



# The formation of civic identity among Russian students is inseparable from a commitment to a healthy lifestyle

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** – aims to confirm the importance of a healthy lifestyle as an integral part of civic self-identification and civic ideal in the minds of Russian students.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The study involved students of higher educational institutions in Russia, representing eight federal districts. The sample was formed using a non-random method, namely the "snowball" method (N=945). The confidence interval (margin of error) was  $\pm 4.64\%$ . The survey was conducted through a developed questionnaire implemented using Google Forms. The main results of the survey were systematized into four thematic blocks. According to gender and age, the respondents were distributed as follows: 58.9% of the respondents were girls, 41.1% were boys.

**Results and conclusions.** The results of the study provided information about the role of the values of a healthy lifestyle and sports in the worldview of Russian students. It was concluded that the values associated with a healthy lifestyle, health care, physical education and sports occupy an important place in the ideas of Russian students about the ideal citizen. At the same time, a tendency has been identified for young people to postpone the practice of a healthy lifestyle to a later period, after achieving career goals. The authors emphasize the need to actively promote a healthy lifestyle among young people, presenting it as an integral part of civic identity and a component of an ideal citizen, as well as focusing on shaping the image of a citizen as a harmoniously developed and successful personality.

**Keywords:** *healthy lifestyle, civic self-identification, civic ideal, gender characteristics, age characteristics, values, sports, worldview, Russian students.*

**Introduction.** National civic identification is a kind of countermeasure against globalization and the erosion of national identity and culture. There is a need for a cultural synthesis that unites universal and national components in the self-awareness of Russian society. Russian identity is a form of social organization and a resource for political and social mobilization. It serves as the basis for the consolidation of society and the formation of a mature personality. Naturally, an important component of civic identity is the image of a national healthy body, the cultural idea of physicality [4]. The idea of national health is already embedded in the very idea of the nation as a long-term political unity of citizens of one state [3, pp. 108-116].

In this context, it is especially important to form an image of health among young people, not only in terms of public health goals, but also for national civic awareness. In this regard, the problem of attracting young people to a healthy lifestyle, health-saving and wellness practices is becoming urgent for society, the state and the education system. For young people, especially university students, due to both the peculiarities of age psychology [2] and the presence of a significant reserve of health, healthy lifestyle norms are often only a good wish, while the main priorities and concerns for them are peer recognition and building a successful career. Another challenge is the change in the lifestyle of young people caused by technological

progress, the emergence of new entertainment and consumption technologies, to which public morals do not have time to adapt. Another significant problem of the youth's lifestyle is a time deficit. The modern world offers so many opportunities and alternatives that young people often get lost in the information ocean, and it is difficult for them to set long-term goals for self-development [1]. Therefore, young people always do not have time for systematic physical education and health care.

It is pointless to deal with these challenges as such, since they are associated with global historical transformations. Therefore, an effective educational strategy should be to: 1) to instill in young people a civic ideal, one of the components of which will be health; 2) to show that systematic physical education is not only not an obstacle, but is a prerequisite for a successful career and personal life; 3) disseminate information about the risks that the new technological environment brings with it (for example, gambling, electronic cigarettes, Internet scrolling, and so on); 4) disseminate information about the long-term positive effects of a healthy lifestyle; 5) cultivate qualities such as determination and the desire for self-improvement.

All this, one way or another, is connected with the value of life in the minds of young people. It can be assumed that the ability to find a balance between different aspects of life in the real and virtual world will become an important skill of the future. The formation of this ability can be considered as an integral result of educational work at the university, as a significant sign of personal development. When introducing students to the values of a healthy lifestyle, it is also necessary to take into account the increased level of individualism and social atomization among young people.

While generally recognizing the value of a healthy lifestyle, half of the respondents (50.5%) are inclined to believe that they will follow it only after they have completed their career, and almost another third (28.68%) rather agree with this statement. 14.07% are indifferent, but only disagree – 4.23% in total, and 2.96% completely. Such a "deferred" attitude to the value of a healthy lifestyle as such may be explained by the age of the respondents, most of whom are objectively at a high level of health, for whom the choice of their own life trajectory, the potential achievement of recognized success, and thinking about life prospects are much more important.

The respondents showed a fairly high level of awareness, disagreeing with the statement that, despite the harm of smoking, electronic cigarettes will not do much harm. This means that, despite the rather aggressive advertising of products that "replace" smoking, young people show a high level of criticality when checking information about a product that could potentially harm their health – more than half of the respondents.

However, the percentage of respondents who are uncritical about information about a potentially harmful product and accept advertising information on faith is also quite high – more than 20%. Overall, almost half of the respondents (49.21%) completely disagree with this statement, while 11.85% "rather disagree". 14.50% are indifferent, 11.01% "rather agree", 13.44% agree.

Nevertheless, the majority of respondents are inclined to an active lifestyle, with the statement that "Physical education and sports are not for me", only 11.43% fully agree, 11.01% agree in general, 16.83% are neutral, 13.97% disagree in general, almost half disagree – 46.77%.

Almost half of the respondents do not attend sections, but prefer physical mobility: 28.47% fully agree with this, 24.87% agree in general, 19.47% are neutral, 9.74% disagree in general, 17.46% disagree. More than a third of the respondents are purposefully engaged in physical training: 36.30% fully agree with the statement "I play sports, attend sections", 14.50% agree in general, 16.51% are indifferent, 9.42% disagree in general, 23.28% disagree (Fig. 1).

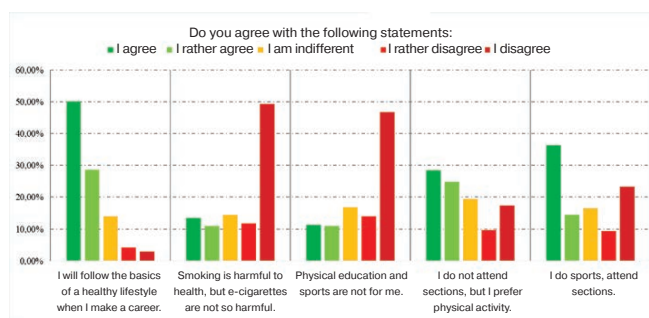


Fig. 1. Respondents' answers to the question about the value of life

The majority of respondents (43.8%) chose personal communication with friends as their preferred type of leisure (Fig. 2).

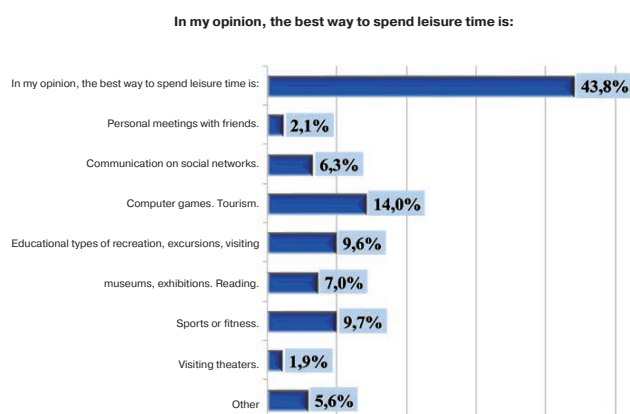


Fig. 2. Preferred leisure activities

Leisure activities that involve personal communication to some extent also include cognitive activities, excursions, visits to exhibitions and museums (9.6%), tourism (14%), sports or fitness (9.7%), as well as options formulated personally by respondents (5.6%) The attitude to physical education and sports occupies a rather important place in the students' value orientations (Fig. 3).

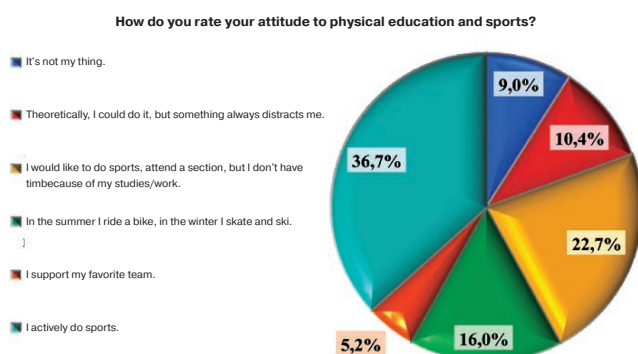


Fig. 3. Physical education and sports

The majority of respondents (36.7%) are actively involved in sports, however, as follows from the answers to the previous question, only 9.7% consider sports to be the best form of leisure. For others, this is not the value of rest, but of working on yourself, your health, and your currently popular image. At the same time, 22.7% would like to play sports, but do not have the time for this. 16% do not engage in sports purposefully, but they are physically active, cycling, skiing, and skating. For 9%, sport is not a personal value, and another 5.2% have a passive attitude towards sports, rooting for their favorite team.

**Conclusions.** The content of the spiritual and moral value of life is very multifaceted and inherently based on the principles of a biocentric approach, in which the highest value is wildlife as a whole, including humans as part of this whole. The answers of the respondents reveal an interesting trend: while about a third of the respondents are engaged in socially active activities for the practical realization of the value of life, the individual orientation of young people towards respect and caring for their surrounding nature, as well as maintaining their own personal health, is very high: for example, about 90% of respondents take care of nature, more than 60% have reliable information about what can be harmful to health, only 22% are not going to engage in physical education and sports. At the same time, the vast majority either play sports or, without doing so purposefully, lead a physically active lifestyle.

Thus, it is necessary to promote a healthy lifestyle for young people precisely as a part of civic identity and a component of the ideal of a citizen, as well as to form the image of a citizen as a comprehensively developed and successful personality.

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