

# Intercultural Communication and Values-Based Orientations of Youth: Social Mobility and Problems of Self-Realisation

Svetlana V. Tolmacheva<sup>\*</sup>, Natalia I. Skok and Igor Yu. Fomichev

*Department of Marketing and Municipal Management, Industrial University of Tyumen, Tyumen, Russian Federation*

**Abstract:** The ability to interact at the level of interpersonal communication allows to say that young people not only perceive society as an environment for their self-realisation, but also use it to gain new experience, that can determine the development of an individual. The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that each act of communication must be implemented for the purposes of development under certain conditions that affect not only the communication environment itself, but also other forms of interaction at the level of the individual, communality or community. The novelty of the subject matter is determined by the fact that the formation of intercultural communication is possible only if programs of social mobility and, accordingly, cultural exchange are implemented. The authors show that such progress is most likely to be achieved in the external environment, which is determined by the presence of external influences. The authors of the paper primarily refer to this effect as the environment of an educational institution. The leading research method is a sociological survey and the method of analysis, which make it possible to comprehensively consider the value priorities and preferences that are characteristic of modern student youth. The practical significance of the study is determined by structuring and factor analysis, which allows to distribute the cultural layer into various social groups and ensure youth intercultural exchange both in the context of local student communication and in the context of an increase in the level of academic mobility.

**Keywords:** Potential, self-realisation, structure, academic mobility, education.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid social development processes and significant socio-economic transformations have caused the need to turn to education as a sphere (Ertmer *et al.* 2011) aimed at forming a personality of a new generation, that is capable of self-development and continuous learning throughout its life (Segal 1993). An important task of this study is to determine the place and role of education in the structure of values of student youth (Anılan, Kılıç, and Demir 2019). A person as an individual, as a socially active person is created and shaped by education and upbringing (Dehghani, Pakmehr, and Mirdoraghi 2011). Education is an important basis and evidence of the level of development of the economy, politics, spirituality, culture, morality as the most general, integrated indicator of the development of any society (Reynolds-Case 2013). Education is a social process of development and self-development of a person, associated with the mastery of socially significant experience, embodied in knowledge, skills and abilities of creative activity, sensory-value forms of spiritual and practical exploration of the world around (Adams 1938).

It is education that is the mechanism through which knowledge and skills are transferred from generation to generation (Kusumajati *et al.* 2017). Education is often

assigned the role of a commodity for which there is effective demand, and the dominant cult of knowledge is based on the young people's need for a certain intellectual capital (Dalci and Özyapici 2018), which is necessary to maintain social status in society, is a kind of guarantee of obtaining well-paid work in the future; and for success in life (Zhang, Kuusisto, and Tirri 2019). That is why nowadays there is a need to create favourable conditions not only for professional development (Dupre and Goodgold 2007). Attention should be focused on the spiritual and cultural development of the student's personality, on the disclosure of their talents and creative abilities, in self-realisation and self-improvement of the personality of a young person (Arnold and Versluis 2019). As a result, young people will gradually develop an attitude towards education as a sphere that is spiritually valuable for a young person (Lawson, Smadi, and Tel 1986).

The modern development of the nation is defined as a period of transformational processes, the search for its own path of development and change in values (Biyekenova *et al.* 2016). Undoubtedly, all those changes that are taking place now directly affect the value priorities of young people, because the new socio-economic conditions require completely different qualities from a person, new worldview and value guidelines (Grönlund *et al.* 2011). In addition, in the context of a transitional transformational society, the actualisation of the study of value preferences of young people is caused, first of all, by practical necessity

<sup>\*</sup>Address correspondence to this author at the Industrial University of Tyumen, Russian Federation; Tel: +7 345 228-36-60; E-mail: sv.tolmacheva5@uohk.com.cn

(Carter, Yeh, and Mazzula 2008). After all, the values with which the youth will live in the future (Khabutdinova and Bayanova 2013), will depend on the socio-cultural and political-economic development of the future society, the emergence of new economic, political and other types of behaviour (Schommer-Aikins and Easter 2014). That is why, with the help of the sociological research, the authors will try to investigate those value priorities and preferences that are characteristic of modern student-age population (Donohue 2020).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It should be noted that the cross-cutting line that runs in the study of college students as a separate socio-demographic group is the study of their value priorities in the dynamic space of social changes (Rocha 2003). In order to study and determine the value priorities of student-age population at the regional level, the authors conducted a sociological survey among students. Time of the study: April-May 2020. To collect primary sociological information, the questionnaire method was used. The respondents were students in four selected areas of study: the economic direction of study is represented by the Faculty of Economics, the humanities – by the Faculty of History, technical – by the Mechanics and Mathematics, the natural sciences – by the Faculty of Geography. As of February 1, 2020, 2,028 students studied at the Faculty of Economics, 896 students at the Faculty of History, 605 students at the Physics and Mathematics Department, and 1,379 students at the Geography Department. Consequently, the total population is 4908 students. To calculate the sample population, we used the following formula (1):

$$N=1/\Delta^2+1/N, \quad (1)$$

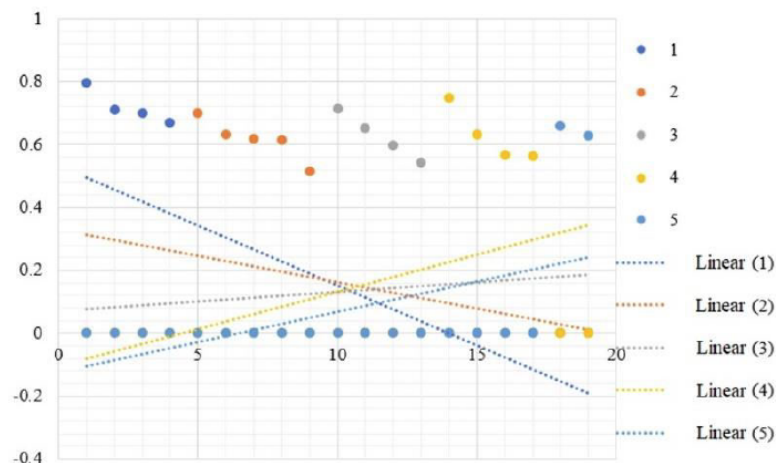
where  $n$  – sample size;  $\Delta$  – the share of a given sampling error (5%);  $N$  – the volume of the general population.

Calculations were carried out separately for each faculty. As a result of calculations, it was found that it is necessary to interview 580 students in four areas of study – economic (167 people), technical (138 people), humanities (120 people) and natural (155). Students of junior (first and second years of study) and senior (fourth and fifth years of study) courses were involved in the survey. Multi-stage quota sampling was used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To identify the generalised factors that determine the meaning of the life of young people, factor analysis was carried out, which was carried out by the method of principal components, by factor rotation according to the Varimax method. According to the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin criterion, the reliability of the factor model is 0.85. As a result, 5 factors were identified that explain 55% of the total variance of results. Of this number, 14% explains the 1st factor, and the remaining factors explain 41% of the results obtained. The results of factor analysis are shown in Figure 1.

The first factor is “material-hedonistic”, formed by such properties that determine the person’s meaning of life “in financial independence, wealth”, “in everyday comfort”, “trouble-free use of life’s pleasures”. This also includes the orientation of a person to “getting a career” for the sake of material independence, and the meaning of a person’s life is determined through the material component. The second factor is “altruistic”,



**Figure 1:** Factor Analysis of Influences Determining the Meaning of Students' life (n=580, 2020).

which has a diametrically opposite meaning in its content in relation to the first and is filled with such properties as “the struggle for justice, equality of people”, “to be useful to society”, “to believe in God and live according to His commandments”, “to become a decent and honest person”, as well as “in selfless service to people”. The third factor is the “factor of fundamental values”, in which a person sees the meaning of his life in his immediate environment. It consists of properties such as “create a good family, raise children properly,” “find love,” “have good and reliable friends,” and “have good health.” The fourth factor is the “factor of personal development” with the following properties: “the need for creativity, for creating something new”, “self-improvement”, “search of truth”, “development and spiritual enrichment”. The presence of these characteristics in the structure of the selected factor indicates that these factors are decisive for students who see the meaning of their lives in their own self-improvement, self-development, learning something new and unknown. The fifth factor is the “factor of professional duties”, which is composed of such properties as “conscientious fulfilment of their educational, professional, official duties” and “serving the ideals of goodness and beauty”.

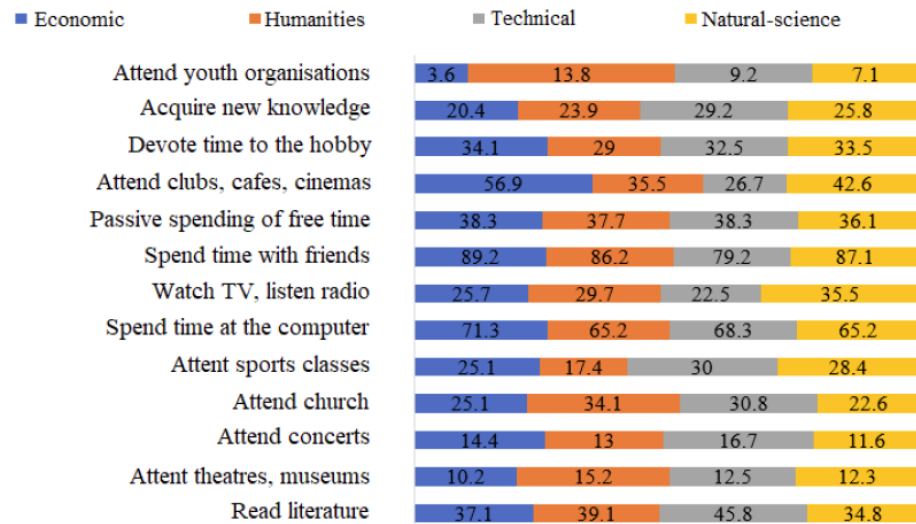
According to factor analysis, the most important was the “material-hedonistic factor”. This indicates that modern students consider the material factor to be quite important in their life. However, as the results of the frequency distribution of respondents’ answers show, the most important area for students is the sphere of family life, interpersonal relations, their own self-development and self-improvement, obtaining the necessary knowledge to master an interesting profession and life according to the law of God. Based on a comparison of the mean and T-test, a statistically significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between men and women was revealed in terms of the “altruistic” and “fundamental values” factors. This indicates that men are less altruistic, and also less focused on fundamental values than women.

An analysis of the factors that determine the meaning of a person’s life using the T-test showed that there is a statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) difference in mean values among men and women only for such alternatives – in serving the ideals of goodness and beauty, to become a decent and honest person, to develop and enrich spiritually. In particular, men, to a lesser extent than women, see the meaning of their life in the alternatives listed above. According to the results of the study, it was found that 21.4% of the

respondents were completely satisfied with their student life; rather yes – 62.2%; rather dissatisfied – 9.5%; not satisfied at all – 2.1%. 4.8% of respondents were undecided on this issue. Among the most painful problems that worried young people at the time of the survey were the lack of stability and confidence in the future (53.6%), as well as social problems such as the spread of drug addiction and alcoholism among young people (33.6%), indifference in relationships between people (30.0%), low level of spirituality in society (29.3%), decline of national culture (28.1%), poverty and squalor of life of fellow citizens (27.1%) and decline of morality (24.5%).

Among the problems of student life, the greatest concern among students is the lack of free time (41.7%), low scholarships or lack of it (37.1%), high tuition fees (20.5%), low level of spirituality among groupmates (17.8%) and low level of cultural interests among youth (17.4%). It should be noted that there were no significant differences in the answers of students over the course of study. According to the results of the survey, it was stated that the overwhelming majority of the respondents saw the meaning of their life in creating a strong family and raising children properly (78.8%). They ranked next in importance: to improve oneself (65.9%), to have good and reliable friends (58.3%), to become a decent and honest person (57.4%), to develop and enrich spiritually (50.3%), to find love (49.3%), to get an interesting profession (46.9%) and to believe in God and live by his commandments (45.5%).

An important goal of the study was to identify those traits that students value most in people. Regardless of students’ course, everyone who took part in the study value the most such qualities as honesty (58.1% for 1st and 2nd courses and 56.3% for 4th and 5th courses), devotion, loyalty (48.4% and 47.0% respectively), kindness (28.9% and 37.3%) and sincerity (25.6% and 28.7%, respectively). Among the most unacceptable human traits for students, in the first place was cunning, hypocrisy (34.1% for students of 1st and 2nd years of study and 36.2% for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of study); on the second – lying (29.5% and 31.3%, respectively); on the third – pride, arrogance (21.8% and 21.3%). Unacceptable traits for students are also self-interest, meanness, insolence, as well as deception and betrayal. Among the most unacceptable human traits for students, in the first place is cunning, hypocrisy (34.1% for students of 1-2 years of study and 36.2% for 4-5 years of study); on the second – lying (29.5% and 31.3%, respectively); on the third – pride, arrogance



**Figure 2:** Distribution of Answers to the Question: “How do You Most Often Spend Your Free Time?”, (n=580, 2020), in %.

(21.8% and 21.3%). Unacceptable traits for students are also self-interest, meanness, insolence, as well as deception and betrayal.

While investigating the value-based world of modern student-age population, the authors tried to find out the answer to the question “Does leisure contribute to the development of students’ spiritual values?” 74.0% of the respondents have chosen the answer option “rather yes”; 9.0% have chosen the alternative “rather not”, and 17.0% of the respondents have not decided on this issue. Figure 2 shows the distribution of answers to the question regarding the peculiarities of students’ free time activities.

The results of the survey indicated that among the ways of spending free time among students, the most common is spending free time with friends, at the computer, visiting clubs, cafes or cinemas, and reading fiction. The least amount of time students devote to acquiring new knowledge, attending concerts, theatres, museums, art exhibitions and youth organisations. Analysing the results obtained by areas of study, we see that economics students most of all like to spend their free time meeting with friends (89.2%), at the computer (71.3%), and also like to visit various clubs, cafes, cinemas (56.9%), but are also supporters of passive spending of free time (38.3%). Humanities students also most of all like to spend leisure time with friends (86.2%) and at the computer (65.2%). Students of the technical and natural science fields of study prefer spending time with friends (79.2% of students in the technical field and 87.1% of students in the natural science field), and also like spending time at the computer (68.3% and 65.2%, respectively).

A very important task of the research was to identify those personality traits that, in the opinion of student youth, today contribute to success in life the most. As a result of the analysis, the authors did not find significant differences in the answers of respondents of junior and senior courses. Students are convinced that in order to achieve success in life, it is necessary to rely on own intelligence and abilities (77.1%), there must be remarkable faith in yourself and indispensable success (58.8%), as well as professionalism, knowledge of own business, business qualities are appreciated (53.3%) and amount of education (53.1%). Also, no less important for the respondents is the presence of influential friends and useful connections (45.5%), as well as business acumen and pragmatism (35.9%). Unfortunately, a fairly small part of the students surveyed believe that a high level of spiritual (16.7%) and cultural (16.0%) development today helps young people to achieve success in life. According to young people, the factor of trust in others contributes least to success in life (7.2%).

Somewhat similar conclusions can be observed from the results of the monitoring conducted to clarify the characteristics of students’ attitudes. The study was conducted in 2020 among students from four faculties: Geography, Law, the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, and the Faculty of Teacher Education. A total of 600 students were interviewed. The rating of certain main factors of life success among students of the surveyed faculties is headed by such factors as professionalism, business qualities, the ability to achieve a goal, as well as their own intelligence, abilities and talent (Table 1).

**Table 1: Rating of Certain Major Factors of Life Success (n=600, 2020), in %**

	Faculty of Geography	Faculty of Law	Faculty of Teacher Education	Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science
Professionalism, business qualities, ability to achieve a goal	49.0	57.0	37.6	42.3
Own intelligence, talent	47.6	49.0	46.4	53.1
Business acumen, pragmatism	12.6	17.5	3.2	9.0
Availability of initial capital, property	12.6	13.5	7.2	4.5
Influential friends, relatives, connections	11.9	8.5	17.6	3.6
Lucky circumstance	7.0	10	9.6	6.3
Appearance	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.8

To achieve the goal of studying the values of modern students, it was important for the authors to involve students from different areas of study in conducting sociological survey, namely, a classical, technical and theological university. That is why at this stage three universities were included in the sample, from which the authors selected one faculty each to conduct a survey among its students. The sample included the Faculty of Economics, the Institute of Law and Psychology, and the Faculty of Philosophy. At the next stage of the study, students of junior and senior courses of each university have been involved in the survey.

First of all, we were interested in the opinion of students regarding "Whether the state needs people with spiritual ideals?" More than half of the surveyed students of the humanities university and technical university fully agree with this statement (61.9% and 63.5%, respectively). It is interesting that almost all students from the faculty of philosophy unequivocally agree with the statement that the state needs people with spiritual ideals (92.9% of respondents). To some extent, about a third of the respondents from the humanities university and technical university (36.8% and 33.8% of the respondents) agreed with this statement, and only 7.1% of the students of the faculty of philosophy. A very small number of young people today believe that the Russian Federation does not need such people (1.4% and 2.7% of respondents from the two above-mentioned universities, except for respondents from the faculty of philosophy). Thus, 65.6% of all respondents answered affirmatively to this question, 32.4% noted the alternative "to some extent" and only 1.8% believe that the Russian Federation does not need people with highly spiritual ideals. As we can see, modern students are interested in the problems of spirituality and spiritual development and

recognise their great role in the process of social progress.

"Does education contribute to the development of a person's spirituality?" The answer to this question indicated that the overwhelming majority of respondents (67.9%) believe that it does. Among them, 26.6% are men and 41.2% are women. 21.3% of the total number of respondents were undecided about the answer; only 10.8% do not believe that education can somehow contribute to the development of a person's spirituality. Students receive higher education today, first of all, with the aim of self-realisation in the professional field, in order to obtain quality knowledge in their profession, to get the opportunity for self-development and self-affirmation through good work.

Analysis of answers by universities shows that for students of the humanities university, education is needed in order to achieve better material security (51.4%), to get a good job (50.0%), to become more useful to society (46.5%), to take an appropriate position in society (45.1%), to become a good specialist (42.4%), to get the desired specialty, profession (41.9%) and to develop spiritually and enrich themselves (40.3%). For students of polytechnic, as it turned out, first of all, education is necessary to get the desired specialty, profession (60.8%) and get a good job (53.0%). The third ranking position is occupied by the alternative, which is associated with material security (46.7%), followed by an option of becoming a good specialist (45.2%), spiritually developing and enriching (42.2%) and taking a corresponding position in society (37.4%).

As for the respondents from the faculty of philosophy, they, first of all, need education in order to develop and enrich themselves spiritually and become more useful to society (both alternatives took the first

rating position with a value of 66.7%). In second place for students is to get the desired specialty, profession (60.7%), in third – to become a good specialist (59.5%), then to get a good job (52.4%) and take an appropriate position in society (31.0%). Education is not too necessary to gain respect among friends, acquaintances and gain power over others, as the answers of our respondents from three universities show. After analysing the respondents' answers to the question "Why modern youth need education?", it is worth noting the following key aspects: education (higher) is not only the means of individual self-realisation and professional growth, but is also a powerful factor in the general cultural and spiritual development of students. An important argument in favor of education is also that education allows to make rational decisions and better navigate the ways of solving life's problems.

As the results of our research show, modern students receive education primarily for their own self-realisation in order to become a qualified specialist and develop and improve their abilities. Analysis of the answers for each university separately allows us to state that students of the humanities university and the faculty of philosophy, when obtaining higher education, are guided, first of all, by the desire to become a highly educated specialist (70.0% and 75.0%), the intention to develop their abilities (55.9% and 57.1%) and desire to acquire versatile knowledge and skills (48.1% and 45.2%, respectively). Among students of a technical university, the intention to develop their abilities is of the highest priority (64.0%). Least of all, when obtaining higher education, as the results showed, the respondents are guided by the intention to find a job abroad (16.1%) and the desire to avoid military service (8.1% of the total number of respondents).

When conducting this research, the authors were interested in finding out the opinion of students about what determines the prestige and authority of a student in his group today. The research showed that a student's authority depends to the greatest extent on his spiritual and moral qualities (54.1%). Among other, equally important factors, academic success was identified (34.1%). For students of a humanitarian university, the most important are the spiritual and moral qualities of their groupmates (kindness, respect, willingness to help, etc.) (62.7%); academic success (24.1%) and originality, dissimilarity (19.5%). The credibility of students of a technical university most of all depends, first of all, on their success in learning (49.1%), on spiritual and moral qualities (36.5%), as

well as students of a technical university pay attention to the originality and dissimilarity from other groupmates.

Students of the faculty of philosophy noted that the authority as of a student depends primarily on the spiritual and moral qualities of the student's personality, his kindness, respect, and willingness to help in any situation (85.7%). It should also be noted that students from the faculty of philosophy pay attention to the specific personality traits of groupmates, which characterise their originality, uniqueness and dissimilarity to others (19.0%). Further in importance, respondents from the faculty of philosophy noted such factors as academic success (17.9%), a high level of general culture, erudition in the field of literature, art, painting, etc. (16.7%), and the presence of a wide circle of acquaintances connections (16.7%). In the self-esteem of humanitarian university students, the most important values for them are "health", "family well-being", "self-improvement and self-development", "loyal and reliable friends" and "personal freedom". Students of polytechnic put two values at once – "health" and "family well-being" in the first rank place, "personal freedom" – on the second, and "self-improvement and self-development" – third. In fourth place, they put such value as "the opportunity to actualise their own abilities and the development of talent". The authors observe somewhat different priorities among students of the faculty of philosophy. The most important value for them is "to believe in God". In second place are "loyal and reliable friends", while for students of a technical university, this value is in sixth place. The value of "health" for these students is in third place. Next, the authors will analyse the position of such important value for the research as "to develop and enrich spiritually". As expected, this value turned out to be the most important for students of the faculty of philosophy. It occupies the fourth ranking position for them, while for students from other universities, spiritual development and spiritual enrichment are already on the twelfth position with an average value of 3.25 for a humanitarian university and 3.31 for a technical university.

It should be noted that in the last ranking places among students of a humanitarian university and a technical one are the values of "high official and social position" and "participation in public life, in solving social problems". For students-philosophers, the least important is "everyday comfort", "material well-being" and, like for representatives of other universities, "high official and social status". The most significant terminal



values, in the course of the study, for students of the Faculty of Geography are health (both physical and mental – 82.6%), good and faithful friends (79.1%), happy family life (77%), as well as development, self-fulfilment, realisation of personal abilities and talents (69.3%). Law students, as well as students of the Faculty of Pedagogical Education, ranked health first among the terminal values (94.5% and 84.8%, respectively). Next in importance for lawyers are the following values: happy family life (86.5%), development (83.5%), as well as education, knowledge and intellectual development (82%). After health, students of the Faculty of Pedagogical Education most of all value a happy family life (79.2%) and mutual understanding with their parents and the older generation (73.6%). For mathematics students, as it turned out, the most important are loyal and reliable friends (79.6%), health (70.2%) and happy family life (66.6%) are also very important.

The analysis of the received answers of the distribution of the basic values of student-age population shows that the most important value for students of the Faculty of Geography is persistence in achieving the goal (68.6%), then it is self-confidence (67.9%), the ability to complete the work begun (67.2%) and self-esteem (66.5%). Law students consider the most important instrumental values to be self-confidence (86.5%), self-esteem (85%), and, like the geographers, persistence in achieving a goal (84%). Students of the Faculty of Pedagogical Education, as well as the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science, consider the most important instrumental values to be self-confidence (70.4% and 61.2%, respectively), self-esteem (69.6% and 61.2%). It should be noted that for future teachers, fairly important values are honesty (truthfulness, sincerity) and sociability (both values matter 68%), and for mathematicians – independence (the ability to act independently, decisively) (59.4%) and rationalism (the ability to sound think logically, make deliberate, rational decisions) (58.5%).

## CONCLUSION

Summing up the results of the surveys of students, the authors want to highlight the following key points:

- today students, regardless of the course and direction of study, are satisfied with their student life, however, there are some systemic problems (socio-economic, spiritual, leisure): lack of free time, low scholarships, high tuition fees, low level of spirituality and cultural needs of groupmates;

- according to factor analysis, the material-hedonistic factor turned out to be the most filled, which indicates the desire of students to have a good material base today to be able to meet their needs. However, as the results of the frequency distribution of the respondents' answers show, the most important sphere for student youth is the sphere of family life, interpersonal relations, self-development and self-improvement, as well as obtaining the necessary knowledge to master an interesting profession and live in accordance with the laws;
- analysing the factors on which the authority of a student in his group depends, it can be observed that for students of a classical and theological university, the spiritual and moral qualities of classmates are of the greatest importance, while for representatives of a technical profile, the authority of students depends, first of all, on their success in learning, and then from spiritual and moral qualities;
- the most important values for students with a classical and technical education are "health", "family well-being", "self-improvement and self-development", and for students with theological education – "trust in God", "faithful and reliable friends";
- representatives of all areas of study agree that education contributes to the development of the spirituality of the student's personality.

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