

DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF PARENTAL LABOR MOTIVATION TYPES

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Abstract

Rapid development of information society was followed by pluralism of cultures and tendencies influencing formation of axiological society pillars, including the family culture formation. It results in transformation of different types of parenthood motivation, which determines reproductive strategies and domestic life forms. Therefore, study of social and demographic determinants, associated with parental motivation and reproductive behaviour types has become the current line of research. Relationship between social and demographic characteristics of respondents and their motivation content was determined with the help of Cramer, Kruskal-Wallis and Chi-square tests. Thereby it was found that the content-related motivation type is independent of gender, age and marital status of a respondent. The sibship size has appeared to be the only social and demographic characteristic significantly related to the motivation type. In this case, the age of children is unrelated to the parental motivation in content. However, it was found that respondents with the “pure” motivation types had fewer children as compared to respondents with the “mixed” or the “undetermined” motivation types.

Key words: parental labour, motivation of parenthood, reproductive motivation.

JEL Code: J11, J12, J13.

Introduction

The culture of parenthood has generated a lot of discourse among modern researchers. It has been repeatedly proven that parents' behaviour has a significant impact on the child's psyche (Dahmen et al., 2019), their physical health (An & Cooney, 2006; Blair et al., 2012), the development of their value system (Murillo et al., 2018, Cui et al., 2016), social capital (Bacchini et al., 2011), and also predetermines many other aspects of a child's future life (Wheeler, 2018; Bernardi et al., 2019). Hence, identifying the determinants of parents' motivation for shaping the future human capital is of undoubted interest.

Cross-national studies of attitudes towards parenting in different countries show that the mechanisms for shaping the culture of parenthood in different countries are similar, the only difference being the parents' self-evaluation of their competence and satisfaction from parental activities, which differ depending on the specifics of cultural propensities and emphases (Bornstein et al., 1998). Moreover, cross-country studies focusing on children's externalizing behaviour show that behaviour trajectories varied both across individuals within culture and across cultures, and the variance was larger at the individual level than at the culture level (Lansford et al., 2018). Thus, it can be assumed that the individual factors determining motivation for parental labour and the parenting style are no less significant than the cultural ones.

There are also studies that focus on the interrelation between various demographic characteristics and the style of parenting. Very common are studies of the role of gender in parental behaviour (Mickelson & Biehle, 2017). In addition, a number of researchers point to a change in attitude towards parenthood with age (Butovskaya, 2013). Differences in attitudes towards children in large and small families have also been explored (Black et al., 2005; Angrist et al., 2010). However, most of the studies only focus on one aspect of parenthood - style, self-evaluation, deviations, etc. At the same time, the influence of various demographic factors on the system of motivation for parental labour has not been sufficiently researched. This study is an attempt to fill this gap.

1 Data and methods

To study motivation for parental labour and the determinants of motivation types we have interviewed 500 parents from the Ural region, aged from 19 to 57.

The respondents' average age was 31, with the modal value of 27. 75% of the respondents had a university degree, and another 4% - unfinished higher education. One fifth of the respondents (19%) had specialized or vocational secondary education. The majority of the parents interviewed were officially married (86%) at the time of the study, while another 9% answered that they have a permanent partner (de-facto marriage). 6% of the respondents identified themselves as single and divorced at the time of the survey (3% in each category, respectively).

The majority of the respondents have small families: almost 60% of the respondents have only one child, with 36% having two children. Just under 4% of the respondents are raising three children, fewer than 1.6% have four, and fewer than 1% of those interviewed

have five or more children. It should be noted that the average number of children per woman in the sample turned out to be approximately equal to the average value in Russia (1.5 children per woman). The distribution of children by age is as follows: 22% of the respondents are parents of infants aged up to 12 months old, almost 70% are raising children between the ages of 1 and 6, 18.7% of the respondents have school-age children (from 7 to 13 years old), another 9.3% have teenage children (13-17 years). In addition, 12.4% of the respondents have children over 18.

In order to identify the motives for parental labour, the respondents were asked to choose between several options to answer the question “What does parenthood give you?” The options were divided into three groups: physiological, social and personal development motives. On the basis of the obtained quantitative data processed in the SPSS Statistics software package, the content-related parental motivation types and subtypes were determined. “Pure“ types of parental labour motivation: the motivations of one category became the leading ones: physiological, social and personal, depending on the category of motivations that was more frequently represented. “Mixed” types of parental labour motivation: two or more groups of motivations were represented equally. We have identified the following subtypes of mixed-type motivation: physical-social, socio-personal; physical-personal; uniform (all categories of motivation). “Undefined” type of motivation: when the respondent failed to choose any answer at all (Voroshilova, 2018).

Next, we tried to identify the respondents’ most significant demographic characteristics, presumably related to the type of motivation for parental labour. The rationale for the selected characteristics is given below.

1.1 The parental labour subject’s gender

Various studies conducted by both domestic and foreign scientists have repeatedly identified significant differences between men and women in terms of parental roles and behaviour (Mickelson & Biehle, 2017) In addition, gender inequality affects the principles of division of labour, the definition of family roles, the distribution of parental and family functions, as well as many other aspects of social differentiation. Modern studies show tha most of the parental functions are performed by women, with fathers playing only a secondary role. In this regard, women should be more motivated for parenting than men, and more often identify parenthood as a labour activity.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there are significant differences between men and women in terms of the peculiarities of their motivation for parental labour, which justifies the need to take into account the respondents' gender when analyzing their answers.

1.2 The age parental labour subject's

The respondents' age is one of the most important variables in sociological analysis. It is known that the system of life values undergoes significant changes with age and gaining life experience. Researchers of "early" motherhood pointed out a number of natural and social problems of parenting due to the mother's young age (Dahmen et al., 2019), although in terms of health young age is more favorable for motherhood than a later age. Anthropological studies also confirm the fact that the parents' age has a significant impact on their attitude towards children: the older the parents, the more they invest in their children. From the point of view of natural reproductive processes (not always consciously considered by parents), this is explained by the fact that the likelihood of having new children decreases with age, and the value of the child increases as the parents grow older (Butovskaya, 2013), since both procreation and fitness (and often the parents' survival rate) directly depend on the abilities of children who are growing up.

Thus, the parents' age viewed as socio-psychological maturity determines the degree of their readiness for parenthood. With age, there is a transition from parenthood as a natural process to an awareness of the value of parenthood, an adequate assessment of the needs of the growing child. Parenting experience is also important, although, given the creative nature of parental labour, the mechanical transfer of previous parental experience to the labour associated with children who are born later may not always be effective. In addition, the age of a parent is in one way or another connected with their health and capabilities, which is the basis of a person's general well-being and is reflected in the motivation for parental labour.

The growth with age of a conscious attitude towards parenting leads us to a hypothetical assumption that motivation for parental labour is related to the parents' age: "late parents" are more motivated for parental labour than those who became parents at an earlier age. It is possible to hypothesize that different motives prevail at different stages of parental labour. This may be due to the fact that people without initial parenting experience decide to become parents driven by physiological motives (procreation, preserving themselves in their descendants, satisfying physiological needs), but in the process of bringing up a child and developing them as an individual, parenting experience leads to an awareness of other values and motives for parental labour.

In addition, the challenges at different stages of parenthood are determinants for the manifestation and awareness by the parents of the actual “labour” component of parenthood. Thus, continuous care for the baby reveals parenthood as a predominantly routine physical labour, the interaction with teenage children - as a complex psychological work, etc.

1.3 The number of children in the family

It would be logical to assume that parents with many children have a higher level of motivation for parental labour. However, the number of children can be an indicator of motivation for parental labour only if the decision to have the first and the subsequent children was deliberate.

Nevertheless, the number of children perfectly shows the level of parents’ workload in terms of physical, emotional, time, and other types of efforts that have to be invested. It is noteworthy that with an increase in the number of children, the intensity of parental labour may have a tendency to decrease due to the inclusion of older children in parental labour, the siblings close in age taking care of each other, etc.

It is known that parents tend to be selective towards children, showing favoritism towards older or younger children, which can significantly affect the motivation for and the results of parental labour.

Next, we analyzed whether the identified types of motivation for parenthood relate to the main aspects of work motivation: the respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics, the personal perception of this activity by the subject and the conditions for its implementation. Using the Cramer, Kruskal-Wallis coefficients and the Chi-square test, the correlation between the respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics and the content of their motivation were studied. The results are considered in more detail below.

2 Results

It was found that the type of motivation is not related to gender, age, education, or the respondent’s marital status (the significance of the Chi-square test in all cases turned out to be more than 0.05, which indicates the random nature of the correlation).

The only socio-demographic characteristic that significantly correlates with the type of motivation was the number of children in the family (according to the Kruskal–Wallis coefficient, 0.007). At the same time, the children’s age does not correlate with the content-based type of motivation for parenthood (according to the Kruskal–Wallis coefficient, the value is 0.109).

The distribution of the respondents' motivation types depending on the number of children in the family is presented in Table 1.

Tab. 1: Average number of children in the families of respondents with different types of motivation for parenthood

Motivation types	Number of children		
	Average	Median	Modal
„Pure“	1,425	1	1
„Mixed“	1,621	2	2
Undetermined	1,6	1	1

Source: author's calculation

As the data in the table indicate, the average, modal and median numbers of children in the families of those with “pure” and “mixed” types of motivation differ significantly: among the respondents with “pure” type, these numbers are significantly lower. To identify the reasons of it, we conducted a more detailed analysis of motivation by subtypes in relation to the number of children. The data obtained are shown in Table 2.

Tab. 2: Average number of children in the families of respondents with different subtypes of motivation for parenthood

Motivation types	Motivation subtypes	Number of children		
		Average	Median	Modal
„Pure“	Physiological	1,385	1	1
	Social	1,387	1	1
	Personal	1,460	1	1
„Mixed“	Physio-social	1,615	2	_*
	Socio-personal	1,688	2	2
	Physio-personal	1,700	2	2
	Uniform	1,526	2	2
Undetermined		1,600	1	1

* - several modal values were identified

Source: author's calculations

The analysis of the correlation between the number of children and the type of motivation indicated that the highest average number of children in a family (1.7 children per family) is characteristic of the respondents with the physical subtype of motivation. The average numbers of children in the family of those respondents whose motivation for parenthood is of socio-personal and physio-social subtype are close in value (1.68 and 1.62 children per family, respectively). The median value indicates that half of all the respondents in these groups have two children.

A slightly lower average number of children in a family was found among the respondents with the uniform subtype of motivation for parenthood — 1.53 children per

family. However, the median value suggests that half of the respondents have two or more children.

3 Discussion

The fact that the group of the respondents with the undefined type of motivation is also characterized by a high average number of children (1.6 per family) is surprising; however, in this group half of the respondents have only one child.

As we already mentioned above, the respondents with “pure” types of motivation for parenthood are characterised by the lowest number of children. The smallest number of children in the family is typical of those with the physiological subtype of motivation: the average value for this group is 1.38 children per family. That is, those who consider children mainly as guaranteed support in the event of old age or illness (based on security motives), or procreation (the motive of self-preservation in future generations) often have only one child. The respondents with the social type of motivation for parenthood demonstrate very close indicators of the number of children in the family. It should be mentioned that this category includes those who are focused on creating sustainable social ties in children. The indicators for the group of respondents with the personal subtype of motivation for parenthood are slightly higher: 1.46 children per family, but half of the group — as the median value indicates — also have only one child.

Based on the results obtained, it is difficult to identify the cause and the result of the discovered correlation between the number of children and the type of motivation. On the one hand, one can assume that as the number of children increases, the parents’ understanding of their motives, return from parenthood, their role and responsibility improves. In addition, parents with many children have to be more versatile in their interaction with children due to differences in their age and character. This allows them to appreciate the new aspects of parenting when the family expands and they establish themselves as a parent facing a greater variety of challenges and situations. On the other hand, we can say that a person who initially has a complex of diverse motives in the structure of motivation for parenthood seeks to satisfy their diverse needs by increasing the number of children. Thus, a large family can be a guarantee of support and assistance in old age and illness, serve as an indicator of prestige, wealth, viability and life achievements, and an example of stable social ties.

Thus, these two processes (the influence of the number of children on motivation, or the decision on the number of children based on the structure of motivation for parenthood)

seem equally possible. Most likely, their “orientation” in each case is determined individually and is influenced by the configuration of external conditions.

Conclusion

It is hard to determine the causes and consequences of the correlation between the number of children and the motivation type based on the obtained results. It can be assumed that the understanding of motives, of the feedback from parenthood and the role of parents deepens with the increase in sibship size. On the other hand, it can also be stated that a person with an initial set of motives within the parenthood motivation structure tends to meet their needs by increasing the number of children. Thus, these two processes (the impact of sibship size on motivation and the decision concerning the number of children based on the parenthood motivation structure) are equally probable.

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