Studying young people's attitudes toward military service through sociological research

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the theoretical and methodological aspects of studying young people's attitudes toward military service through sociological research. It explores the social factors that shape these attitudes, including the influence of family, educational environments, peer groups, mass media, and social networks. The article also analyzes the role of the survey method in sociological research, the principles of questionnaire design, the requirements for formulating survey questions, and the methodological characteristics of conducting interviews. Particular attention is paid to the appropriate selection of respondents, question clarity, research objectivity, anonymity, and the reliability of the collected data. The article highlights the importance of sociological surveys in gaining a deeper understanding of young people's attitudes toward military service, identifying the factors that influence these attitudes, and developing relevant practical recommendations.

Keywords: youth, military service, military-patriotic education, sociological research, survey method, questionnaire, interview, respondent, social factors, public opinion, social attitudes, data reliability.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of accelerating globalization and geopolitical developments, a state's defense capabilities are closely linked to the attitudes of its citizens toward military service and their level of preparedness. Therefore, it can confidently be argued that fostering a sense of patriotism among young people and encouraging them to develop a positive attitude toward military service are issues of considerable importance. This is because young people's perceptions of and attitudes toward military service are shaped by various factors in their social environment. For example, the family, peer groups, individuals who encourage and guide young people toward military service within the education system, social media, and mass media can contribute to the formation of different ideas and attitudes among young people. These factors may also influence their behavior when interacting within different social groups, as well as the difficulties they encounter when adapting to a new environment. Therefore, an in-depth study of young people's existing opinions and attitudes toward military service, together with the identification of the underlying causes and influencing factors, constitutes an important scientific and practical task. In this regard, conducting sociological research and selecting appropriate research methods are of particular importance. The role of sociological research methods, especially the survey method, is invaluable in this process.

The survey method enables the systematic examination of public sentiment, social problems, needs, and systems of social relations among different segments of society. This, in turn, necessitates ensuring the effectiveness and accuracy of data collection methods. One of the most widely used and practically effective methods for this purpose is the survey method.[4] In contemporary sociology, the survey method serves as a fundamental tool for empirical research. It plays a significant role in examining public opinion, identifying problems, assessing needs, and informing various political and economic decision-making processes.[5]

Surveys make it possible to identify a wide range of important indicators, including living standards, social relations, value systems, political attitudes, and levels of trust among the population.

The survey is considered one of the most widely used methods of sociological research. It enables researchers to obtain information from a broad audience, ranging from ordinary citizens to specialists. Furthermore, survey results provide important evidence for making political, social, and economic decisions. In a democratic society, in particular, public opinion is taken into account to a significant extent through surveys.

Sociological research involves the study of social objects, relationships, and processes in order to obtain new data and identify the regularities of social life, based on theories, methods, and procedures established in sociology.[6]The principal methods of sociological research include observation, experimentation, document analysis, and surveys. The observational method can be applied in sociological research to examine social problems in specific situations and within particular groups.[7]The survey method is generally implemented through questionnaires and interviews. In sociological research, the questionnaire method consists of a set of questions and statements organized according to a specific sequence, content, and format. Questions may be open-ended, allowing respondents to express their opinions freely, or closed-ended, requiring respondents to select one of the proposed answer options.[8]

Every research study begins with a problem.[9]The next stage involves clearly defining the research problem. At this stage, the researcher develops a hypothesis. A hypothesis is an assumption concerning the relationships that may exist between the phenomena under investigation. To ensure the effectiveness of the research, the hypothesis must be formulated in such a way that the collected empirical data can be used to test it. The subsequent stage involves developing the research design, which requires determining the methods through which the necessary data will be collected. A range of research methods is available, and the choice of a particular method depends on the objectives of the study and the aspects of human behavior that need to be examined.[10]

The American journalist, psychologist, and statistician George Gallup first employed the survey method in his work entitled “An Objective Method for Determining Readers’ Interest in Newspaper Content.” Later, between 1932 and 1936, while working at an advertising agency, he was among the pioneers who used questionnaires to conduct market research among consumers.[11] Each specific sociological study requires the development of a specially designed

4. Sharipov A.A. – “Sotsiologiya nazariyasi va amaliyoti”. – Toshkent: Fan, 2020. – B. 117.
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10. E. Giddens “Sotsiologiya”, 2002-745-bet.

questionnaire, although all questionnaires generally share a common structure.[12] Any questionnaire consists of three main parts:

- Introduction;
- Main body;
- Concluding section.[13]

The introductory section identifies the organization or individual conducting the research, explains its aims and objectives, and provides instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. It also emphasizes the anonymous nature of participation and expresses gratitude to respondents for their contribution. The introduction is accompanied by guidelines for completing the questionnaire.[14]

For example: *"Dear student, greetings! This questionnaire is being conducted to examine young people's attitudes toward military service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The survey is anonymous, and the results will be used exclusively for scientific research purposes. Please answer the questions sincerely and honestly. Every opinion you share is of great importance to us!"*

The main body of the questionnaire plays a decisive role in the research process, as the reliability of the results obtained largely depends on this section. The content, types, and sequence of the questions, as well as the way in which response options are presented, must be designed to ensure the collection of the most accurate and comprehensive information possible about the object under investigation. Therefore, careful planning and systematic development of the questionnaire's questions are essential to ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings.

The development of questionnaire items is considered one of the most complex stages of sociological research. At this stage, the researcher determines the purpose of the questionnaire, the type of information to be collected, and the questions that are most appropriate for achieving the intended research objectives. In addition, the questions must be logically interconnected and arranged in an appropriate sequence. When formulating questions, it is essential to take into account the respondents' level of knowledge and understanding. Questions should be simple, clear, precise, and free from unnecessary complexity, while remaining appropriate to the respondents' level of familiarity with the subject under investigation. They must also be formulated in a way that facilitates the collection of relevant and reliable data.

As in interviews, questionnaire items may be designed in either open-ended or closed-ended formats. Therefore, one of the initial decisions is to determine which type of question should be prioritized. One of the principal requirements for constructing response options for closed-ended questions is to avoid logical errors, such as overlapping categories or inconsistencies among definitions intended to describe different aspects of the phenomenon being studied. The final section of a questionnaire contains questions about respondents' demographic and social characteristics, which can also help assess the reliability of the collected data. These questions may concern respondents' gender, age, educational attainment, place of residence, social status, background, work experience, and other relevant characteristics.[15]

It is important to recognize that questionnaire development is not a one-time activity but rather a complex process involving several stages. Consequently, not every specialist is neces-

11. Методология и методы научного исследования: учебное пособие / Л. В. Байбородова, А. П. Чернявская. – Ярославль: РИО ЯГПУ, 2014. – 283 с.
12. https://cyberleninka.ru./article/n/sotsiologik-tadqiqotlarda-anketa-usulu-uning-tuzilishi-va-qo-llanish-tartibi 2022, Nilufar Yuldashovna Ibragimov, Barno Sharapat qizi Atamuradova

sarily qualified to design a sociological questionnaire. Developing an effective questionnaire can reasonably be regarded as both a scientific skill and an art. Initially, the content of the questions is carefully considered, after which they are organized into a coherent structure and an initial draft is prepared. The questionnaire is then thoroughly reviewed to identify ambiguities, unclear formulations, and unnecessary elements. At the next stage, it is tested on a small group of participants to observe how actual respondents interpret and respond to the questions. Based on the findings, the necessary revisions are made and the final version is developed.

Conducting pilot testing is essential for evaluating questionnaire quality. During this process, researchers examine whether the questions are clear and relevant to the research objectives, how their wording influences respondents, and whether they are arranged in a logically consistent sequence. In other words, every question must contribute to obtaining clear and useful information about the phenomenon or characteristic being investigated. Questions should remain relevant to the research topic and should not be unnecessary, vague, or ambiguous.

If questions are excessively complex, difficult to understand, or require too much effort from respondents, the quality of the answers may deteriorate. Therefore, questions must be formulated in a simple, precise, and comprehensible manner.

The final section of a questionnaire usually contains questions concerning respondents' personal and sociodemographic characteristics. These may include gender, age, educational attainment, work experience, marital status, principal occupation, sources of income, and income level. When designing questions concerning these characteristics, it is often appropriate to use a closed-ended format in which respondents are provided with predetermined answer options.

In questionnaire design, the identification section, commonly referred to as the respondent profile or demographic section, is generally placed at the end of the questionnaire. This approach allows respondents to engage with the main research questions first and provide personal information afterward, thereby making the overall response process more convenient and potentially reducing initial reluctance to participate.

Conducting a survey is not simply a matter of asking questions and collecting answers. It is a systematic and consistent process aimed at ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and scientific value of the collected data. A properly planned survey provides a foundation for the effective implementation of subsequent research stages.

The next stage involves data collection. At this stage, information is obtained from respondents in a systematic and structured manner according to a previously developed research plan. The clarity of the questions, the appropriate selection of respondents, and the impartial conduct of the survey are decisive factors in ensuring data quality.

The final stage consists of data analysis and the presentation of research findings. The collected information is organized, classified, and analyzed, and conclusions are subsequently drawn from the results. To maximize the practical value of the research, the resulting conclusions and recommendations should be applied appropriately and effectively.

In the research process, the object of an interview or survey is a particular social group, stratum, or community, whereas the researcher conducting the study represents its subject in

15. https://cyberleninka.ru./article/n/sotsiologik-tadqiqotlarda-anketa-usulu-uning-tuzilishi-va-qo-llanish-tartibi 2022, Nilufar Yuldashovna Ibragimov, Barno Sharapat qizi Atamuradova

the methodological sense. The research topic is determined in relation to current social problems, social relationships, or a specific phenomenon. The time, location, and format of the interview – whether individual, group-based, or mass-oriented – are planned in advance, thereby improving the effectiveness of the research process.

To conduct a successful interview, the system of questions and answers must be developed with particular care. Questions should be designed to identify respondents' social experiences, ways of thinking, and attitudes toward social processes. Questions arranged in a logically consistent sequence increase the likelihood of obtaining reliable and accurate information.

In my view, the principal objective of this method is to analyze changes occurring in society, including transformations in people's social behavior, attitudes, and perceptions. Interviews make it possible to collect comprehensive information about the worldviews, values, interests, and attitudes toward social problems of individuals belonging to different age groups, professions, and social positions. Such information is important for drawing sociological conclusions, forecasting social processes, and developing practical recommendations.[16]

Another form of the survey method is the interview. As a sociological research technique, an interview is a purposeful form of information exchange conducted through direct communication between the researcher and the respondent. Unlike ordinary conversation, this method is characterized by a systematic structure and a clearly defined research focus. It enables researchers to explore respondents' opinions, perceptions, and experiences in greater depth.[17]

The role of the interviewer is particularly important in this process. The interviewer must maintain a neutral position, avoid interfering with the respondent's expression of opinions, and refrain from exerting pressure on their views. This approach enables respondents to express their thoughts freely and enhances the authenticity of the information collected. Furthermore, the effectiveness of an interview largely depends on how the initial communication environment is established. It is essential to foster trust and a positive attitude toward the researcher among participants. Such an approach contributes to the effective application of the interview method.[18]

A survey can be defined as a questionnaire, consisting of one or more pages, designed to collect information from respondents. Surveys can be used to gather various types of information from a target audience, including demographic, behavioral, psychographic, and other relevant data. There are several methods of administering surveys, including:

- Email surveys;
- Website-based surveys;
- In-app surveys;
- In-store kiosks;
- Interviews;
- Social media surveys.

For a survey to be successful, it is essential to identify and carefully select the target audience. This helps ensure the reliability and accuracy of the responses obtained. Researchers should first compile a comprehensive list of all potentially relevant questions and

13. https://cyberleninka.ru./article/n/sotsiologik-tadqiqotlarda-anketa-usulu-uning-tuzilishi-va-qo-llanish-tartibi 2022, Nilufar Yuldashovna Ibragimov, Barno Sharapat qizi Atamuradova
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17. E. Giddens "Sotsiologiya" Toshkent: Sharq nashriyoti
18. S. Kvale, S. Brinkmann "Interviews: learning the Craft of Qualitative Research interviewing"-2009.

then select those that are most important to the objectives of the study. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions may be used. Depending on the characteristics of the target audience and the depth of information required, questions can be added or removed to ensure that the survey meets the research objectives.[19]

In contemporary sociological research, adapting survey instruments to the characteristics of the target audience is essential for their effective implementation. Whether the survey is conducted through a questionnaire or an interview, the location and timing of data collection are also important considerations. This is because careful attention to every element of the research process increases the likelihood that the researcher will obtain the information required to achieve the study's objectives.

During the data analysis stage, the collected information must be systematically organized. This process may involve recording supplementary information associated with each respondent, including identification codes, metadata, feedback, contact points, and other relevant indicators, where appropriate and in accordance with data-protection requirements. Subsequently, responses and feedback are categorized according to their content. Categories may include identified problems, general suggestions, technical errors, requests for new features, and complaints concerning service quality. Based on the analytical findings, practical measures should be developed to address the identified issues. This stage increases the practical value of the research, supports improvements in organizational performance, and contributes to identifying, addressing, and reducing existing sociological problems.[20]

CONCLUSION

Studying young people's attitudes toward military service represents an important area of contemporary sociology. These attitudes are shaped by young people's social perceptions, values, understanding of patriotism, and the influence of various social institutions. Families, educational institutions, peer groups, mass media, and social networks are among the principal factors influencing young people's perceptions of military service.

The theoretical and methodological approaches discussed in this article demonstrate that sociological surveys offer significant opportunities for examining young people's attitudes toward military service objectively and systematically. In particular, questionnaires and interviews can be used to identify young people's opinions, needs, motivations, expectations, and the factors shaping their positive or negative attitudes toward military service. However, obtaining reliable results depends on clearly defined research objectives, appropriate respondent selection, logically structured and comprehensible questions, and the scientifically grounded collection and analysis of data.

Furthermore, ensuring anonymity, objectivity, and respondents' freedom to express their opinions is essential throughout the survey process. This is particularly important when researching military service, a field characterized by discipline and hierarchy. Formulating neutral questions and avoiding pressure on respondents can contribute to the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

Overall, sociological research into young people's attitudes toward military service makes it possible to understand the mechanisms underlying the formation of these attitudes, identify existing problems, and develop evidence-based recommendations for addressing them. There-

19. U. Flick "An introduction to qualitative Research".
20. Graham Kalton "Introduction to survey sampling"- 1983

fore, conducting regular sociological studies, analyzing their findings, and applying the results in practice are important for improving military-patriotic education among young people and fostering objective, well-informed perceptions of military service.

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