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Natural reproduction of the population and the influence of spiritual and moral education and traditional values: an interdisciplinary analysis

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Abstract. This study is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the role of spiritual and moral education in the formation of reproductive attitudes of the individual and its impact on modern demographic processes. In the context of the axiological crisis that characterizes many modern societies and the accompanying transformation of traditional socio-cultural models, the study of factors influencing reproductive behavior is becoming particularly relevant. The author considers the mechanisms of interrelation and mutual influence of the individual's value orientations, historically established family traditions and patterns of reproductive behavior. The study analyzes the current challenges caused by the erosion of spiritual foundations and moral imperatives that have a direct impact on the institution of the family and reproductive strategies of the population. An attempt is made to comprehend the role of spiritual and moral education and traditional values in the context of ensuring sustainable natural reproduction of the population. This phenomenon is considered through the prism of its influence on the formation and translation of social norms governing marriage and family relations, as well as on the formation of individual reproductive attitudes and, as a result, on specific manifestations of demographic behavior. The study examines how the assimilation of moral and ethical principles and commitment to cultural and historical heritage contribute to the formation of a responsible attitude towards starting a family, giving birth and raising children, countering the trends of depopulation and population aging. The author analyzed the potential of educational and cultural institutions in strengthening the spiritual and moral foundations of society as a factor of demographic security and sustainable development. The development and implementation of modules in educational programs are considered as specific measures.

Keywords: marriage and family relations, demographic security, demographic behavior, demographic processes, family institution, reproductive behavior, reproductive attitudes

Conflicts of interest. The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Естественное воспроизводство населения и влияние духовно-нравственного воспитания и традиционных ценностей: междисциплинарный анализ

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Аннотация. Исследование посвящено комплексному анализу роли духовно-нравственного воспитания в процессе формирования репродуктивных установок личности и его влияния на современные демографические процессы. В условиях аксиологического кризиса, характеризующего многие современные общества, и сопутствующей ему трансформации традиционных социокультурных моделей, исследование факторов, влияющих на репродуктивное поведение, приобретает особую актуальность. Рассмотрены механизмы взаимосвязи и взаимовлияния ценностных ориентиров индивида, исторически сложившихся семейных традиций и паттернов репродуктивного поведения. Проведен анализ актуальных вызовов, обусловленных эрозией духовных основ и нравственных императивов, которые оказывают непосредственное воздействие на институт семьи и репродуктивные стратегии населения. Предпринята попытка осмысления роли духовно-нравственного воспитания и традиционных ценностей в контексте обеспечения устойчивого естественного воспроизводства населения. Данный феномен рассмотрен через призму их влияния на формирование и трансляцию социальных норм, регулирующих брачно-семейные отношения, а также на становление индивидуальных репродуктивных установок и, как следствие, на конкретные проявления демографического поведения. Исследовано, каким образом усвоение морально-этических принципов и приверженность культурно-историческому наследию способствуют формированию ответственного отношения к созданию семьи, рождению и воспитанию детей, противодействуя тенденциям депопуляции и старения населения. Проанализирован потенциал образовательных и культурных институтов в укреплении духовно-нравственных основ общества как фактора демографической безопасности и устойчивого развития. В качестве конкретных мер, рассмотрены разработка и внедрение в образовательные программы модулей, направленных на формирование ценности семьи и ответственного родительства; поддержка государственных и общественных инициатив по популяризации традиционных семейных устоев через средства массовой информации и культурные проекты; а также создание системы психолого-педагогического сопровождения молодых семей, ориентированной на укрепление их духовно-нравственного фундамента. Обоснована необходимость интеграции усилий государства, общественных организаций и семьи в целях возрождения и поддержания ценностной парадигмы, способствующей позитивной демографической динамике, путем реализации вышеуказанных практических шагов.

Ключевые слова: брачно-семейные отношения, демографическая безопасность, демографическое поведение, демографические процессы, институт семьи, репродуктивное поведение, репродуктивные установки

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Introduction

The processes of natural reproduction of the population, characterized by fertility and mortality, represent a complex dynamic system where the interaction of economic, socio-cultural and value factors determines the direction of demographic changes. Modern scientific research in the fields of demography, sociology, and economics emphasizes that none of these factors act in isolation; instead, a synergetic relationship is formed between the material conditions of life and the spiritual and moral guidelines of society. Economic conditions have a direct impact on the reproductive behavior of the population through family incomes, well-being, and the availability of social services. However, spiritual and moral values and traditional attitudes form long-term behavioral strategies, determining the stability or variability of demographic patterns even with fluctuations in economic parameters. The demographic crisis is one of the key threats to the social and economic stability of the Russian Federation. According to Rosstat, starting in 2018, the birth rate in the country has been showing a steady decline: if in 2017 it was 1.62 children per woman, then in 2024 this figure decreased to 1.32. The forecast of the low option will be 1.46 children by 2045¹.

Research in the field of demography and social psychology confirms that the fertility crisis is associated not only with economic factors, but also with socio-cultural changes, including the deformation of the traditional approach to the institution of the family [1]. While Western societies are focused on individualistic models of self-determination, the Russian cultural tradition, which includes patriarchal family values, mutual assistance and a multigenerational way of life, has long been the key to sustainable natural reproduction of the population [2]. Spiritual and moral guidelines deserve special attention, since it is precisely such

¹ *Federal State Statistics Service : the official website.* URL: <http://ssl.rosstat.gov.ru/> (accessed: 03.10.2025) (In Russ.).

values that have historically anchored pro-family behavior in society, ensuring a high birth rate.

The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between the level of assimilation of spiritual and moral values and reproductive attitudes. The formation of social norms, reproductive attitudes, and demographic behavior is influenced by spiritual and moral education, as well as traditional values. These factors are key elements of the socio-cultural system, mediating the interaction between individual decisions and macrodemographic trends.

Materials and research methods

Rosstat data and publications in scientific journals related to the research topic were used as research materials. The search was carried out in scientific electronic libraries Elibrary.ru and CyberLeninka. Empirical and theoretical methods were used as research methods: analysis, synthesis, deduction, content analysis, comparative analysis.

Results and Discussion

Modern pedagogy and sociology provide a broad instrumental basis for the analysis of spiritual and moral education. The sociocultural approach confirms the key role of educational processes in the integration of traditional values into the consciousness of individuals. Personality formation largely depends on its interaction with such tools as national culture, educational programs and family heritage [3]. The axiological aspect examines the influence of values as moral guidelines that determine behavior. Thus, the basic moral categories — goodness, truth, beauty — serve as guidelines that help individuals realize their responsibility to society and make decisions, including starting a family [4].

Spiritual and moral values include family orientations (mutual assistance, multigenerationalism), social norms (decency, solidarity, respect for elders) and humanistic ideals (charity, striving for social justice). Spiritual and moral education is aimed at the formation of such qualities in an individual as humanism, patriotism, responsibility for actions, the importance of constructive interaction with other members of society, which is directly related to the strengthening of family values, awareness of responsibility to future generations and increased motivation for the birth and upbringing of children. This allows us to consider spiritual and moral guidelines as an integral mechanism of influencing the natural growth of the population [5]. The traditional way of life ensures the transmission of basic social values through religious and cultural institutions, strengthening public

consciousness and at the same time forming a stable reproductive motivation. Spiritual and moral education, as well as traditional values in the processes of natural reproduction of the population, directly affect the formation of social norms, reproductive attitudes and demographic behavior. These factors are key elements of the socio-cultural system that determine the interdependence of individual decisions and demographic trends. The value-normative determinants of reproductive behavior are formed in the process of spiritual and moral education, which determines the value system that influences the attitudes of young people towards starting a family, procreation and intergenerational solidarity [6].

The cultivation of traditional family values (In religious or ethno-cultural communities) correlates with higher birth rates, which is confirmed by research within the framework of the theory of the “second demographic transition”. Moral guidelines that emphasize the importance of parenthood increase the likelihood of implementing reproductive attitudes, thereby influencing the parameters of natural reproduction. In particular, in the context of religious doctrines (Christianity, Islam, Judaism), the sacredness of the family and childbearing is emphasized, which forms attitudes towards medium- and large-family reproductive behavior. Research in the field of demography indicates a correlation between religiosity and increased birth rates in traditional societies [7]. The stability of family institutions directly depends on ethical education aimed at developing empathy, responsibility and communicative competencies, which helps to reduce the level of family conflicts and divorces. Stable marital relations create favorable conditions for having many children, which is a key factor in a positive demographic balance [8].

The transmission of spiritual traditions strengthens intergenerational ties, providing support to older generations in raising children. A stable family, in turn, creates favorable conditions for the socialization of children and minimizes the risks of depopulation. Sociological studies emphasize the role of habitus and symbolic capital in maintaining reproductive strategies [9]. The formation of family and marriage values takes place in the process of spiritual and moral education, contributing to a return to the tradition of creating harmonious family relationships that are focused on having many children and a sustainable lifestyle. Family values based on spiritual and religious principles directly determine a person’s reproductive attitudes. In particular, Orthodox values embedded in the system of spiritual and moral education motivate young people to marry and have children as their main life priorities [10]. Social solidarity and demographic stability are formed under the influence of such moral principles as altruism, caring for future generations and the collective good, which, in turn, form an attitude towards

prosocial behavior, including readiness for parenthood even in conditions of economic uncertainty. This phenomenon can be traced in works analyzing the relationship between religiosity and reproductive attitudes, where ideological paradigms mitigate the influence of macroeconomic factors on reproductive decisions [11].

Cultural and historical specifics play an important role in the formation of traditional values. In traditional societies dominated by collectivist values, spiritual and moral norms are directly incorporated into reproductive strategies, whereas in secular individualistic cultures this relationship is mediated by rational choice and personal priorities [12]. The theory of demographic transition links the decline in the birth rate to the weakening of traditional values in the process of urbanization and secularization. In societies that maintain spiritual and moral guidelines (for example, in a number of countries in Africa and the Middle East), the demographic transition phase slows down, supporting natural population growth².

On the contrary, post-materialistic values emphasizing self-realization and hedonism correlate with low birth rates in developed countries [13]. In conditions of high uncertainty in a post-industrial society, which is characterized by a decrease in the number of births, it is spiritual and moral education that becomes a key factor in preserving reproductive potential.

The issues of spiritual and moral formation of personality are fixed in the Strategy for the Implementation of Youth Policy in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030³, which emphasizes the importance of developing high moral aspirations and orientation towards family values among young people as an engine of natural reproduction.

The basic principles of spiritual and moral education include:

- the introduction of a system of standards of morality and behavior based on respect for family, society and the individual;
- Encouraging altruism and solidarity as the foundations of intergenerational interaction;
- Stimulating awareness of personal responsibility for the future of society through the creation of a family and the birth of children.

The key role belongs to the family, educational institutions and the state. The family forms basic attitudes through traditions and emotional bonds, while schools and universities reinforce them through programs of patriotic and ethical education.

² Vishnevsky AG, Zakharov SV. Demographic transition. *Great Russian Encyclopedia: scientific and educational portal*. URL: https://bigenc.ru/c/demograficheskii-pere_khod-a3b9d7/?v=5759901 (accessed: 10.03.2025). (In Russ.).

³ Russian Federation. Laws. Strategy for the implementation of youth policy in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030: [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated August 17, 2024 No. 2233-р]. *Consultant Plus Legal Reference System*. URL: <http://www.consultant.ru> / (accessed: 10.03.2025). (In Russ.).

The introduction of the discipline “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood” in higher education institutions actually establishes among young people an understanding of the importance of traditional values, stable family and respect for children as the primary manifestation of responsibility. The cooperation of the educational system with the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional religions in Russia has become an important mechanism for the implementation of spiritual and moral education programs.

The introduction of the course “Fundamentals of the spiritual and moral culture of the Russia’s peoples” in schools contributes to the formation of respect for family values and reproductive responsibility among the younger generation. Examples of successful cooperation between educational and religious organizations, such as Sunday schools, demonstrate the potential of a public alliance in restoring the traditional way of life [14]. Within the framework of the state family policy, the National Family Project has been created, which includes five federal projects: “Family support”, “Large family”, “Protection of motherhood and childhood”, “Older generation” and “Family values and cultural infrastructure”⁴.

To increase Russia’s demographic potential in the long term, it is proposed:

- Strengthening the role of education in the formation of spiritual and moral values through schools and universities. It is recommended that teaching institutions integrate into their curricula disciplines aimed at teaching family and parenting skills, knowledge of the basics of demography and demographic policy of the state.
- Organization of joint programs of the state and religious organizations to enhance the value of family and parenthood.
- Emphasis on supporting large families as bearers of traditional moral attitudes.
- Promotion of media projects promoting large families and conscious parenthood, state propaganda of family values through the media.

A structured and thoughtful system of educating the population based on spiritual and moral principles can significantly affect the demographic development of a country, reducing the threat of depopulation and strengthening social stability.

The results of the study confirm the existence of a correlation between spiritual and moral education and orientation towards planning large families. Thus, those who learned traditional values in the early stages of their lives through upbringing in multigenerational families were more likely to express their willingness to have more than two children, even in conditions of economic instability. The role of family traditions, such as the compilation

⁴ The national project “Family”. *The official website of the Russian Ministry of Labor*. 2025. URL: https://mintrud.gov.ru/ministry/programms/nacproekt_semya (accessed: 10.03.2025). (In Russ.).

of family trees or the veneration of older family members, is significant for strengthening the institution of the family. The integration of traditional values into educational programs has demonstrated positive changes in teenagers' attitudes towards family life. Empirical evidence confirms that the assimilation of norms of mutual assistance, patriotism and family solidarity increases motivation to have children.

Conclusion

Spiritual and moral education plays a central role in overcoming the current demographic crisis, reviving the traditional cultural guidelines of society. The integration of these values through educational programs and public policy helps strengthen the institution of the family. In the long term, the restoration of the pro-family structure can become an effective tool for stabilizing the birth rate and a key factor in overcoming the demographic crisis. A regional analysis in the context of Russia's ethno-confessional diversity, a comparative analysis of regions with a multi-confessional population, and the development of diagnostic tools to assess the effectiveness of spiritual and moral education may become a research perspective.

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