favor of women. Most likely, this is due to the fact that women are more often employed in the budgetary sphere (health care, education, social protection), which, provides although not very high, but stable salary and a guaranteed social package. In rural areas, this factor plays an important role.

To examine age differences in the respondents' estimates, the quantitative scale represented by absolute values was categorized into two age groups: younger and older than 28 years old. This border was chosen because of two reasons: firstly, it almost equally divides our sample; secondly, approximately this age can be considered as the boundary of youth and early adulthood (Porhacheva & Dzhus, 2008).

Significant differences were found in satisfaction with the state of health. In the younger category, 35.3% were fully satisfied, in part - 50.1%; and in the older category, respectively - 27.0% and 47.0%. There is the similar situation with the group of aspects related to the economic component of life activity - the younger age group is more satisfied with this sphere. The presented data seem to be natural: in the first case, the correlation between the age and health level is obvious. In the second case, the factors of parents' support decrease in connection with their retirement and increase with the number of children in the family (figure 2).

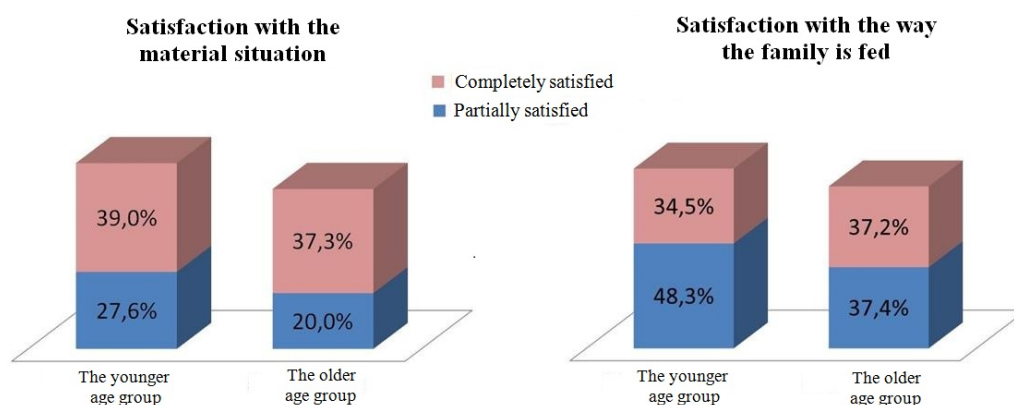


Figure 02. (Differences in satisfaction with the economic aspects of life between the younger and older age groups of rural youth)

The authors also compared the satisfaction of young people living in central settlements, periphery and semi-periphery. The control group was made up of young people from the peripheral type, since remote settlements are less affected by urbanization processes, and young people living there retained the authentic values and norms characteristic of villagers to a large extent (Table 3.).

Table 03. (Comparison of satisfaction with different aspects of life of rural youth, the Russian youth and the Russians)

	Periphery	Semi-periphery	Central settlements
The circle of your communication	93.9%	88.3% ↓	87.0% ↓
Relationships in your family	91.5%	84.4% ↓	86.5% ↓
Your life as a whole	81.6%	80.9% ≈	85.9% ↑
The position that you occupy in society	80.7%	79.4% ≈	79.3% ≈
The state of your health	87.3%	75.5% ↓	78.9% ↓
The way your family is fed	82.1%	74.5% ↓	79.8% ≈
The way you spend your free time	85.8%	77.3% ↓	76.0% ↓
The state of the environment where you live	82.0%	85.1% ≈	68.1% ↓
The education you received	73.6%	74.0% ≈	75.7% ≈
Relationships at work	67.9%	74.1% ↑	73.6% ↑
Housing conditions of your family	74.1%	68.3% ≈	71.9% ≈
Your work as a whole	68.2%	70.6% ≈	70.0% ≈
The financial situation of your family	67.5%	56.4% ↓	64.1% ≈

It can be seen from the table that in different types of settlements, satisfaction is the same only in four aspects: "position in society", "education", "housing conditions" and "work in general". Satisfaction with "life as a whole," is somewhat higher in the central type. Respondents of semi-peripheral types of settlements expressed less satisfaction by nutrition and material situation than in peripheral and central types and by the state of the environment in the central types - less often than in others. As for the variant "relations at work", the only aspect with which peripheral settlements are satisfied less than in others, the distribution of those who found it difficult to answer is indicative. In the periphery, there were 17.0%, in the semi-periphery - 13.8%, and in settlements of the central type - 6.9%. This distribution shows a high level of unemployment in the periphery and semi-periphery, which is confirmed by the statistical data collected by us during the previous stages of the study. It is important to note that in assessing the satisfaction with "work as a whole", a similar distribution was obtained in the periphery and semi-periphery, respectively 12.8% and 13.5%, and in the center - 7.7%. For all other aspects of respondents' lives, higher satisfaction is observed in peripheral settlements.

The data given allow one to state that young people living in peripheral settlements demonstrate the highest level of satisfaction with most aspects of life. Next, the respondents of the central type settlements come, and the lowest satisfaction is in semi-peripheral settlements.

The results were quite unexpected. Numerous studies indicate that income positively affects the level of satisfaction, although this influence is nonlinear. Positive correlation is shown both at the individual level and on larger social and geographical scales. Why are young people living in economically unsuccessful peripheral settlements more satisfied with different aspects of life? The answer to this question is seen in the existence of the complex of factors. The American economist and demographer Richard Easterlin, a researcher in the field of the economics of happiness, affirmed that economic growth does not necessarily lead to an increase in satisfaction with the life of the population. In the case of international comparisons, the average level of happiness does not strongly correlate with GDP, especially for the countries with incomes which are sufficient to meet basic needs. At the same time, Easterlin noted that people in poor countries become happier when they can afford the most

necessaries of existence (Rodionova, 2014). This phenomenon was called the Easterlin paradox. It seems that it can be extrapolated to the results of the authors' study.

Another argument in favor of the ambiguous influence of the economic factor on satisfaction may be the thesis that cognition which the foundation of a person's worldview and is based on deep semantic structures of consciousness, plays a decisive role in assessing one's own life (Uglova, 2013). In the case when the cognitive mechanisms for assessing one's own life are loosely related to the material component, satisfaction with the economic aspects of life can be low against the background of the others and one sees it with representatives of the youth from a remote area. Peripheral settlements are geographically isolated, and some villages of this type can be reached only using the winter road in the cold season. The difficulty of reaching forms an authentic social environment, and, accordingly, a special mentality based on traditional norms and values. The authors' observations, formed during visits to such settlements, show that among the inhabitants of the periphery, the level of cohesion is higher, and collectivism is often the only opportunity for a normal existence in severe conditions and isolation. Individualism, competition and a high level of claims widely-spread in large cities and characteristic of a market economy practically do not affect the local residents. As a consequence, people, including the youth, are satisfied with the current state of affairs and show discontent only in extreme cases.

Concluding the description of the data, let us note that the heuristic potential of the analysis of rural youth satisfaction is not exhausted by the presented results. Satisfaction indicators have generic characteristics, and it is necessary to make deeper analysis using multidimensional methods (Tatarova & Kuchenkova, 2016). Many other aspects of the life of a village and young people that inhabit it also require scientific understanding. I would like to hope that modern researchers will pay more attention to these problems.

7. Conclusion

The study showed that the structure of life satisfaction of the modern rural youth of Tyumen region is characterized by higher assessments of life aspects related to the social environment and prestige. The basic needs of physiology and economic well-being are less satisfied. This structure is similar for all the Russians, but in young villagers it appears more significantly. In general, the rural youth in Tyumen region demonstrate higher satisfaction with different aspects of life than the Russian youth and the Russians as a whole. This may be related to the regional specifics - Tyumen Region is one of the most prosperous regions of Russia in a number of indicators.

Socio-demographic characteristics affect the satisfaction of rural youth, but only in the limited aspects of life. Thus, the younger age group of respondents (up to 28 years) is more satisfied with the state of health and economic aspects of life than the elder ones, and women are somewhat more satisfied with their work than men. Socio-economic and geographic factors have a more significant impact. The different types of the rural settlements identified on the basis of these factors provide different conditions for young people, which manifests itself in statistically significant differences in satisfaction with most aspects of the life of young people.

Summarizing all aforesaid, it can be concluded that rural youth is a heterogeneous geographically-demographic group with a high potential and it requires a special approach in implementing regional

policy affecting its interests. The dynamic changes, taking place in the modern rural society, as well as the significant role of rural youth in the future of the country, necessitate close attention to it not only on the part of managers, but also of researchers.

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