

## Features of the Life Position of Mothers Depending on Their Education and the Child's Age

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### ABSTRACT

**Background.** The socialization of children today is determined not only by macro-trends related to socio-cultural, economic, and techno-evolutionary processes, but also by the specific features of their relationship with parents, peers, and teachers and other adults. It is these relations with the closest social environment that L.S. Vygotsky defined as key to the social situation of a child's development (Vygotsky, 1984). This position also determines the relevance of this study, which analyzes the particular life position of mothers of pupils in primary, middle, and high school. We proceed from the assumption that the mother's life position (her value orientations, emotional well-being, and evaluation of social threats) significantly affects her interaction with her child, largely determining the conceptual context of the process of his or her socialization.

**Objective.** To characterize the distinctive features of the relationship between indicators of life position (values, emotional evaluation of one's success in life, significance of threats posed by the social environment) with the educational status of mothers of boys and girls studying in primary, middle, and high school.

**Design.** The article presents data from analysis of the answers of 285,714 mothers of pupils in primary, middle, and high school to an anonymous survey conducted in various regions of the Russian Federation by staff of the Center for the Sociology of Education's Institute of Education Management, Russian Academy of Education, in 2022. According to the research design, the article focuses on analysis of answers to questions that relate to three indicators of the mother's life position: value orientations, emotional evaluation of the likely success of her future prospects, and evaluation of the significance for herself of various social threats. The answers to these questions are then characterized with regard to the influence of the mother's educational status, as well as the gender and age of the child, on her life position.

**Results.** Generally speaking, mothers with higher education are more optimistic about their life prospects than those with secondary education. Values such as happy family life, successful professional activity, spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one,

raising the level of one's education, striving for self-reliance and independence, and the opportunity for creative work are significantly more important. The factor analysis we performed, taking into account the simultaneous influence of three factors on the life position of the mother (her education, the gender and the age of the child), made it possible to identify the following four substantive factors that characterize her life position: "striving for self-realization — personal insecurity"; "optimism — pessimism"; "microsocial well-being"; and "physical well-being". Grouping the mothers of boys and girls of primary, middle, and high school according to these factors showed that the level of education of the mother fundamentally affects the social content of the child's development in the family. Thus, primary and middle school pupils whose mothers have higher education are situated in a field of positive life attitudes on the part of the adult: striving for self-realization, optimism, the value of a happy family life, and material well-being. On the other hand, their peers whose mothers attained only secondary education see the adult as socially unsuccessful: fearful and uncertain about both her present personal security and her future prospects. The study also found significant substantive transformations in the life position of mothers when their children reached high school.

**Conclusion.** The study allows us to draw a conclusion about the fundamental difference in the social situation of a child's development in families with different levels of the mother's education at different stages of the children's schooling.

**Keywords:** Mothers, pupils, life position, life values, social threats, emotional evaluation of life prospects, social situation of development, gender, age, level of education

#### Highlights:

- Using an anonymous survey of 285,714 mothers of primary, middle, and high school pupils, a large-scale study was conducted to identify the distinctive features of the mothers' life position, where the key indicators were: their value orientations, the significance of various social threats, and the emotional evaluation of their success in life. The findings were analyzed in relation to the influence of the mother's level of education and the age and gender of the child.
- Factor analysis of the results showed that the life positions between mothers with higher and those with secondary education are fundamentally different during their child's education in primary and middle school with respect to such tendencies as striving for self-realization and emotional assessment of the success of their life prospects.
- When implementing a strategy of upward educational mobility of a child from a family with a low level of education, the mother's life value of striving for self-realization plays a fundamental role in the transition from middle to high school.
- Overall, the data allow us to conclude that the mother's educational status has a significant impact on the social content of the child's development at different ages and stages of schooling.

#### АННОТАЦИЯ

**Актуальность.** Своеобразие процесса социализации современного ребенка определяют не только макро-тенденции, касающиеся социокультурных, экономических и техно-эволюционных процессов, но и конкретные особенности его взаимоотношений с родителями, сверстниками, учителями и другими взрослыми. Именно эти отношения со своим ближайшим социальным окружением Л.С. Выготский и определял как ключевые при характеристике социальной ситуации развития ребенка (Выготский, 1984). Принятие этого положения и определяет актуальность проведенного исследования, которое посвящено анализу своеобразия жизненной позиции матерей учащихся начальной, основной и старшей школы. При этом мы исходим из предположения о том, что жизненная позиция матери (ее

ценностные ориентации, эмоциональное благополучие и оценка социальных угроз) существенно влияет на характер взаимодействия с ребенком, во многом определяя смысловой контекст процесса его социализации.

**Цель.** Основная цель исследования состоит в характеристике особенностей взаимосвязей показателей жизненной позиции (ценности, эмоциональная оценка своей жизненной успешности, значимость угроз социальной среды) с образовательным статусом матерей мальчиков и девочек, обучающихся в начальной, основной и старшей школе.

**Процедура.** В статье приведены данные анализа ответов 285 714 матерей учащихся начальной, основной и старшей школы, полученные в ходе анонимного анкетного опроса, который был проведен в различных регионах РФ сотрудниками Центра социологии образования «ИУО РАО» в 2022 г. Согласно дизайну исследования основное внимание в статье уделено анализу ответов на вопросы, которые касаются трех показателей жизненной позиции матери: ценностные ориентации, эмоциональная оценка успешности своих будущих перспектив, оценка значимости для себя тех или иных социальных угроз. Полученные ответы на эти вопросы охарактеризованы относительно особенностей влияния на жизненную позицию матери ее образовательного статуса, а также пола и возраста ребенка.

**Результаты.** Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что в целом матери с высшим образованием по сравнению с теми, кто имеет среднее образование, более оптимистично оценивают успешность своих жизненных перспектив. При этом для них существенно более значимыми оказываются такие ценности как счастливая семейная жизнь, успешная профессиональная деятельность, духовная и физическая близость с любимым человеком, повышение уровня своего образования, стремление к самостоятельности и независимости, возможность творческой деятельности. Материалы проведенного факторного анализа, учитывающие одновременное влияние на жизненную позицию матери трех факторов (ее образование, пол и возраст ребенка) позволили выделить следующие четыре содержательных фактора, характеризующих особенности жизненной позиции: «стремление к самореализации — личностная незащищенность»; «оптимизм — пессимизм»; «микросоциальное благополучие»; «физическое благополучие». Размещение матерей мальчиков и девочек начальной, основной и старшей школы в пространстве выделенных факторов, показало, что уровень образования матери принципиально влияет на содержательные особенности социальной ситуации развития ребенка в семье. Так, учащиеся начальной и основной школы, чьи матери имеют высшее образование, находятся в поле позитивных жизненных установок со стороны взрослого: стремление к самореализации, оптимизм, ценность счастливой семейной жизни и материального благополучия. Напротив, их сверстники, со средним образованием матери, видят взрослого как социально неблагополучного: проявляющего страх и неуверенность относительно как своей личной защищенности в настоящем, так и относительно оценки успешности своих будущих перспектив. Исследование также выявило существенные содержательные трансформации характера жизненной позиции матерей у учащихся старшей школы.

**Выводы.** В целом, проведенное исследование позволяет сделать вывод о принципиальном различии содержания социальной ситуации развития ребенка в семьях с разным уровнем образования матери на различных этапах обучения детей в школе.

**Ключевые слова:** Матери, учащиеся, жизненная позиция, жизненные ценности, социальные угрозы, эмоциональная оценка жизненных перспектив, социальная ситуация развития, пол, возраст, уровень образования

**Ключевые положения:**

- С помощью анонимного анкетного опроса 285 714 матерей учащихся начальной, основной и старшей школы проведено крупномасштабное исследование

дование, направленное на выявление особенностей их жизненной позиции, где в качестве ключевых показателей выступили: характер ценностных ориентаций, значимость различных социальных угроз, эмоциональная оценка своей жизненной успешности. Полученный материал проанализирован относительно влияния уровня образования матери, возраста и пола ребенка.

- Результаты проведенного факторного анализа полученных материалов показали, что содержательные характеристики жизненной позиции матерей с высшим и средним образованием принципиально отличаются на этапе обучения их ребенка в начальной и основной школе относительно таких тенденций как, стремление к самореализации и эмоциональная оценка ими успешности своих жизненных перспектив.
- При реализации стратегии восходящей образовательной мобильности ребенка из семьи с невысоким уровнем образования, на этапе перехода из основной в старшую школу принципиальную роль играет жизненная ценностная установка матери на стремление к самореализации.
- В целом, полученные данные позволяют сделать вывод о существенном влиянии образовательного статуса матери на содержательные особенности социальной ситуации развития ребенка на разных возрастных этапах его обучения в школе.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción.** La socialización de los niños de hoy está determinada no solo por macro tendencias relacionadas con procesos socioculturales, económicos y tecnoevolutivos, sino también por las características específicas de su relación con los padres, pares, docentes y otros adultos. Son estas relaciones con el entorno social más próximo las que L.S. Vygotsky definió como clave para la situación social del desarrollo del niño (Vygotsky, 1984). Este enfoque también determina la relevancia de este estudio, que analiza la particular posición de vida de las madres de alumnos de primaria, secundaria y bachillerato. Partimos del supuesto de que la posición de vida de la madre (sus orientaciones de valor, bienestar emocional y evaluación de amenazas sociales) afecta significativamente la interacción con su hijo, determinando en gran medida el contexto conceptual del proceso de su socialización.

**Objetivo.** Caracterizar los rasgos particulares de la relación entre indicadores de la posición de vida (valores, evaluación emocional del éxito en la vida, importancia de las amenazas del entorno social) y el nivel educativo de madres de chicos y chicas que cursan los estudios en la escuela primaria y secundaria.

**Diseño.** El artículo presenta datos del análisis de las respuestas de 285.714 madres de alumnos de primaria y secundaria a una encuesta anónima realizada en varias regiones de la Federación Rusa por los investigadores del Centro de Sociología de la Educación del Instituto de Gestión Educativa de la Academia Rusa de Educación en 2022. De acuerdo con el diseño de la investigación, el artículo se centra en el análisis de las respuestas a las preguntas que se relacionan con tres indicadores de la posición de vida de la madre: orientaciones de valor, evaluación emocional del éxito probable de sus perspectivas futuras y evaluación de la importancia para ella de diversas amenazas sociales. Las respuestas a estas preguntas se caracterizan luego con respecto a la influencia del nivel educativo de la madre, así como el sexo y la edad del niño, en su posición de vida.

**Resultados.** En términos generales, las madres con educación superior son más optimistas acerca de sus perspectivas de vida que aquellas con educación secundaria. Valores como la vida familiar feliz, la actividad profesional exitosa, la intimidad espiritual y física con el ser querido, el aumento de nivel de educación, la lucha por la autosuficiencia y independencia, y la posibilidad del trabajo creativo son significativamente más importantes. El análisis factorial que realizamos, teniendo en cuenta la influencia simultánea de tres factores en la posición de vida de la madre (su educación, el sexo y la edad del hijo),

permitió identificar los siguientes cuatro factores significativos que caracterizan su posición: “lucha por la autorrealización — inseguridad personal”; “optimismo — pesimismo”; “bienestar microsocioal”; y “bienestar físico”. Al agrupar a las madres de los alumnos de primaria y secundaria, según estos factores se demostró que el nivel educativo de la madre incide fundamentalmente en el contenido social del desarrollo del niño en la familia. Así, los alumnos de primaria y secundaria cuyas madres tienen estudios superiores se sitúan en un campo de actitudes vitales positivas por parte del adulto: la búsqueda de la autorrealización, el optimismo, el valor de la vida familiar feliz y el bienestar material. Por otro lado, sus pares cuyas madres solo obtuvieron educación secundaria ven al adulto como un fracasado social: temeroso e inseguro sobre su seguridad personal actual y sus perspectivas futuras. El estudio también encontró transformaciones sustantivas significativas en la posición de vida de las madres cuando sus hijos llegaban a la escuela secundaria.

**Conclusión.** El estudio permite realizar una conclusión acerca de la diferencia fundamental en la situación social del desarrollo de un niño en las familias con diferentes niveles de educación de la madre en diferentes etapas de la escolaridad de los niños.

**Palabras clave:** Madres, alumnos, posición de la vida, valores de la vida, amenazas sociales, evaluación emocional de las perspectivas de la vida, situación social del desarrollo, sexo, edad, nivel de educación

#### Destacados:

- Utilizando una encuesta anónima a 285.714 madres de alumnos de primaria y secundaria, se realizó un estudio a gran escala para identificar las características particulares de la posición de la vida de las madres, donde los indicadores clave fueron: sus orientaciones de valor, el significado de varias amenazas sociales y la evaluación emocional de su éxito en la vida. Los hallazgos fueron analizados en relación a la influencia del nivel educativo de la madre, la edad y el sexo del niño.
- El análisis factorial de los resultados mostró que las posiciones de la vida entre las madres con educación superior y secundaria son fundamentalmente diferentes durante la educación de sus hijos en la escuela primaria y secundaria con respecto a tales tendencias como la búsqueda de la autorrealización y evaluación emocional del éxito de sus perspectivas de vida.
- Al implementar una estrategia de movilidad educativa ascendente de un niño de una familia con bajo nivel educativo, el valor de vida de la madre de luchar por la autorrealización juega un papel fundamental en la transición de la escuela secundaria a la sénior.
- En general, los datos permiten concluir que el nivel educativo de la madre tiene un impacto significativo en el contenido social del desarrollo del niño en diferentes edades y etapas de escolaridad.

#### RESUME

**Origines.** La particularité du processus de socialisation d'un enfant moderne est déterminée non seulement par les macro-tendances liées aux processus socioculturels, économiques et techno-évolutifs, mais également par les caractéristiques spécifiques de sa relation avec les parents, ses pairs, les enseignants et les autres adultes. Ce sont ces relations avec son environnement social le plus proche que L.S. Vygotsky a défini comme essentiels pour caractériser la situation sociale du développement d'un enfant (Vygotsky, 1984). L'acceptation de cette disposition détermine la pertinence de l'étude qui est consacrée à l'analyse de l'originalité de la position de vie des mères d'élèves des écoles primaires, fondamentales et secondaires. En même temps, nous partons de l'hypothèse que la position de vie de la mère (ses orientations de valeurs, son bien-être émotionnel et son évaluation des menaces sociales) affecte de manière significative la nature de l'interaction avec l'enfant, déterminant largement le contexte sémantique du processus de sa socialisation.

**Objectif.** Le but principal de cette étude est de caractériser les caractéristiques de la relation entre les indicateurs de position de vie (valeurs, évaluation émotionnelle de sa réussite dans la vie, importance des menaces pour l'environnement social) et le statut éducatif des mères de garçons et de filles qui font leurs études à l'école primaire, au collège et au lycée.

**Mise au point.** L'article présente les données de l'analyse des réponses de 285 714 mères d'élèves du primaire, du collège et du lycée à une enquête anonyme menée dans diverses régions de la Fédération de Russie par le personnel de l'Institut de gestion de l'éducation du Centre de sociologie de l'éducation auprès de l'Académie de l'Éducation de Russie, en 2022. Selon la conception de la recherche, l'article se concentre sur l'analyse des réponses aux questions relatives à trois indicateurs de la position de vie de la mère : les orientations de valeur, l'évaluation émotionnelle du succès probable de ses perspectives et l'évaluation de l'importance pour elle-même des diverses menaces sociales. Les réponses à ces questions sont ensuite caractérisées à l'égard de l'influence du statut scolaire de la mère, ainsi que du sexe et de l'âge de l'enfant, sur sa position de vie.

**Résultats.** En général les résultats obtenus indiquent que les mères possédant la formation supérieure, par rapport à celles ayant que la formation secondaire (bac), sont plus optimistes à l'égard de la réussite de leurs perspectives de vie. Dans le même temps, des valeurs telles qu'une vie de famille heureuse, une activité professionnelle réussie, une proximité spirituelle et physique avec un être aimé, l'élévation du niveau de leur éducation, la recherche d'indépendance et d'une activité créative sont bien plus significatif pour elles. Les matériaux de l'analyse factorielle menée, tenant compte de l'influence simultanée de trois facteurs sur la position de vie de la mère (son éducation, le sexe et l'âge de son enfant), ont permis d'identifier les quatre facteurs significatifs suivants qui définissent les caractéristiques de la position de vie : « *le désir d'accomplissement de soi — l'insécurité personnelle* » ; « *optimisme — pessimisme* » ; « *bien-être microsocial* » ; « *bien-être physique* ». Le placement des mères de garçons et de filles des écoles primaires, fondamentales et secondaires dans l'espace des facteurs identifiés a montré que le niveau d'éducation de la mère affecte fondamentalement les caractéristiques de contenu de la situation sociale du développement de l'enfant dans la famille. Ainsi, les élèves du primaire et du secondaire, dont les mères ont une formation supérieure, se situent dans le domaine des attitudes de vie positives de la part d'un adulte : le désir d'accomplissement de soi, l'optimisme, l'appréciation d'une vie de famille heureuse et du bien-être matériel. Au contraire, leurs pairs, dont la mère ayant la formation secondaire, voient l'adulte comme socialement défavorisé : montrant de la peur et de l'incertitude à la fois à l'égard de sa sécurité personnelle dans le présent et sur l'évaluation du succès de ses perspectives. L'étude a également révélé des transformations significatives dans la nature de la position de vie des mères chez les élèves de l'école secondaire.

**Conclusion.** En général, l'étude nous permet de conclure qu'il existe une différence fondamentale dans le contenu de la situation sociale du développement d'un enfant dans les familles avec différents niveaux d'éducation de la mère à différents stades de l'éducation des enfants à l'école.

**Mots-clés:** Mères, écoliers, position de vie, valeurs de vie, menaces sociales, évaluation émotionnelle des perspectives de vie, situation sociale de développement, sexe, âge, niveau d'éducation

#### Points principaux:

- À l'aide d'une enquête par questionnaire anonyme auprès de 285 714 mères d'élèves de l'école primaire, au collège et au lycée, une étude à grande échelle a été menée visant à identifier les caractéristiques de leur position de vie, où les indicateurs clés sont suivants : la nature des orientations de valeurs, la signification de diverses menaces sociales, l'évaluation émotionnelle de leur succès dans la vie. Le matériel obtenu a été analysé en relation avec l'influence du niveau d'éducation de la mère, de l'âge et du sexe de l'enfant.



- Les résultats de l'analyse factorielle des matériaux obtenus ont montré que les caractéristiques de contenu de la position de vie des mères ayant la formation supérieure et secondaire sont fondamentalement différentes au stade de l'éducation de leur enfant à l'école primaire et secondaire par rapport à des tendances telles que le désir d'accomplissement de soi et leur évaluation émotionnelle du succès de leurs perspectives de vie.
- Lors de la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de mobilité scolaire ascendante d'un enfant issu d'une famille à faible niveau d'éducation, au stade de la transition du primaire au secondaire, l'orientation de la valeur vitale de la mère sur le désir d'accomplissement de soi joue un rôle fondamental.
- Dans son ensemble, les données obtenues nous permettent de conclure que le statut éducatif de la mère a un impact significatif sur les caractéristiques de contenu de la situation sociale du développement de l'enfant à différents stades d'âge de sa scolarité.

## **Introduction**

The relevance of this work is largely associated with one of the most significant topics in contemporary psychological and pedagogical research: the socialization of the younger generation. The process of a child's socialization is closely related to the parents' social well-being, their life position, which to a large extent determines the social content of the child's development (Sobkin, 1997; Sobkin & Marich, 2002; Sobkin & Pisarsky, 1992; Sobkin, Skobeltsina, Ivanova, & Veriasova, 2013; Vygotsky, 1984). This study is also important for understanding the context of contemporary socio-economic changes that characterize the current situation of child development at the level of macro-trends: greater economic inequality, social differentiation, ambiguity of processes in educational policy (Belavina, 2009; Belova & Kartseva, 2013; Rean, Kurdashev, & Baranov, 2022; Sobkin, 1997; Sobkin, Abrosisomva, Adamchuk, & Baranova, 2005; Vandanova, 2018). Sociocultural changes in the contemporary Russian family also play an important role here, associated with: the institutionalization of non-marital motherhood, the frequency of single-motherhood, low birth rates, the increase in the number of dysfunctional families, trends toward the "westernization" of the lifestyle of modern parents, which is expressed in the diversification and fragmentation of family practices (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn, 2004; Makhnach, 2019; Polomoshnov & Kravtsova, 2022; Sobkin & Marich, 2002; Sobkin, Skobeltsina, Ivanova, & Veryasova, 2013; Van de Kaa, 2010).

Furthermore, as reviews of publications of contemporary foreign psychological and sociological studies show (Shapovalenko, 2022), the relationship between parenthood and the individual's psychological well-being are being actively discussed (Levesque, Bisson, Charton, & Fernet, 2020; Mikucka & Rizzi, 2020; Ryan & Padilla, 2019; Simpson & Rholes, 2019; Young, Roberts, & Ward, 2019). This connection was also described in a review of studies of the subjective image of motherhood (Kulikov, Malenova, & Potapova, 2020), which changes under the influence of life plans, circumstances, external and internal factors such as cultural traditions, value orientations, notions of personal success, career, and well-being in interpersonal relationships in the close social environment.

Based on our many years of research, we believe that parents' life position can be expressed by such indicators as: priorities in life values, emotional assessment of one's future, and the significance of various social risks. The indicators of life position that we developed have been used in our studies of participants in the educational process since the early 1990s and have shown high content validity regarding the influence of demographic factors and social stratification. This has been confirmed by sociological analysis in cross-cultural studies of the value orientations of adolescents, teachers, and parents (Fedotova, 2016; Sobkin, 1998; Sobkin & Pisarsky, 1992; Sobkin & Smyslova, 2014), deviant manifestations (Sobkin, Abrosimova, Adamchuk, & Baranova, 2004), self-determination of adolescents (Sobkin, 1997; Sobkin 2006; Sobkin & Vaganova, 2006), vocational guidance (Sobkin & Kalashnikova, 2019; 2020), and parents of preschoolers (Sobkin & Marich, 2002; Sobkin, Skobeltina, Ivanova, & Veryasova, 2013).

But perhaps the most important thing that determines the relevance of this study is its general focus on identifying the mutual influences of institutions of the family and the school in the socialization of the child. The practical significance of the study is in improving the interaction between the family and the school in organizing the educational process (Guzman & Beznosyuk, 2022; Tsvetkova, 2017).

The objective of this study is to characterize the distinctive features of the relationship between indicators of life position (values, emotional evaluation of one's success in life, the significance of threats posed by the social environment) with the educational status of mothers of boys and girls studying in primary, middle, and high school.

## **Methods**

The study used data from an anonymous electronic sociological survey of 302,117 parents of pupils in grades 1–11 at general schools from 85 regions of the Russian Federation; it was conducted by staff of the Center for the Sociology of Education's Institute of Education Management, Russian Academy of Education, in 2022. The study examined the answers of 285,714 mothers of primary, middle, and high school students to closed-ended questions in a questionnaire that address three indicators of a mother's life position: value orientations, emotional assessment of the likely success of her future prospects, and evaluation of the significance for herself of various social threats.

To identify significant values, the following question was asked: "Which of the following life values are the most significant for you?" The respondents could choose from several possible answers: health; successful professional activity; spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one; achievement of material well-being; having close friends; raising one's cultural level; self-reliance and independence; happy family life; opportunity for creative work; raising the level of one's education; a good relationship with one's parents; respect of others.

The emotional evaluation of the likely success of one's future prospects was determined by the question: "Everyone evaluates their personal prospects differently. Can you say that in general: 1) you look forward to tomorrow with confidence and opti-



mism; 2) you have your doubts that life will turn out well; 3) you anticipate tomorrow with fear and pessimism?

To identify the attitude to threats from the social environment, the following question was posed: “What scares you the most?” The respondents could choose no more than three of the proposed answers for what is most significant to them: crime; unemployment; hunger and poverty; lack of social protection; extremism; military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts; tightening of the regime in the country; deterioration of the foreign political situation; epidemics (coronavirus, HIV) and other infectious diseases.

The answers to these questions are analyzed with respect to the mother’s educational level, and the gender and age of the child. We studied subsamples of mothers with different educational status (higher education 50.4%, specialized secondary education 40.4%; secondary education 10.2%). This article provides a comparative analysis of the responses of mothers with higher and secondary levels of education. Table 1 shows the distribution of subsamples, taking into account the level of the mother’s education, and the gender and age of the child.

Table 1

*Distribution of Respondents in Subsamples by Level of Education, Age and Gender of Child, %*

STATUS	GENDER	GRADE										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
S/E	boy	5.8	12.2	12.2	12.5	10.0	11.2	11.9	10.6	9.3	1.9	2.3
	girl	5.1	10.5	12.1	12.7	9.6	12.1	11.2	10.7	9.9	3.0	3.1
H/E	boy	5.8	11.4	12.4	13.4	8.2	11.8	10.3	9.7	8.7	3.7	4.7
	girl	5.8	11.4	12.4	13.1	8.0	11.4	10.7	9.2	8.9	4.1	5.0

*Note. The table shows the percentage distribution of subsamples of mothers of students by level of education S/E = secondary education; H/E = higher education; gender of the child (boy, girl); age = grade in school).*

In addition to considering the distribution of answers to the questions posed by different subsamples of respondents (about values, success in life, social threats), we used factor analysis of the statistical materials to identify meaningful features of the indicators of the mothers’ life position. The answers in the subsamples of mothers with higher and secondary education of boys and girls studying in grades 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11 were subjected to factor analysis (principal component analysis with axis rotation according to the varimax Kaiser criterion).

The differences discussed in the article are significant at the level  $p \leq .05$ .

### Results and Discussion

The results are grouped into two sections. The first presents data analysis about the distribution of respondents’ answers to the three questions that determine the particular life position (values, emotional evaluation of success, social risks). The second

describes the results of factor analysis of respondents' answers, taking into account the level of the mother's education, and the gender and age of the child.

### I. Mothers' Answers to Questions That Identify Their Particular Life Position

*Life values.* The general distribution of the schoolchildren's mothers' answers to the question about life values showed that "health" (91.4%) and "happy family life" (61.6%) are the most important for them. One out of three respondents answered "achievement of material well-being" (34.1%) or "successful professional activity" (32.4%). One out of four or five indicated "self-reliance and independence" (24.5%); "respect of others" (21.6%); "having friends" (18.3%). The following are in descending order of importance: "raising the level of one's education" (13.0%); "spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one" (12.2%); "raising one's cultural level" (8.9%); "opportunity for creative work" (6.8%).

Figure 1 shows the results of a comparative analysis of responses by level of the mothers' education.

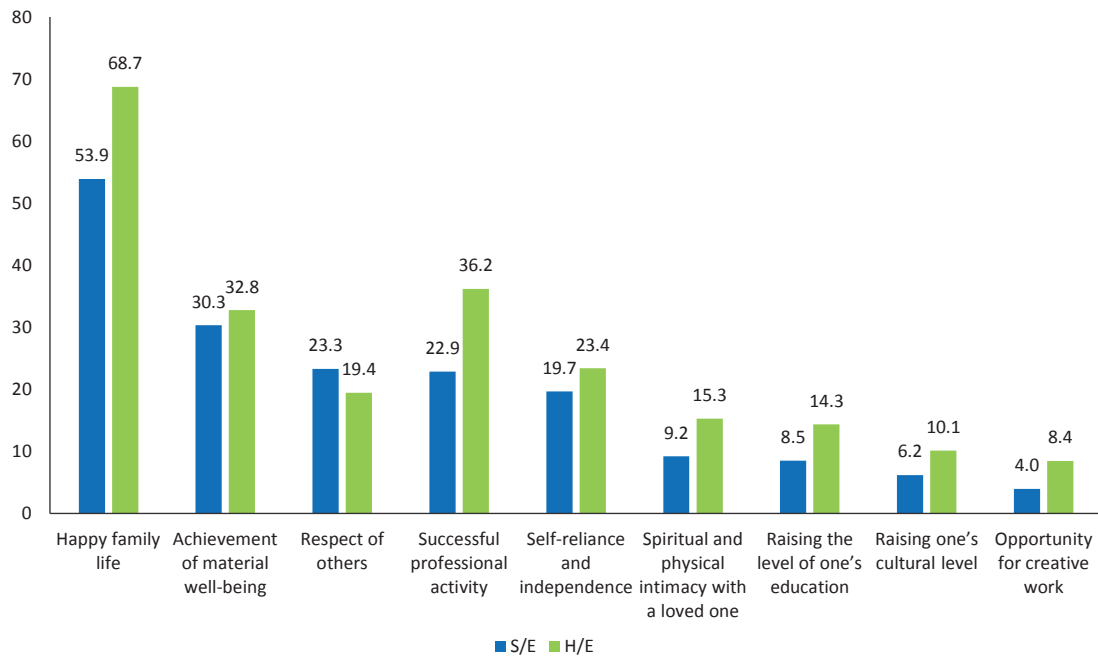


Figure 1. Significant differences in the priorities of life values among subsamples by educational status of the mother, %

Note. S/E = secondary education; H/E = higher education

The figure shows that the values associated with personal and professional growth (striving for self-realization) are more characteristic of mothers with higher education, while mothers with secondary education more often note the importance of maintaining social status in the microsocial environment ("respect of others").

Consideration of the age dynamics of changes in the significance of various values showed that as the child grows older, mothers consistently place more emphasis

on successful professional activity and less on the importance of a happy family life (Figure 2).

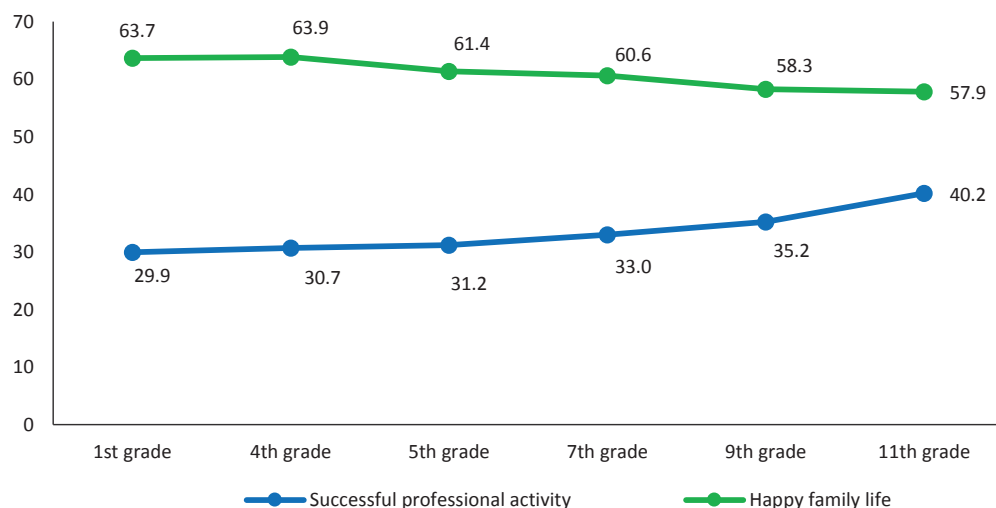


Figure 2. Dynamics of changes in the importance of life values in mothers, depending on the age of the child, %

An additional analysis of the data shows that the decline in importance of “a happy family life” with as the child grows older is mainly observed among mothers with higher education: 70.4% for mothers of first-graders, and 63.5% for mothers of 11th-graders; whereas for mothers with secondary education it is 52.8% and 50.1%, respectively. At the same time, the importance of “successful professional activity” among mothers with higher education consistently increases with the age of the child from the first grade to 11th grade (33.4% of mothers of first graders and 43.8% of mothers of 11th graders), whereas for mothers with a secondary education, a similar increase in the significance of “successful professional activity” occurs only at the child’s transition to high school (24.6% for mothers of ninth graders and 34.0% for mothers of 11th graders).

*Emotional evaluation of success in life.* In analyzing the answers to the question about the emotional assessment of one’s prospects, we found that the majority of the mothers surveyed are optimistic about their future: “I look forward to tomorrow with confidence and optimism” (80.7%). At the same time, one out of six “doubts that life will turn out well” (16.4%). And, finally, only a few (2.9%) clearly evaluate their life prospects negatively (“with fear and pessimism”).

The data of comparative analysis in the subsamples by level of education indicate that mothers with secondary education have a more negative assessment of their life prospects (Figure 3).

Analysis of the influence of the child’s age indicates a clear decrease in “optimism” in mothers with higher education. Whereas 85.9% of mothers of first-graders are optimistic about their life prospects, that is true of 78.4% of mothers of 11th-graders. In parallel, the proportion of those who are “uncertain” about their future

(11.7% and 17.8%, respectively) and those who are “pessimists” (2.4% and 3.8%, respectively) increased in this group. For mothers with secondary education, self-appraisal of their life prospects remains fairly stable throughout all the stages of their child’s schooling.

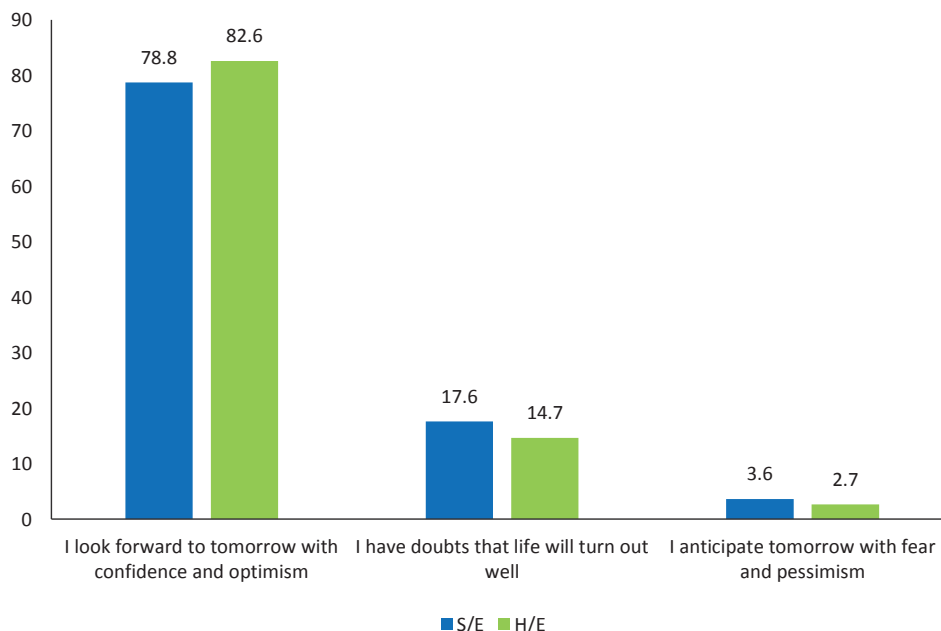


Figure 3. Differences in answers to the question about the emotional evaluation of life prospects among mothers with different educational status, %

Note. S/E = secondary education; H/E = higher education

*Social risk assessment.* Analysis of respondents’ answers to the question about threats from the social environment showed that respondents consider the most significant to be “crime” (48.0%), “unemployment” (43.0%); “epidemics” (41.4%); and “military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts” (41.2%). One in three respondents checked “deterioration of the foreign political situation” (30.2%); “hunger and poverty” (28.7%), and one in five — “lack of social protection” (22.2%). The threat of “extremism” (11.7%) and “tightening of the regime in the country” (11.4%) are much less frequently checked.

Figure 4 shows the results of a comparative analysis of answers about the significance of social threats depending on the mother’s educational status.

The figure shows that the mothers’ educational status significantly affects their evaluation of the significance of various threats to the social environment. Thus, mothers with higher education tend to pay more attention to macrosocial trends (military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts, deterioration of the foreign political situation, extremism, lack of social protection), whereas mothers with secondary education are more likely to focus on threats associated with personal insecurity and social well-being (crime, unemployment, hunger and poverty).

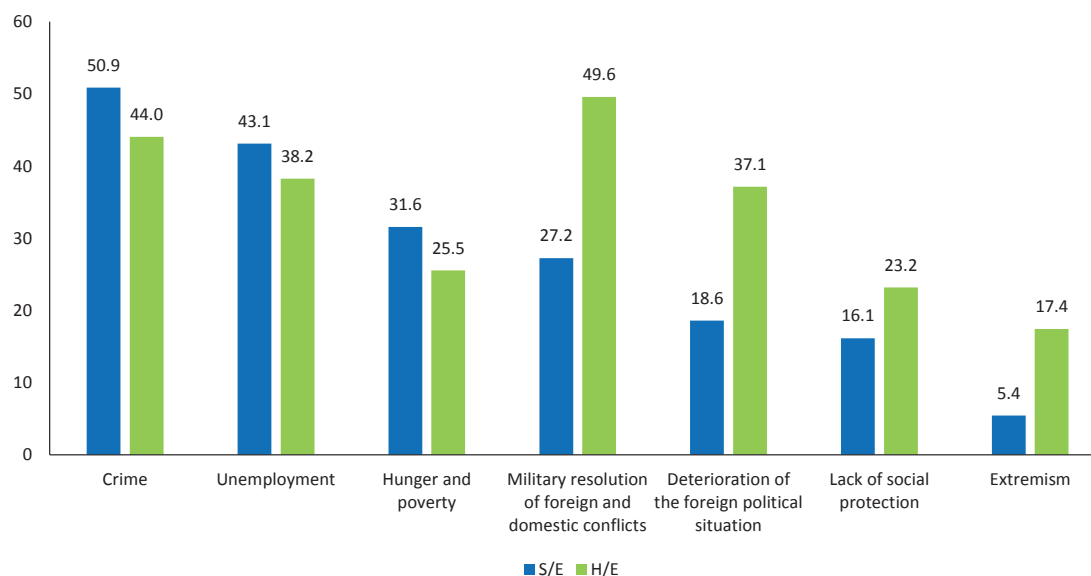


Figure 4. Significant differences in answers to question about threats to the social environment between subsamples with different educational status, %

Note. S/E = secondary education; H/E = higher education

Analysis of changes in mothers' evaluations of the significance of threats to the social environment depending on the age of the child showed that from 1st to 11th grade, the frequency of choosing such aspects as "military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts" increases (from 41.4% to 44.8%, respectively); "unemployment" (from 40.6% to 44.9%, respectively); "deterioration of the foreign political situation" (29.3% to 35.8%, respectively); "lack of social protection" (from 21.2% to 24.1%, respectively). The significance of other threats decreases in parallel: "crime" (from 51.4% to 38.6%, respectively) and "hunger and poverty" (from 31.4% to 24.1%, respectively). Note that such age dynamics are quite understandable given the change in the social composition of high school pupils, where the proportion of pupils from families in which the parents have higher education is increasing.

## II. Interrelation of the Mother's Educational Level, and the Gender and Age of the Child, on the Mother's Life Position

On the whole, the data cited above shows the clear influence of mothers' educational status on various aspects of their life position: value attitudes, social risks, and emotional evaluation of their success in life. At the same time, several of the results clearly also illustrate the important role of the child's age in the significance of various characteristics of the mother's life position. This means there is a need to simultaneously consider the impact of a complex of indicators. For this purpose, we performed a factor analysis of the empirical data, which makes it possible to take into account the

interacting effects of the mother's level of education, and the gender and age of the child, on the meaningful features of her life position.

To do this, the mothers' responses were processed with respect to the subsamples that classified their educational status, the child's gender and age group (grade). The percentage distributions of answers to questions about values, success in life and social threats in each subsample were grouped into a matrix of primary averaged data with a total dimension of 23 (rows)  $\times$  24 (columns), where the rows contain the wording of answers to questions about various aspects of life position, and the columns identify subsamples of mothers by educational level (secondary or higher education), the child's gender (boy or girl), and school grade (1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades). The cell of the matrix (the intersection of the row and column) shows the percentage of the corresponding subsample that chose that answer to the question.

The matrix of averaged percentage scores concerning different aspects of the mothers' life position in the corresponding subsamples was subjected to factor analysis (principal component analysis with axis rotation according to the varimax Kaiser criterion). The table shows the results of the factor analysis performed with SPSS Statistics 13.0 software.

Factor analysis yielded four factors explaining 90.4% of the total cumulative variance. Significant weight scores of meaningful indicators of life position according to the selected factors are shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2

*Content of the Selected Factors (% of Variance and Weights of Indicators)*

Content of the selected factors	% of cumulative variance, weight loads of indicators
F1+/- <i>Striving for self-realization — Personal insecurity</i>	44.3%
successful professional activity	.952
self-reliance and independence	.894
spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one	.891
lack of social protection	.873
extremism	.830
deterioration of the foreign political situation	.829
opportunity for creative work	.814
raising one's cultural level	.802
military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts	.771
raising the level of one's education	.757
crime	-.922
tightening of the regime in the country	-.829
respect of others	-.665



F2+/- “Optimism — Pessimism”	23.9%
I look forward to tomorrow with confidence and optimism	.921
achievement of material well-being	.824
a happy family life	.646
I have doubts that life will turn out well	-.867
I anticipate tomorrow with fear and pessimism	-.815
unemployment	-.670
F3- “Microsocial well-being”	13.9%
having close friends	-.891
hunger and poverty	-.728
F4+ “Physical well-being”	8.3%
epidemics (coronavirus, HIV) and other infectious diseases	.955
health	.611

Note. The table shows the results of factor analysis performed with SPSS Statistica 13.0 software.

The first, most powerful bipolar factor, F1 (contribution to the cumulative variance — 44.3%), characterizes the opposition between “*striving for self-realization*” and “*personal insecurity*”. At its positive pole, values were grouped with respect to successful professional activity, raising one’s cultural level, the level of one’s education, opportunity for creative work, self-reliance and independence, spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved one. These are values associated with striving for self-realization in various areas of life: professional, educational, cultural, interpersonal relations. It is significant that the success of self-realization and achievements in various fields correlate with possible threats on the *macrosocial* level, both in domestic policy (lack of social protection, extremism) and in foreign policy (deterioration of the foreign political situation, military resolution of foreign and domestic conflicts). The negative pole of this factor reflects the significance of the *microsocial* environment (respect of others) and threats that are associated with personal insecurity (crime, tightening of the regime in the country).

Thus, in general, this factor establishes the opposition between “*striving for self-realization*” and “*personal insecurity*”.

The second-most-powerful bipolar factor, F2 (contribution to the cumulative variance — 23.9%) establishes the opposition between “*optimism*” and “*pessimism*”. The positive pole of this factor is characterized by an emotionally positive evaluation of one’s success in life (“I look forward to tomorrow with confidence and optimism”). Such an evaluation is associated with the importance of the values of material well-being and a happy family life. Thus, we can conclude that it is these basic values that, in general, determine the mothers’ evaluation of their own *well-being*, of its foundation.

The negative pole of this factor is determined by emotionally negative evaluations of one's success in life ("fear", "pessimism", "doubt"). Such a negative view of one's life prospects is characteristically associated with the threat of "unemployment". Thus, job loss turns out to be an important factor, not only for material success (the ability to provide for oneself), but also for social success (the status of being "unemployed").

This factor establishes the opposition between "optimism" and "pessimism" in assessing one's success in life.

Unipolar factor F3 (contribution to cumulative variance 13.9%) is "microsocial well-being". This factor is quite simple in its structure and establishes a connection between the value of "having close friends" and the threat of "hunger and poverty". We may consider that this factor characterizes the significance of the particular role of the microsocial environment in evaluating one's well-being: the microsocial environment ("close" friends) acts as a supporting factor in a difficult financial situation ("hunger and poverty").

And finally, unipolar factor F4 (contribution to cumulative variance 8.3%) is "physical well-being". This factor, like the previous one, is simple in its structure and establishes a connection between the value of health and the threat of epidemics. That connection is quite obvious today, in connection with the spread of the coronavirus.

Thus, the factor analysis we performed made it possible to identify the following four generalized factors that characterize the meaningful features of the life position of the pupils' mothers: F1 "striving for self-realization — personal insecurity"; F2 "optimism — pessimism"; F3 "microsocial well-being"; F4 "physical well-being."

Another line of consideration of the results of factor analysis concerns the placement of the scores of subsamples of mothers along the axes of the selected factors (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Placement of the Scores of Subsamples of Mothers along the Axes of the Selected Factors*

Gender	Grade	Educational status	Factors			
			F1+/-	F2+/-	F3-	F4+
		S/E	-1.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3
	1	H/E	0.3	1.7	-0.2	0.5
		S/E	-1.4	0.5	-0.1	-0.3
	4	H/E	0.3	1.3	0.4	-0.2
		S/E	-1.5	-0.2	0.6	0.1
	5	H/E	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.1
Boys		S/E	-1.2	-0.4	0.8	-1.4
	7	H/E	0.9	0.2	0.6	-0.5
		S/E	-0.9	-0.7	-0.1	-0.9
	9	H/E	1.1	-0.6	0.9	-0.4
		S/E	0.1	-0.2	-1.7	-3.2

	11	H/E	1.4	-1.4	1.4	-1.0
		S/E	-1.0	-1.2	0.9	2.1
	1	H/E	0.0	2.1	0.1	0.4
		S/E	-0.9	-0.1	-0.6	0.6
	4	H/E	0.5	1.2	-0.1	0.5
		S/E	-1.1	-0.4	0.0	0.6
Girls	5	H/E	0.5	1.0	-0.1	0.2
		S/E	-0.5	-1.2	-0.6	0.4
	7	H/E	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.5
		S/E	-0.7	-0.3	-0.5	0.5
	9	H/E	1.1	-0.3	0.3	-0.2
		S/E	1.3	-1.1	-3.5	1.2
	11	H/E	1.5	-1.4	1.1	0.6

Note. The table shows the numerical values for the factors F1–F4.

We begin consideration of the distributions of subsamples of mothers by analyzing the results along the axes of the simplest of the identified factors, F4 and F3.

Table 3 shows that, as a rule, mothers of girls have positive scores along factor axis F4 (“physical well-being”), in contrast to mothers of boys, whose scores along that factor axis are negative. This fact shows that physical well-being does not play a significant role in the life position of mothers of boys. In general, this allows us to conclude that the gender of the child affects the actualization of health-maintaining values in mothers. It is mothers of girls who are more inclined to accentuate the value of health and the threat of being exposed to epidemics and various infectious diseases (coronavirus, HIV, etc.). It is possible that such concern about health among the mothers of girls is due to mechanisms of gender identification of the mother with her daughter. Fears and concerns for the daughter’s health are also projected onto the mother’s own life position, whereas social stereotypes associated with the idea of a man as healthy and strong, negate the importance of this value for the mother to a significant extent. And the son himself is inclined to resist such patronizing behavior on the part of the mother regarding his health.

We note in addition that the importance of health-maintaining values is most pronounced in the life position of mothers with a secondary education, both when her daughter enters school (1st grade) and after her graduation (11th grade).

As for the interpretation of the placement of subsamples of mothers along the axis of factor F3 (“microsocial well-being”), here it is necessary (taking into account the data in Table 2 on the weight loads of life position indicators) to keep in mind the high, not positive, but negative scores. The data show that negative scores are mainly characteristic of mothers with a secondary education who are raising girls. Moreover, the supporting role of the significance of the microsocial environment is actualized in them at the stage of their daughter’s transition to middle school (grade 4) and reaches the highest score among mothers of 11th graders. It is at this stage of her

daughter's life that the value of having close friends and their supportive role is most significant for the mother. It is also noteworthy that among mothers with a secondary education whose sons are in the 11th grade, the importance of the role of "close friends" also sharply increases and the fear of possible material threats (hunger, poverty) grows. On the whole, this allows us to conclude that there are significant changes in the life position of mothers with a secondary education when the child graduates from school. Obviously, in this social group of mothers with secondary education, the separation of the child from the parents is acutely felt, which causes the mother's compensatory need for close friends to increase. However, another interpretation is also possible. Separation of the child from the mother actualizes her anxiety about the child's socio-psychological well-being. Therefore, it is important for the mother that the child have close friends, including among prosperous families (who do not experience "hunger and poverty").

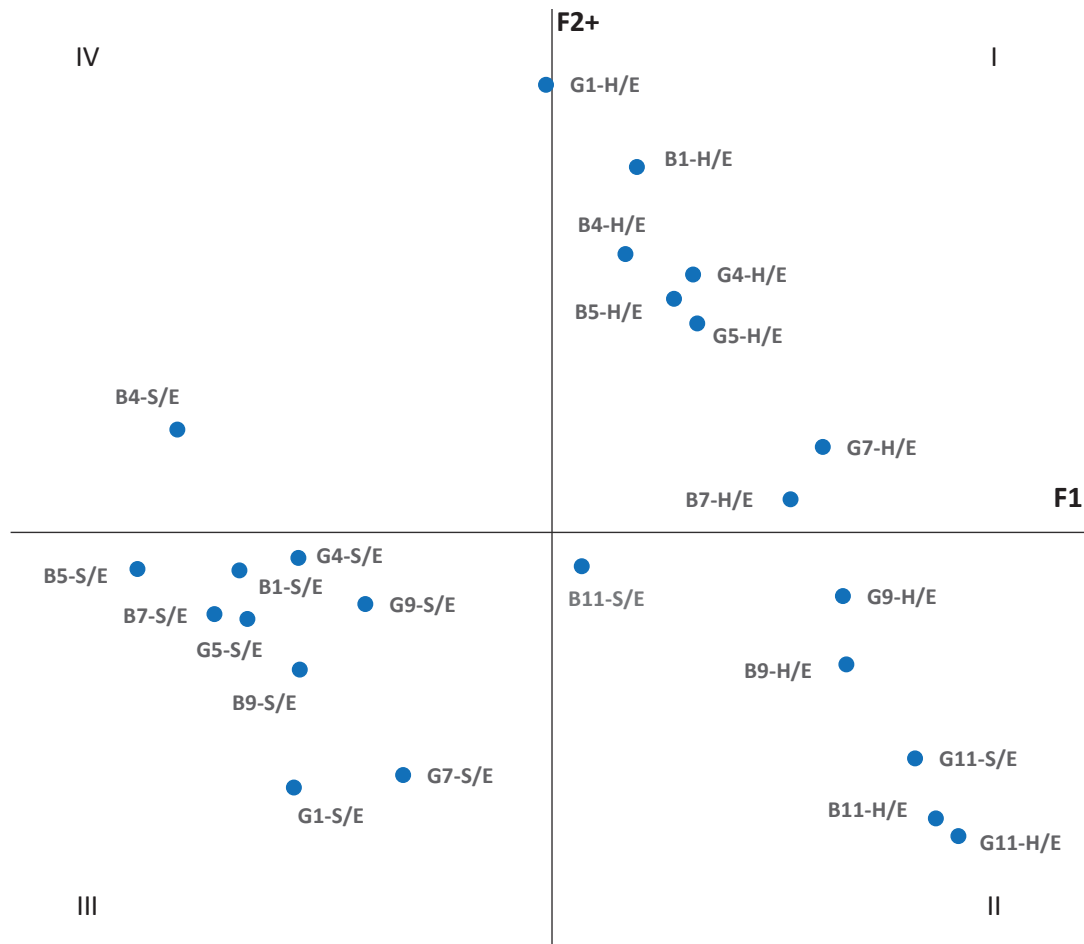


Figure 5. Placement of subsamples of mothers of boys and girls in grades 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11 in the space of the bipolar factors of F1, "desire for self-realization — personal insecurity" and F2, "optimism — pessimism"

Note. B = boys; G = girls; 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11 — grades; S/E = secondary education; H/E = higher education

In general, the placement of subsamples of mothers along the axes of factors F3 and F4 allows us to conclude that the child's gender and age have a significant impact on the mother's life position with respect to the importance of physical and social well-being. Moreover, it can be assumed that both the mechanisms of gender identification of the mother with her daughter and the projection of her concerns about the socio-psychological well-being of the child during the transition from adolescence to adulthood play an important role in the actualization of such life attitudes.

Of greatest interest is the placement of the scores of subsamples of mothers in the space of the bipolar factors of F1, "desire for self-realization — personal insecurity" and F2 "optimism — pessimism" (*Figure 5*).

From the data shown in *Figure 5*, it can be seen that the F1 factor, in general, clearly differentiates between mothers with higher and secondary education. Thus, women with higher education who are mothers of all age groups of boys and girls are located at the positive pole, which indicates the intensity of their aspirations for self-realization. At the same time, women with secondary education who are mothers of primary and secondary school pupils are located at the negative pole of factor F1 ("personal insecurity"), where a significant value is the respect of others, along with the fear of both a tightening of the regime in the country and the fear of becoming a victim of crime.

The factor F2 "optimism — pessimism", as seen in *Figure 5*, clearly differentiates women with higher education who are mothers of primary and secondary school pupils (positive values) from all subsamples of mothers with secondary education, as well as from those mothers with higher education whose children are in the 9th and 11th grades (negative values).

When interpreting the results, it is important to note the placement of subsamples of mothers in the quadrants of the space defined by the intersection of factors F1 and F2. Two points stand out here.

First of all, *Figure 5* clearly shows that women with higher education who are mothers of primary and secondary school pupils (both boys and girls) are placed in quadrant I, and women with secondary education who are mothers of pupils of the same age are placed in the opposite one, quadrant III. Thus, the life position of women with higher education who are mothers of primary and secondary school pupils, in general, is characterized by striving for self-realization and optimism regarding their success in life, whereas the life position of women with secondary education who are mothers of schoolchildren of the same age is determined by the personal insecurity of the mother, as well as her negative evaluations (pessimism, doubt) about her success in life.

In our view, this result is of fundamental importance for understanding the impact of a mother's educational status on parent-child relations in the process of a child's socialization at the age of primary and secondary school. Thus, the social relationships between a child and a mother with a higher education are determined by the transmission of emotionally positive attitudes from the mother to the child (striving for self-realization, optimism), whereas pupils in primary and secondary school from families in which the mother has an average level of education, are in a completely different situation in a socio-psychological sense: here the position of

the mother is determined by personal insecurity and a negative evaluation of her life prospects.

Second, of particular interest is the placement in Figure 5 of the subsamples of mothers in quadrant II. This quadrant characterizes, on the one hand, “striving for self-realization” (F1+), and on the other, “pessimism” (F2-). Mothers of senior high school students in the 9th and 11th grades, both with higher and secondary education, were placed here. Thus, when the child is in high school, the mother’s level of education ceases to play much of a differentiating role in relation to her life position. From this we can also conclude that child–parent relationships for senior high school students from families in which the mother has a secondary or higher education are, in principle, similar, if we consider the mother’s life position: the mothers express a positive attitude towards self-realization, and, at the same time, doubts about their success in life.

But, we emphasize that such similarity is rather formal. Therefore, in order to clarify the specific social situation in the child’s development, we must pay attention to the sociocultural dynamics of differences in the changes in the mother’s life position when a child moves on to high school, from families with different levels of education.

And, indeed, what, does it mean socially for a child whose mother has a low level of education to go to high school? This very fact testifies to a trend of upward educational mobility in the social development of the child, since education in high school implies the continuation of education either at a university (the vast majority of school graduates are oriented to this) or in institutions of secondary vocational education. Thus, we can conclude that in an educational strategy for children from families in which the mother has a low educational status, an important role is played (along with other things like the child’s academic success, abilities, interests, etc.) by the mother’s life position, her value orientation towards self-realization. It is this position of the mother (striving for self-realization) that is of great supporting importance in the child’s strategy of upward educational mobility.

A substantially different situation develops for mothers with higher education in connection with the child’s transition to high school. Their life position also changes. However, the sociocultural dynamics of these changes follows a different line: here the transition along the axis of factor F2 is clearly actualized, from its positive pole (“optimism”) to the negative one (“pessimism”). Since factor analysis indicates that doubts about one’s success in life are associated with the fear of unemployment (see Table 2), we can conclude that for mothers with higher education, not only their possible personal problems in the labor market, but also the professional self-determination of the child, is significant at the stage of graduation from high school. In this regard, we note that parents with higher education often have ideas about a successful professional career that do not correspond to the real situation in the labor market. And, in this respect, parents’ opinions are not authoritative for a senior high school student, for whom a professional choice is of vital importance. And this concern for the success of her child’s future path after graduation is also reflected in the change in the mother’s life position: increased anxiety, doubts, including about her own success.



## **Conclusion**

Using an anonymous questionnaire survey of mothers of primary, middle, and high school pupils, we conducted a large-scale study to identify their life positions. The material was analyzed for the influence of a number of factors (mother's level of education, gender and age of the child) on the mothers' evaluations of their success in life, their value orientations, and the significance of various social threats.

On the basis of a factor analysis of the empirical data, the following four generalized factors were identified that characterize the life position of mothers of pupils in general schools: "striving for self-realization — personal insecurity"; "optimism — pessimism"; "microsocial well-being"; and "physical well-being".

It was established that the life positions of mothers with higher and secondary education are fundamentally different when the child is in primary and secondary school. Thus, mothers with a higher education are clearly oriented towards self-realization and, at the same time, evaluate the success of their life prospects positively; on the other hand, among mothers with a secondary education, concerns are clearly accentuated about their personal security and pessimism about their success in life.

Institutional selection for the continuation of a child's education in high school levels out the differences in the life positions of mothers with higher and secondary education. The mother's life position, associated with her striving for self-realization, turns out to be an important factor supporting the child in a strategy of upward educational mobility.

The results of the study give grounds to conclude that both the psychological mechanisms of a mother's gender identification with her daughter and the projection onto the child of her own fears about the child's socio-psychological well-being during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, play an important role in changes of the parent's life position.

## **Limitations**

In the future, we plan to consider the life position of mothers in comparison with the positions of fathers, who were also surveyed as part of this study. We also plan to analyze the parental life position depending not only on educational level, but also on the level of material security, as well as the social status of the family (complete/incomplete families). A special line of consideration of the data is associated with comparison of the life positions of fathers and mothers of senior high school students with the life positions of the parents of students receiving secondary vocational education.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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