

Socio-psychological differences in the perception of family traditions between generations in Karakalpakstan

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of socio-psychological differences in the perception of family traditions between the younger and older generations of Karakalpakstan residents. Based on a study of 481 respondents using the Mann-Whitney criterion, it was revealed that with the overall preservation of cultural continuity, young people highly value a number of traditional and modern family rituals. The obtained results indicate a reinterpretation of traditions by young people as a source of cultural identity, psychological stability, and readiness for family life in the context of social transformation.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the issue of improving the socio-psychological preparation of young people for family life is becoming particularly relevant in the context of transforming ethnopsychological tasks of youth policy and the increasing influence of globalization processes in a multipolar world. The institution of family is undergoing significant changes, which is manifested in the transformation of marital and family attitudes, a decline in birth rates, an increase in the number of divorces, and a weakening of intergenerational ties.

Even in countries with a high level of socio-economic development, the family faces serious challenges that threaten its stability and reproductive function. For instance, in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the average age at first marriage is 31.5 years for women and 33-35 years for men, while in countries such as Sweden, France, Spain, and Norway, this figure reaches 34-35 years for women and 36-37 years for men [14]. The fertility rate in OECD countries ranges from 1.3 to 1.6 children per woman, with a demographically necessary level of 2.1, while in South Korea it has decreased to a critical level of 0.78 [13].

In light of these global trends, analyzing the role of traditions in maintaining the psychological stability of families takes on particular scientific significance. Within the cultural context of Karakalpakstan, traditions serve not only a cultural and ceremonial function, but also act as a psychological regulator, shaping stable models for perceiving marriage, family roles, and intergenerational interactions. They establish norms, expectations, and behavioral patterns, reducing uncertainty and anxiety in marital relationships while providing a sense of stability and security [3].

The involvement of spouses in the traditional model of family relations contributes to role consistency, strengthens trust, and fosters a stable family identity. In a collectivist culture, marriage is viewed not only as a union between two individuals but also as a merger of two families and lineages, which imbues marital relationships with additional social and value-based meaning.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

In the context of Karakalpakstan's culture, traditions serve not merely a cultural and ceremonial function - they become a psychological anchor, shaping the internal structure of marriage perception. Traditions themselves represent a set of established behavioral and value patterns that define expectations, norms, and rules for spousal interaction. It is through these traditions that consistent views on marital roles, boundaries of acceptable behavior, and ways of expressing love and respect are formed. The more deeply spouses are integrated into the traditional model, the more

predictable their interactions become. This creates a sense of stability, clarity, and consequently, security in the relationship. When both partners consciously adhere to familiar cultural codes (such as respecting elders, seeking family counsel, preserving matchmaking rituals, and celebrating ceremonies according to national customs), it reduces uncertainty and anxiety, thereby strengthening trust. Psychologically, tradition functions as an external regulator, diminishing the need for constant renegotiation of marital roles. Spouses don't need to repeatedly agree on fundamental aspects - they follow rules that have proven their viability over centuries. This conserves psychological resources and reduces conflicts. Furthermore, following tradition instills a sense of belonging to something greater than just personal relationships - a feeling of inclusion in culture, history, and community, which elevates the significance of marriage itself. This is particularly important in the context of collective expectations: in traditional culture, marriage is not just a union of two individuals, but a joining of two families, two lineages. When spouses embrace this as a value, their marital satisfaction deepens - after all, they feel they are fulfilling an important cultural mission [1-3].

The aim of the study was to identify differences in the perception of family and marriage traditions between representatives of the younger and older generations of Karakalpakstan residents.

The research hypothesis assumed the existence of statistically significant differences in the perception of traditions between the younger and older generations.

The study involved 481 respondents, of whom 299 were representatives of the younger age group and 182 were from the older age group. To assess the significance of differences, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples was used, which was due to the non-normal distribution of data.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of 32 traditions [4, 5, 8, 9, 12] reflecting various aspects of family, marriage, and reproductive culture in Karakalpakstan, including both traditional and modern ritual practices.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of applying the Mann-Whitney test showed that for most traditions, no statistically significant differences were found between age groups ($p > 0.05$), which indicates the preservation of basic cultural continuity. At the same time, significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were identified for a number of traditions, which predominantly received higher ratings among representatives of the younger generation:

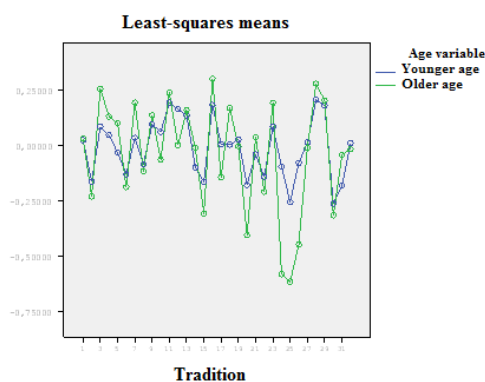


FIGURE. 1. Average scores for traditions in two different age groups

There are significant differences in the perception of the “ransom” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.014$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this tradition differ significantly. The younger age group rates the “ransom” tradition considerably higher at 253.16, compared to the older age group at 221.02.

There are significant differences in the perception of the “Bachelorette party” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.014$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this tradition differ significantly. The younger age group rates the “Bachelorette party” tradition considerably higher at 253.16, compared to the older age group at 221.02.

There are significant differences in the perception of the “celebrating a child’s first birthday” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.007$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this

tradition differ significantly. The younger age group rates the “celebrating a child’s first birthday” tradition considerably higher at 254.38, compared to the older age group at 219.01.

There are significant differences in the perception of the “Love story” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this tradition differ significantly. The younger age group rates the “Love story” tradition considerably higher at 269.65, compared to the older age group at 193.93.

There are significant differences in the perception of the “gender party” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this tradition differ significantly. The younger sample has significantly higher scores for the “gender party” tradition - 261.36, compared to the older sample - 207.55.

There are significant differences in the perception of the “the ceremony of discharging the mother and newborn from the maternity hospital” tradition, with the significance level less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). This indicates that the mean ranks in the two groups for evaluating this tradition differ significantly. In the younger sample, the scores for the “the ceremony of discharging the mother and newborn from the maternity hospital” tradition are significantly higher - 261.63, compared to the older sample - 207.12.

The obtained data indicate a higher positive assessment of both individual traditional rituals and modern cultural formats specifically among young people.

Of particular interest is the tradition of ransom, where higher ratings among young people indicate a reinterpretation of the ritual not as a patriarchal remnant, but as a symbol of respect, serious intentions, and cultural identity. A similar trend can be observed in rituals associated with childbirth, as well as in modern forms of symbolizing family events [1-3]. An interesting and psychologically significant result was obtained regarding the tradition of ransom - the bride price. Contrary to expectations, it was the younger generation who showed a more positive attitude towards this tradition, valuing its significance higher than adults. This observation may seem paradoxical at first glance, but it has deep socio-psychological foundations.

Firstly, for young people, ransom in modern conditions is increasingly perceived not as a patriarchal obligation, but as a symbol of respect, confirmation of the groom's serious intentions and economic readiness for marriage. In this sense, the bride price becomes a kind of ritualized form of recognizing the value of a girl and her family, which resonates with modern needs for emotional validation and a sense of significance [6-7].

Secondly, young people often seek support in tradition as a form of identity, especially in conditions of cultural uncertainty and pressure from global values. In this context, ransom can be perceived as an authentic element that distinguishes “ours” from “foreign” strengthening the sense of belonging to one’s culture.

From a psychological perspective, the positive perception of ransom by young people can also indicate a desire for traditional structured marital roles. In the context of high uncertainty in the modern world, the formalized procedure of matchmaking and bride price creates a sense of predictability, orderliness, and social approval of partner choice. This reduces anxiety associated with making an important life decision [10-11].

It is also interesting that the older generation may evaluate ransom less favorably, as they encounter the practical and financial aspects of the tradition. For them, this ritual can be associated not only with cultural value but also with economic difficulties and an overload of responsibilities, which reduces its psychological appeal. Additionally, adults, especially women, may interpret ransom as a remnant of an archaic model in which a woman is viewed as an object of “transfer” between families.

Thus, a higher appreciation of the ransom tradition among young people reflects not so much a return to patriarchy as a reinterpretation of the tradition as a symbol of respect, stability, and cultural identity. This confirms an important cultural and psychological trend: the youth of Karakalpakstan, being between tradition and modernity, are capable of constructing new meanings within old forms, restoring emotional and symbolic relevance to traditions.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results confirm the proposed hypothesis regarding the presence of statistically significant differences in the perception of individual traditions between the younger and older generations of Karakalpakstan residents.

The identified differences are not superficial but deeply socio-psychological in nature and reflect the transformation of socialization and identity mechanisms in the context of cultural transition. The older generation demonstrates a more stable, integrated perception of traditions as part of their formed self-concept, while young people exhibit a selective and reflective attitude, adapting traditions to modern values and personal meanings.

Paradoxically, the higher appreciation of certain traditional rituals by young people indicates not a rejection of cultural heritage, but its symbolic reinterpretation. Traditions begin to serve as psychological support, reducing uncertainty and anxiety in an unstable social world [13-17].

Thus, the traditions of Karakalpakstan serve as an important resource for the socio-psychological preparation of young people for family life, ensuring a balance between cultural continuity and individualization. Taking into account the identified differences is of fundamental importance in developing family education programs, youth policy, and psychological models for preparing for marriage in the context of cultural transformation.

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