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Assessment of the Youth's Moral Consciousness / Оценка морального сознания молодежи

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Аннотация: Предметом исследования является процесс морального развития в подростково-юношеском возрасте как оценочный компонент сознания личности, рассматривающий события и поступки с позиции морально-нравственных категорий, норм, ценностей. Особое внимание обращается на моральное развитие в общем процессе социализации. Такое развитие проходит определенные этапы (стадии), пока

мораль не организуется на конвенциональном уровне. Такой уровень морали предполагает учет общественного мнения и осознание того, что моральные суждения человека в большей мере должны зависеть от внешних условий. Учитывается, что развитие и формирование моральных суждений в подростково-юношеском возрасте подвержено моральным искажениям, но в целом проходит такие этапы, как доконвенциональный, конвенциональный и постконвенциональный уровни зрелости морали. Методология исследования представлена теорией морального развития, которая разработана Лоуренсом Колбергом и в соответствии с которой развитие нравственности включает шесть стадий. Эти стадии описываются в трёх уровнях: доконвенциональный, конвенциональный и постконвенциональный. Это три основных уровня развития морального сознания. Новизна исследования заключается в выявлении и конкретизации содержания уровней развитости морального сознания молодежи в зависимости от возраста и места проживания. Основные выводы исследования сводятся к тому, что у подростков часто встречается постконвенциональный уровень развития морали, чем ее конвенциональный уровень. Показатель конвенциональности морали подростков по сравнению с обследуемыми более старшей (юношеской) группы, свидетельствует о том, что подростки довольно часто ориентируются только на собственные представления о значимости морали и нравственности и поэтому склонны к моральным искажениям восприятия социальных ситуаций. Распространенность показателей развитости морального сознания в подростково-юношеском возрасте в зависимости от места проживания. Территориальный фактор развития имеет значение для социализации в этом возрасте. Для представителей московской молодежи по сравнению с молодежью из регионов чаще характерны показатели доконвенционального сознания. Конвенциональные выборы по диагностическим дилеммам, наоборот, чаще встречаются у региональной молодежи по сравнению с московской молодежью. Постконвенциональные моральные убеждения чаще встречаются у молодежи московской агломерации, чем у молодежи из регионов.

Ключевые слова:

Моральное сознание молодежи, Организация морального сознания, Формирование моральных убеждений, Дилеммы Колберга, Уровни морального сознания, Стадии морального сознания, Прекоконвенциональный уровень морали, Конвенциональный уровень морали, Постконвенциональный уровень морали, Моральные искажения

The relevance of the study of moral consciousness is determined by the need to identify risks that affect personal development and socialization processes. Of particular importance is the assessment of the level of development of moral consciousness in older adolescence and early adolescence, when the basic norms of moral consciousness are already understood but not always assimilated and accepted. On the one hand, this age period is characterized by the incompleteness of some adolescent reactions (for example, negativism) and, on the other hand, by the immaturity of moral judgments [\[7, 8\]](#).

The phenomenon of social infantilism can be considered a confirmation of the severity of the problem of moral underdevelopment, which attracts attention [\[3\]](#). This phenomenon includes, first of all, the evidence of existing deviations in behavior and young people's beliefs. Such deviations in early adolescence may be general and, therefore, constitute the basis for forming specific behavioral disorders in the future [\[14\]](#).

This is because the moral regulation of behavior is a system of beliefs and preferences that fundamentally affect the specifics of social communication in relation to a specific age group. The difficulty of assessing the levels of moral development is due to the subjectivity of approaches and the dynamics of public opinion. Therefore, evaluating young people's actions, statements, or behavior is often imperative. This refers to a categorical assessment when ideas about proper behavior are based on unambiguous social norms, including moral norms [15].

The imperative basis for assessing young people's moral consciousness can lead to an aggravation of social and moral communications, as it is not always appropriate, especially when it comes to different ethnic groups and even regions (territories) within the same ethnic group. Such assessments should also consider the dynamics of age-related development, which is very contradictory in adolescence. It is believed that unambiguity, the imperative of evaluation, is appropriate and necessary in cases of unlawful behavior [2]. One can only agree with this, as moral distortions in development are accompanied by deceit, cunning, and resourcefulness. Such cases are complex for those adults nearby. As a rule, obvious moral distortions of development are fraught with hidden social danger. Therefore, assessing the beliefs and behavior of such young people should be strictly imperative, as it presupposes legal norms that must be strictly and accurately enforced following categorical prescriptions.

If the process of moral formation of a personality is under control and upbringing has a positive impact on it, approaches to assessing moral consciousness based on the dispositive of social norms are more appropriate [13]. Dispositive norms presuppose the freedom of choice, which is important for forming a morally mature personality. Such norms presuppose independence in decision-making. However, there are only some solutions if we take into account adolescence. Dispositive norms are appropriate and effective in cases where there is a positive dialogue between the subjects of social communication.

A comparative analysis of imperative and dispositive norms indicates their fundamental differences in assessing adolescent moral development. Imperative norms are based on prohibitions and the inadmissibility of deviations from ethical standards. Dispositive norms presuppose opportunities for correct moral choice.

According to L. Kolberg, precisely this circumstance encourages structuring assessment approaches based on dilemmas [5, 6]. One can only agree with his opinion, as the dilemmas include a guideline for condemnation (prohibitions) and an approved choice. This is because the dilemma is inherently a situation of mutually exclusive preferences that do not satisfy the subject and are, therefore, difficult. Dilemma situations force a young person to make a single choice and thus reliably indicate the development of such moral foundations of personality as awareness of responsibility, selflessness, values of life, and ideals in general.

Kohlberg's dilemmas involve choosing one of two moral principles that can be considered fundamental and that govern human judgment. The author attributed ten main and several additional ones to such universal regulators of human decisions. He attributed to the basic principles such as life, freedom, law, punishment, property, affection, power, justice, truth, and sex [6]. Additional principles can be formulated and proposed, considering the social situation of development, age, ethnicity, territory of residence, etc. That is, it is possible to assess the levels of moral consciousness, both personally and transpersonally.

It is essential to consider the personal nature of the assessment. This is due to the rapid dynamics of moral development in adolescence.

Ultimately, forming behavioral patterns in the structure of personal value orientations in adolescence contributes to the differentiation of fundamental concepts of unfair and just, bad and good, immoral and moral, etc. The norms formed in this way result from accepting the meanings of these concepts in the socialization process. Eventually, they become an ethical ideal that regulates the activity of the structure of moral consciousness [\[1, 4\]](#).

The activity of the structure of moral consciousness is understood as the dynamics of its components depending on the prevailing social situations or life circumstances. Even though moral consciousness is assessed as an integral part of social consciousness, including as a set of individuals' consciousness concerning norms, values, and categories from the standpoint of morality, such consciousness is also structured. Many social characteristics of a person largely depend on how the structure of moral consciousness has been formed.

This is because moral consciousness manifests itself in the system of social relations since it is the result of socialization and a social category. Philosophers and social psychologists often use concepts such as public morality, social justice, the conscience of the nation, etc. These concepts fill the content of the category of morality and, in a broad sense, make it possible to present morality as a universal human value and a social regulator of the behavior of individuals and social groups.

Despite the dominant social determination in the genesis of moral consciousness, some signs of a hereditary nature in the structure of the ethical organization of the individual appear during adolescence. This is consistent with the naturalistic concept of moral consciousness, which boils down to the genetic determination of the acceptance/non-acceptance of the norms of public morality. An analysis of data from, for example, penitentiary psychologists indicates that among juvenile offenders, there are often forms of moral judgments that are almost impossible to correct and are accompanied by cunning, deceit, and resourcefulness.

The manifestation of destructive forms of moral consciousness in adolescence concerns three main components of its structure: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Structuring morality according to these criteria makes it possible to assess it concerning the risks of social deviations and, ultimately, the social danger of young people. However, these three components have different meanings for such assessments.

Emotionality and behavioral characteristics, to a greater extent, and cognitive characteristics of a personality, to a lesser extent, allow us to judge the moral development of a young person. This is because cognitive personality structures are associated with mental functions such as memory, attention, and thinking. It is this triad that is considered cognitive. However, it is increasingly possible to find an overly broad interpretation of cognitive characteristics, especially cognitive disorders and distortions, in the literature. A broad and arbitrary understanding of the meaning of the cognitive component led to the fact that it began to include a combination of moral principles, knowledge, ideas, concepts, judgments, and personal awareness of one's own moral qualities. However, this is not entirely true since cognitive functions are not directly related to the ethical sphere.

Although some authors believe that the cognitive component is a combination of moral principles, knowledge, ideas, concepts, judgments, and personal awareness of one's own moral qualities, and L. Kolberg himself thought so. But nowadays, cognition as a concept

acquires a slightly different content. For example, there is a distinct division of concepts in English—usually three different understandings of morality [19, pp. 38-39]. The first understanding is that social morality is synonymous with a particular society's norms, rules, and values. This is an analog of morality in Russian. The second understanding is universal non-historical principles inherent in all of humanity. So, in the cognitive direction of L. Kohlberg, the morality of this kind is, first of all, justice.

The emotional component of personality may be used to judge morality, as it reflects an emotional and value-based attitude to moral norms, self-esteem, and moral self-esteem, as well as an emotional assessment of interpersonal relationships. The same can be noted about the behavioral component, reflecting readiness for a particular course of action and the level of personal responsibility for one's behavior [9, 10].

Other approaches exist for assessing the process of forming morality and ethical principles. First, L. Kohlberg's theory of progressive stages of moral development states that moral development in the general socialization process goes through certain stages until morality is organized at the conventional level. According to L. Kohlberg, this (traditional) level of morality precisely presupposes considering public opinion and realizing that a person's moral judgments should depend more on external conditions [6].

There may be variations when morality is selfish (the pre-conventional level of its development) or when an individual's morality is characterized by their self as dominant in the system of social relations. In the second case (post-conventional level of development), moral self-esteem contributes to the individualization of judgments and behavior when a person does **not** strive to follow social norms and focuses mainly on their own opinion, which often complicates interpersonal and social communication to the point of conflict.

This study aims to determine the prevalence of moral judgments in the adolescent environment.

The research subject is moral development as an evaluative component of a person's consciousness, considering events and actions from the perspective of moral categories, norms, and values.

The novelty of the research is the identification and specification of the content of the levels of development of the moral consciousness of youth, depending on age and place of residence.

The research methodology is represented by Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to this theory, the development of morality includes six stages. These stages are described in three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. These are the three main levels of the development of moral consciousness [6].

Three hundred and six people were examined. All the subjects were divided into groups: adolescents aged 13–14 (n=112) and representatives of early adolescence aged 17–17 (n=194); a group of Moscow youth (n=204) and a group of people from the regions of the Russian Federation (n=102).

Dilemmas prepared based on Kohlberg's principles were used, and participants could choose between "bad" and "good" actions. The basic principles included life, freedom, law, punishment, property, affection, power, justice, and truth. Sex was excluded from Kohlberg's list of principles.

Using Kolberg's method, the features of moral consciousness in the examined persons were identified. In particular, attention was paid to the levels of development of moral consciousness (pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels). The development of moral judgments was assessed according to each level.

Statistical processing of the obtained data was carried out by simply calculating percentages (%).

As a result of the study, it was found that the structural organization of moral consciousness is largely determined by the age of the surveyed persons and the territorial affiliation of their residence. And this is despite moral norms being universal, supra-situational, and supra-personal. Nevertheless, age is a factor that reflects the dynamics and speed of the formation of values in morality. The territorial affiliation by residence reflects the peculiarities of the external conditions in which such attitudes are formed.

Although actual moral values are the same for everyone, the main task is to recognize them as significant and accept them as universally recognized regulators of communicative interaction. Therefore, it is important, on the one hand, to declare the norms of morality and morality, and on the other hand, to cultivate moral qualities, directing efforts to adopt such norms by young people, taking into account their age characteristics.

An analysis of the data in Table 1 indicates that the indicators of conventional (45%) and post-conventional consciousness (34%) prevail in the total mass of moral judgments. However, pre-conventional judgments in morality and ethics are also found in almost one in five respondents (21%).

Table 1.

Structural organization of moral consciousness in adolescence (%)

The level of moral consciousness	The stage of moral development	13-14 years old	17-18 years old	%
		(n=112)	(n=194)	
Pre - conventional	6	16	5	21
Conventional	5	9	18	45
	6	4	14	
Post-conventional	1	12	7	34
	2	8	7	

Nevertheless, there are differences between the two groups of subjects in the frequency of occurrence of signs of developed moral judgments. Thus, in adolescents (group 1), a postconventional level of moral development was detected in 20% of cases and a conventional level in 13% of cases. Compared with the subjects of the second group, who were older (early adolescence) and for whom it corresponds to only 14% in terms of occurrence, this indicates that adolescents often focus only on their own ideas about the importance of morality.

This discrepancy can be explained only by age-related reactions of negativism, which are characteristic of adolescence and often problematic regarding upbringing. The natural desire for independence and self-affirmation is aimed at forming a self, that is, one's own self, accompanied by defending one's own opinion in all spheres of life, including morality.

At the same time, the dynamics of the transition to adolescence, when the level of post-

conventional consciousness decreases in frequency (13%), can be considered positive. As well as indicators of the occurrence of post-conventional morality by stages: In adolescents, the first stage was 12%, the second stage was 8%, and in the second group of subjects, the first and second stages were equivalent in frequency and were detected in 7%.

It should be noted that both of these stages differ in the characteristics of moral judgments, but not significantly. Thus, the first stage is characterized by moral beliefs associated with a rather primitive understanding of the meaning of morality/immorality of actions. If an act is approved by the immediate environment, it is good, but if the act ends in punishment, it is bad. That is, in such dilemma choices, their situational meaning is visible. However, this meaning is realized morally because further dynamics, as seen from the data in Table 1, are accompanied by increasingly frequent signs of conventional morality in the older age group (youth) (32%).

The assessment of the frequency of conventional judgments in the younger age group is expressed by low indicators (only 13%). And at the highest stages of conventionality: at the 5th stage - 9%, and at the 6th stage - 4%.

An explanation is necessary in this case since the discrepancy in concepts and their meanings is obvious. The fact is that in relation to adults, the highest stages of the development of conventional morality indicate the completion of its formation and the achievement of universal principles for regulating one's own behavior, taking into account a critical attitude to the opinions of others. As Kolberg wrote, at such stages of moral consciousness, we are talking about conscience as the highest regulator of behavior and a cognitive process that causes emotions and rational associations based on a moral philosophy or a system of personality values. In adults, this level of morality is found in most cases.

In adolescence, the conventional level of morality does not seem stable and corresponds to adolescents' desire for independence in actions and judgments. An indirect confirmation of this argument can be considered the increase in the occurrence of conventional moral characteristics in the second group (the group of representatives of adolescents). For them, this figure reaches 32%. Almost every third first-year student is already a bearer of conventional morality. Moreover, according to its formation, these are the indicators of the fifth (18%) and sixth (14%) stages. However, this dynamic can be considered positive only on the condition that it reflects natural growth and orientation towards the opinion of the social environment (a kind of social contact) and not its rejection.

At the sixth stage of conventional morality, the presence of universal ethical principles in a young person is already noticeable. These principles refer to accepted moral standards that take into account the interests of other people and cultures, such as justice, nonviolence, equality, freedom, responsibility, mercy, and others.

Table 2.

The structural organization of moral consciousness in adolescence, depending on the place of residence (%)

The level of moral consciousness	Moscow (n=204)	Regions (n=102)	%
Pre - conventional	14	7	21
Conventional	17	28	45
Post-conventional	20	14	34

post-conventional	7%	14%	20%
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The data analysis in Table 2 allows us to present the prevalence of indicators of the development of moral consciousness in adolescence, depending on the place of residence. The territorial factor of development is important for socialization at this age. It is known, for example, that even political subjectivity in the structure of the value orientations of the youth of the Moscow agglomeration has its own peculiarities compared with youth from other regions [\[12\]](#).

It was found that representatives of Moscow youth in 14% of cases are characterized by indicators of pre-conceptual consciousness, compared with youth from other regions (7%).

Conventional choices on diagnostic dilemmas, on the other hand, are more common among regional youth (28%) than among Moscow youth (17%).

Post-conventional moral beliefs are more common among the Moscow agglomeration's (20%) youth than among other regions' (14%) youth.

A generalized analysis of indicators of the development of moral consciousness in adolescence, taking into account territorial affiliation, indicates that a large metropolis's environment impacts the development of morality. This is expressed in the desire for autonomy, that is, to organize one's behavior mainly based on one's beliefs and certain tendencies toward rejecting social norms. If we compare these post-conventional characteristics of morality with indicators of its pre-conventional beliefs (14%), it becomes evident that there is some social infantilism (childishness).

The development and formation of moral beliefs in a group of youth from the regions indicates a much more frequent occurrence of conventional judgments (28%) and a much lower (two times, 7%) occurrence of beliefs at the pre-conventional level. At the same time, the post-conventional characteristics of moral consciousness are less common (14%) compared with the youth from the Moscow group of respondents (20%). Such a distribution may reflect moral beliefs in the need to build their socialization strategies, considering public opinion and personal responsibility for the consequences of their actions and deeds.

The data obtained confirm that Kohlberg's dilemmas can be used to identify indicators of moral judgment development. However, this method has certain limitations because the subjects do not understand the presence of dilemmas in which discrepancies exist in the choice between "bad" and "good" actions.

In this regard, A.A. Khvostov notes that many works were aimed at simply establishing a link between the level of development of moral judgments and behavior [\[10, 11\]](#). In essence, a retrospective diagnosis was carried out when, based on an already accomplished act (offense), a study of the subject's morality was conducted. For example, this is how J. J. Beer and G.S. Richard generally found a direct link between problematic behavior and moral judgments, although relatively low [\[16\]](#). In another study, Beer showed why the relationship between behavior and moral judgments is relatively low [\[17\]](#). In particular, the reason may be the assessment methodology; qualitatively different judgments may be assessed at the same level of moral development. This is consistent with the results of our study.

The results of our study showed the presence of dependence on indicators of the development of moral judgments, taking into account the place of residence. The research of D.M. Berzoff and J.G. Miller shows such a dependence. The study of these authors, conducted in India and the USA, raised approximately the same question about how much

an act is expected by society, how important it is to take it into account, how much it is a personal matter of the person themselves, etc. [18]. It turned out that, in general, Americans were more likely to act according to the principles of justice rather than the principles of interpersonal relations in solving moral dilemmas. In India, the opposite trend was observed.

Despite the identified trends in the prevalence of moral judgments depending on age and place of residence, it is necessary to recognize their relative nature. Kohlberg's dilemmas alone are not enough for the completeness of the characteristics of moral consciousness in various social groups. In this regard, G.M. Low and E.M. Shimberg showed that a test using short "moral stories" does not differentiate these groups [20]. From the point of view of these authors, these groups did not differ in their ability to assess situations as moral. At the same time, moral judgments diagnosed intelligence and social apperception rather than moral essence. Referring to Weber, Khvostov A.A. provides evidence that similar results were obtained in a comparative analysis. Thus, the ranking of 16 "bad" actions revealed no differences between the norm and delinquent groups. According to this author, it's not about understanding the moral side of the issue. Instead, moral behavior is conditioned by emotions, will, and intelligence [9]. One can only agree with this interpretation.

Conclusions

1. L. Kolberg's dilemmas can be used to identify indicators of the development of moral judgments. However, this method has limitations when assessing the levels of development of moral judgments in young people. These limitations are related to the fact that the subjects do not understand or do not always understand correctly the presence in dilemmas of discrepancies in the choice between "bad" and "good" actions. This indicates the relativity of using this method for the specified age.

2. Adolescents are more likely to have a post-conventional level of moral development than signs of conventionality. The indicator of adolescents' conventional moral development in comparison with the subjects of the older (youth) group indicates that adolescents quite often focus only on their own ideas about the importance of morality and, therefore, are prone to moral distortions of social situation perception.

3. The manifestation of moral consciousness in adolescence depends on the place of residence. The territorial factor of development is important for socialization at this age. Thus, representatives of Moscow youth are more likely to have indicators of pre-conceptual consciousness than youth from the regions. Conventional choices on diagnostic dilemmas, on the contrary, are more common among regional youth compared to the youth of the Moscow agglomeration. Post-conventional moral beliefs are more common among Moscow youth than among youth from the regions.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the distribution structure of indicators of young people's moral consciousness development is very dynamic. Its mobility depends on many factors and agents of socialization. However, it is advisable to build a general vector of assessment of moral beliefs so that the dominant educational strategies are oriented toward public opinion, not just one's own.

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Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

На рецензирование представлена статья «Оценка морального сознания молодежи». Работа представляет собой постановку проблемы, описание основного теоретического подхода, анализ результатов эмпирического исследования, а также подведение основных итогов.

Предмет исследования. Работа нацелена на определение распространенности моральных суждений в подростково-юношеской среде. В качестве предмета исследования выступает моральное развитие как оценочный компонент сознания личности, рассматривающий события и поступки с позиции морально-нравственных категорий, норм, ценностей.

Методологическая основа исследования. Методология исследования представлена теорией морального развития, которая разработана Лоуренсом Колбергом. В эмпирическом исследовании приняло участие 306 человек, которые были разделены на несколько групп: подростки 13-14 лет (n=112) и представители раннего юношеского возраста 17-17 лет (n=194); группа московской молодежи (n=204) и группа лиц из регионов РФ (n=102). Для проведения исследования были применены дилеммы, подготовленные на основе принципов Л. Колберга, и позволяющие сделать выбор из «плохих» и «хороших» поступков. С помощью методики Л. Колберга проводилось выявление особенностей морального сознания у обследуемых лиц. В частности, обращалось внимание на уровни развития морального сознания (преконвенциональный, конвенциональный и постконвенциональный уровни). Соответственно каждому уровню оценивалось развитие моральных суждений. Статистическая обработка полученных данных осуществлялась простым подсчетом процентных исчислений (%).

Актуальность исследования определяется тем, что необходимо выявлять риски, которые оказывают влияние на процессы развития и социализации личности. Особо в старшем подростковом и раннем юношеском возрасте, когда основные нормы морального сознания уже понятны, но еще не всегда усвоены и приняты. На данном возрастном периоде, с одной стороны, не завершены некоторые подростковые реакции (например, негативизм), а с другой стороны – суждения в моральном отношении являются незрелыми.

Научная новизна исследования. Полученные результаты позволили автору выявить и конкретизировать содержание уровней развитости морального сознания молодежи в зависимости от возраста и места проживания.

Стиль, структура, содержание. Стиль изложения соответствует публикациям такого уровня. Язык работы научный. Структура работы представлена, автором выделены основные смысловые части. Логика в работе имеется. Содержание статьи отвечает требованиям, предъявляемым к работам такого уровня. Объем работы небольшой, но предмет исследования раскрыт.

Во введении определена проблема и актуальность исследования, небольшой теоретико-методологический обзор, цель, предмет и новизна. В основном разделе представлены

результаты исследования распространённость моральных суждений в подростково-юношеской среде. В заключении подведены основные результаты и сделаны аргументированные выводы.

Библиография. Библиография статьи включает в себя 20 отечественных и зарубежных источников. Издания за последние три года практически отсутствуют. В список включены, в основном, монографии, статьи и тезисы. Источники оформлены не во всех позициях корректно и однородно. Например, при оформлении статьи журнала не указывается издательство (...//Воспитание школьников. – М.: Изд-во: ООО «Школьная пресса», 2013. – № 4. – С. 45–49.). При оформлении статьи журнала в некоторых журналах есть разделительные знаки (например, ...//Развитие личности – 2016. - № 3. – С. 113-138.), то такие знаки отсутствуют (например, // Психологический журнал. 2012. Т. 33. № 1. С. 30-39) и так далее. В целом, оформление библиография нуждается в значительной доработке.

Апелляция к оппонентам.

Рекомендации:

- 1) скорректировать библиографический список в соответствии с предъявляемыми требованиями;
- 2) в работе присутствуют опiski (например, «стратегий»).

Выводы. Проблематика затронутой темы отличается несомненной актуальностью, теоретической ценностью. Статья будет интересна специалистам, которые занимаются проблемами личностного развития подростков и юношей. Проблема рассматривается через призму оценивания морального сознания молодежи. Статья может быть рекомендована к опубликованию. Однако, важно учесть выделенные рекомендации и внести соответствующие изменения. Это позволит представить в редакцию научно-методическую и научно-исследовательскую работу, отличающуюся научной новизной и практической значимостью.