

Cite: Menabdishvili, L. E., Menabdishvili, N. E., & Gomelauri, N. A. (2020). Peculiarities of Georgia's Student Youth's Self-Preservative Behavior. *Demography and Social Economy*, 3 (41), 132-143.

УДК 314.5.063; 314.7; 314.743
JEL CLASSIFICATION: J11, J61

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PECULIARITIES OF GEORGIA'S STUDENT YOUTH'S SELF-PRESERVATIVE BEHAVIOR

This paper is based on the sociological research — “Self-preservative behavior among students” — conducted directly by the authors with the participation of the students. Using random selection, we have interviewed 1200 students ranging between ages 18-24 from various universities of Tbilisi, inasmuch as 70 % of the higher educational institutions are located in the said city. The interview was conducted by the questionnaire method. The questionnaire included open and closed questions, and they were filled out with the help of trained interviewers. One of the significant factors of state national security and economic stability is population's health. It determines the demographic potential of a country on a macro level. Therefore, it is important to study the self-preservative behavior of the population. Our research is the first sociological study of Georgian students in the new century. It has enabled us to study the student youths' values, motives, attitudes, norms of behavior in terms of their health and to identify risk-factors affecting the same. The research has confirmed that in terms of health, there exist masculine and feminine models of behavior among the student youth. Women are prone to value their health less, care for it more and tend to have a higher life expectancy disposition than men, whose model of behavior is sharply opposite than that of the women. As for the men, they value their

health more and care for it less than the women. Furthermore, there emerged mistakes made during the upbringing of youth in terms of establishment of the culture of self-preservative behavior. Those students who developed habits of caring for their health in childhood stand out when evaluating their health, have a highly developed understanding of the importance of health, excel at caring for their health and avoid bad habits. Respondents from both sexes understand well that a constant care for health has a positive impact on life expectancy, however for the majority of students health-care has a medical character rather than a prophylactic one. A certain portion of them visit a doctor after their condition becomes worse or start self-medication. A person's attitude toward life expectancy is viewed as an individual's long-term necessity which entails a desire for a long life and appropriate self-preservative behavior. The research has confirmed a direct correlation between self-appraisal of one's health and the parameter of an estimated life expectancy. The respondents reckon that the lower the self-appraisal of their health the less the estimated life expectancy. In addition, caring for health has a big impact on the presumption of life expectancy. The indicator of an ideal, desired and estimated life expectancy is high among those respondents who always care for their health.

Keywords: self-preservative behavior, health, healthy lifestyle, risk-factors affecting health.

Description of the research problem and relevance of the article. Demographers allot a significant attention to studying self-preservative behavior, it is one of the aspects an important role in determining a demographic situation. Health condition of a population together with the population reduction, fertility decreasing and any other demographic factor determine a grave demographic situation. Caring for one's health is a necessary aspect of human development and means societal progress [3].

Self-preservative behavior or caring for one's own health starts when a person understands his/her capabilities and takes responsibility for his/her self. The self-preservative behavior is viewed as a system of activities and relations during the full cycle of life directed toward preserving health and prolonging a lifetime. An attitude of an individual toward their own health is the basis of the self-preservative behavior. It depends on the individual what kind of character his/her self-preservative behavior has: positive or negative. The violation of the rules, norms, activities and relations of the self-preservative behavior, transforms into a self-destructive behavior, which can endanger a society. Therefore, during the self-preservative behavior an individual is responsible for himself/herself as well as for the society. Social health reflects a potential of living of a person and their attitude toward themselves besides toward outer world. For this reason, it is equated to a moral activity. It is a human's behavior in a society.

The bodily self-preservation of an "I" is marked by such needs as preservation of a life, wholeness of an organism, health, which is related to necessity for a long-term life. The latter gives an opportunity to a person to undergo every stage of a life cycle and represents moving force behind the person's self-preservative behavior — the need for life until a certain time.

Health entails various aspects — biological, hygienic, psychological, social, it is a complex parameter. It is also clear that at the modern stage of societal de-

velopment there are two, micro and macro, factors which affect social health: globalization, ecological situation, technical and natural catastrophes, health policy of a state, family environment, conditions of labor, and many other.

Every society values the physical and spiritual health of their members. Therefore, one of the main functions of a state is to prevent diseases and protect the health of its population from harmful environmental factors. Joint effort of the state and every citizen determine the protection of the country's population. A citizen must understand the significance of the impact of bad habits and erroneous behavior, whereas a government must foster such an environment which will enable humans to take care of their health. Healthy society significantly determines not only the proliferation of its population's values but also the spread of material wealth and a nation's spiritual values.

Undeniably, one of the important factors of a state's national security and economic stability is the health of its population. It determines a country's demographic potential on the macro level, which is again confirmed by our current existence in the conditions of the world pandemic.

Studying self-preservative behavior is important during the research of the causes of mortality and it is urgent when analyzing the process of population reproduction. Consequently, understanding its essence is significant in order to correctly determine the measures of demographic policy.

Literature review. Attitude toward health is one of the fundamental characteristics of the existence of a person or society. Therefore, it is completely logical that scientists pay great attention to this issue. Analyzing health attitude and behavior was made successively within various theoretical paradigms: structural functionalism (T. Parsons, R. Robertson, and S. Brian); symbolic interactionism (E. Gallagher, E. Berkovich, E. Hoffman, A. Strauss, E. Becker); conflict theory (K. Marx, E. Friedson, I. Zola); poststructuralism (M. Foucault); postmodernism (N. Fox, V. Kokaram, T. Abel, P. Burdye). During the last decade innumerable researches have been conducted in the post-Soviet space by Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Georgian and other countries' scientists (I. Zhuravlyova, T. Shushunova, I. Mironova, M. Igoshev, I. Karas, I. Vialov, E. Belyakova, A. Polenova, G. Tsuladze, A. Sulaberidze, M. Shelia, etc.).

The aim of the article and innovation character. The article is based on the sociological research which was conducted among the students of Georgian universities (state as well as private). The research was carried in the 2018-19 academic year and 1200 students were interviewed.

The aim of the studying of self-preservative behavior is to analyze problems related to health condition of student youth along with demonstrating risk-factors which affect their health. There is a very grave demographic situation in Georgia today. According to the UN, our country is among the dying nations. Thus, it is important to unveil the peculiarities of the youth's self-preservative behavior and search for the factors which influence it. This will help us find ways

to improve their demographic behavior which in turn will enable us to further perfect the measures of demographic policy aimed at the youth [1].

Choosing the social group of students for research purposes was determined by the fact that the student youth are one of the most significant strategic resources in any society that play an important role in the spheres of economy, culture, politics, etc. It defines the future of a country; the student youth accounts for 14–15 percent of the Georgian youth [5]; as experts have ascertained, the students say no to self-preservative behavior most often when they have to choose between success in studying and their health. They have also proven that deterioration of health during the whole course of a human's life occurs most often in university years. There are scientific researches, according to which, the third of the students had chronic diseases before enrolling at university, whereas the number of the students with chronic illnesses grew and amounted to a half after graduating [6].

In the opinion of Professor V.P. Yatsenko, nowadays, the problem of students' health is rather pressing. Statistics show that 60–70 % of the students have health issues. The occurrences increase, on average, 1–1.5 times annually. On top of that, 10 % of the students are dispensary patients, and from among them, 60 % have therapeutic profile [9].

The aim of the Georgian state youth policy is to create appropriate environment for the full-value development of the youth. In order to achieve the mentioned goal, the youth policy, among other measures, must ensure the establishment of healthy lifestyle, as well as provide access to medical services and increase their quality within the favorable environment for the youth. Health is one of the four strategic fields of the youth policy. It is important that the youth possess enough information regarding healthy lifestyle, realize its significance and make use of preventative services.

Georgian government aims to establish healthy lifestyle amid the youth. For the purpose of perfectly fulfilling this goal, it is essential to have some opinion about the existing situation. Our research offers us a clear picture with regard to the level awareness and education of the youth concerning healthy lifestyle. This is the first sociological research conducted in the course of a new century which offers complete information in regard to knowledge, values, views, motives, disposition, norms of behavior, risk-factors affecting health, which are related to the student youth's health. Furthermore, the following research is the first since the time the country implemented a universal health insurance and its citizens could look after their health better, with less costs. The results of the research will aid the state structures and contribute greatly to planning important events for the successful implementation of the state youth policy [10].

Data and methods. From among the research methods, we gave preference to the sociological method of quantitative research, which enables us to generalize the results over a wide population group. We prepared a special questionnaire

for the mass questioning method. In addition, we trained interviewers so that they could assist students while filling out questionnaires. When choosing between universities, we used the lottery selection method from the types of probability selection. Three state and five private higher educational institutions were selected. In the selected higher educational institutions we used spontaneous selection method in order to interview the students.

Basic results of the research. Health is an invaluable treasure. It emerges as the most important determining factor of the quality of a human's life. Subsequently, health must be the number one value in our life. However, the sociological research done by us among the students confirms that it is not so. Only the fourth of the number of the students mentioned health as their top value. At the same time, men were twice more prone to designate health as a top priority than women. For the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the interviewed students, there are other more valuable things than their health, for instance, happy family and freedom. Health is the most important determining factor of the quality of a human's life and if a young person holds other things as higher values than their health, it means that his/her behavior is directed less toward retaining-strengthening of health. This in turn is reflected on the quality and durability of his/her life. Happy family life, for which the students strive so eagerly, is impossible without a sound health.

It is also noteworthy that acknowledging of one's health as the number one priority does not always mean that a constant care is allotted for its strengthening and retaining. From amongst those students who mentioned health as their top value only 33 % pay constant attention to preserving it. In order to explain the phenomenon that certain number of the students acknowledge health as being their main priority, but do nothing to protect and preserve it, we can use the famous Georgian psychologist's Dimitri Uznadze's theory of attitude and set according to this theory: "Volition is a power of a subject, his/her ability to implement that which is deemed as expedient by their intellect...although humans cannot always manage to do that which is thought of as advisable. Some manage to pursue the advice of the mind when acting on something, and some are not able to do this" [8]. The latter category includes 16.3 percent of the students.

In the process of the interview, the students had to assess their health. There emerged three groups in terms of self-assessment of health: the students with "good" health (44.5 %), "satisfactory" health (47.5 %) and "bad" health (5.7 %). A small number of the students abstained from making their health assessment (2.3 %). The research has shown that the students with "good" health always (45 %) or, in any case, sometimes (37.4 %) care for their health, the students with "satisfactory" health sometimes (41 %) and during illness (27.5 %) look after their well-being, and the students with "bad" health care for their health only during illness (41 %) or never (20 %). This has its explanation. The students with "bad" health came from the families where its members looked after their well-being less (68 %), whereas the students with "good" health (91 %) learned

the culture of caring for one's own health in their families since childhood. It also became clear that those students who pay a systematic attention to their health, make a habit of it since childhood (83 %), whereas those who do not look after their health think that the time for it has yet to come, because a person must start caring for his/her health after the age of 40. Women (87.4 %) were more prone to acquire habits of caring for their health since childhood than men (78.5 %).

We must acknowledge that the whole system of a human's needs comes down to the need for self-preservative. It is utterly important for both a person and society to establish habits of self- preservative behavior in the early ages. The earlier the person establishes the self- preservative behavior the more likely and higher his/her chance for quality life with long expectancy. The research has demonstrated that the situation is not quite so enviable among the students in this regard [4].

Scientific literature characterizes the risk-factors which affect health as well as their activity share. Among the risk-factors are: lifestyle (49-53 %), genetics (18-22 %), environmental conditions (17-20 %) and healthcare (8-10 %) [2]. Studying the respondents' views with regard to the mentioned issue has shown that among the risk-factors which affect health the main significance is allotted to life conditions (36 %), the next place is occupied by care for health or self-preservative behavior, (32.3 %) after which come genetics (15 %) and ecology (14.8 %). The female respondents deem life conditions as the leading factor of health, whereas males think self-preservative behavior to be the most important factor. Women mention life conditions 1.3 times more than the men. On the other hand, men are prone to mention self-preservative 1.1 times more as opposed to the women.

Among the students special attention is paid to lifestyle out of all the factors of healthcare. They appreciate healthy lifestyle 5.4 times more than systematic medical checkup. From among the forms of self-preservative behavior healthy lifestyle is predominant for 83.8 % of the respondents. Its predominance is expressed more among the men (85.7 %) than among the women (81.0 %).

For the majority of the students caring for health does not have a preventive character, when during a correct self-preservative behavior it is absolutely important to undergo the preventive medical checkup and visit a doctor in a timely manner when one notices first signs of an illness. It is universally known that treatment is substantially more simple and effective when you go to the doctor at the

Table 1. The frequency of caring for one's own health according to the sex of the respondents (%)

How often do you care for your own health?	Male	Female
Always	28.5	29.9
Frequently	37.9	41.9
Only during illness	25.9	19.8
Do not care for it at all	7.0	7.7
Did not answer	0.7	0.7

Source: sociological research of the Institute of Demography and Sociology of the Ilia State University, 2018.

first signs of a disease. The students do not understand this fact well because 22.8 % of them visit the doctor only in the extreme cases.

Fulfilling the recommendations of healthcare strongly depends on a person's volition and action. The female students are more consistent when implementing doctor's recommendations if they can afford it. The male students are more indolent to heed the doctor's recommendations (28 %).

From among the components of a healthy lifestyle the students, first of all, mention hygiene (41 %), healthy diet (32.5 %), sport (16 %) and recreation (10.5 %). In order to form the healthy lifestyle it is utterly significant to observe the rules of private hygiene. Otherwise, it is impossible to retain a good health even under the conditions of high level societal hygiene. This issue is very urgent as one person who does not maintain a private hygiene can become the cause of deterioration of another's health condition. Maintaining hygiene is precisely the main condition of avoiding infectious diseases. Nowadays, the world population faces this problem. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced the pandemic on 11 March of the current year. The number of the infected and deceased rises every day because of the new Corona Virus COVID-19 and it is impossible to predict final results. It is noteworthy that nobody knows about the long-term negative effects of this terrible pandemic. The WHO's primary recommendations are consistent and correct observance of the hygiene norms as well as maintaining social distance. The mentioned fact, once more, makes it clear that hygiene is of utmost importance. It is interesting that the students understand the significance of a private hygiene well, but they resort to those norms less (34.3 %). The female students maintain the rules of hygiene completely 1.2 times more than the male students. It is known that correct and rational nutrition, when it is necessary, is the prerequisite of the normal function of all systems of an organism. The students designated correct nutrition at the second place from

Table 2. Habits of caring for health according to the sex of the respondents (%)

Types of health care	Male	Female
Systematic medical checkups	12.4	16.2
Diet and moderation	21.2	29.3
Absolute fulfillment of the hygiene rules	31.3	37.2
Systematic sport activities	20.8	5.4
Recreation regime	11.7	9.3
Not indicated	1.9	2.2
Do not care	0.0	0.4

Source: sociological research of the Institute of Demography and Sociology of the Ilia State University, 2018.

among the essential components of a healthy life. Nonetheless, a healthy nutrition is not their lifestyle because they systematically consume fast food and thus endanger their health. Medics systematically warn us of the negative influence of the fast food on our health. The female students observe correct regime of nutrition and moderation 1.4 times more than the men.

Some of the basic preconditions for a human's health are engagement in sport and regime of recreation. In order to support or renew one's spiritual and physical health it is crucial to employ these components systematically. The men are 3.9 times more prone to engage in sport activities compared to the women, moreover they pay 1.2 times more attention to their recreation regime than the women.

From amongst the many components of a healthy lifestyle, one of the basic parts is to say no to bad habits — tobacco, alcohol, drugs. Representatives of healthcare warn us, in various forms, of the destructive impact of these bad habits on our health. The mentioned problem also poses a threat in terms of demography, inasmuch as the bad habits endanger not only a user's health but also menace natural increase of population. They cause various anomalies in the newborns of the ill parents, prevent embryo development or become the reason for childlessness. In the period of difficult demographic conditions it is essential to diminish the impact of these factors to a minimum. For this, the will of a population is necessary. It is especially important to study the youth's attitude toward these acute problems. We encountered tobacco users among the students of both sexes. However, there emerged a tendency of quitting this bad habit. The share tobacco users decreased by 7.3 % among the respondents. It is interesting that there was a higher decrease among the male respondents than among the women (men — 9.3 %, women — 5.4 %).

Georgia is considered the homeland of viticulture, where production of wine has started eight thousand years ago. Despite the extensive production, distinct regulations have been imposed on the consumption of wine. We encounter a moderate use of the alcoholic beverages among the student youth. The percentage of those students who absolutely abstain from drinking alcohol is 14 % among the men and 49 % among the women. From among those who drink alcohol at various frequencies, the majority are those who drink once a month. The quan-

Table 3. Tobacco use among respondents (%)

Respondent's sex	Have you ever smoked?			Are you smoking currently?		
	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No	No answer
Male	50.4	46.8	2.8	41.1	58.9	0
Female	23.6	73.0	3.4	18.2	81.3	0.5

Source: sociological research of the Institute of Demography and Sociology of the Ilia State University, 2018.

tity of the latter exceeds 18.8 times the quantity of those who drink several times a week, in other words, the ones who are systematic users.

The percentage of the respondents who have a negative attitude toward drugs is 80 %. This negative attitude is more pronounced among the women. Every third among the men states that they have experimented with narcotics and it is a customary habit for every fifth of them. It must be noted that there are also frequent drug users among the women, although their quantity is 5 times less than that of the men.

It merits mentioning that the inclination to bad habits is less pronounced among the students with “good” health. For example, 75 % from this group do not use tobacco, whereas from among the students with “bad” health more than half are addicted to the tobacco. Amidst the students with “good” health 77 % have never used narcotics and 73 % of the students with “satisfactory” health have never done so, whereas the students with “bad” health are frequent users of drugs.

Effective self-preservative behavior significantly determines life expectancy. The individual desire life expectancy expresses a personal advantage. The demand for life expectancy is more pronounced among the men than among the women (the desired life expectancy for the men is 89 years, for the women — 83 years). The desired does not mean the possible. The respondents think that they will live less than what is desired. Moreover, the difference between the desired and life expectancy is larger among the men (11 years), than among the women (9 years) [7]. The interviewed student youth explain this distinction between the desired and possible life expectancy by health conditions and environment. The indicator of the possible life expectancy is the lowest amid those respondents who assess their health as being “bad”. The ideal life expectancy indicator for the latter exceeds the desired by 3.2 and the possible by 11.7. The desired life expectancy exceeds the possible one by 8.5 years. Among the students who assessed their health as being “good”, the difference between the indicators of the ideal and desired life expectancy is only 1.1, between the ideal and possible — 5.5 years. The desired life expectancy indicator exceeds by 2.2 the possible

Table 4. The impact of health care on the indicators of self-preservative behavior (%)

Indicators of self-preservative behavior	Health care frequency		
	Always	Sometimes	During illness
Ideal life expectancy	87.0	85.9	84.6
Desired life expectancy	84.2	84.1	80.9
Anticipated life expectancy	79.8	78.6	75.3

Source: sociological research of the Institute of Demography and Sociology of the Ilia State University, 2018.

one. With regard to the respondents who assessed their health as being “satisfactory,” the difference between their ideal and desired life expectancy is 2.0, between the ideal and possible — 6.9, between the desired and possible — 4.9 years. There is a clear indication of different views and expectations in terms of the parameters of self-preservative behavior among the respondents with various health conditions.

The more actively a respondent looks after their health, the higher their disposition toward life expectancy. The decrease of indicators is directly proportional to the quality and frequency of the respondent's health. Moreover, the higher health, as the main values in the value system, the higher the assessment of self-preservation behaviors indicators. Subsequently, there exists an important relationship between a person's attitude and the analyzed factors.

Conclusion. The research has demonstrated that the student youth's self-preservative behavior is characterized by a low culture. This is mainly determined by the mistakes made in their socialization. In order to overcome this setback, significant measures must be carried out. It is essential that the culture of self-preservative behavior be established in earlier years. Together with families, the mentioned process must involve pre-school and school education systems. A special attention must be paid to maintaining the norms of a private hygiene. Our current life situation has shown us that this is the most important issue that needs to be solved.

In order to preserve the nation's physical and psychological health, it is crucial to strengthen the role of school education in the process of fighting against bad habits. The youth must have access to information sources which alert them to the risk-factors influencing health. Mass media's role and their active participation is important in this regard. It is essential to strengthen the youth's sense of individual responsibility and to provide them with knowledge and skills that will offer them better means to care for their own health.

It is significant to ensure the establishment of health as the primary value within the value system, and to place formation of health care habits as topmost priority. The youth must be informed with regard to the importance of health for them personally, as well as for society as a whole. There must be implemented events in order to involve the youth in sport activities, foster popularization of healthy lifestyle by introducing mass campaigns for sport activities and by using other events. It is advisable to integrate youth recreation and entertainment programs with their physical activities.

It is crucial that health be established as a primary value within the system of a person's values and habits of caring for health must be set as a number one priority. Physical education of adolescents must be considered as one of the priorities. Nowadays, girls are less engaged in sport. It is important to remedy this problem, and the role of schools must be increased in this utterly crucial affair. It is essential to introduce an annual obligatory medical checkup in order to se-

cure health prophylactic of the youth. Today, each of us is obliged to take active steps so that our future generation becomes healthy. This is necessary for the country's demographic situation.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції журналу 07.07.2020

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ САМОЗБЕРЕЖУВАЛЬНОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ СТУДЕНТСЬКОЇ МОЛОДІ ГРУЗІЇ

Стаття заснована на авторському соціологічному дослідженні «самозбережувальна поведінка студентів». Використовуючи випадкову вибірку ми опитали 1200 студентів віком від 18 до 24 років із різних університетів Тбілісі, оскільки 70 % вищих на-

вчальних закладів розташовані в цьому місті. Інтерв'ю проведено анкетними методом. Анкета містила відкриті і закриті питання, які опитувані заповнювали за допомогою навчених інтерв'юерів. Одним із важливих чинників державної національної безпеки і економічної стабільності є здоров'я населення, він визначає демографічний потенціал країни на макрорівні. Тому важливо вивчити самозбережувальну поведінку населення. Наше дослідження — перше у новому столітті соціологічне дослідження студентів Грузії. Ми змогли вивчити цінності, мотиви, установки, норми поведінки студентської молоді з погляду їхнього здоров'я і виявити фактори ризику, що впливають на нього. Дослідження підтвердило, що з точки зору здоров'я серед студентської молоді існують чоловічі і жіночі моделі поведінки. Жінки схильні менше цінувати своє здоров'я, але більше піклуються про нього, у них вища установка на тривалість життя, ніж у чоловіків, чия модель поведінки протилежна жіночій. Чоловіки більше цінують власне здоров'я, але менше піклуються про нього, ніж жінки. Крім того, в процесі виховання молоді були допущені помилки у формуванні культури самозбережувальної поведінки. Ті студенти, у яких в дитинстві виробилися звички піклуватися про своє здоров'я, акцентують увагу на ньому, добре розуміють важливість здорового способу життя, досягають успіху в турботі про своє здоров'я і уникають шкідливих звичок. Респонденти обох статей добре розуміють, що постійний догляд за здоров'ям позитивно впливає на тривалість життя, однак для більшості студентів турбота про здоров'я має скоріше лікувальний, ніж профілактичний характер. Ставлення людини до очікуваної тривалості життя розглядається як довгострокова потреба людини, яка визначає прагнення до довгого життя і відповідну самозбережувальну поведінку. Дослідження підтвердило прямий зв'язок між самооцінкою здоров'я та показником очікуваної тривалості життя. Респонденти вважають, що чим нижче самооцінка їх здоров'я, тим менша очікувана тривалість життя. Крім того, турбота про здоров'я сильно впливає на передбачувану тривалість життя. Показник ідеальної, бажаної та передбачуваної тривалості життя високий серед тих респондентів, які посякчас дбають про власне здоров'я.

Ключові слова: самозбережувальна поведінка, здоров'я, здоровий спосіб життя, чинники ризику, що впливають на здоров'я.