
STUDY OF INTERCONFESSIONAL INTERACTION OF THE POPULATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN CONSTRUCTING INDICES OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

**Alina Vladimirovna Makhyanova^{1,2*},
Rustam Minhaydarovich Khairullin² and
Albert Askhadovich Mavludov^{2,3}**

¹*Kazan State Power Engineering University, Krasnoselskaya Str. 51, Kazan, 420066,
Russian Federation*

²*Center for Advanced Economic Research of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of
Tatarstan, Ostrovskogo Str. 23/1, 420111, Kazan, Russian Federation*

³*Kazan National Research Technological University, Karl Marx Str. 68, Kazan, 420015,
Russian Federation*

(Received 14 March 2018, revised 7 May 2018)

Abstract

The article presents a study on interconfessional interaction of the population in the Republic of Tatarstan (Russia) carried out on the basis of the author's methodology of constructing indices of religious tolerance, as well as materials of applied sociological studies demonstrating their approbation on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan. As a methodological basis we used the indices of social and economic activity, which were developed and researched by the world's largest companies and universities (Conference Board, Inc., University of Michigan, etc.). The calculation of social and economic activity indices is conducted according to the arithmetic mean. They are used to compare data for different countries and regions. Designed indices are focused on the analysis of religious tolerance of the population at three levels: in the place of direct residence of the respondent, at the state level, and at the worldwide level. This allows taking into account the impact of various factors affecting the level of tolerance in society, including personal (assimilated values, norms prevalent in the place of residence) and social factors (mentality, political, economic, and other circumstances). Five authors' indices are developed and tested: the current state of religious tolerance, changes in the state of religious tolerance, expected changes in the state of religious tolerance, the favourableness of conditions for the formation of religious tolerance, and the satisfaction with the state of religious tolerance.

Keywords: indices, religious tolerance, social portrait

*E-mail: makhyanova80@bk.ru

1. Introduction

It is difficult to imagine contemporary relations in society without the concept of tolerance, because this concept becomes the core of understanding in dialogue at the regional, state, and global levels. For example, M. Walzer, one of the most famous researchers of tolerance, believes that the condition and at the same time a necessary component of tolerance is peaceful coexistence of people with different history, culture, and identity [1]. Recognition of persons' right to their own opinion, the right to publish and communicate its legitimacy, as well as tolerable, calm attitude to the judgments of others is nothing more but tolerance. In this context, according to F. Schweitzer, tolerance is a kind of principle that affirms the right of everyone to the ideological beliefs of any content [2]. At the same time, as noted by N.N. Fedotova: "Tolerance is the recognition of the legitimacy of the legitimate interests of another, which do not clash with morality, as well as openness to his experience, readiness for dialogue and for expanding their own experience" [3].

On the current political map, almost all countries are multiconfessional. Their interaction is characterized by an increase in conflict, extremism, and religious intolerance. There is a growing tension in relations both within countries and among them, unleashing of hostilities, and the use of force among states, which are increasingly becoming the consequences of intolerant relations on religious grounds. In general, we can say that the global processes in the ethno-political sphere actualize the importance of studying the problem of religious tolerance.

The society in which interconfessional interaction is constantly taking place, the society characterized by the increase in the intensity of migration flows, strengthening of competition in the labour market as a result of periodic economic crises is a 'favourable ground' for reducing tolerance in religious sphere. In this regard, the study and measurement of religious tolerance, the creation of a kind of social portrait in this area, which makes it possible to monitor trends and make forecasts, are becoming of great importance.

The UN Declaration of principles of tolerance adopted and proclaimed by Member States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on November 16, 1995 [4] defines tolerance as respect, perception, and understanding of the rich diversity of cultures of our world, forms of self-expression of the human personality. Tolerance is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is unity in diversity. Tolerance is what makes peace possible and contributes to the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. Tolerance is, first of all, an active stand, which is formed on the basis of the recognition of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Tolerance in no way can justify violations of these core values. Tolerance should be shown both by each person individually, groups of people, and the states.

Thus, it can be defined that tolerance is a social value and a principle of social relations, which involves the perception and understanding of the diversity of the cultures of our world, the forms of self-expression of the human personality whose basis is the recognition, declaration, guaranteeing, and observance of human rights.

In contrast to the definition of 'tolerance', today scientists have no single approach in understanding the concept of 'religious tolerance'. Traditionally, for scientific comprehension of this concept, a broad and narrow interpretation of this term can be distinguished. A broad interpretation of religious tolerance implies that the essence of this concept consists in perceiving all religious beliefs as such, which are equally correct. On the other hand, narrow approaches interpret religious tolerance as an opportunity to adhere to religious beliefs without any harassment or discrimination, distinguishing religious tolerance in fact as part of the general concept of tolerance in the field of religious relations [5].

According to J. Neusner and B. Chilton, religious tolerance is a person's ability to live alongside with the religious tradition, which is different from his own tradition [6]. Religious tolerance is a type of relationships among adherents of different confessions, which is based on the principles of mutual respect and conscious rejection of arrogance, infringement of rights and humiliation of each other [7]. Therefore, considering religious tolerance, in our study we will comprehend this concept as social principles of interaction, which provide the possibility of observance of religious beliefs without any harassment or discrimination. Religious tolerance is a system of attitudes that determines the positive perception and willingness to accept the differences of other religions and religious associations, as well as regulate religious behaviour and personal interaction. The formation of the system of attitudes is influenced by both individual and social factors [8-10].

According to the author's approach in the study of religious tolerance, the essence of the latter should contain the concept of 'attitude'. The ideas of V.A. Yadov [11, 12], A. Lukov and V.A. Lukov [13] most fully suit to study religious tolerance.

The use of V.A. Yadov's ideas is carried out through the recognition of the hierarchical structure of the value-normative system and consideration of religious tolerance through the prism of the individual's predisposition to a certain perception of a particular religion or to a certain type of religious behaviour. First of all, we note that the concept of religious tolerance based on the Yadov's provisions of the dispositional theory of personality is interpreted as attitudes included in the highest level of the basic social attitudes based on predisposition towards the representative of this or that religion and readiness for this or that form of behaviour [11, 12, 14].

Using a methodological approach developed by A. Lukov and V.A. Lukov, attitudes towards religious tolerance can be represented in the form of thesaurus structures, which can be actualized or, vice versa, lose their relevance. At that, these processes are considered depending on both individual and social

factors. The decrease of tolerance level in individual, group, or society at large can be considered as the loss of reproducibility of interpretation related to the society crises and the problem of multidirectional content of values and norms [13].

The author's understanding of religious tolerance appears as a part of the individual configuration of orientation information (knowledge and attitudes), which develops under the influence of macro- and micro-social factors, and provides orientation of the personality in different situations and at different levels of sociality. According to the author's approach, the issues of religious tolerance should be studied through the prism of the social portrait. This will allow investigating the current trends in a certain static snapshot, tracking the state, and identifying the characteristic features.

2. Methods

To create the author's methodology allowing construction of religious tolerance indexes in a social portrait of the population, it is offered to rely on the methodology used in calculation of indexes of social and economic activity of the population. The methodology is based on the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the partial indices (indices of economic activity of the population).

The arithmetic mean is the most commonly used average value and has the following form:

$$\bar{X}_{\text{ар. сред.}} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad (1)$$

Where: X – is the values of the quantities for which the average must be calculated;

N – is the total number of X values (the number of units in the studied set).

Partial indices are constructed by the following procedure: the share of negative answers is subtracted from the share of positive answers and this difference is added to 100 to exclude occurrence of negative values [*Obnovlennaya metodika izmereniya indeksa social'nyh nastroyenij (ISN)* (Updated methodology for measuring the social sentiment index (SSI), Levada-Center, retrieved 15.01.18 from <https://www.levada.ru/obnovlennaya-metodika-izmereniya-indeksa-sotsialnykh-nastroyenii-isn/>].

Using calculation techniques of well-known indices of economic activity of the population, such as Consumer Sentiment Index, Consumer Confidence Index, Buyer Activity Index, self-dependence and self-esteem index, and labour force mobility index, we have developed and tested five original indices of religious tolerance: current state of religious tolerance, changes in the state of religious tolerance, expected changes in the state of religious tolerance, favourableness of conditions for the formation of religious tolerance, and satisfaction with the state of religious tolerance.

Each of these partial indices consists of three answers to the question, which relates to the place of direct residence of the respondent, Russia at large, and the world. Together, these partial indices form an integral indicator of religious tolerance index. It is calculated by the arithmetic mean formula using five partial indices.

Approbation of the indices was carried out based on the author's sociological study held in 2017. Using questionnaire, 1500 people living in the Republic of Tatarstan were surveyed. At that we used gender, age, and location based sampling. When developing the questionnaire, conducting survey, and processing the obtained results we used methodological developments of Russian scientists [15-17].

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Indexes of the current state of religious tolerance and of the satisfaction with the current state of religious tolerance

According to the obtained data, the index of the current state of religious tolerance has accounted to 109 points. Its positive value proves that relations among representatives of different religions are generally considered by the population as tolerant. A more detailed description of the data shows the following. Every third assessed the relations among the representatives of Islam and Orthodoxy in the place of their residence as good, whereas bad relations were noted by every tenth respondent (32.5 and 11.3%, respectively). At that, the majority of population believes that in some aspects these relations are good, while in other aspects they are bad (52.8%). At that, 3.4% of the total number of respondents found it difficult to answer the question posed (Figure 1).

According to the respondents of the Republic of Tatarstan, the assessment of relations among representatives of different religions in Russia at large was also dominated by neutral answers (46.7%). The ratio between those who called these relations good or bad was 31.2/14.5%, while 7.6% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question. A similar issue with regard to the situation at the world level was found to be negative and amounted to 89.3 points. This was caused by the prevalence of negative responses compared to positive responses (29.4 against 18.7%, respectively). At that, 42.1% of respondents called these relations good in some way and in some way bad. The number of those who found it difficult to answer made up 9.8% of the total number of respondents.

The index of satisfaction with the state of religious tolerance has shown average values and amounted to 100.4 points. This indicator allows stating the existence of two polar groups. The majority of adherents of the first group generally are satisfied with the state of tolerance among representatives of different religions, while adherents of the second group, in turn, are not satisfied with the current state of affairs (Figure 2).

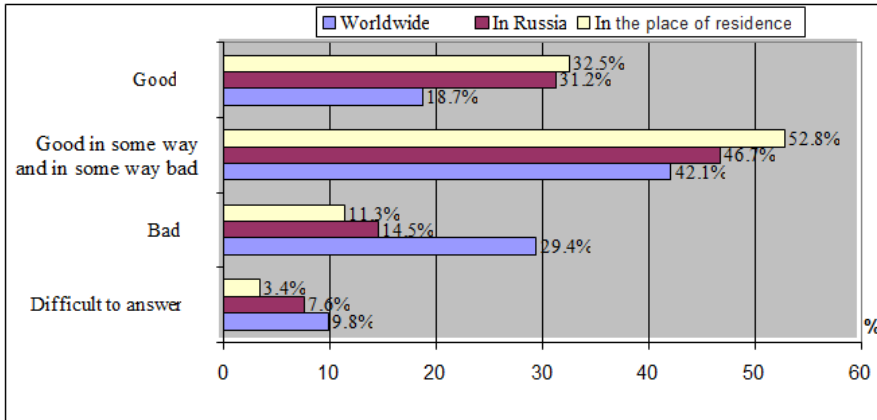


Figure 1. Data on the index of the current state of religious tolerance.

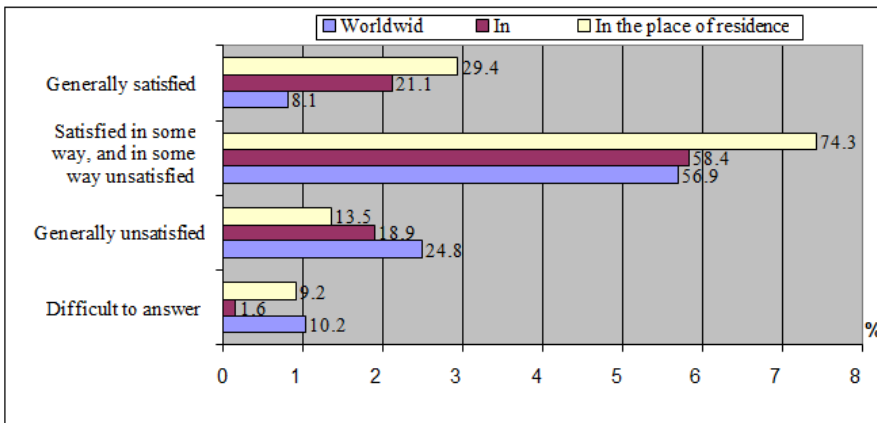


Figure 2. Data on the index of satisfaction with the state of religious tolerance.

Detail analysis of answers relating to consideration at various levels showed the following. Two thirds of the respondents are satisfied only to some extent with the current state of tolerance among representatives of different religions in their place of residence (74.3%). The proportion of those who are fully satisfied with everything amounted to 29.4%, while proportion of those, who are completely unsatisfied, was 13.5% of respondents. The number of respondents who found it difficult to answer was 9.2% of the total number of respondents.

The situation with respect to Russia at large is somewhat different. The number of those who were satisfied with the current situation in the country only to some extent was reduced (58.4%). At the same time, the number of those who were generally satisfied and those who were generally not satisfied became almost equal (21.1 against 18.9%, respectively). The number of respondents who found it difficult to answer the question amounted to 1.6% of the total number of respondents.

The average estimation of respondents considering the issue at the global level amounted to 56.9%. However, the proportion of those, who were not satisfied with the current situation, was 4 times higher than the proportion of those who were satisfied (24.8 against 8.1%, respectively). At that, every tenth respondent found it difficult to answer the question (10.2%).

3.2. Indexes of occurred and expected changes in the state of religious tolerance

The index of changes in the state of religious tolerance included questions designed to reveal the opinion of the population about the changes that have occurred in relation to the representatives of other religions over the past year. Regarding the personal attitude, two thirds of the respondents stated that there were no changes (78.9%). The number of those who have reported improvements was twice greater than the number of those who have reported deterioration (12.8 against 5.3%, respectively). At that, only 3% of respondents found it difficult to answer (Figure 3).

Also, the majority of respondents believe that relations among representatives of different religions in Russia have remained unchanged over the past year (67.3%). The ratio of those who noted improvement or deterioration was 10.6 against 7.6%, while the number of those who found difficulties in giving the answer was 3% of the total number of respondents.

In general, 63.8% of the people deny any changes in relations among representatives of different religions in the world. At the same time, the number of those who pointed to deterioration was almost three times higher than the number of those who noted improvement (14.7 against 5.4%, respectively). It should be noted that the number of respondents who found it difficult to answer this particular question increased to 16.1%.

The index of changes in the state of religious tolerance amounted to 100.4 points. We can say that this figure is on the border mark that indicates the existence of two opposing groups of opinions regarding the changes that have occurred in relation to the representatives of another religion over the past year. A detailed description of the data suggests that the assessments of these changes at the place of residence and in Russia at large are positive, while at the worldwide level they are negative.

The index of expected changes in the state of religious tolerance was positive and amounted to 102.7 points. It also consisted of three questions concern three different assessment levels. The answers to the first question showed the conviction of the majority of respondents in fact that in the next three years the religious tolerance in the place of their residence would remain at approximately the same level (75%). At that, 13.2% of respondents were sure that the tolerance would grow, 4.3% expected decrease, while 7.5% of the respondents found it difficult to predict (Figure 4).

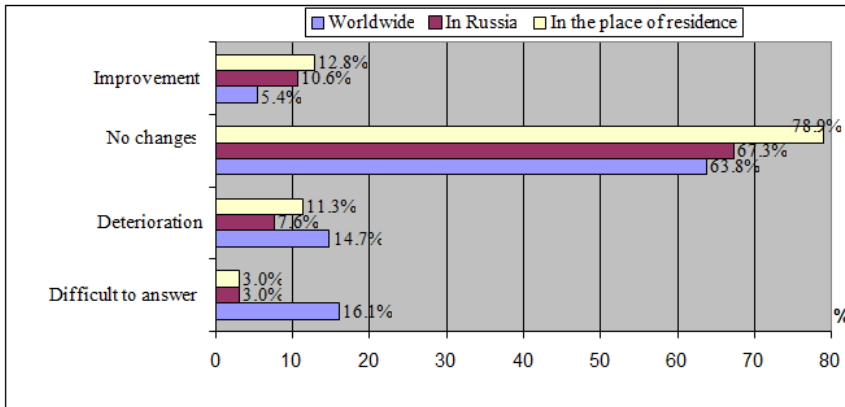


Figure 3. Data on the index of changes that have occurred in the state of religious tolerance.

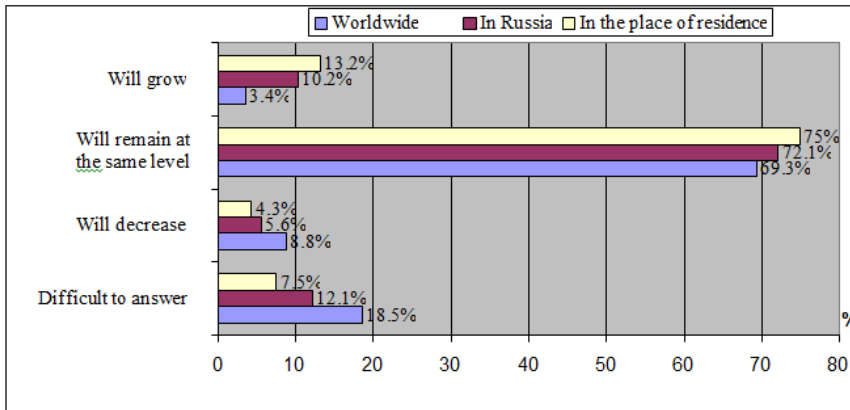


Figure 4. Data on the index of expected changes in the state of religious tolerance.

Data obtained with regard to assessments at the level of Russia turned out to be similar. Similarly, the majority believes that everything will remain approximately at the same level (72.1%). Nevertheless, 10.2% are confident in the growth of religious tolerance, while 5.6% of the population predict its reduction; 12.1% of respondents found it difficult to answer.

With regard to prediction at the global level, 69.3% of respondents have expressed the opinion that in the next three years the level of religious tolerance will remain approximately the same. Assurance in its growth was expressed by 3.4% of respondents, while reduction was predicted by 8.8% of respondents. The number of those who found it difficult to answer was 18.5% of the total number of respondents.

3.3. Index of conditions' favourableness for the formation of religious tolerance

The index of conditions' favourableness for the formation of religious tolerance has taken a negative value and amounted to 84.3 points. The majority of respondents called them partly favourable and partly unfavourable (56.7%) in their place of residence. Only every tenth respondent called them favourable (12.3%), whereas the opposite idea was expressed by 17.3% of the respondents. At that, 13.7% of residents found it difficult to answer (Figure 5).

According to 58.7% of the population, conditions for strengthening and expansion of religious tolerance in society all over Russia are partly favourable and partly unfavourable. The ratio of those who considered these conditions favourable and those who considered them unfavourable was 8.9 against 22.8%, respectively. The number of respondents who found it difficult to respond was 9%.

The assessment of these conditions at the worldwide level was somewhat lower. Thus, 6.3% of respondents called them favourable, while 34.6% noted unfavourable conditions. The option 'partly favourable and partly unfavourable' was chosen by 43.2% of respondents, while 15.9% found it difficult to answer.

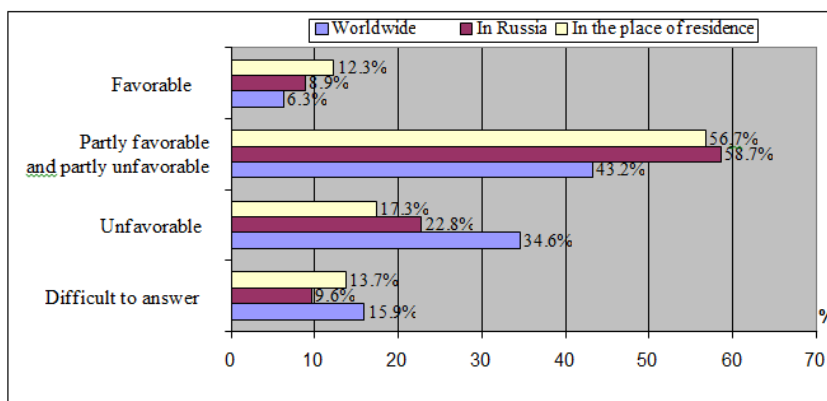


Figure 5. Data on the index of conditions favourableness for the formation of religious tolerance.

Thus, the index of the current state of religious tolerance in the Republic of Tatarstan has received the maximum value among all other indices (109 points). This suggests that residents positively assess the existing relations among representatives of different religions living in the surveyed region, and are optimistic about the future of these relations. However, it is worth noting that nonetheless negative values dominated over positive ones when assessing current situation at the worldwide level.

The index of changes in the state of religious tolerance took an average value close to neutral (100.4 points) that indicated the presence of two groups of opinions. The first group is a carrier of a negative assessment of recent changes

in attitudes among representatives of different religions while the second one, on the contrary, considers them positive.

The index of expectations of changes in the state of religious tolerance exceeded average value (102.7 points). This proves the fact that the population hopes maintaining the existing friendly relations among representatives of various religions, as well as improving them. However, the belief in this is more characteristic for assessment at the regional level of permanent residence of the respondents, while the confidence in the situation at the worldwide level is significantly weaker.

The negative value of the index of conditions' favourableness for the formation of religious tolerance (84.3 points) indicates that the respondents are dominated by negative estimates of the conditions' favourableness. Under these conditions, respondents do not see real capabilities for implementing the potential of tolerance, and in bulk, this potential finds its expression precisely at the level of world processes.

4. Conclusions

In the frameworks of the authors' comprehension of religious tolerance it is proposed to lay the notion of attitude in the form of a part of the individual configuration of orientation information, which is influenced by macro- and micro-social factors, and which provides orientation of the personality in different situations and sociality levels. It was suggested conducting a study of religious tolerance on the basis of the developed authors' indices. They were tested in the course of applied sociological survey which showed the following.

The assessment of the degree of satisfaction with the state of religious tolerance has revealed the presence of two polar groups, whose representatives can be called pessimists and optimists. At that, the proportion of the firsts dominates in the assessment of the situation at the worldwide level, while the proportion of the latter dominates when analysing the situation at the level of the respondents' place of residence.

In general, almost all indices have shown the following peculiarity: assessments of the state of religious tolerance have been reducing while considering situation in the place of direct residence and at the worldwide level. Thus, the proposed methodology i.e. developed and tested indices, can be used in monitoring aimed at revealing current trends and changes in the level of religious tolerance, as well as in the preparation of a social portrait of the population.

References

- [1] M. Walzer, *On toleration. Castle lectures in ethics, politics and economics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997, 160.
- [2] F. Schweitzer, *Brit. J. Relig. Educ.*, **29(1)** (2007) 89-100.
- [3] N. Fedotova, *Philosophical Sciences*, **4** (2014) 24-38.

- [4] ***, *Declaration of principles on tolerance proclaimed and signed by the Member States of UNESCO on 16 November 1995*, UNESCO, Paris, 1995, 16.
- [5] R. Burns, *Concept of religious tolerance: A view of western experience*, McFarland Company, London, 2005, 210.
- [6] J. Neusner and B. Chilton, *Religious tolerance in world religions*, Templeton Foundation Press, West Conshohocken, 2008, 396.
- [7] H.O. Yusuf, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, **3(8)** (2013) 224-232.
- [8] L.M. Drobizheva, *Sociological researches*, **1** (2017) 25-36.
- [9] N.M. Lebedeva, *Tolerantnost' v mezkul'turnom dialoge (Tolerance in intercultural dialogue)*, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, RAS, Moscow, 2005, 365.
- [10] V.I. Mukomel, *Sociological researches*, **2** (2005) 56-66.
- [11] V.A. Yadov, *Samoregulyaciya i prognozirovanie social'nogo povedeniya: Dispozicionnaya koncepciya (Self-regulation and prediction of social behavior: Dispositional concept)*, 2nd edn., Center of Social Marketing and Forecasting, Moscow, 2013, 376.
- [12] V.A. Yadov, *World of Russia*, **3-4** (1995) 158-181.
- [13] V.A. Lukov and V.A. Lukov, *Knowledge. Understanding. Skill*, **1** (2004) 93-100.
- [14] S.B. Malikova, N.E. Talantuly, E.T. Alimkulov and A.K. Zhanibekov, *Eur. J. Sci. Theol.*, **14(1)** (2018) 83-92.
- [15] G.V. Osipov, *Rabochaya kniga sociologa (The workbook of the sociologist)*, 4th edn., KomKniga, Moscow, 2006, 480.
- [16] M.K. Gorshkov and F.E. Sheregi, *Prikladnaya sociologiya: metodologiya i metody (Applied sociology: Methodology and methods). Textbook*, Alfa-M: INFRA-M, Moscow, 2009, 416.
- [17] A.N. Al-Kaisi, A.L. Arkhangelskaya, M.A. Bragina, B.A. Bulgarova and O.I. Rudenko-Morgun, *Eur. J. Sci. Theol.*, **14(1)** (2018) 47-59