

## EXPLORING THE SOCIOCULTURAL PORTRAIT OF CHILDREN LEADING NOMADIC LIFE WITH THEIR PARENTS

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents, based on life strategies, basic and instrumental values. Proceeding from the substantiated theoretical and methodological framework, the concept of life strategies has been identified for both children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life. The said life strategy concept relies on individuality, initiative, activities, the value of life, as well as on personal qualities and properties that are essential for nomadic life. According to results of the research, life strategies, basic and instrumental values have been found to be the principal basis in elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents.

**Keywords:** education, nomadic life, sociocultural portrait, indigenous small-numbered peoples, life strategies, basic values, instrumental values.

### 1 Introduction

In the contemporary sociocultural situation, attention is focused on sociocultural changes and processes related to creating the new sociocultural portrait of children, their life strategies, basic and instrumental values.

In these conditions, scientific research work on education of children leading nomadic life with their parents has been conducted.

In 2019, FSBSI "Scientific Research Institute of National Schools of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)" studied the historical and sociocultural prerequisites of functioning of nomad schools (Nikitina & Fedorov, 2020). Scientific approaches to organizing education for children in places of their traditional residence (Fedorov & Nikitina, 2020). Models have been developed describing education for children leading nomadic life with their parents. The researchers have also studied the contemporary condition of the system of education designed for children of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation leading nomadic life with their parents. For this, questionnaire survey was conducted for the participants of educational relationships coming from 26 regions of the Russian Federation where indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation reside. According to the survey results, educational needs of the regions have been identified, and so have their ideas about organizing educational activities in nomad kindergartens and schools located in places of traditional residence and economic activity of the small-numbered peoples. Based on the analysis, methodological guidelines have been developed for the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation on organizing education of children of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation leading nomadic and (or) semi-nomadic life with their parents.

Practice shows that in Russia's individual subjects, families need to educate their children in conditions of nomad camps. Currently, what is essential is to get a new vision of children's education in nomad camp areas up to the contemporary sociocultural realia of life.

Proceeding from the above, in relation to the sociocultural development of the population of the North, let it be noted that the problem of searching for the new scientific and theoretical grounds and conceptual provisions backed up by basic and applied research has become urgent. For solving the posed problem, the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents has to be elaborated relying on life strategies, basic and instrumental values. Alongside this, theoretical and methodological framework has to be determined;

based on it, the concept of life strategies related to the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents has to be developed.

For solving the problems found, it is expedient to analyze scientific approaches to elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents, and to work out the toolkit for the research. Meanwhile, the sociocultural portrait has to be developed proceeding from life strategies, basic and instrumental values.

### 2 Literature Review

The problems of life strategies have been studied by a number of Russian and foreign researchers (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991; Fromm, 1998; Adler, 1997).

Pedagogy borrowed the idea of life strategy from other domains of science, and the concept "life strategy" is interpreted in a variety of ways.

In Russian psychology, the concept "life strategy" was most extensively explored by K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya (1991). She identifies three attributes of life strategy "in choosing the direction, method of living, solving life controversies of the "I want vs. I have" kind, and discovering something new for oneself in achieving one's life goals and plans. It involves creating conditions for self-fulfillment through creativity, too, "creating values of one's life, combining one's needs and life in the form of its special values" (p. 6). In this context, the authors consider K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya's scientific viewpoint (1991) more acceptable for this research, because life strategy is fulfilled while bearing in mind a person's individuality, his or her active stance. It also implies "the value of life consisting in the person's interest, involvedness, satisfaction, and new search as a method of living, individual life strategy, when they are determined by the very person" (p. 6).

Among various scientific approaches, E. P. Rubtsov's opinion (2010) deserves special attention; he emphasized that life strategy is "a kind of one's forward-looking orienting system for one's life world, incorporating conscious and behavioral characteristics that are essential and sufficient for forming and fulfilling the future life". Similarly, let the views of V. R. Tsylev (2015) on the content of the life strategy concept be noted. He defines it as "a system of a person's sociocultural ideas about the person's own life, including value-based priorities, future-oriented plans, and ways for accomplishing them; they make up one's way of life as such and manifest themselves in one's daily practices" (113-128 pp.).

Works by a number of researchers deal with an important constituent of one's life strategy – a need of self-fulfillment. Self-fulfillment acts as the effectiveness of personal growth; it is understood as a process of one's getting accustomed to higher levels of knowledge and one's active self-fulfillment in life (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991; Dermanova & Korostyleva, 1997; Kormakova, 2009; Kudinov, 2007).

"One person can identify his or her life line, professional prospect successfully from the outset. Meanwhile, another one can see several prospects, self-fulfillment lines for oneself, so one wants to try oneself in various spheres first and choose the main focus area only after that. This is what life strategy about in different people" (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991). And this is exactly why the contemporary school has to grant its students as many platforms for self-expression as possible.

The said important circumstances have enabled the authors to outline key reference points in their research. They are aimed at self-fulfillment of an individual, the individual's conscious development in the spheres of spiritual, moral, esthetic, emotional, intellectual, and overall physical activity when interacting with the reality around the individual.

When studying personal life strategies, it is E. Fromm's (1998) work "To have or to be?" describing two principal ways of human existence or life strategies that is of the greatest interest. E. Fromm's book "To have or to be?" (1998) discusses the problem of life strategy which gains special sound and importance in conditions of the modern times. The problem is associated with the human need of transcendence (experience, feelings, understanding, mind), of creativity, and catering to both trends (i.e., "having" and "being") between correspondence to social demand and creative self-fulfillment, the development of human uniqueness, viewing them as the end result of life strategy.

Another important constituent of life strategy is discussed in studies of the foreign scientist A. Adler (1997). He used the concept of life style, "an integrated style of adapting to life and interacting with it" (p. 158). According to the researcher, life style is fulfilled when completing the principal tasks of life, such as love, friendship, work, that are determined by the conditions of living.

Thus, it is noted that foreign researchers approach the understanding of life strategies from the standpoint of describing the principal directions while also speaking about the presence of an integrated life style. In the said aspects, it is the personality and its individual particularities that are the main point, which is of no small importance in creating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents.

Summing up the above, it can be stated that "according to the author, upbringing an active life stance in children and their learning the methods for constructing their own life are a compulsory constituent of the upbringing system the contemporary school features". This is so because currently, "the society is most of all characterized by two attributes, uncertainty and changeability, and socialization of today's children occurs in radically different conditions than that of their parents. Meanwhile, the parents themselves do not have a quite clear idea, either, as for what exactly goals life is going to make their children face in the future" (Zhigulina, 2015, 430-432 pp.). Among factors that influence students' constructing their life strategies, it is family that proves to be the principal constituent. Children have experience its influence from their early years, as they are the most sensitive to it. It is family that predetermines children's life path to a greater extent. For children, parental support, independence, active participation and organization, motivation, and communication lead to the internal wishes, intentions, and aspirations prevailing in children.

In terms of the content, life strategies represent an individual's orientation to certain basic values first of all (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991; Kormakova, 2009; Shaposhnikov, 2008).

As of today, it is abundance, freedom, justice and equality, and the good that act as the principal basic values of the society. They are defined as follows. "Abundance" is considered to be the availability of means for convenient life (food, clothes, accommodation, and material security of a family). "Freedom" is represented by the expedience of acting up to one's own wishes and needs while adhering to the standards and rules set in the society. Such basic values as "justice and equality" are formed in the process of distribution of material and spiritual assets. Finally, "the good" is interpreted as the assertion of humaneness, responsiveness, mutual respect, and striving to do good for people.

The above basic values characterize some personal qualities and individual particularities that are important in elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life.

The variability of approaches studying basic and instrumental values enrich them considerably and allow singling out the principal elements of basic values: universal human, cultural, and individual. These elements help create the model of sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life, with the particularities of each person considered, regardless of their sex,

age, social and religious belonging, and according to their cultural traditions and traditional values (*universal human values*), the unique and original culture of the peoples (*cultural values*), individuality and personal particularities (*individual values*).

It is these basic values that are inherent within the need of, interest in, and aspiration to beauty, harmony, manifesting originality, uniqueness, learning the world and oneself, evoking in oneself a wish to create, invent, design, and produce something entirely new. Taken together, they will help model the sociocultural portrait of personality for both children, teachers, and parents, leading nomadic life.

Discussing the content-related aspects of life strategy, I. V. Lashuk (2014) defines basic values as "the meaning of life; they are subdivided into groups of values based on identifying the premise "For what do I live?": for one's cause (this is the group of self-fulfillment values); for oneself (the group of human well-being values); for the close ones (the group of values associated with the "people of the small circle"); for others (the group of values "based on other people's opinions")" (215-231 pp.). So, I. V. Lashuk's conceptual approach (2014) presents an all-round characteristic of basic values; it provides the scientific basis, too, for creating the sociocultural portrait of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life. Alongside this, the principal factors of basic values are especially important in this study, such as "For what do I live?" – for having an exciting job, for being professional in one's work, for personal well-being (physical, spiritual, social), and so on. Certainly, basic values act as a kind of centerpiece around which the structure of personal values is organized (Plotnitskaya, 2008; Sozontov, 2007, 129-146 pp.). The latter determine life strategies, life goal, correct behavior, needs, interests in the process of learning – as well as instrumental values of behavior types, such as courage, bravery, leniency, sincerity, love of truth, determination, persistence in work, and so on.

All the above ideas, attributes, factors, and circumstances pertaining to life strategies enable the authors to speak about the scientific approach to elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life. In a way, these are a marker of the sociocultural development of Northern and Arctic regions of the Russian Federation.

### 3 Research Methodological Framework

The objective of the research consisted in analyzing scientific approaches to elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents (with their life strategies, basic and instrumental values borne in mind), developing the research toolkit, and testing it out.

Tasks:

- to study conceptual approaches to elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents, relying on life strategies, basic and instrumental values;
- to determine theoretical and methodological framework for the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents;
- to develop research toolkit for creating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents;
- to organize and conduct the survey among children leading nomadic life with their parents.

Methods of the research included analysis of scientific literature, survey.

The survey was conducted in March 2020. The research base was the vacation time school "Arctic" (Yakutsk). The respondents were 50 children of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North (studying at grades 5-11), with 50% of children coming from nomad families and having the experience of nomadic life among them.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

Analyzing the scientific literature and the results of a number of discussions on the research topic has enabled the authors to outline the following theoretical and methodological framework, or foundations, for elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life:

- *The sociocultural approach* determines personal life strategies and individual particularities, active stance, as well as life values of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life. On the other hand, it describes their personal qualities, properties, initiative, responsibility, interest, enthusiasm, method of living, and individual strategies of nomadic life that are aligned with the principal trends of the society in which indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North live. This approach details the specific features of nomadic life, nomad family, traditional economic activity, nomad school, nomad kindergarten, and the community for transforming and integrating the traditional and contemporary sociocultural and educational environment in conditions of nomad settlements;
- *The civilization approach* creates the sociocultural, educational basis and grants the opportunity of studying the originality, uniqueness of nomadic life of indigenous small-numbered peoples. In line with this approach, the originality of nomadic life of children and teachers of nomad educational organizations ensures personal life strategies aimed at public-spirited activities, spiritual and personal development, and social self-fulfillment;
- *The activity-based approach* is the educational basis of life strategy for children and teachers leading nomadic life. This approach is determined by individual originality and creative activity which manifest themselves in conditions of nomad camps as creative uniqueness (i.e., a constructive attitude to one's own nomadic life), passive individuality (being determined by the influence of some external circumstances), and active typicality (here, efforts are focused on accomplishing the universally accepted goals, values, and traditions). Individual life strategies are aimed at activity-based self-fulfillment;
- *The synergetic approach* addresses life strategies relying on self-organization and personal self-fulfillment of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life, with certain methods used for that. Conditions are created for self-fulfillment through productive activity which results in a particular output (manufacturing parts of housing, sleds, etc.). They also elaborate individual educational paths, which is important in conditions of nomad settlements when cultivating new habits and behavior patterns.

Determining the theoretical and methodological framework is related to "ensuring accessible education in areas of nomad camps, establishing children's personalities (in terms of the world view and values), their individualization (learning oneself), passing on the time-honored experience, material, cultural, and spiritual traditions of their peoples. This is also associated with a better quality of social life of the communities, higher performance of their work, and professional guidance for children in various spheres of life activity (Fedorov & Nikitina, 2020).

Proceeding from the theoretical and methodological framework, the authors have determined the concept of life strategies as applied to children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life. So, the basis of one's life strategy concept includes individuality, initiative, activities, and values of life, as well as personal qualities and properties that are essential for nomadic life. The specific features of the life strategy concept of children, teachers, and parents depend on the nomad family's activities, nomad way of life, traditional economy management, and their social initiative. The result provided by the life strategy concept of children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life is determined by the originality, creative uniqueness, individuality, and active stance, within which they perform actions aimed at fulfilling the universally accepted goals, values, and traditions of

the nomad people. Moreover, the life strategy concept in children, teachers, and parents is aimed at socially important activities, spiritual, personal development, and three types of self-fulfillment: the activity-related one, the social one, and personal self-fulfillment. Activity-related self-fulfillment manifests itself in children, teachers, and parents leading nomadic life self-expressing in various activities (reindeer herding, fishing, sewing clothes, hunting, applied decorative arts, foraging, and so on). Social self-fulfillment acts as a humanitarian mission in organizing and participating in social and economic, social and political, and public-spirited activities. Personal self-fulfillment rebounds for children's spiritual growth and development of personal potential. In other words, personal self-fulfillment is formed and manifested in life situations in conditions of nomad camps. It incorporates such qualities as responsibility, courage, inquisitiveness, industriousness, persistence, initiative, resourcefulness, creativity, morals, etc., with each of them being sociocultural to various extents.

Thus, the theoretical and methodological framework and the life strategy concept detail the scientific and methodological foundations for modeling the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents. First of all, they have the nature of human values, i.e., the axiological nature. Namely, "indigenous peoples of the North live in areas of traditional settlement of their ancestors; they keep their traditional pattern and way of life, economy management types, their original culture and language" (Ivanova, 2019).

Relying on the results of theoretical analysis, as well as considering life strategies, basic and instrumental values, the authors developed the research toolkit for creating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents.

In March 2020, the authors conducted the local study (survey) of children, based on the vacation time school "Arctic" (Yakutsk). The survey covered 50 respondents – children of indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North (studying at grades 5-11), with 50% of children coming from nomad families and having the experience of nomadic life among them.

The following preliminary findings have been obtained as a result of the local study.

Firstly, most students note they treat their native home, settlement, reindeer pastures, fishing areas, the traditional work of reindeer herders and fishers in a very responsible and careful way. It has been found that the students associate their life strategies with various professions, including specialities that are essential in conditions of nomad camps (reindeer herder and farm machinery operator, fisher, fish biologist, veterinarian, agriculturist, livestock specialist, economist, lawyer, and so on).

Secondly, the students identify the following values as their basic ones: work, family, nature, the traditional knowledge, and healthy way of life, which are maintained in the nomad pattern of life, family traditions, and are passed on from generation to generation.

Thirdly, it has been found that in conditions of nomad camps, the students prefer such instrumental values as responsibility (sense of duty, ability to stand by one's word), rationalism (ability to think sensibly and logically, make well-considered, rational decisions); self-control (self-possession, self-discipline); bravery in defending one's opinion, views; inflexible will (ability to get one's own way, to face difficulties head-on); tolerance (to other people's views and opinions, ability to forgive others their mistakes and fallacies); open-mindedness (ability to understand another one's viewpoint, to respect other customs and habits); honesty (love of truth, sincerity); efficiency (industriousness, performance), sensibility (responsiveness).

Fourthly, some questions related to achieving the desirable end result (terminal values) were posed. As the students' answers show, they give the prevailing importance to the nature, nomad family, traditional economy, pasture lands, nomad routes, and

fishing areas. They have not opted for a life of comfort, but they prefer the vast expanse of nomad camps.

## 5 Conclusion

As a result of the research, theoretical and methodological framework and the concept of life strategies have been identified for elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents. Research toolkits have been developed based on scientific and methodological approaches and the said concept in the topic being explored.

The obtained preliminary results of the local study have enabled the authors to find out that life strategies, basic and instrumental values are the principal basis in elaborating the sociocultural portrait of children leading nomadic life with their parents.

For gaining a more complete picture of the research, other personal and individual qualities and properties of children leading nomadic life with their parents have to be found out. The research must be based on life strategies, basic and instrumental values, as well as behavior models and sociocultural competencies and involve children from other regions. Namely, alongside the Northern and Arctic areas of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the said regions where children of nomadic families and indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation reside include Yamal-Nenets and Nenets autonomous districts, Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets municipal area of the Krasnoyarsk territory, and Amur region.

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**Primary Paper Section:** A

**Secondary Paper Section:** AM, AO