

# The sociological concept of the phenomenon of self-preserving behavior

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## Abstract

The paper outlines and updates research tasks related to defining vector trends and key risks of existing self-preserving behavior models of the population at a national security scale via a mass survey, with quota sampling, distribution by gender, age and area of residence. As a result, all recommendations on the formation of appropriate health-saving behavior models are reduced to increase the personal responsibility of an individual for his/her health. In conclusion, self-preserving behavior is a system of actions and relationships aimed at preserving health during the full life cycle.

**Keywords:** Health, Life, Expectancy, Self-Preserving, Behavior.

## El concepto sociológico del fenómeno del comportamiento autoconservador

### Resumen

El documento describe y actualiza las tareas de investigación relacionadas con la definición de tendencias vectoriales y los riesgos clave de los modelos de comportamiento de la población autoconservadores existentes en una escala de seguridad nacional a través de una encuesta masiva, con muestreo de cuotas, distribución por género, edad y área de residencia. Como resultado, todas las recomendaciones sobre la formación de modelos de comportamiento apropiados para el ahorro de la salud se reducen para aumentar la responsabilidad personal de un individuo por su salud. En conclusión, el comportamiento de autoconservación es un sistema de acciones y relaciones destinadas a preservar la salud durante todo el ciclo de vida.

**Palabras clave:** Salud, Vida, Expectativa, Autoconservación, Comportamiento.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a steady increase in the attention of the scientific community and management entities to the study of the problem of preserving and strengthening the health of the population. The reason for this was the steady decline in the health indicators of all age groups against the background of the growth of the consumer attitude to it. At the same time, according to the results of the research, the most frivolous attitude to their health is demonstrated by those socio-demographic categories of the population, on which the economic, political and social well-being of society (the youth and the working population) largely depends. Negative trends associated with the health indicators deterioration of the Russian population are due

not only and not so much to the social and economic crisis of recent years, the building up of the social tension processes in society, the deterioration of the environmental situation and the reform of the health care system.

One of the reasons for this situation is immature behavioral models aimed at preserving and strengthening health. Self-preserving behavior as a system of actions and attitudes of an individual to his/her health allows us to characterize the value-motivational structure of the personality and the value of health in it. At the same time, the value of health is of a paradoxical character: it preoccupies high positions in the structure of life values of individuals and various social groups, but at the behavioral level, health turns out to be one of the main resources for achieving other, more significant, goals. The consolidated public perception that their health is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health neutralizes an individual's personal liability for their own activity in the field of health protection.

In modern conditions, the issues of self-preserving behavior culture are of particular relevance, transferring the definition of health from a purely medical category to the category of national security factors, on which not only well-being but, ultimately, the physical existence of a state depends. In this regard, Russian science is clearly faced with the issue of finding forms and methods for increasing life expectancy and preserving the Russian nation as a whole. Achieving this result is impossible without the formation of appropriate models of self-preserving behavior.

The concept of self-preserving behavior formulated by A. I. Antonov initiated an increase in research interest in the study of behavioral factors that influence the state of individual health. At the same time, the majority of domestic researchers who continued to study this social phenomenon from the standpoint of the concept which stipulates dispositional regulation of social behavior by V. A. Yadav (VYALOV, 2011; ZHURAVLEVA, 2006; SHILOVA, 2012, etc.) use as a guide the definition formulated by A. I. Antonov that the self-preserving behavior is a system of actions and relationships aimed at preserving health during the full life cycle, at the attitude of extending the life span within this cycle (ANTONOV, 1998).

In a number of studies of recent years, such concepts as health-protection behavior (VOLKOVA, 2005), health-saving behavior (ZELENKO, 2016; POZDEEVA, 2008; SHABUNOVA, SHUKHATOVICH & KORCHAGINA, 2013; YAKOVLEVA, 2013), health-related behavior RASKAZOVA & IVANOVA (2015) are used as synonymous definitions of self-preserving behavior. Self-preserving behavior is often viewed as an integral part of broader concepts that are included in the subject field of health sociology. So, I.V. Zhuravleva considers self-preserving behavior to be one of the main indicators of attitude to health, i.e. a social phenomenon defined as an individual's assessment of his\her own health established on the basis of knowledge available, his\her awareness of the value of health, as well as actions aimed at changing the health status (ZHURAVLEVA, 2006: AMEEN, AHMED & HAFEZ, 2018: HANIMOGLU, 2018: MAMBILE & MACHUVE, 2018: OSTOVAN, DARYANOOSH & SHARIFI, 2018).

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

Exploring risks and trends within the framework of self-preserving behavior of the population, in 2018, the International Center for Sociological Research of the Belgorod State National Research University proposed a configuration concept for studying it, which was operationalized in the software tool complex. Testing tools and verification of factors influencing the formation of models of self-preserving behavior was implemented through a mass survey (N = 1200), with quota sampling, distribution by gender, age and area of residence. The results of testing the proposed concept can be seen in the works of (VANGORODSKAYA, 2018; SHAPOVALOVA, VANGORODSKAY, PERESYPKIN, GERASHCHENKO & SHUMAKOVA, 2018).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Behavioral models in the health area can be represented as unique configurations of individual and public elements united by a common theme (the theme of maintaining health and prolonging life) and determine not only the content but also the ratio between them. Moreover, of all theoretically possible variations of behavior, the models that most successfully maintain the existing social order, that is, contribute to preserving the integrity and optimal parameters of the system's vital activity will come to the fore in any society. Thus, we can talk about the determining role of external factors that act as

configuration boundaries, within which the formation of individual strategies of self-preserving behavior takes place.

This moment seems very important to us due to the fact that most of the current concepts and theories of self-protecting behavior come from the priority of the behavioral component and, as a result, focus mainly on the study of the value-motivational foundations of self-protecting behavior. As a result, all recommendations on the formation of appropriate health-saving behavior models are reduced to increase the personal responsibility of an individual for his/her health, while the most critical problems of changing priorities of public health policy and the formation of collective self-protective attitudes of the population go to the background. On the other hand, the mutual influence of individuals and society in the process of social transformation is manifested in the fact that behind the transformation of institutions there are:

changes in the structure of human relations which were not clearly planned by individuals who have been forced to obey these changes [...] this relates to the human habitus itself, and to the civilizational process (ELIAS, 2001: 36).

Thus, the configuration approach can be used as one of the alternative methodological tools for studying self-preserving behavior, which will expand the boundaries of theoretical and empirical understanding of this social phenomenon, complementing it with new interpretation options and opening new perspectives of interdisciplinary interaction on its study. The provisions of the self-

preserving behavior configuration concept can be formulated as follows:

1. Self-preserving behavior is essentially the result of the complex combination of effects caused by heterogeneous factors forming configurations of various levels and systems of action.
2. The analysis of possible self-preserving behavior models is associated with the assessment of existing factor configurations at the macro-, meso-, micro- and nano-levels, which corresponds to the federal (national), local (territorial or institutional), individual and personal prerequisites for the formation of self-preserving models of a certain type.
3. The relationship between the levels of the factorial configuration is carried out through the establishment of descending habits, which form the configurational boundaries for self-preserving behavior models.
4. Factor configurations of systems of various levels lead to the emergence of prerequisites for indicators of self-preserving behavior, the values of which determine the types of self-preserving behavior models inherent in society in a given period of time.
5. The configuration of system-relevant models of self-preserving behavior determines the self-preserving behavior

meta-model, the self-preserving paradigm, and the self-preserving status of the society (from the time or territorial perspective).

6. Factor and self-preserving configurations are a single system where the dynamic (determining) role is assigned to factor sets at all levels: changing the factor configuration leads to a change in the configuration of self-preserving behavior indicators, which in turn changes the configuration of the model line, changing the self-preserving status of a community.

7. The dynamic series of factor and model changes forms self-preserving behavior trends in the conditions of social transformation in the retrospective and perspective (predictive) aspect.

8. Certain factor configurations provoke an increase in destructive trends (indicators) in the formation of models of self-preserving behavior, and they are risks of self-preserving configurations. Approximation (according to the forecast analysis) to the risk factor configuration requires management intervention to reduce the likelihood of a destructive generational paradigm over a large area.

So, based on the proposed configuration concept of self-preserving behavior, the method of its analysis is based on the following meta-factor model:



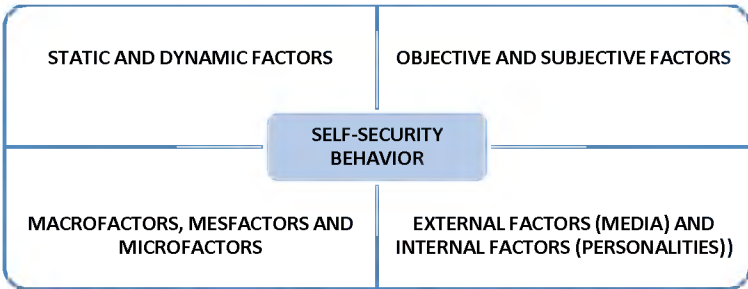


Figure 1: Meta-factor model for the self-preserving behavior analysis

Combinatorial analysis and verification of the groups of factors specified in the model form factor configurations which, together with the installed habits, determine the preferential types of self-preserving behavior for the population at the territory, analyzing the effectiveness and pathology (destructiveness) of which allows determining the vector and constructing the trajectory of management decisions in the health protection system of the territory.

Table 1: Factor groups and possible factor typologies in the study of self-preserving behavior

Groups of factors	Static	Dynamic	Subjective	Objective	Internal	External
	<b>MACRO FACTORS</b>					
Political factors of the state						
Economic factors of the state						
Factors of the public health system in the state						
Ethnocultural factors of the state						

MEOSFACTORS						
Ecological factors of the territory						
Economic factors of the territory						
Social factors of the territory						
Health system factors in the territory						
Information factors of the territory						
MICROFACTORS						
Cultural and socio-psychological factors						
Social and socioeconomic factors						
Health care factors						
Infrastructure factors						

Creating a methodology for the sociological analysis of risks and trends in self-preserving behavior implies filling the meta-model with specific factors to be diagnosed and analyzed, and determining a methodological sociological arsenal capable of verifying the factor model. The typologies of factors proposed by us in the meta-factor model of self-preserving behavior are superimposed on the selected factor groups as follows (see table 1).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Self-preserving behavior as a unit of analysis and an independent category interesting for studying in terms of social risks and life strategies begins to be perceived as an indicator important for developing government policy in the aspect of the social development on the path of civilizational progress. Despite the polymorphic nature of this term in research concepts of foreign and Russian scientists, most of them adhere to the position that self-preserving behavior is a

system of actions and relationships aimed at preserving health during the full life cycle, and at the formation of the attitude to the extension of the life span within this cycle. The theoretical analysis allows us to reveal the complex and interdisciplinary nature of this category and give the following definition to the concept: self-preserving behavior is the conscious activity of an individual aimed at maintaining optimal parameters of biological, psychological and social health and minimizing objectively existing threats and subjectively perceived risks.

Behavioral models in the field of health can be presented as unique configurations of individual and social elements united by a common theme (the theme of maintaining health and prolonging life) and determining not only their content but also the relationship between them. Of all theoretically possible variations of behavior, the models that most successfully maintain the established social order, that is, contribute to preserving the integrity and optimal parameters of the system's vital activity, will come to the fore in any society. Thus, we can suggest about the determining role of external factors that act as configuration boundaries, within which the formation of individual strategies on self-preserving behavior takes place.

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