

Study of the influence of socio-economic parameters on the perceived quality of life of the russian population

Estudio de la influencia de los parámetros socioeconómicos en la calidad de vida percibida de la población rusa

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Abstract

The article considers theoretical approaches to understanding the quality of life of a population from a sociological point of view. It discovers features of the concept of the perceived quality of life, as well as structural-functional and socio-economic approaches to its evaluation. The possibilities and limitations of these approaches for the study of quality of life are highlighted. It is concluded that the concept of the perceived quality of life allows revealing its perception by people and evaluating its condition. Based on this concept, the author developed a methodology of empirical research conducted among the population of Russia. The state of individual parameters of the quality of life of the Russian population and the nature of their changes from 2008 to 2019 are disclosed. Based on the All-Russian Sociological Study conducted in 2019, the relation of the socio-economic status of citizens and their quality of life is shown.

Keywords: quality of life, socio-economic status, value structure, satisfaction with the quality of life, social well-being.

RESUMEN

El artículo considera la calidad de vida percibida y el estado socioeconómico de la población rusa. Durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX, la "calidad de vida" evolucionó de una vaga expresión científica no formada a un concepto científico que forma parte de muchas teorías. Durante la mayor parte de este período, el desarrollo y análisis de esta categoría se llevó a cabo principalmente en la ciencia occidental. En la URSS, el término "estilo de vida" fue especialmente popular. Este período de tiempo incluye una gran cantidad de trabajos dedicados al estilo de vida de la clase trabajadora, el equipo de producción, entre otros. La "forma de vida" reemplazó el concepto entonces rechazado de "calidad de vida" a principios de los 90. La "calidad de vida" se incluye activamente en las ciencias sociales rusas y en poco tiempo se populariza en casi todas las ciencias sociales y humanidades. También en el artículo, se llevó a cabo un análisis de un fenómeno social como el bienestar social de la población de la sociedad rusa moderna. Según el estudio sociológico realizado en toda Rusia en 2019, se muestra la relación del estado socioeconómico de los ciudadanos y su calidad de vida.

Palabras clave: calidad de vida, estatus socioeconómico, estructura de valores, satisfacción con la calidad de vida, bienestar social.

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1. Introduction

The significantly increased interest of science and practice in the problems of quality of life indicates that our society is less concerned only about the issues of self-preservation, but more about issues of sustainable social development, the need to create decent living conditions for both future and current generations. Sociological experience and research searches of the last decades show that it is still not possible to construct a unified model of "quality of life", to determine optimal "working" indicators of measurement, to propose non-polemic standards of life. There are many reasons for this. Many of them are seen in the fact that the social interests of various groups, strata, nationalities are as different as the norms of behavior, life stereotypes, values, ideals are ambiguous. The phenomenon itself, which is called today "the quality of life", takes place in any culture, at any historical time, when one thinks about the value of life, its meaning and affirmation. Another question, by means of what indicators they try to reflect the degree of satisfaction with life, the achievement of its greatest completeness and the reason of existence. The quality of life is considered as a general sociological, as a socio-economic, and as a purely economic concept. Some researchers define it as the level of the quality of life, others as the quality of the level of living, still others consider these concepts to be unrelated and belonging to different areas of scientific knowledge. The main reason for the emergence and widespread use of the term "quality of life" in high-consumption societies was a change in the mechanism of all social development. The criteria of quality of life, and the development of human potential became the goal and factor of economic growth came instead of the purely economic development criteria.

Over the past decades, scientists in many countries have attempted to clarify the content of the concept of "quality of life" and to identify the universal criteria for its assessment, to expand the range of application of this category. The quality of life is a complex and diversified, though at the same time integral, particularly historical and social phenomenon. The concept of "quality of life" has many interpretations, which describe primarily the economic and social parameters of its content. The range of indicators is expanding, and the scope of its indicators is being specified.

The problems associated with the definition of the concept of "quality of life", its content and methods of measurement, arise due to the mixing of levels of social analysis. Of course, in a specific study of social processes, all levels of analysis are entangled. However, to achieve valid knowledge, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of each (Averin, Sushko, 2019).

Most often, the quality of life is included in theories that conceptualize the state of modern societies at the theoretical and empirical level, which gives the conclusions not only a more accurate character, but also a practical orientation. To obtain an empirical base, a system of indicators and an appropriate methodology for processing the results are developed. The quality of life becomes an important component of the theories of "human capital", "endogenous growth", "expansion of human choice", "development of human potential" ("human development"), "sustainable development". These and other theories that are close to them in terms of content are formulated in Western sociology in order to identify ways, goals and means of optimizing the functioning of industrially developed countries, as well as to comprehend modern global social problems.

The specificity of the sociological approach to the problem under study is that it is distinguished by its sociality, the determinacy of social processes and the relationships in the mechanism of self-identification and its influence in the analysis of such an important phenomenon as social well-being.

Social well-being is a kind of "speaking" or even "screaming" phenomenon, since it shows the general condition of individuals, signals the presence of acute problems, and is an indicator of the effectiveness of the reforms. Social well-being acts as a serious social force, which largely determines the situation in society, the degree of tension and conflict, the maturity level of socio-economic, socio-political and spiritual relations.

Social well-being is directly dependent on gender, age, place of residence, religion, profession, education. However, all these characteristics have an impact on the individual through the prism of his/her identity. When analyzing social well-being, it can be interpreted as subjective well-being, which is defined as "a wide category of phenomena consisting in the emotional reaction of people, their satisfaction with certain areas of life, and also in their judgments about the quality of life in general" (Diener, Suh, Lucas, Smith, 1999). It differs from such an indicator as "mood" or "emotional state" in its relative stability over time.

Substantially, there are two main components in subjective well-being: affective and cognitive. The affective component is an assessment of one's life, which is given on the basis of emotions and feelings, while the cognitive component acts as a rational assessment obtained by comparing one's life and ideal life.

Subjective well-being is a kind of individual feeling of happiness and satisfaction with living conditions. Happiness reflects an assessment of the social side of people's lives (the closest indicator of happiness is related to satisfaction with family life, social connections), while satisfaction with life acts as an integral indicator of assessing the external side of people's life (satisfaction with a position in a social structure, material situation, and other factors of achievement). Satisfaction with life, in contrast to happiness, is most dependent on societal conditions and changes in the political, economic and social sphere of life in the country.

Subjective well-being is expressed through such indicators as life satisfaction, confidence in the future, subjective assessment of health, level of anxiety, as well as one's identification of their position in economic, legal and metasocial spaces.

So, such factors as age, education, nationality are weakly related to the level of well-being and life satisfaction. Such social parameters as participation in the labor market, participation in public life, and social relations turned out to be not very significant for explaining the level of satisfaction of individuals. In developed Western countries, the personal qualities of people — their social adaptability, physical activity, energy, psychological stability, are of somewhat greater importance.

This problem is also especially relevant for our society due to the fact that in the conditions of social transformations of modern society, the problem of social self-determination of an individual becomes relevant. Global changes in life have created unique mechanisms for the formation of new identifications in society. The need to classify oneself as something has increased, which has led to identification syndrome, due to which the ability to form new mechanisms of social group identifications has increased. Namely, the process of social identification of an individual has become more active. Unlike the public mood, the social mood is affected not by socio-political processes, but by specific manifestations of the social problems of society. It is distinguished by its non-uniformity, i.e. it is different for different strata of society.

In order to reveal the social mechanism of the influence of the socio-economic situation of the population on their quality of life, it is necessary to determine a theoretical understanding of this structure.

Among the concepts of theoretical and empirical orientation in terms of theoretical and methodological elaboration, several conceptual approaches should be singled out - socio-economic, structural-functional and the concept of the "perceived" quality of life.

The socio-economic approach to understanding the quality of life began to develop from the beginning of XX, when the English economist A. Pigou in the work "Economic Theory of Welfare" first introduced the term "quality of life" in the analysis of individual well-being, the elements of which form the quality of life (Pigou, 1985). The socio-economic approach to understanding the quality of life of the population was developed in a number of works. In them, it is understood as an integrated characteristic of the level and conditions of the life of population. It includes a set of parameters of human life, providing one or another degree of satisfaction with

his/her material and spiritual needs and interests in terms of compliance with existing social standards of working and leisure conditions, housing conditions, social security, living environment, etc. The quality of life is expressed in the quantity and quality of goods and services consumed by a person. D. Forrester considered the quality of life as a measure of the development of human society and formulated four main factors to improve the quality of life (Forrester, 2003). John Galbraith defined quality of life as an opportunity to consume goods and services. The quality of life reflects the level of material well-being of an individual, as well as his ability to reproduce and increase his/her material wealth (Galbraith, 1958). Walt Whitman Rostow considered the quality of life as a person's goal to increase indicators in the field of education and health, recreation, the fight against poverty and inequality (Rostow, 1973).

However, the socio-economic approach has its limitations in an empirical explanation of the state of the quality of life, since only objective indicators characterizing the economic and social situation of an individual are used to evaluate it. The higher quality of life is, larger the quantity is and the better the quality of the material and spiritual goods consumed by the individual is. According to the socio-economic understanding of the quality of life, it is defined as satisfying the needs of the individual. Moreover, the social role of the individual is not considered. At the same time, the state of objective indicators characterizing the economic and social situation of an individual is not uniquely associated with his/her satisfaction with life; they cannot fully explain the perception of the quality of life. They do not take into account the nature of aspirations, expectations and personal needs of people. Socio-psychological analysis indicates that the quality of life of an individual is the way he/she perceives it and feels it in terms of fulfilling his/her social role. As rightly pointed out by A.I. Subetto, "the growth of material wealth is necessary not by itself, but as a mean of increasing a person's satisfaction with life, the ability to fulfill their roles in society. The analysis showed that satisfaction with life depends on economic conditions by 40% and on psychological factors by 60%."

The social role of the individual lies at the heart of the structural-functional approach to understanding the quality of life. Within its framework, the quality of life is widely considered as a state of an individual's optimal ability to fulfill effectively his/her roles and tasks for which he/she was socialized. However, this understanding is more of a conceptual nature and requires special theoretical content, necessary for the development of a conceptual model of a sociological study of the quality of life.

The nature of the aspirations, expectations, and personal needs of people is taken into account in the framework of the concept of a "perceived" quality of life. Moreover, it is based on the concept of structural functionalism to determine the general criterion for assessing the quality of life. The concept of a "perceived" quality of life considers it as a subjective state of an individual, which is the result of existing conditions to satisfy his/her needs. The quality of life of an individual is such as the extent to which the felt physical, intellectual, emotional and volitional capabilities allow him/her to work and communicate, i.e. do not impede the fulfillment of a social role. Moreover, the perception of such opportunities is determined from the point of view of the individual himself, i.e. subjectively. The quality of life is higher, when an individual has more opportunities for fulfilling his/her social role. Within the framework of this concept, there are various theoretical and methodological approaches to assessing this phenomenon. Angus Campbell connects the quality of life with a subjective perception of the well-being of an individual's life. An important role is played by satisfaction with the material situation, the level of self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Campbell, 1981). Angus Campbell and his colleagues Philip Converse and Willard Rogers note that the level of satisfaction with the "perceived quality of life" is revealed when there is a discrepancy between the claims of individuals and their levels of satisfaction (Campbell, 1976).

The sociological approach helps us to identify a certain set of concepts that characterize the quality of life, namely: food quality, quality of clothing, comfort of house, quality of healthcare, education, services, environment, leisure, etc. We can notice that some of the notions used in the sociological concept have already

been stated in the framework of the economic approach, but not all of them. New parameters have also appeared that make it possible to consider new aspects of the quality of life; therefore, the social and economic approaches, combined into a socio-economic concept, allow a rather versatile description of the phenomenon of quality of life.

The starting point of human life is a creational life. It appears, on the one hand, as a necessity, and on the other, as an internal human need. Consequently, the most important characteristic of the social, labor and production activities of a person is the attitude to work that has developed in society, satisfaction with work, which reflects the achieved level of scientific and technological progress.

The degree and satisfaction with material and spiritual values, and therefore with everyday life, is characterized by consumer life. "Consumer life or the activity of a person and society to satisfy their own needs and interests is characterized, first of all, by the achieved level of well-being, as well as the ability of a person and society to reproduce their material wealth and increase it (production growth, economic development, improvement of the environment, etc.)". "Family-tribal life is the preservation and reproduction of human life and health, the reproduction of the human race, as well as such demographic characteristics of the population as family life, marriage, divorce, fertility, mortality, natural growth, life expectancy." "Ensuring a healthy lifestyle and the reproduction of the human race depends on a number of reasons: the quality of medical care, the comfort of a person's stay in the environment, improving the ecology of the environment" (Vasiliev, 2003).

The manifestation of a civic position is characterized by the sociocultural life of the individual; therefore, the great importance is attached to education and the formation of culture.

The development and satisfaction of ethical, aesthetic, intellectual and religious abilities is characterized by a person's spiritual life. "Satisfaction with the spiritual life is associated with such moral and psychological aspects of a person's life as manifestations of love and friendship, belief in high ideals and hope for a better future, tolerant attitude to dissent of other people and social groups, issues of religious tolerance and religious consciousness. Spiritual life reflects a person's attitude to the surrounding reality and shapes his/her spiritual values, understanding of good and bad, beautiful and ugly" [Vasiliev, 2003].

2. Methodology

An empirical study of the influence of socio-economic parameters on the perceived quality of life of the Russian population was carried out on the basis of an integral research concept. A questionnaire survey method was applied¹. A sampled population of 1803 people was formed by the method of quota-random selection. It provided representativeness of the results of the study to the entire adult population of Russia from 18 years and older, firstly, by sex; secondly, by age; thirdly, by social status; fourthly, by territorial settlement: in the regional context, in the context of city-village and in the context of three types of urban settlements (1 million people and more, from 100 to 499.9 thousand people, less than 100 thousand people).

The structure of the sample includes 22 regions, territories, republics and cities of the Russian Federation - Moscow, St. Petersburg; Moscow, Smolensk, Yaroslavl, Lipetsk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk, Volgograd, Samara, Nizhny Novgorod, Saratov, Rostov, Murmansk regions; Altai, Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, Stavropol Territories, the Republic of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan - representing its main territorial zones. In each subject of Russia, the survey was conducted in accordance with its socio-settlement structure: in the central

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city, in a regional city and in rural settlements (49% - in central cities, 28% in regional cities, 23% in rural settlements). Regional cities and rural settlements were selected randomly. Thus, a high level of representativeness was ensured for the entire adult population of Russia ($\pm 3.5\%$). During the empirical analysis of the research results, several problems were solved. Firstly, the socio-economic status of the adult population of Russia was determined. Secondly, it was necessary to reveal the nature of the influence of socio-demographic, socio-educational and socio-economic factors on the state of perceived quality of life.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on our approach, we can highlight a number of important concepts that characterize the phenomenon under study: health, education, nutrition, income, population density, etc. An analysis of the parameters of the perceived quality of life of the Russian population showed that their condition is at a different level in relation to the best possible condition. Respondents were asked how they would evaluate their health status now and how it was a year ago. Compared to last year, it has deteriorated to some extent. Almost half of the respondents (47.1%) rated it now as good, while 55.6% of respondents gave this evaluation a year ago. Only 7.5% rated their health as "excellent", 13.1% said - "very good" and almost a third of the population rate their health as "mediocre" (28.5%). A significant part of the respondents (24%) also answered "slightly worse than a year ago". Only 5.3% rated as "significantly better than a year ago".

It is worth noting that this indicator steadily increased from 2002-2012, reaching 60.75% in 2012 and becoming 5.31% higher. The rate of this positive change is lower than average compared with other indicators of the perceived quality of life of the Russian population. The increase in perceived general health over the past 17 years has been even. From 2002 to 2008, it increased by 2.77%, from 2008 to 2012 - by 2.54%. The rate of increase of this level over the past 7 years has not practically changed, but it has not increased either. The perceived quality of life of the Russian population as a whole grew faster than the level of perceived general health. But this assessment concerned personal health in general, therefore it was important to analyze separately the perceptions of physical and emotional health.

Therefore, the second most important indicator was the assessment of physical condition. In general, it can be summarized that respondents were more positive about their physical health: only almost every fifth respondent replied that because of his/her physical condition he/she "had to reduce the amount of time spent usually on work or other things" (18.8%), while every third person "had to do less work than he/she wanted" (31.9%). 27.5% had to spend more effort into fulfilling their professional duties or other activities", and 23.8% of respondents were "limited in performing one type of activity". Comparing this indicator with previously obtained data, we can say that the level of physical health, according to the estimates of the respondents themselves, constantly and evenly increased over the course of 10 years, reaching 80.9% in 2012 and increasing by 5.01%. Moreover, the rate of its increase was lower than the average in other indicators of the quality of life (6.4%), and, in general, it was not affected by the economic crisis that began in 2008 in Russia. Consequently, the physical health of the Russian population was in good condition for 10 years, providing a very high level of perceived physical activity. This level was constantly increasing - people could perform increasingly high physical activities, the amount of which their health did not limit. However, the obtained data shows a slight decrease in this indicator in 2019 and, most likely, this may be exactly due to the socio-economic parameters of the quality of life.

When analyzing the emotional state as a whole, the respondents' answers were close to the assessment of the physical state, but slightly higher overall: "I had to reduce the amount of time spent on work or other matters" was indicated by 25.2% (7% higher compared with the assessment of physical condition). We received almost the same number of answers that they "did less work than they wanted" (32.9%). Almost every third respondent (28.1%) "did their work or other things not as careful as usually". When comparing the obtained data with the

perceived role of emotional problems in limiting the life of the population, it can be noted that the significance of this role has been constantly decreasing over the course of 17 years, reaching 69.6% in 2012 and decreasing by 8.94%. The speed of this positive change is one of the highest compared to other indicators of the perceived quality of life of the Russian population. The decrease in the perceived role of emotional problems in limiting the life of the Russian population for 17 years was uneven. From 2002 to 2008, it decreased by 8.14%, from 2008 to 2012 - only by 0.8%, i.e. about 10 times less. Over 10 years, the rate of decrease of this role has fallen dramatically, i.e. actually, this decrease stopped, which was associated with the economic crisis that began in 2008 in Russia. It led to the fact that in the conditions of this crisis, emotional experiences intensified, and they increased the importance of the perceived role of emotional problems in limiting the life of the Russian population. From 2008 to 2012, as well as by 2019, the decrease in the significance of this role essentially ceased, and it became approximately equal to the average value of the quality of life of the Russian population as a whole. However, the rate of decrease in this role was high. Consequently, over 17 years, the emotional health of the Russian population has been improving - emotional problems have less and less prevented people from fulfilling their professional duties and other matters, and have less limited their activities.

In general, when analyzing how much the physical or emotional state over the past four weeks has prevented respondents from normal communication with family, friends, neighbors, or in a team, we see a positive trend. Almost half of the respondents (48.6%) replied that their condition "did not interfere with communication at all". One of three (31.5%) said: "it was a little interfered". 14.7% said "interfered moderately", and only 5.3% of respondents chose "interfered greatly". The obtained data indicate positive dynamics compared with how these feelings were 10 years ago, which were caused by the economic crisis that began in 2008 in Russia. It led to the fact that people have reduced the usual communication with friends, neighbors and work colleagues in their free time, visiting cultural events with their family, travel on vacation. Now it can be summarized that the social health of the Russian population, the desire and ability to communicate with surrounding people, is on average in very good condition, providing a high level of the perceived social activity.

The next important issue was the analysis of respondents' moods. They were asked how they felt and what their mood was during the last 4 weeks, what subjective feelings they had. Only 36.4% of the respondents felt "vigorous and full of energy most of the time", while at the same time almost every third 29.9% chose "sometimes and rarely"; 27.3% were "very nervous", while 38.3% were "never or rarely nervous"; 19.1% of respondents "felt depressed", while 29% "never felt depressed". Most of the time 19.2% felt "exhausted", while the majority of respondents (59.4%) rarely or never felt exhausted; 59.5% felt almost happy all the time, and only 3.6% of respondents never felt happy; 60.7% most of the time "felt full of strength and energy", unlike those who "never or rarely felt full of strength and energy" (4.1%).

Based on the obtained data, it can be concluded that the level of perceived vitality, the amount of time that a person felt vigorous and full of energy, causes good confidence for the formation of a decent quality of life. This level has been steadily increasing over the course of 17 years, reaching 59.9% in 2012 and becoming 5.4% higher than before 2008. The increase in the level of perceived vitality over 17 years was uneven. From 2002 to 2008, it increased by 4.38%, from 2008 to 2012 - only by 1.1%, about 4 times less. The rate of increase of this level over 9 years has fallen [7]. It was affected by the economic crisis that began in 2008 in Russia. It led to the fact that during this period the role of physical and emotional problems, mental stress among the Russian population increased, so people felt cheerful, full of energy during less time. In general, by 2019, the level of perceived vitality of the Russian population has become higher than 10 years ago. Social mood is also a background that "colors" people's lives, shows the direction of their behavior with a high degree of probability and helps to predict the possibility of strengthening the positive and weakening of the negative aspects of public consciousness [Toshchenko, 1996].

4. Conclusions

The results of a sociological study of the perceived quality of life of the Russian population show that, from 2002 to 2019, the state of its parameters changed unevenly. From 2002 to 2012, the state of the quality of life increased; however, by 2019 its escalation almost ceased.

The stratification by perceived quality of life among the Russian population decreased, while for groups of people with low and very low perceived quality of life, for most of its components, it either did not change or worsened. These population groups "sank to the bottom" according to the perceived quality of life. Whereas the specificity of the social mood is that it reflects reality based on the content of sustainable interests, goals and ideals of individuals, social groups. This refracted reality determines the goal-setting activity of the subject, his/her setting of the most important goals in life. That is why the social mood is involved in the regulation of individual actions, actions of people, social groups, and demonstrates their value orientations and attitudes, mentality and mental outlook.

However, often social goals of people cannot be realized due to the fact that there is no possibility of their satisfaction. The psychophysiological and emotional state of people depends on these contradictions. Therefore, the social mood directly depends on the degree of resolvability of social problems, contradictions, satisfaction of social interests and needs.

The emotional state and value characteristics depend not only on the individual attitudes and orientations of the individual, but also on external events - on social conditions, on the actions of others who convey or inspire certain moods. Moreover, each person has a different degree of acceptance or rejection of information about the social environment.

One of the biggest contributions to improving the perceived quality of life of the Russian population was made by a decrease in the role of emotional problems in limiting person's life, i.e. emotional problems have become less restrictive for people's daily activities. People became more emotionally stable. The increase in the level of physical activity, social activity, general health and vitality over the course of 10 years was much slower than two components mentioned above. Mainly, in the pre-crisis period - from 2002 to 2008.

The analysis of the results of the study shows the priority tasks that need to be solved to improve the perceived quality of life of the Russian population now and in the near future. First, it is necessary to increase the level of social health of the Russian population, to create conditions for the emergence of a sense of calm. To solve this problem, it is necessary to ensure political and economic stability in the development of Russian society and the state, increasing the level of its spiritual and material well-being. This will reduce the level of social tension in society, and concern people for their present and future. It is equally important to reduce the volume of subjective painful feelings of the Russian population. These feelings arise in people in connection with a low income per family member, insecurity in staying in employment. An increase in the level of wages, pensions at present and reasonable expectations of this in the future will, in many ways, reduce the volume of subjective painful feelings of people. Along with this, it is required to increase the level of medical care in Russia, to reduce the commercial medical load on people, thereby ensuring an increase in the perceived quality of life in general.

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