

The life of young Russia: Value orientations and life paths

La vida de los jóvenes rusos: Orientaciones de valor y caminos de vida

Tamara Dmitrievna KOSINTSEVA [1](#); Nursafa Gafurovna KHAIRULLINA [2](#); Igor Nikolaevich GLUHIH [3](#); Elena Nikolaevna PRYAKHINA [4](#); Alexandr Yurievich NIKIFOROV [5](#); Juliya Zufarovna BOGDANOVA [6](#)

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ABSTRACT:

The article analyzes the dynamics of the value orientations of students concerning the basic values – personal security, perceptions of identity, preferences concerning the social and economic structure of Russia, family values and health. The analysis showed that today's youth is characterized by an orientation toward the immediate social environment: the family as a source of material prosperity and friends as active agents of the formation and implementation of one's own value preferences. According to the results of sociological research, the article presents a social portrait of a modern student. Students are distinguished by individualism, orientation to the pragmatic ideal of a self-sufficient, successful person, who can independently achieve material prosperity and social status.

Keywords: values, value orientations, contents of value orientations, students, social portrait of a student.

RESUMEN:

El artículo analiza la dinámica de las orientaciones de valor de los estudiantes sobre los valores básicos – seguridad personal, percepciones de identidad, preferencias concernientes a la estructura social y económica de Rusia, valores familiares y salud. El análisis mostró que la juventud de hoy se caracteriza por una orientación hacia el entorno social inmediato: la familia como fuente de prosperidad material y amigos como agentes activos de la formación y aplicación de sus propias preferencias de valor. Según los resultados de la investigación sociológica, el artículo presenta un retrato social de un estudiante moderno. Los estudiantes son distinguidos por el individualismo, la orientación al ideal pragmático de una persona autosuficiente, acertada, que puede alcanzar independientemente la prosperidad material y el estado social.

Palabras clave: valores, orientaciones de valor, contenidos de orientaciones de valor, estudiantes, retrato social de un estudiante.

1. Introduction

In modern socio-economic conditions, many internal and external (social) factors have a formative influence on the personality. On the one hand, the value system is a basis for further personal and social development of an individual; on the other hand, it is an indicator of the level and quality of his/her development, characterizing personal worldview, an individual system of perceptions of him/herself and society, of the desired. Certainly, these qualitative differences will be manifested in all spheres of life activity, especially when a person needs to make a choice (of a partner, circle of contacts, future profession, educational institution, place of work, place of residence, etc.). External objective and subjective factors certainly can have a certain influence on decision making, but, in our opinion, personal attitudes determined by the qualitative uniqueness of the moral value system play a crucial role in this process. Personal values largely determine the worldview of a person in the life activity.

Values by their nature always reflect the attitude toward the forms of human being, human existence. A change in social conditions cannot but affect the state of human consciousness, which, in turn, passing already established attitudes through the personal perception, through the inner world, inevitably reveals inconsistencies in the system of values and orientations dictated by real life. At the same time, full conformity is hardly possible, and the individual and then mass consciousness begins to adjust the values, bringing them in line with the requirements of life, in order to ensure the acceptability of new forms of existence. In accordance with this, a value can be defined as a personal attitude to the world, based not only on knowledge and information, but also on one's own life experience (Radugin, 2001). This statement can be confirmed by a change in the structure of our society (at the end of the twentieth century), when new values were introduced into the system of traditional values and subsequently polarized. As a consequence, each person (to a greater extent – representatives of the younger generation) had to make a choice and determine individual attitudes.

Values are generally accepted beliefs about the goals, for which a person should strive. In turn, values are the basis of moral principles. One can agree that, firstly, values orient the human activity in a certain direction and, secondly, they are spiritual support that helps a person to resist difficult life trials. They organize activities, introduce meaningful assessments, reflect the aspects of reality, correlate with the perceptions of the ideal, the desired, standards, and give meaning to human life (Smelser, 1994).

It should be mentioned that a concept of value orientations comes from a concept of values. This is attitude to values, approval or denial of certain values. Value orientations are stable representations. They are influenced by the environment. According to A.G. Zdravomyslov and M. Weber, value orientations are a complex psychological phenomenon; they characterize the worldview of a person (Zdravomyslov, 1994; Weber, 1990). Thus, analyzing the works of scientists, we can conclude that a "value" is a desirable, personally preferable state of social relations, the principles of social relations, a criterion of the assessment of real phenomena; values determine the meaning, purposeful activity and thereby regulate social interactions. Values form ideals and motivate a person. They are a center of determining people's behavior.

The study of value orientations forming the spiritual life of students and the identification of preferences during the period of study in an educational institution is one of the most urgent problems of modern sociology. It is known that social value orientations are characterized by the subjective refraction of social life values in the individual consciousness of people in this society (Toshchenko, 2001). Indeed, taking into account the diversity of interests and needs, the knowledge of spiritual culture, goals, values, and programs of action are important prerequisites for determining the value orientations of a person (Bakshantovskii, 2003). In other words, social value orientations present an objective and specific expression of social mood. Social mood of a subject changes together with the social values that are important to him/her. Values change dramatically when a person begins to understand the essence of material and spiritual forms of wealth. Social value orientations formed by the consumption

market increase the social status of a person, but do not always improve his/her social mood. But if the moral values of society do not provide the necessary material wealth, the mood of people is characterized by different types of intrapersonal discomfort. For example, between society and the needs of a person. Thus, values and social mood of a person are interrelated and affect each other.

In modern society, where the material wealth has become a reason for the existence of a person, the life requirements of the younger generation and then the value orientations of the younger generation in general and students in particular are formed accordingly. Students are the most educated, intellectual part of the youth. They are self-confident, purposeful, easy outgoing, they have a sense of novelty. On the other hand, "students are the part of society that reacts vehemently to negative consequences and changes in our society" (Karpukhin, 1995). Thus, in the opinion of O.I. Karpukhin, students are the part of society that is the most sensitive to various changes in this society (Karpukhin, 1995).

V.T. Lisovskii specifies the main features of students:

"1) the general kind of cognitive activity: the learning activity, which, in combination with research activities, forms a specific social background for the life activity of this social group; 2) students are particularly involved in social and political activities; 3) students have their own specific subculture" (Lisovskii, 1998). Students are united by common interests and a high intellectual potential. Higher education plays an important role – it should form such qualities as the ability to be critical of oneself, first of all, and be ready for cooperation, dialogue. A student should be more stress-resistant to the factors that complicate the process of socialization in society. These factors remain as follows: the uncertainty of employment in the field of study, financial difficulties, the social "income" stratification in the student environment (Lenin, 1983). In another work, Lisovskii V.T. gives the following definition of the youth: the generation of people passing through the stage of socialization, assimilating educational, professional, cultural and other social functions (Lisovskii, 1998). Actually, students are a socio-demographic group identified on the basis of a set of age peculiarities and features of social conditions. Youth as a life cycle stage is biologically universal. "The age range of youth, the relevant social status and socio-psychological characteristics are socio-historical in nature and depend on the social system, culture and socialization laws specific to this society" (Lisovskii, 1998).

The socially mature personality of a student is characterized not only by the depth of professional knowledge, but also by the breadth of humanitarian training, cultural outlook, the wealth of feelings and the level of moral cultural development (Lisovskii, 2015). According to Toshchenko Zh.T., the consciousness of the youth is influenced by various factors: economic, social, political factors, because students are characterized by the instability of social orientations and life positions (Toshchenko, 2010). Individualism is a typical feature of a student. Personality is important as much as he/she has managed to fulfill his/her own potential within the individual value system. Lisovskii V.T. writes: "The social usefulness of personality as an integral element of the collectivist value system is becoming less important for modern students" (Lisovskii, 1996). Another characteristic feature of modern students is little interest in politics, apathy, and the lack of faith in the effectiveness of political reforms. Students do not believe in socio-economic transformations of the country and this is manifested in the instability of life, the inability of the youth to predetermine the course of future events. The value system is changing; the interests are focused on the household sphere, pragmatic attitudes become more prevalent. Lisovskii V.T. determines the following steps to the position of a mature professional:

I. Familiarizing with the general rules of university life, adaptation to the student group and the nature of student activity;

II. Familiarizing with the content of professional activities within the university;

III. Adaptation to the nature and conditions of the actual professional activity after graduation from the university" (Lisovskii, 1996).

In this case the objective conditions and circumstances are used as effective means of forming a specialist. A higher education teacher plays an important role. According to the all-Russian study conducted by Toshchenko Zh.K., most teachers are satisfied with the choice of their profession. These are people, who are devoted to their profession, actively accepting innovative ideas in methods of teaching their subject, they are creatively engaged in the education of students. "Although two-thirds of teachers believe that their profession is assessed in society as unpromising". It is disturbing that every fifth teacher is sure that he/she should find personal fulfillment by using other opportunities, setting up a business, and thereby he/she will achieve greater success in life (Toshchenko, 2001). Therefore, the role of a higher education teacher increases. It should be noted that the society does not consider the education as an impact on a person with the purpose of forming the qualities necessary for an educator, higher education institution, and society. It is believed that education should be considered as a process of creating the necessary conditions for self-fulfillment of a person when studying at a higher education institution. The main task of higher school is to develop and reproduce a special cultural social class, intellectual elite (Karpukhin, 1995; Khairullina, 2004; Yatsevich, 2016).

The formation of value orientations of Russian youth is of paramount importance in the life not only of the younger generation, but of the entire society as a whole. In the last 2-3 decades, in Russian society there have been dramatic changes in the socio-economic and socio-cultural areas of the social order, which, in turn, affect attitudes, value orientations, and the worldview of citizens of society, especially of young people (Kosintseva, 2007). A change in the official state ideology, which determined the qualitative characteristics of all spheres of public life for more than seventy years, was one of the conditions for the formation of a free environment that is favorable for any innovations, creativity, conducive to the flourishing of the spiritual and moral orientation in the formation of personality. At the same time, negative tendencies began to appear, which, in our opinion, are inevitable in the transition of society from one social structure to another. Thus, the results of numerous studies in the sphere of sociology, culturology, ethics, pedagogy and psychology show the changes in public attitudes, in the system of values and moral reference points (Yadov, 2005; Kosintseva, 2005). A certain part of the studies identifies disorganization tendencies: as a result of a change in the social structure, the society has primarily lost its ideological and moral foundations that provide stability and create conditions for further development. Chaos in political and public life, individualism, a cult of the material, the devaluation of "eternal" values – this is the modern Russian society (Kosintseva, 2007).

But, on the other hand, researchers have also identified positive changes in attitudes and value orientations. These changes are caused by the fact that the qualities that had not been properly developed previously come to the fore in their significance: initiative, resourcefulness, the ability to think outside the box, to show creativity, striving to achieve one's creative potential (Kuzmen, 2013).

Changes in value orientations that accompany any more or less significant social changes are characterized by a qualitatively new content, on the one hand. At the same time, these innovations do not mean a complete refusal of traditional value orientations and related qualities such as diligence, complaisance, the ability to manage and be subordinate, to restrict one's own impulses, which are against public interests, etc.

Thus, we can talk about the dynamics of the qualitative correlation of values recognized by the society and an individual as significant.

Students are the most dynamic social group in terms of value orientations (Kosintseva, 2005). Firstly, students are a specific mobile social group, a specific community of people, who are united by one organization – a higher education institution. The commonality of students as a social group is determined by value orientations, which are connected both with the process of education in a higher education institution and the acquisition of professional education. Secondly, students cover a rather wide age period from 17 to 25 years old and nowadays the students' age threshold increases due to the acquisition of the second higher education,

retraining, etc. Thus, students present a group, whose age-related objective is to actively develop the worldview, values and value orientations.

Thus, the research of value orientations forming the spiritual life of students during their studies in an educational institution is one of the most pressing problems of modern sociology.

2. Methods

A cross-sectional experimental study was conducted in order to analyze the dynamics of students' value orientations during their studies in the higher education institution. The students of the 1-4 years of study at the Tyumen State Oil and Gas University (TSOGU) (2004) and the students of the Siberian Institute of Management (SibIM) (2013) participated in the study. 186 people in total were involved in the study.

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- to conduct an informative analysis of value orientations;
- to identify the most pressing problems of modern students;
- to compile a social portrait of a student.

The results of a sociological study conducted at the Tyumen State Oil and Gas University (TSOGU) in 2004 and a sociological study conducted at the premises of the Siberian Institute of Management (SibIM) in 2013 have been used in the article (Kuzmen, 2013). Full-time students of the 1-4 years of study participated in the questionnaire survey.

The study was conducted with respect to the following values:

- life goals (the possibility of moving abroad after graduation from the higher education institution);
 - attitude to religion,
 - pressing problems (most disturbing problems);
 - behavior in an unforeseen frustrating situation;
 - attitude to bad habits;
 - evaluation of one's own health;
 - family values;
 - the value of education, the acquisition of higher education, satisfaction with the chosen profession.
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3. Results

The analysis of the students' life goals showed that 3.2% of students were contemplating moving abroad in 2004; 11% of the students – in 2013.

The results of the analysis of values and value orientations were as follows: - as for religion: in 2004, 55% of students were believers, while in 2013 – 73%; as for healthy lifestyle: in 2004, 24.2% of students had negative attitude to the use of drugs, 1.1% of students had positive attitude, and 74.7% considered the use of drugs as a strictly personal matter; in 2013, 96% of students had negative attitude to the use of drugs, and 4% considered it possible to use drugs.

- the level of students' satisfaction with their health condition in 2004: 48% of students were satisfied with their health condition, 1% of students were not satisfied with their health condition; in 2013, 23% of students were satisfied with their health condition, while 5% were not satisfied with it;

- the value of family: in 2003, 32.8% of students were satisfied with their family relations, in

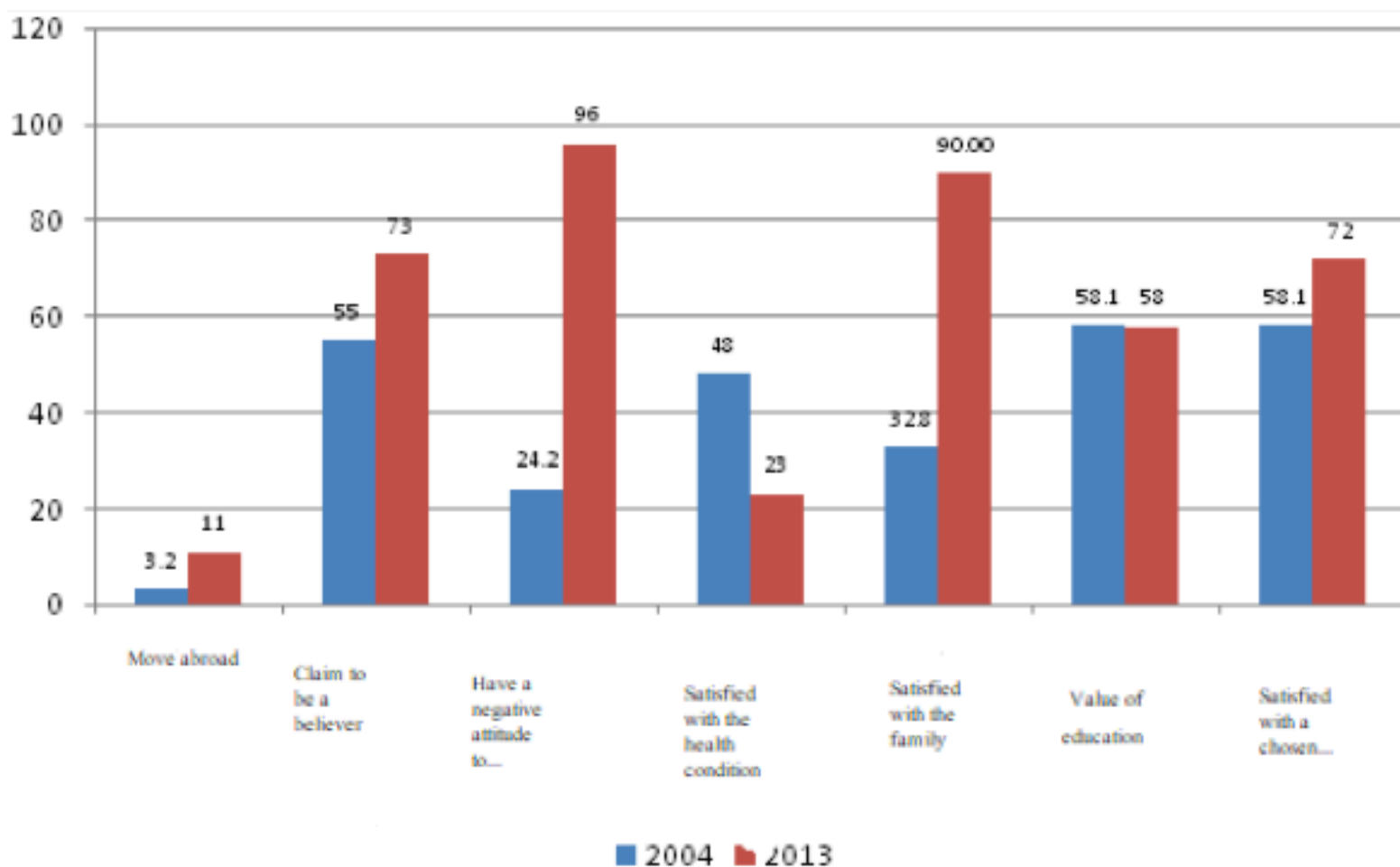
2014, 90% of students were satisfied with their family relations;

- the value of education, the acquisition of higher education, satisfaction with the chosen profession: in 2003, 58.1% of students noted the value of higher education and training, in 2014 – 58%. In 2003, only 58.1% of students were satisfied with their chosen profession, in 2014 – 72%.

The distribution of the proportion of examinees in accordance with value orientations is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Distribution of the proportion of students by chosen value orientations



The analysis of the data presented in Figure 1 allows drawing a conclusion that the proportion of students, who consider themselves believers, have negative attitude to drugs, satisfied with their family life and chosen profession, has increased in 2013 in comparison with 2004 ($p < 0.01$).

The proportion of students, who are satisfied with their health condition, has decreased from 48 to 23 ($p < 0.01$). In our opinion, this is due not so much to the actual deterioration in the health condition as to the increased demands on appearance, body and health condition, the increased prestige of healthy lifestyle, taking more care of health.

The value of education has remained unchanged – more than 50% of students consider education an important period of their life, a valuable period during which they gain experience and knowledge.

Despite the fact that in 2013 the proportion of students satisfied with the chosen profession increased, however, a financial aspect of the profession also remained important, and even its importance among young men increased in 2013, compared with young men in 2004.

Characterizing the life goals of modern students, we can conclude that the proportion of students, who plan to move abroad in future, increased from 3.4% up to 11% in 2013.

The analysis of the most urgent problems of modern students allowed obtaining the following data:

- In 2004, students were worried about the instability (32.3%), financial problems (49.5%),

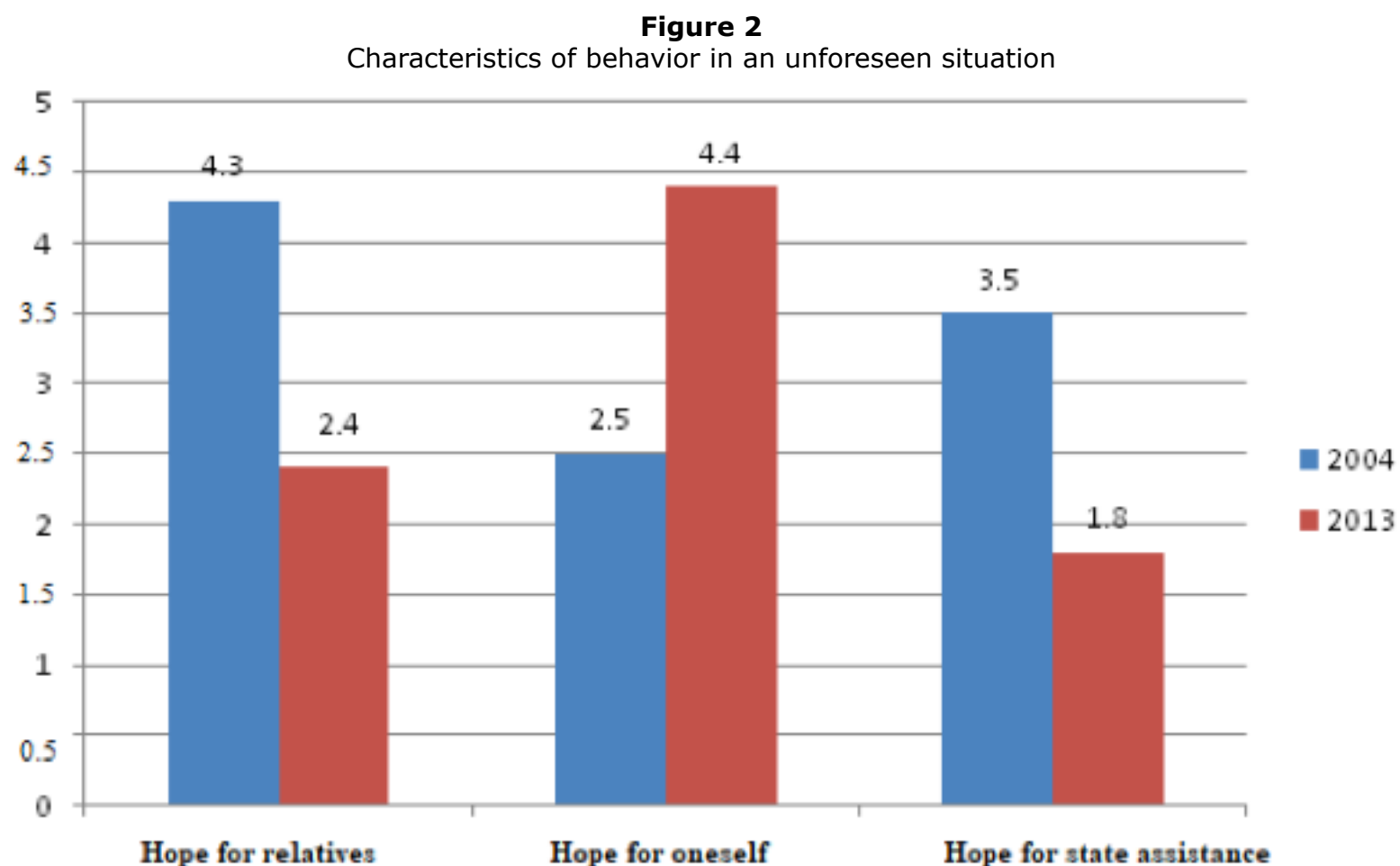
personal problems (42.5%), and criminality (33.3%).

- In 2013, students had the same concerns, but the proportion of students, who were worried about criminality, decreased to 28% ($p < 0.01$).

The analysis of characteristics of behavior in an unforeseen situation (problematic situation) showed that:

- 67.2% (2004) and 20% (2013) will count on help and support of relatives and friends;
- 33.9% (2004) and 20% (2013) will count on themselves;
- 3.2% (2004) and 5% (2013) will count on state assistance.

The obtained data are presented in Figure 2.



Based on the analysis of the data presented in Figure 2, it should be noted that in 2013 students expressed hope for state assistance more often than hope for relatives and themselves.

4. Discussion

Students as a group is characterized by their exposure to any social changes, since young people are focused on the new, they reject old traditions and forms of life activity. Students have always been the most politically active part of the population, a core of rebellious spirit, innovations, changes (Kosintseva, 2007). Students are the main strategic resource of society, because the future of the country and society depends on them. Students will define an image, outlook, and values of future generations. Therefore, the content of those values that are formed among students is of significant importance now. In modern society, the mechanism of formation of students' value orientations is constantly undergoing changes, since the old rules of behavior are changing, new value orientations are still being formed and thus there is a collision of old and new changes.

The study of problems of value orientations is caused by practical needs, since negative manifestations have a direct impact on the role structure of modern Russian society. A problem of the study of value orientations, regulators of social life that regulate the activities of a person and determine human behavior, is pressing in modern science (Bichenko, 2009). Scientists

analyze the theoretical aspects of the formation of value orientations and their impact on the behavior of a person and society; empirical studies of the values of various population categories were conducted (O.G. Drobnitsky, V.P. Tugarinov). The analysis of the dynamics of value orientations during the transformation of society was conducted under the supervision of N.I. Lapin. The analysis of the results of the study of the content of value orientations in Russia is presented in the works of A.V. Andreenkova, L.G. Ionin, Yu.A. Levada, V.A. Yadov, V.S. Magun and others (Bichenko, 2009).

Since the 1960s, the value orientations of the youth in general and students in particular have been actively studied in the works of S.N. Ikonnikova, I.S. Kon, V.F. Levicheva, E.E. Levanov, V.T. Lisovskii, V.G. Nemirovskii and others. Modern studies of value orientations of students are presented in the works of I.V. Vasenina, V.I. Dobrynina, T.N. Kukhtevich, N.L. Smakotina, E.A. Grishina, I.S. Bolotin and others (Bichenko, 2009).

Students have always been the most educated, intelligent and dynamic part of the youth. They have always had such qualities as self-confidence, purposefulness, and a sense of novelty. These positive qualities of young people come into conflict with the unfavorable socio-economic environment that has been formed in Russia in recent years. Therefore, at this stage it is important to identify and understand the values that regulate the life of young people, their own value orientations (Kosintseva, 2007). Students are the most vulnerable part of society. The lack of life experience makes them easy prey for criminal structures, becomes a reason for the inadequate response to the experienced difficulties. The role of higher education institutions, which perform socio-economic and moral functions, becomes greater in these conditions. The role of the organization of students' leisure activities aimed at the development and self-improvement of a person, contributing to the creation of socio-cultural values, becomes greater. The acquisition of the spiritual values is inherent in the implementation of the continuity of different cultures, the implementation of moral-aesthetic cultural standards in various types of activities, forms of communication and behavior (Kosintseva, 2005).

5. Conclusion

Thus, as a result of the study, we have compiled a social portrait of a representative of modern students.

Religion is important for a modern student; a young man is primarily a believer, who claims to be a member of a particular denomination. Family, family relations, education and the acquisition of a profession are valuable for modern students. At the same time, they tend to choose an interesting profession, which will allow them to develop. Furthermore, a financial aspect of professional activity is of considerable importance – modern students are practical in choosing their future; the orientation towards a financial aspect of profession is more typical for young men than for young woman. Modern students see their future in Russia. Financial and personal problems are the most urgent ones for modern students. Health and healthy lifestyle compose an important sphere of life of a modern student and this is manifested in negative attitude to various kinds of addictions, bad habits that are considered not only a strictly personal matter, as well as in special health care - more careful, diligent and delicate. In a problematic situation, modern students are less likely to count on support of relatives and friends, but, at the same time, they do not tend to solve their problems independently, and this shows somewhat infantile attitude of modern students.

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1. Tyumen State Medical University, 625023, Russia, Tyumen, Odesskaya Street, 54

2. Tyumen Industrial University, 625000, Russia, Tyumen, Volodarskogo Street, 38

3. Tyumen State University, 625003, Russia, Tyumen, Semakova Street, 10

4. Tyumen State University, 625003, Russia, Tyumen, Semakova Street, 10

5. Ufa State Petroleum Technological University, 450062, Russia, Republic of Bashkortostan, Ufa, Kosmonavtov Str., 1

6. State Northern Trans-Urals Agrarian University, 625003, Russia, Tyumen, Republic Street, 7

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