

УДК 008

Svitlana Stryzhak, Svitlana Podolkova, Paraskoviia Sakhno

**RELIGION INFLUENCE ON CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS**

*Getting into the trouble, some people apply to the psychologist, others looking for answer into the image of God. But is it possible to combine psychological knowledge and religion beliefs? The answer to this question is the subject matter of our work.*

**Key words:** Religion, faith, atheism, Christianity, God, consciousness.

Стрижак С., Подолкова С., Сахно П.

**РЕЛІГІЙНИЙ ВПЛИВ НА СВІДОМІСТЬ СУЧАСНОЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОЛОДІ**

*Потрапляючи в біду, деякі люди звертаються за допомогою до психолога, інші шукають відповідь і в образі Бога. Та чи можливе поєднання психологічних знань та релігійні вірування? Відповідь на це запитання і є предметом дослідження роботи.*

**Ключові слова:** релігія, віра, атеїзм, християнство, Бог, свідомість.

Стрижак С., Подолкова С., Сахно П.

**РЕЛИГИОЗНОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА СОЗНАНИЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ**

*Попадая в беду, некоторые люди обращаются за помощью к психологу, другие ищут ответ в образе Бога. Но возможно ли скombинировать психологические знания и религиозные верование? Ответ на этот вопрос и является предметом исследования в работе.*

**Ключевые слова:** религия, вера, атеизм, христианство, Бог, сознание.

**Actuality:** Faith helps people to solve or bear many psychological issues. Thus, finding the band between religion and psychology gives great benefits for every practical psychologist.

**Goal of work:** The goal of this work is consideration of religion's influence on contemporary Ukrainian youth

**Object of research:** Research was aimed at modern right-bank Ukrainian youth: 1064 questionnaires, 229 of them are students of Sumy State University and 835 are users of Ukrainian segment of Internet.

A man has consciousness. It distinguishes us from animals, but adds a lot of problems. Very often, people suffer too much going deep into themselves, or suffer from other psychological problems. Some people consult psychologists, another group get healing of emotional wounds from God.

Psychology is a science that studies human mental activity, the influence of external factors on it and the interaction between individuals based on detailed behavioral analysis. It also examines the effects of external factors on human mental system and the relationship between emotional events and activities [1].

Psychology (translation from Greek) is the science of soul. And the soul is inclined to believe, it requires faith. Moreover, the soul can not be fully investigated with the help of scientific means, quantitative methods and mathematical analysis. And that is why we have to go beyond scientific methods, if we really ready to deal with the soul, not only with behavioral reflexes and bio-social instincts [2].

Nowadays, we observe the rapid decline of values and morality, mainly among young people. Namely youth should create the future of mankind, it is the young generation that should be an example to make the future great and happy. And how about the issues, whether the faith will help a person not to lose morality; and, what the most important is, whether young people believe in God today? Taking into account the country, where the research was carried out, the word «youth» in our paper means “contemporary Ukrainian youth”.

Moreover, we would like to note two kinds of faith:

1. Religious faith. Adepts of this kind of faith often attend church and keep all the rites prescribed in the basic religious books. They often become religious fanatics, always trying to follow the commandments of their God, but are frequently mistaken in the interpretation of their meaning.

2. True faith. Believers of this type do not take part in religious disputes and try to prove other people the superiority of their God. They almost do not attend church. Most of them also live following the commandments of the God, but understand their meaning.

The purpose of this work is to carry out more detailed analysis of the above mentioned issues. For achieving this purpose we performed some social poll, so let's analyze it's data. About thousand people (1064, exactly) took part in the carried out anonymous poll. Questioning was conducted in two stages:

1. The first stage, in which 229 people participated, consisted of the direct distribution of questionnaires. The questionnaires were allocated among the students of Sumy State University, mainly, among third-year students, representatives of the related specialties.

2. The second phase of the research was conducted during long time – about two months. It consisted of sending invitations to have an interactive survey, stored on Google servers. 835 people took part in this survey. The questionnaire was distributed among the residents of the right bank Ukraine, namely: Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kherson and Poltava regions (mostly young people up to 27 years – vk.com social network users).

Questionnaire was composed in the following way:

1. Do you consider yourself a religious person?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
  - C. I believe in God, but I think there is no God in the church.
2. What religion are you related to?
  - A. Christianity.
  - B. Islam.
  - C. Buddhism.
  - D. Judaism.
  - E. Atheism.
  - F. I believe in God, but I think there is no God in the church.
3. What is your attitude to the religious traditions of your ancestors?
  - A. I have the same views.
  - B. The traditions deserve to live.
  - C. Negative attitude.
4. How often do you recollect the God in words or in thoughts?
  - A. A few times a day.
  - B. A few times a week.
  - C. A few times a month or less.
5. Do you consider yourself a sinner?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
  - C. I don't know.
6. Do your thoughts about God prevent you from sinning?
  - A. Yes.
  - B. No.
  - C. I don't know.

The answer to the first question was supposed to show whether a person believes in God, and if it is so, to which type of believers (mentioned in the introduction) he/she can be related.

The second question was asked to clarify in details, what religion the respondent is related to (at first, taking into account territorial peculiarities of our country, we assumed that the bulk of respondents are Christians. However, there was some place for atheists and representatives of other common world religions, for those who do not relate themselves to any religion, but believe in God).

The third question showed general attitude of interviewees to religious traditions of their ancestors.

The fourth question helped to determine in whole whether a person thinks about God, or at least remembers about Him among other things, in proverbs and sayings, like «Oh, my God!», inheriting in such way the religious habits of their parents and grandparents.

The fifth question appeared to be difficult, because it gave a person the opportunity to decide whether he is sinful or not. For those who didn't manage to make the choice, there was an alternative – «I don't know».

The sixth question also gave respondents the space for speculation, helped to take a look inside themselves and decide, whether he/she will sin against the Bible, while thinking about God.

After conducting the full survey and counting statistic data the following results were obtained:

1. Question number 1:
  - Option A – 455 votes (43% of respondents; among them are 108 students of Sumy State University (SSU), questioned directly; 347 were collected with the help of an interactive questionnaire on the Internet).
  - Option B – 315 votes (30%; 87 of SSU students, 228 of Internet users).
  - Option C – 289 votes (27%; 27 – SSU, 260 – Internet).
2. Question number 2:
  - Option A – 740 votes (70%; 154 – SSU, 586 – Internet).
  - Option B – 7 votes (1%, 4 – SSU, 3 – Internet).
  - Option C – 11 votes (1%, 3 – SSU, 8 – Internet).

- Option D – 5 votes (0.5%; 1 – SSU, 4 – Internet).
- Option E – 163 votes (15.5%; 46 – SSU, 117 – Internet).
- Option F – 134 votes (12%; 17 – SSU, 117 – Internet).

3. Question number 3:

- Option A – 233 votes (22%; 53 – SSU, 180 – Internet).
- Option B – 740 votes (71%; 153 – SSU 587 – Internet).
- Option C – 86 votes (7%; 18 – SSU 68 – Internet).

4. Question number 4:

- Option A – 414 votes (39%; 94 – SSU 320 – Internet).
- Option B – 351 votes (33%; 73 – SSU 278 – Internet).
- Option B – 294 votes (28%; 57 – SSU 237 – Internet).

5. Question number 5:

- Option A – 717 votes (68%; 150 – SSU 567 – Internet).
- Option B – 150 votes (14%; 44 – SSU 106 – Internet).
- Option C – 192 votes (18%; 30 – SSU 162 – Internet).

6. Question number 6:

- Option A – 303 votes (29%; 48 – SSU 255 – Internet).
- Option B – 366 votes (34%; 85 – SSU 281 – Internet).
- Option C – 390 votes (37%; 91 – SSU 299 – Internet).

In addition, the specific patterns were observed in the respondents' answers:

- Among the participants of the first phase research, there were 3 times more people who do not consider themselves to be religious (1 question) than those, who believe in God, but do not believe in religion in that sense it is interpreted in the paper.

- The number of atheists was three times more than number of believers in God, but not in religion (2nd question). Internet users chose these options equally.

- Approximately 70% of respondents who think that they are sinners, and at the same time the thoughts about the God don't make them keep from sinning.

- Among the Internet users, the number of people who restrain themselves from sins, thinking or mentioning the God, is 20% higher.

Thus, the survey allows us to draw the following conclusions:

The majority of respondents believes they are religious people, and more than 70% of all respondents consider themselves to be adherents of different religions.

The answers to the first and second questions demonstrate, that the number of atheists and adherents of the faith is approximately equal; and their number is much less than the number of religious people.

The fact that only 7% of respondents are intolerant to the traditions of their ancestors is really encouraging. These data proves, that average education level of youth is satisfactory. The majority of respondents is loyal to these traditions, and only 22% of them follow the religious traditions of their families.

The number of those who think about the God, at least once a day, is more. But if we reject those who simply mention the God in words, in such phrases as «Oh my God!», «O, Lord!», «God forbid!», etc, we will get less attractive situation. In our opinion, it is more important for formation of personality due to the feeling of divine eye nearby. Taking into account this logic, the number of people who almost never think about God, is 28%, and this number is exceeding the previous parameter. Generally, belief in God and thoughts about Him have a positive impact on personality of individual, helping to form more psychologically sound individuals.

About 70% percent of respondents consider themselves to be sinners (5th question).

Statistical data of the last question also brought a negative result. Thoughts of God keep from sin 30% of respondents, while 35% can not be stopped.

The most important part of the questionnaire was presented by last two questions. Their statistical data are versatile. On the one hand, 70% of respondents understand and confess their sinfulness; it can help them to improve themselves. However, the majority of them still believe that only memory of the God is not enough for restraining from sin.

Approximately two-thirds, an objective majority of the respondents, accept the God in themselves. This means that faith (religion) gradually keeps affecting the identities of these people. One-third of the respondents pointed out that their faith is deep enough, and just the thought of the God is sufficient for them to stop sinning. The result is positive, but we hoped their number would be greater.

Thoughts of a negative or positive effect of the God on the human mind are quite different. However, the attempt to distinguish religion and faith was made in this paper. Religion itself is mainly performance of rites, following of different traditions and recognition of certain dogmas true, without question. Faith, in our opinion, is not only going to church on every holiday, or just limiting yourself. A believer is not always permanent guest in the church. He prays every day, he does not have to prove his opponent saying «my God is better than yours». For such person it is just enough to believe that the God exists; though he is invisible, he still exists, and as a last resort he will help if you ask him.

As for religion, the positive argument of its supporters is unifying feature of religion. It can be brightly illustrated with the example of the consolidation under the influence of newly accepted Christianity in Rus. The opponents of religious beliefs condemn Orthodox elite for «living in luxury on money of parishioners» or accuse too zealous believers of giving extra, passionate evidence of their views fidelity.

O. B. Halochkina, a psychologist from Toronto, says about faith:

«In my opinion, a belief in a higher power (and it has many types, including belief in God) is a way to support yourselves in life. God is a support for humans. He teaches, gives commandments, keeps an eye on you, judges and decides whether your soul will go to hell or to heaven. This is external support. A lot of people who do not have internal support, or we may say, the God inside them, require it. Those people, who have this internal support, need neither external objects of influence and self-control, nor rites and magic acts to make decisions and live. They have it as an intertwined form inside the soul, the psyche. But, in fact, the same thing happens with the believers in the church. In my opinion, the difference lies in the fact, whether a particular person has the internal support or not. Otherwise, he looks for support in the God and religion.

It's difficult to describe this internal support, because it's a very complicated thing. But, I think, it's a kind of self-regulating and decision-making mechanism, when we compare them with internal criterion, internal God. I believe, it is psychology, that teaches us means, methods and ways of forming this internal support» [2].

The final part of the paper presents statistical results of the special research – the sociological survey about the influence of religion on the minds of contemporary Ukrainian youth. Analysis of these data and conclusions has been presented in the previous parts of the article.

We can consider our paper completed successfully, the goals of our study have been achieved.

#### **Literature:**

1. <http://www.belogurova.ru/psychology> – Олена Белогурова, приватний психолог, стаття в Інтернеті.
2. <http://www.all-psy.com/ks/religiya-i-psihologiya.html> – Галочкіна Олена Борисівна, психолог з Торонто, стаття в Інтернеті.
3. <http://www.narcom.ru/ideas/socio/146.html>. – О. Міхельсон, стаття в Інтернеті.
4. Маслоу А. Новые рубежи в развитии человека / А. Маслоу // Хрестоматия по гуманистической психотерапии. – М., 1995.
5. Фромм Э. Тины религии и религиозного опыта / Э. Фромм // Религия и общество : хрестоматия по социологии религии. – М., 1996.
6. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JVbb-ugZLkuzIJaG9WotC9gHMyVfKZfr0iQMF8MDlu4/viewform> – посилання на онлайн анкету до опитування.