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COMPETENCIES AS A FACTOR IN THE WORK-FAMILY BALANCE



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The demographic agenda in contemporary Russia is focused on supporting families with children. The objective of ensuring population reproduction is closely linked to reproductive behavior characterized by a predominantly low-fertility model. The realization of reproductive intentions, given the high standards of child-rearing quality, is rationally constrained by the available resources of the family. As a social institution, the family primarily determines the balance between its economic and reproductive functions based on its own capacities. Drawing on a body of Russian studies, we substantiate the role of competencies as a factor in the efficient use of household resources and highlight the specific patterns in the distribution of roles and responsibilities between spouses. Adopting a competency-based approach, the study analyzes families' needs for various types of skills required to maintain a sustainable family lifestyle and ensure effective household functioning. These skills relate primarily to household management, financial planning, child-rearing, time allocation, and the reconciliation of professional and family duties. The demand for competencies associated with family and child-oriented lifestyles varies by gender, marital status, and number of children. It is found that large families experience a high unmet need for competencies, while the supply of adult training courses remains constrained by limited availability and high costs. The article concludes by identifying possible avenues for developing competencies essential for a family and child-oriented lifestyle.

Number of children, work-family balance, resource availability, family, competency-based approach.

Introduction

The relevance of this topic stems from a combination of the socio-economic and demographic transformations taking place in modern society. As the structure of employment becomes more complex, as the demands placed on professional self-fulfillment grow, and as the importance of family functions simultaneously intensifies, the problem of achieving a sustainable balance between work and family life has become especially pressing. This balance is not only a significant category for the individual; it also acts as a factor that influences demographic processes. Under present-day conditions, there is a noticeable tendency to postpone childbearing and to have fewer children, a trend that is largely attributable to the limited resources – economic, temporal, psychological, and social – that families possess. A family's resource endowment determines its capacity to perform both its reproductive and its nurturing functions and also affects the level of its members' subjective well-being. In this context, a particularly important role is coming to be played by competency: a characteristic that reflects the ability of individuals to make effective use of the resources at their disposal, to adapt to changing circumstances, and to take well-founded decisions when combining the professional and family spheres so as to successfully fulfill all the functions that the family, as a social institution, performs. The competency-based approach makes it possible to examine a family's behavior not only through the lens of objective constraints but also from the standpoint of the quality of its resource management, its level of awareness, and its planning and strategic skills. This is especially important in the context of creating conditions that are conducive to the realization of reproductive intentions, since even limited resources, when coupled with a high degree of competency, can be employed more efficiently.

The object of the study is the family as a social institution; the subject is the set of

marital competencies that ensure the effective performance of family functions, as well as the specific features of the distribution of gender roles, responsibilities, and family interaction practices that shape the need for the development of these competencies.

The aim of the study is to substantiate the system of competencies that spouses require for the well-being of the family and for the successful discharge of its functions as a social institution, taking into account the contemporary model of the division of social roles and responsibilities. The practical application of the research findings is envisaged in the context of the implementation of state demographic policy, which is designed to raise the birth rate, strengthen the institution of the family, and create the conditions for a harmonious combination of professional and family self-realization. The study of competency in the context of a family's resource endowment makes it possible to uncover hidden reserves for enhancing the effectiveness of these policies, as well as to justify the need to develop comprehensive programs that are oriented not only toward the material support of families but also toward the cultivation of their competency potential.

The objectives of the study are: to analyze the theoretical approaches to assessing work–family balance; to identify the specific features of the population's perceptions regarding the distribution of gender roles, family functions, and responsibilities between spouses; to assess the need of families for the competencies that are necessary for the effective performance of the basic functions of the family – including the organization of everyday life, the upbringing of children, financial planning, and the reconciliation of professional and family employment; and to substantiate the system of competencies of spouses that contributes to the well-being of the family and to its successful performance of social, economic, child-rearing, and reproductive functions under modern conditions.

Approaches to assessing work-family balance

The attention paid to the issue of work-life balance stems from the objective task that confronts the family: the need to reconcile two key functions – the reproductive and the economic. Providing the family with material goods is achieved mainly through the labor activity of its members. Accordingly, the higher the dependency burden, the more resources are required. In parallel, the burden associated with running the household and bringing up children increases; in other words, at least one irreplaceable resource – time – has to be divided between income-generating labor and the domestic work that goes hand in hand with parenthood. The growing demands for a higher quality of life and for greater investment in children's development and education have led to an obvious compromise: having fewer children. This makes it possible to reduce both the total expenditure on children and the period during which the mother interrupts her labor activity, thereby forgoing earnings.

The findings of a study by O.B. Savinskaya show that, despite the declared values of career and professional growth, the overwhelming majority of mothers (81.6% of mothers of schoolchildren and 85% of mothers of preschoolers) adhere to the “working mother” strategy, which is oriented toward a compromise-based reconciliation of roles. The motivation for employment is primarily economic in nature (47.9% cite “economic independence”), and the most sought-after working conditions are a flexible schedule, proximity to the home, and guaranteed summer leave. At the same time, Savinskaya stresses that corporate policies that take parental responsibilities into account are not very widespread: only 7.6% of those surveyed had received assistance in placing a child in a kindergarten, and 10.2% had the opportunity to work from home (Savinskaya, 2013).

As for flexible working hours, despite their seemingly obvious advantages for combining work and family, the picture is not entirely

clear-cut. A study by E.S. Chernykh, N.V. Korovkina, and G.V. Leonidova demonstrates that flexible forms of employment, in particular platform-based work, have a dual effect. On the one hand, they increase workers' autonomy by allowing them to independently regulate their working time and adapt it to their family needs. On the other hand, this high degree of flexibility is accompanied by the risk of blurring the boundaries between work and personal life, which leads to the phenomenon of “constant availability” and self-exploitation (Chernykh et al., 2025).

According to G.V. Belekova, work-life balance acts both as a critical characteristic of quality of life and as a factor in the development of labor potential. Within this approach, particular attention is paid to the individual's subjective perception of the degree of harmony with which the work and non-work spheres are combined. Balance is interpreted as a state in which the satisfaction of the individual's basic needs is ensured and in which the conditions for the effective fulfillment of professional and personal roles are created. Belekova emphasizes, moreover, that satisfaction with this balance is closely linked to the individual's socio-demographic characteristics and resource endowment, including their level of income, education, marital status, and the nature of their employment (Belekova, 2020).

In the works of M.E. Baskakova and I.V. Soboleva, the focus shifts to the institutional and socio-economic conditions under which work-family balance is achieved. The authors examine this phenomenon in the context of the present-day demographic challenges and the transformation of employment brought about by the development of the digital economy. In their interpretation, balance is not merely an individual state; it is also the result of the functioning of the labor market, of the degree of its flexibility, and of the accessibility of various forms of employment for those groups who have family responsibilities. Special attention is devoted to the potential of remote and flexible employment as an instru-

ment for reconciling the professional and family spheres. It is stressed that the development of digital technologies expands the opportunities for labor-market participation on the part of those who were previously constrained in this respect by their family burdens, above all women with children. However, despite the fact that a substantial share of such workers possess the necessary competencies and motivation, their labor potential remains only partially realized because of institutional barriers, including the insufficient development of infrastructure, imperfections in the legal framework, and the limited nature of support programs (Baskakova, Soboleva, 2018).

An article by G.V. Belekova and A.L. Ivanovskaya shows that working women's subjective assessment of how well their work and family responsibilities are reconciled is determined not only by the objective length of the working day but also by their opportunities to rest, by the state of their immediate environment, and by the extent of their involvement in additional forms of labor. When working hours are similar, women with children and women without children may not differ in statistically significant ways in terms of their level of satisfaction with the balance they achieve, a finding that suggests that women are highly adaptable to multitasking and to the redistribution of their time resources (Belekova, Ivanovskaya, 2022). Indirectly, this attests to the family's capacity to adapt to the combination of employment and parenthood, partly by opting to have fewer children and partly thanks to the assistance provided in child-rearing by supportive institutions (above all, the education and social systems).

E.V. Odintsova has introduced into scholarly discourse the construct of the "stability of the labor position of households with children", which integrates three criteria: the realization of labor potential, the stability of employment, and the income-earning potential needed to ensure economic resilience. The researcher maintains that, under the contemporary Russian conditions of 2022–2024, a mere 3.8% of households with children are characterized by a stable labor position, whereas 70.3% face instability linked

to insufficient employment income, even when all the adult members of the family are formally employed (Odintsova, 2025). This confirms both the difficulty of simultaneously performing the economic and the reproductive functions of the family, the persistence of high risks of poverty for families with children, and the generally constrained resources of households.

Drawing on nationwide survey data, S.V. Mareeva demonstrates that the possibility of achieving a work–life balance is distributed extremely unevenly: only 41% of Russians believe that they manage to combine work, family, and personal interests. A key conclusion of the study, moreover, is that the inequality in question is cumulative in character: groups with low incomes and with negative privilege in the economic sphere systematically display lower odds of achieving a work–life balance (only 23%, compared with 58% in the group with positive privilege). Whereas for the more affluent groups the main barrier is more often a shortage of time – which signals a pattern of "pursuing multiple ambitious goals" – for the less well-off the main problem is a lack of money, pointing to an understanding of balance as simply "having a normal life". An important contribution made by Mareeva lies in her analysis of the non-work sphere: the ability to engage in activities such as cultural leisure, sport, or holidays away from home is highly stratified and serves as an additional marker of social well-being (Mareeva, 2019).

A.L. Temnitskii views work–family balance as a significant factor in achieving life success. In his interpretation, life success is a complex phenomenon that encompasses not only material indicators (income and status) but also subjective characteristics (life satisfaction, the fulfillment of life plans, and a sense of happiness). His findings indicate that all forms of a balance between the work and family spheres are positively correlated with assessments of life success. The decisive role in this, however, is played by characteristics connected with the conditions and qual-

ity of employment, whereas the family sphere acts as a secondary factor. At the same time, the value orientations of the population reflect the high importance of both family and interesting work, which together form a single, meaning-bearing complex of ideas about what constitutes life success (Temnitskii, 2019).

Within the framework of research on the time budgets of populations, such foreign scholars as J.P. Robinson, A. Szalai, F. Juster, J. Neilson, and M. Stanfors have estimated the parental costs of raising children (Robinson, 1977; Szalai, 1972; Juster, 1985; Neilson, Stanfors, 2014). The gender dimension of the problem of work-family balance is analyzed in detail in the work of Zh.V. Chernova, where it is stressed that the combining of professional and family responsibilities is asymmetrical in character and falls to a greater extent on women. Chernova views balance not as a preordained state but as the result of individual strategies that are shaped at the household level under conditions of insufficient institutional support. Within this logic, motherhood is treated as the central element of a woman's life project, around which decisions in the sphere of employment are built. Chernova draws attention to the existence of a gender contract that presupposes the priority of professional activity for men and the dominance of family responsibilities for women. Even in dual-career families, this leads to the phenomenon of the "double burden" and to the necessity of seeking out compromise strategies for reconciling the two roles (Chernova, 2012).

Thus, under contemporary conditions, a persistent imbalance is observed between the work and family spheres of life, an imbalance that is multi-level in character and is determined by a combination of economic, institutional, and social factors. The problem is further aggravated by pronounced social stratification and gender asymmetry, since it is women – and mothers in particular – who are drawn into the

practices of combining professional and family responsibilities to the greatest extent, a fact that leads to the formation of the phenomenon of the double burden and to the constant need to search for compromise strategies. The achievement of a work-family balance is determined not only by the availability of material and organizational resources such as money, time, and professional competencies but also by the extent to which these resources are embedded in the individual's system of life goals and value orientations. After all, it is the matching of resource capabilities with personally meaningful life purposes and priorities that shapes the subjective assessment of satisfaction with the balance and determines how that balance is actually perceived. In this connection, a special importance is assumed by the need to distribute, in an informed and deliberate manner, the key resources that both make the family's functioning possible and, at the same time, allow it to maintain an acceptable level of balance between the work and family spheres. What is involved here, above all, are time and material resources, the rational use of which is the single most important condition for the effective performance of both professional and family roles.

The present study advances a competency-based approach to assessing a family's resource potential. This approach treats the totality of household members' knowledge, skills, and abilities as the key factor that determines how optimally resources are used and how effectively a balance is maintained between professional employment and family responsibilities. It should be stressed, at the same time, that even when a family enjoys a high level of resource endowment, the positive effect of this is neither automatic nor unambiguous, since it is mediated by the system of value attitudes and life priorities held by the individuals concerned. It is precisely their value orientations that determine how resources are allocated among the different spheres of life, which goals are regarded as priorities, and how the very notion

of an “adequate” or “successful” balance is interpreted. At the same time, especially when resources are constrained, competencies serve as the key to their effective utilization, thereby contributing to the family’s well-being in both its material and its socio-psychological dimensions.

Let us now consider the set of competencies that spouses require in order to successfully perform their family functions. Of considerable importance here is the financial literacy of the family members, which includes the skills of budgeting, rational consumption, managing the debt burden, and building savings. The works of O.E. Kuzina and R.I. Korkin demonstrate that the level of financial literacy directly influences the economic behavior strategies of households, including the use of credit instruments and the formation of savings (Kuzina et al., 2024). Financial literacy helps households to adapt more successfully to periods of crisis, which in turn makes it easier to weather the decline in income that accompanies the arrival of children – both on a per capita basis and because of the mother’s temporary withdrawal from the labor force (Kalachikova et al., 2019).

No less important is the competency of household management, which encompasses the skills of running a home (cooking, cleaning, minor repairs, and so forth). The work of N.M. Rimashevskaya stresses the significance of domestic labor as an element of the family economy (Rimashevskaya, 2012). In addition, the findings of a study by O.D. Natsak indicate that the specific ways in which household chores are distributed influence the character of intra-family relations and the level of satisfaction with the marriage (Natsak, 2022).

Civic literacy – which includes an awareness of one’s rights and obligations – is likewise regarded as a highly important component of family competencies. D.V. Maltseva views civic competency as a significant factor in social resilience, one that enables people to interact effectively with social institutions (Maltseva, 2017). The competencies involved

in interacting with supportive institutions (healthcare, education, social services, and government services) are also essential for the functioning of the family. Research by L.V. Lapidus demonstrates that the ability to access and make use of social services is an important condition for social inclusion and well-being (Lapidus, 2014). The work of G.V. Baranova stresses that the accessibility and the mastery of social services act as factors that improve the quality of life of the family (Baranova, 2019).

Competencies relating to the interpersonal relations between spouses, which determine the emotional climate within the family, are of particular importance. The work of O.A. Karabanova demonstrates that the character of spousal interaction exerts a substantial influence on the psychological well-being of the family (Karabanova, 2005). The empirical studies conducted by K.V. Adushkina likewise confirm that ineffective strategies for conflict resolution heighten the risk of destabilizing family relations (Adushkina, 2015).

The competencies connected with health – including both reproductive and psychological health – are of fundamental importance for the performance of the family’s functions, in particular the maintenance of the health of all family members, as well as the recreational and child-rearing functions. Our own earlier research, for instance, has analyzed medical and hygienic literacy as a component of family planning and has demonstrated the determining influence of reproductive health on the birth rate (Kalachikova, Shabunova, 2015; Kalachikova, 2011a; Kalachikova, 2011b). In the work of M.V. Shamardina, M.D. Yasafova, and K.I. Yamshchikova, psychological health is viewed as a crucially important condition for the effective life activity of the individual, including in the context of family relations (Shamardina et al., 2024). It is also of no small importance that knowledge of the physiology and psychology of children is a necessary condition for the performance of the child-rearing function of the family.

Competencies in the sphere of parent–child relations occupy a central place within the system of family competencies at the stage of expansion and during the mature-marriage phase. In an article by D.A. Ivantsova, it is shown that the character of the interaction between parents and children has a determining influence on the child’s mental development, and that harmonious parent–child relations contribute to the formation of a psychologically resilient personality (Ivantsova, 2023).

Relations within the sibling system are likewise of considerable importance, since they serve to form the child’s basic social skills. In the research of E.A. Tsurul’nikova and T.S. Shvarts, it is noted that “favorable relations, the presence of shared interests, and the fact of siblings spending time together promote the development of a problem-oriented style of coping. Moreover, it is on the basis of a favorable relationship between brothers and sisters that the extraverted personality and such a coping style as social distraction are developed, a process which helps one to experience difficulties and problems together with others” (Tsurulnikova, Shvarts, 2022).

Finally, the competencies connected with the formation and maintenance of relations with other people – that is, with the family’s social capital – are an important resource for the family’s functioning. Drawing on the research she has conducted, T.A. Guzhavina draws the conclusion that the Russian family possesses the resources that are necessary for shaping the social capital of future generations (Guzhavina, 2018). Ya.M. Roshchina and E.D. Kuflina note: “Compared with being in a registered marriage, all of the other possible marital statuses have a positive influence on the person’s involvement in online networks and in the church, and a negative influence on their involvement in circles of friends and of relatives living separately. This suggests that people who are married are oriented, to a greater extent, toward ‘strong’ ties, while others are oriented toward ‘weak’ ones. In families with a larger number of adults (not counting the respondent and his or her partner), the social capital that is associated with friends, with online networks, and with the

potential for assistance is higher; the reliance on relatives who live separately, by contrast, is lower. The number of minors in the family has a positive influence on friendships and a negative influence on online ties. The presence of a disabled person in the family has a positive influence on involvement in online networks and a negative influence on friendships” (Roshchina, Kuflina, 2022).

Thus, it can be stated unequivocally that the strategy of the “working mother” – which is characterized by relatively modest career ambitions and by a compromise-based attitude toward pay, provided that the necessary time can be devoted to parental tasks – is a product of the enduring value placed on motherhood and on the family, of the gendered differentiation of everyday domestic responsibilities, and of the consolidation of the social norm whereby women are expected to contribute to the material support of the family. Competencies act as a factor that determines the efficiency with which the household’s available resources are used, thereby shaping its social, economic, psychological, and demographic well-being.

Research methods

In order to systematize the dimensions that are relevant to striking a balance between the reproductive, socializing, and economic functions of the family, as well as to identify the spheres of competency that are likely to promote the optimal management of household resources, a critical review of the experience of Russian scholarly research was conducted, employing the general scientific methods of logical analysis and synthesis. The study made use of methods involving the analysis and synthesis of the academic literature, of comparative analysis, and of quantitative sociological research.

The empirical basis of the study consisted of the findings from the monitoring of the reproductive potential and behavior of the population of the Vologda Region, which has been carried out by the Vologda Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (VolRC RAS) since 2005, using a large-scale questionnaire survey of the population of reproductive age. The sample size is 1,500 persons. The sample is quota-

based, with quotas set by sex, age, and type of settlement. The maximum sampling error does not exceed 5%.

The instruments that have been developed make it possible to identify perceptions concerning the social roles of spouses, the distribution of family responsibilities and authority between them, attitudes toward marriage and divorce, and a range of other markers that allow one to assess the spectrum of traditional and modernizing (patriarchal and egalitarian) marriage and family attitudes and practices. In 2025, the instruments were supplemented with questions designed to reveal the need for the competencies that are required for a family-and-child-centered way of life.

Drawing on the data obtained from the questionnaire survey, the specific features of the distribution of gender roles within the family were assessed, as was the character of the differentiation of family functions and responsibilities among the members of the household. Particular attention is devoted to uncovering the ways in which models of family interaction are constructed and realized under contemporary conditions, including the degree to which men and women are involved in the various spheres of domestic and extra-domestic labor. In addition, within the framework of the competency-based approach, an analysis was performed of the need of families for the various kinds of competencies that are necessary to maintain a sustainable family way of life and to carry out the key functions of the household effectively. What is at issue here is the totality of the skills and abilities associated with the organization of everyday life, with financial planning, with the upbringing of children, with the allocation of time, and with the reconciliation of professional and family employment.

Research findings

Drawing on the findings of the survey, let us examine which marriage and family attitudes are currently prevalent among the population of the Vologda Region. An analysis of the extent to which particular views of the family are supported indicates that, on the whole, a fairly high level of agreement with traditional notions of gender roles – such as the view of the man as

the main breadwinner and of the woman as the person responsible for running the household – continues to persist.

Registered marriage remains relevant: the mean agreement score for the statement that a marriage must necessarily be officially registered is higher than the mean score for the position that registering the marriage is not essential for creating a family. Nor has the view that a family cannot exist without children and that a single person cannot be happy lost its relevance. At the same time, divorce is regarded by the respondents as being entirely permissible (*Tab. 1*).

The young people of the region display a hybridity in their views, and their position regarding the distribution of functions is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, a high level of agreement can be observed with statements about the traditionally primary “male” and “female” tasks within the family; on the other hand, there is a strong demand for involved fatherhood, for men’s participation in household chores, and for women’s participation in the material support of the family. A contradiction comes to the fore here: a serious attitude toward registered marriage (and toward the obligation to register it) is combined with a tolerant attitude toward divorce. It would seem that, if divorce is a commonplace practice, then there is little point in treating the act of marrying so seriously; it would be more logical to dispense with it altogether as a devalued practice. This situation may perhaps be explained by a desire to create a strong union – something that proves extremely difficult to achieve in real life – since the divorce statistics appear highly disheartening, even after adjusting for the reported divorce numbers: according to an estimate by A.B. Sinelnikov and his colleagues, roughly 62% of marriages break down (Sinelnikov et al., 2024). This figure is lower than the ratio of marriages to divorces that actually occurred in the same year (723 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 2023).

Respondents who are in a registered marriage display a more pronounced orientation toward the traditional model of the family, including an acknowledgment of the necessity of officially registering the marriage and of its importance for the birth and upbringing of children (*Tab. 2*).

Table 1. Distribution of answers to the question "Which views on the family do you agree with? (indicate one response option on each row on a scale from '1' – completely disagree to '5' – completely agree; '0' – difficult to answer)" by the respondents' age, mean score

Attitude	Mean	Age			
		15–19 years	20–24 years	25–34 years	Over 35 years
A marriage must be officially registered, otherwise it is not a real family	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.5
Registering the marriage is not essential for creating a family	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9
A man should take on household matters and the upbringing of children on an equal footing with a woman	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0
The husband's main tasks are to protect the family and to provide for it materially	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.2
The woman's main responsibilities in the family are caring for the children and running the household	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.9
A woman, just like a man, should take part in the material support of the family	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7
It is not necessary to get married in order to have and raise a child	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.1
The registration of a marriage is essential for having and raising children	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.7
A family can be happy without children	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.0
A family without children is not a family	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.5
Divorce is the destruction of a family; one should try to preserve the marriage	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.4
Divorce is a normal thing nowadays; it is not worth preserving a family with a person one does not love	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5
It is not necessary to start a family in order to be happy	2.9	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.9
A single person cannot be happy; the meaning of life lies in the family	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

Table 2. Distribution of answers to the question "Which views on the family do you agree with? (indicate one response option on each row on a scale from '1' – completely disagree to '5' – completely agree; '0' – difficult to answer)" by the respondents' marital status, mean score

Attitude	Marital status			
	Registered marriage	Cohabitation	Have been regularly dating for several years	Irregular, occasional contacts
A marriage must be officially registered, otherwise it is not a real family	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.2
Registering the marriage is not essential for creating a family	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.3
A man should take on household matters and the upbringing of children on an equal footing with a woman	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.7
The husband's main tasks are to protect the family and to provide for it materially	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.1
The woman's main responsibilities in the family are caring for the children and running the household	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8
A woman, just like a man, should take part in the material support of the family	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.6
It is not necessary to get married in order to have and raise a child	3.0	3.4	2.9	3.2
The registration of a marriage is essential for having and raising children	3.8	3.3	3.6	3.5
A family can be happy without children	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
A family without children is not a family	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
Divorce is the destruction of a family; one should try to preserve the marriage	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.1
Divorce is a normal thing nowadays; it is not worth preserving a family with a person one does not love	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.6
It is not necessary to start a family in order to be happy	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.1
A single person cannot be happy; the meaning of life lies in the family	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.0

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

By contrast, persons who are in a cohabiting relationship are characterized by more flexible attitudes, ones that allow for alternative forms of family organization. At the same time, it is important to note that, regardless of the type of union, a fairly high level of support for gender-differentiated roles persists, especially with regard to the material support of the family being provided by the man.

Let us now analyze which roles the respondents believe spouses should perform within a marriage (Tab. 3). It is noteworthy that the wife is perceived primarily as a mother, a sexual partner, and a homemaker. The husband, in turn, is associated with the roles of father, sexual partner, and protector. The role of the head of the family is assigned to the man considerably more often, a fact that indicates that elements of a patriarchal power structure are being preserved within fam-

ily relations. At the same time, the high importance attached to the friendship role in the case of the woman points to a gradual strengthening of the partnership component of marriage. From the gender perspective, an interesting finding is that the perception of the wife as the keeper of the "home and hearth" and of the husband as the protector is characteristic primarily of women, whereas it is more often the men who assign the husband the role of the head of the family.

The question concerning which roles spouses actually perform was put to those respondents who were directly in a registered marriage (Tab. 4). On the whole, the actual distribution of roles corresponds, to a considerable degree, to the expectations noted in Table 3. Women continue to perform the functions associated with motherhood, sexual partnership, and the maintenance of the family order, whereas men retain

Table 3. Distribution of answers to the question "In your opinion, which roles in a marriage should spouses perform?" by the respondents' gender, %

Role	Mean	Gender		Role	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female			Male	Female
The wife should perform the role of...				The husband should perform the role of...			
Mother	86.7	86.1	87.4	Father	86.3	85.1	87.5
Sexual partner	85.4	84.9	85.9	Sexual partner	86.1	85.8	86.5
Keeper of the "home and hearth"	80	77.6	82.3	Protector	83.3	81.7	84.9
Homemaker	77.5	78.2	76.8	Homemaker	72.7	72.7	72.8
Head of the family	19.3	17.5	21.0	Head of the family	78.9	79.5	78.2
Breadwinner	22.0	20.9	23.1	Breadwinner	82.0	80.2	83.8
Friend	67.6	66.7	68.5	Friend	66.3	65.2	67.5
Other	0.7	0.8	0.5	Other	0.3	0.4	0.1

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

Table 4. Distribution of answers to the question "In your opinion, which roles in a marriage do spouses actually perform?" by the respondents' gender, %

Role	Mean	Gender		Role	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female			Male	Female
<i>The wife actually performs the role of...</i>				<i>The husband actually performs the role of...</i>			
Mother	88.7	89.1	88.5	Father	87.1	87.1	87.1
Sexual partner	84.8	82.5	87.1	Sexual partner	85.5	83.7	87.3
Keeper of the "home and hearth"	80.6	79.1	82.0	Protector	81.0	80.3	81.8
Homemaker	76.3	75.7	76.9	Homemaker	71.2	70.3	72.1
Head of the family	20.7	20.4	21.0	Head of the family	76.8	79.3	74.4
Breadwinner	23.7	23.4	24.0	Breadwinner	78.9	77.9	79.9
Friend	62.7	60.8	64.4	Friend	62.3	60.6	64.0
Other	1.8	1.9	1.6	Other	1.3	1.7	0.9

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

their dominant position in the roles of father, sexual partner, and protector. At the same time, a certain decline can be observed in the indicators, compared with the perceptions of what roles ought to be performed, a fact which may indicate that traditional roles are undergoing a partial transformation and that families are adapting to the socio-economic conditions of life.

When it comes to the distribution of marriage and family responsibilities, it should be noted that, on the one hand, a substantial share of these responsibilities are carried out jointly: the allocation of the family budget, the maintenance of kinship ties, the upbringing of children, and the material support of the family (Tab. 5). On the other hand – although the differences in the respondents' answers are not

Table 5. Distribution of answers to the question "If you are married, please indicate how the following marriage and family responsibilities are distributed between you and your spouse" by the respondents' gender, %

Responsibility	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female
Allocation of the family budget			
Husband	7.7	8.4	7.0
Wife	10.6	9.6	11.4
Jointly	81.8	82.0	81.6
Looking after the children and their upbringing			
Husband	3.8	4.1	3.6
Wife	20.1	18.6	21.5
Jointly	76.1	77.4	74.8
Looking after the children and their upbringing, % of those who have children			
Husband	3.5	3.5	3.6
Wife	20.6	18.9	22.3
Jointly	75.8	77.7	74.1
Looking after the children and their upbringing, % of those who have minor children			
Husband	2.9	2.5	3.4
Wife	21.2	20.7	21.8
Jointly	75.8	76.8	74.8
Material support of the family			
Husband	20.5	18.8	22.1
Wife	5.5	8.1	3.1
Jointly	74.0	73.1	74.9
Organization of family leisure (rest, entertainment)			
Husband	7.5	9.9	5.2
Wife	21.6	19.8	23.2
Jointly	71.0	70.3	71.6
Caring for the health and well-being of the family members			
Husband	8.1	10.9	5.4
Wife	29.3	28.5	30.0
Jointly	62.6	60.5	64.6
Ensuring psychological comfort			
Husband	7.2	9.7	4.9
Wife	29.0	28.9	29.1
Jointly	63.8	61.4	66
Doing homework together with the children			
Husband	10.5	13.9	7.3
Wife	38.4	33.8	42.8

End of Table 5

Responsibility	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female
Jointly	51.2	52.4	50.0
<i>Doing homework together with the children, % of those who have minor children</i>			
Husband	9.9	12.0	7.8
Wife	40.8	36.7	44.8
Jointly	49.3	51.3	47.3
<i>Maintenance of kinship ties</i>			
Husband	5.2	5.2	5.2
Wife	14.5	13.9	15.0
Jointly	80.3	80.9	79.8
<i>Purchase of food and other goods</i>			
Husband	9.1	9.9	8.3
Wife	19.1	20.8	17.5
Jointly	71.8	69.2	74.2
<i>Cooking</i>			
Husband	10.7	16.9	4.9
Wife	52.1	48.6	55.4
Jointly	37.2	34.5	39.7
<i>Cleaning</i>			
Husband	10.7	18.6	3.3
Wife	54.3	47.9	60.3
Jointly	35.0	33.5	36.4
<i>Laundry and ironing</i>			
Husband	10.3	17.4	3.5
Wife	63.8	59.6	67.9
Jointly	25.9	23.1	28.5
<i>Repair work around the house, of household appliances, etc.</i>			
Husband	60.6	56.7	64.3
Wife	12.9	19.6	6.6
Jointly	26.5	23.8	29.1
<i>Taking out the garbage</i>			
Husband	36.5	36.7	36.3
Wife	12.3	16.6	8.3
Jointly	51.2	46.7	55.4

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

large – a specialization of responsibilities can be observed: women predominantly perform the regular, routine types of activity (cooking, cleaning, laundry, and ironing), whereas men are more frequently involved in the performance of episodic and technically oriented tasks (repairs, taking out the garbage).

When developing the survey toolkit, the aim was also to identify the prevalence of practices that could help enhance the spouses' competencies and make their daily life easier. A

question was asked about the extent to which they had turned to various forms of assistance or services over the past year (*Tab. 6*). The most widespread practices proved to be delivery services, assistance from relatives, and the services of tutors. Gender differences manifest themselves in a greater propensity on the part of women to make use both of assistance in general and, in particular, of help from relatives and of services connected with children's education and health.

Table 6. Distribution of answers to the question "Over the past year, have you made use of the following services/assistance (select all applicable options)..." by the respondents' gender, %

Type of service/assistance	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female
Nanny	1.3	1.2	1.5
Relatives (grandparents, siblings, etc.)	31.3	29.0	33.6
Tutors	12.1	10.0	14.1
Cleaning services	6.0	6.0	6.0
Delivery (of food, clothing, etc.)	45.0	43.1	46.9
Laundry and dry-cleaning	9.5	9.1	9.8
Psychologist	1.8	0.9	2.7
Massage therapist, chiropractor, nutritionist	9.7	7.1	12.4
Travel agent	6.7	6.6	6.8
"Husband for an hour" (electrician, IT specialist, plumber, etc.)	3.4	1.5	5.3
Other	1.7	2.0	1.5

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

When it comes to the use of particular services, broken down by the respondents' marital status, what is important to note here is that the various types of assistance are used most actively in registered marriages, a fact that is connected with the greater degree of responsibility that is characteristic of legitimate family structures (Tab. 7). The assistance provided by relatives is especially significant, a finding which points to the importance of the family's social capital as a resource for its functioning. Indirectly, this indicates that the larger number of children found in legitimate marital unions is accompanied by a growing need for additional resources and support, which most often come from the family's immediate circle – in other words, one can by no means speak of a functional nucleation of the family within the region.

Turning to the use of services as a function of whether the respondents have children, it should be stressed that, as the number of children in the family increases, the need for the

Table 7. Distribution of answers to the question "Over the past year, have you made use of the following services/assistance (select all applicable options)..." by the respondents' marital status, %

Type of service/assistance	Marital status			
	Registered marriage	Cohabitation	Have been regularly dating for several years	Irregular, occasional contacts
Nanny	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Relatives (grandparents, siblings, etc.)	44.5	22.1	10.4	12.7
Tutors	14.9	5.7	6.9	6.6
Cleaning services	6.9	3.3	7.6	6.1
Delivery (of food, clothing, etc.)	46.4	45.9	49.3	37.6
Laundry and dry-cleaning	9.6	6.6	16	9.9
Psychologist	1.7	2.5	2.1	2.8
Massage therapist, chiropractor, nutritionist	10	11.5	10.4	9.4
Travel agent	6.6	7.4	9.0	5.0
"Husband for an hour" (electrician, IT specialist, plumber, etc.)	1.9	4.1	4.2	7.2
Other	1.4	2.5	1.4	2.2

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

majority of forms of support rises substantially (Tab. 8). On the whole, this finding confirms that children are the principal factor behind the growing complexity of a family's resource structure and the increasing burden placed on its members. It is interesting to note that the use of laundry services, of a massage therapist, of a travel agent, and of a "husband for an hour" is more widespread among families with one child than among those with two, a fact that is most likely linked to differences in their material capacities. Multi-child families make active use of goods delivery, evidently because of the convenience it offers in terms of choice: should one go to the store with three (or more) children, or should the necessary goods be brought to one's home? More than half of the

Table 8. Distribution of answers to the question "Over the past year, have you made use of the following services/assistance (select all applicable options)..." by whether the respondents have children, %

Type of service/assistance	Do you have children?			
	No children	One child	Two children	Three or more children
Nanny	0.0	1.3	2.6	2.7
Relatives (grandparents, siblings, etc.)	8.5	39.8	43.7	87.4
Tutors	7.8	5.8	18.5	71.9
Cleaning services	6.8	4.2	5.9	19.8
Delivery (of food, clothing, etc.)	50.1	43.8	43.7	100.0
Laundry and dry-cleaning	11.0	9.8	7.6	14.8
Psychologist	1.5	1.6	2.0	3.6
Massage therapist, chiropractor, nutritionist	10.6	9.3	8.9	22.5
Travel agent	8.2	6.4	4.8	14.8
"Husband for an hour" (electrician, IT specialist, plumber, etc.)	4.6	3.4	2.8	5.9
Other	1.9	1.1	2.4	5.9

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

childless respondents make use of delivery services, most probably for reasons of time-saving and comfort.

The absence from educational programs of such subjects as "home economics", "the ethics and psychology of family life", and so forth has placed the burden of forming these competencies onto the family itself. In turn, it can be assumed that parents who were themselves taught the relevant skills at school were not always able to pass them on to their own children in equal measure. For the time being, however, the acquisition of the competencies that are necessary for family life remains not very widespread in any formalized guise. Having analyzed the respondents' answers to the question "Have you taken any of the following courses in the last two or three years?", we would note that, on the whole, a low level of involvement on the part of the population can be observed in educational practices aimed at

Table 9. Distribution of answers to the question "Have you taken any of the following courses in the last 2–3 years? (indicate only those courses you have actually taken)" by the respondents' gender, %

Name of course	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female
Cooking courses	3.0	0.9	5.0
Driving school	15.0	14.9	15.1
Sewing and dressmaking courses	1.3	0.1	2.5
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	1.4	2.4	0.4
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	0.7	0.5	0.9
Stress management training	2.3	1.6	2.9
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	1.1	0.4	1.7
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation", "the successful manager", etc.)	2.0	1.5	2.5
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	5.3	5.6	5.0
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	2.1	2.4	1.7
Healthy-lifestyle courses	2.5	1.3	3.6
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	1.7	2.1	1.2
Other	1.1	1.1	1.2

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

developing family competencies (*Tab. 9*). The most widespread are courses at driving schools, professional development courses, and cooking courses. A gender differentiation is also present: women more often master the competencies connected with everyday life, the upbringing of children, health, and personal development, whereas men more frequently acquire technical and financial skills.

Respondents who are in a registered marriage are more often oriented toward mastering the competencies connected with family life (the upbringing of children) and with professional development (*Tab. 10*). In the group

Table 10. Distribution of answers to the question "Have you taken any of the following courses in the last 2–3 years? (indicate only those courses you have actually taken)" by the respondents' marital status, %

Name of course	Marital status			
	Registered marriage	Cohabitation	Have been regularly dating for several years	Irregular, occasional contacts
Cooking courses	2.4	3.3	4.9	2.8
Driving school	13.0	17.2	25.0	16.0
Sewing and dressmaking courses	2.0	0.8	0.0	0.6
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	1.8	0.8	0.0	2.2
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.1
Stress management training	1.7	1.6	2.8	3.3
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	1.4	0.8	0.7	0.0
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation," "the successful manager," etc.)	2.0	2.5	2.1	1.1
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	5.9	7.4	6.3	3.9
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	2.0	0.8	3.5	1.7
Healthy-lifestyle courses	1.8	4.1	4.9	2.2
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	1.9	2.5	1.4	1.7
Other	0.9	3.3	1.4	0.0

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VoIRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

of cohabitants, there is a higher level of interest in courses that are linked to the quality of life and to resource provision (healthy-lifestyle courses, courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget). Persons with unstable forms of relationship are more typically engaged in

courses devoted to professional development, healthy lifestyles, and digital literacy.

Training at a driving school and cooking courses are the most popular among childless families and in households with three or more children (*Tab. 11*). On the whole, a greater need for training is observed in families with three or more children. At the same time, among respondents who have children – especially those with one or two – participation in courses linked to personal development declines, which may be conditioned by a shortage of time and resources. Meanwhile, participation in courses

Table 11. Distribution of answers to the question "Have you taken any of the following courses in the last 2–3 years? (indicate only those courses you have actually taken)" by whether the respondents have children, %

Name of course	Do you have children?			
	No children	One child	Two children	Three or more children
Cooking courses	4.2	1.9	2.6	13.6
Driving school	20.1	14.9	10.4	32.4
Sewing and dressmaking courses	1.1	1.9	0.7	7.7
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	1.3	0.8	1.5	3.6
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	1.3	0.3	0.7	0.0
Stress management training	3.4	1.1	2.2	1.8
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.8
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation," "the successful manager," etc.)	4.9	1.3	2.2	8.6
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	4.9	4.5	6.3	6.3
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	3.2	1.9	1.3	0.9
Healthy-lifestyle courses	4	1.6	1.1	9.5
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	1.7	0.8	2.2	2.7
Other	1.5	0.5	1.1	0.9

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VoIRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

Table 12. Distribution of answers to the question "Would you like to take any of the following courses? (indicate only those courses you would like to take)" by the respondents' gender, %

Name of course	Mean	Gender	
		Male	Female
Cooking courses	11.9	3.3	20.5
Driving school	16.7	11.0	22.3
Sewing and dressmaking courses	6.7	1.1	12.4
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	8.4	13.7	3.2
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	4.5	4.8	4.2
Stress management training	6.9	4.8	8.9
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	7.1	2.8	11.3
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation," "the successful manager," etc.)	11.8	11.2	12.4
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	15.2	15.8	14.6
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	9.2	8.6	9.8
Healthy-lifestyle courses	9.8	5.1	14.5
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	10.4	8.7	12.1
Other	0.9	1.1	0.8

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

on organizing children's activities remains low across all groups, a fact which points to a weak orientation toward the formalized mastery of parenting competencies.

Let us now consider the respondents' unmet need for competencies (*Tab. 12*). What first catches the eye is the relatively high level of potential demand across the majority of areas, including driving schools, professional and personal development, cooking, and financial literacy. This suggests that there is already a well-formed demand for broadening one's competencies in both the professional

and the everyday family spheres. Women are oriented, to a greater extent, toward mastering the competencies associated with running the household, with health, and with the upbringing of children. Men, by contrast, more often display an interest in technical and professional skills, but to a lesser extent in family-and-household areas.

The highest level of unmet need is characteristic of respondents who are in less formalized but stable relationships ("have been regularly dating for several years"), as well as of those with unstable contacts (*Tab. 13*). In these groups, the maximum values are registered for professional development courses, personal growth courses, and driving schools, a finding which reflects an orientation toward individual resources and self-fulfillment. Respondents who are in a registered marriage display a more pronounced interest in courses that are connected with running the household and with family life (cooking, child-rearing, and healthy-lifestyle courses). In the cohabitation group, a relatively high interest is observed in psychological and personal dimensions. Thus, the unmet need for training is differentiated in character: in stable, formalized unions, it is linked mainly to family-and-household and parenting competencies; in informal and less stable relationships, it is linked to individual development and professional self-fulfillment. At the same time, across all groups, a gap persists between the high level of potential demand and the low level of actual participation in training, a fact which suggests that there are constraints on access to resources.

Having children influences the structure of the unmet need for training, increasing its differentiation depending on the stage of the family's life cycle (*Tab. 14*). On the whole, as the number of children increases, the overall level of potential demand for training rises, especially in multi-child families, where the maximum values are reached across a number of areas. In particular, interest rises

Table 13. Distribution of answers to the question "Would you like to take any of the following courses? (indicate only those courses you would like to take)" by the respondents' marital status, %

Name of course	Marital status			
	Registered marriage	Cohabitation	Have been regularly dating for several years	Irregular, occasional contacts
Cooking courses	12.7	7.4	11.8	5.5
Driving school	11.3	14.8	19.4	13.3
Sewing and dressmaking courses	7.5	4.9	4.9	3.3
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	8.2	6.6	8.3	11
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	5.2	0.8	2.8	3.3
Stress management training	6	9.8	6.9	6.6
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	7.8	9	8.3	2.8
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation," "the successful manager," etc.)	9.8	13.1	12.5	13.3
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	12.7	11.5	19.4	19.9
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	9.2	7.4	6.9	9.9
Healthy-lifestyle courses	10.1	8.2	11.1	6.1
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	9.7	10.7	11.1	9.4
Other	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.6

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

sharply in cooking courses, in sewing and dressmaking courses, in family psychology, in healthy lifestyles and financial literacy, and in driving schools, a finding which points to the high need of multi-child families for the development of the practical, everyday, and managerial competencies that are necessary for the functioning of the household. In the groups with one and with two children, the

Table 14. Distribution of answers to the question "Would you like to take any of the following courses? (indicate only those courses you would like to take)" by whether the respondents have children, %

Name of course	Do you have children?			
	No children	One child	Two children	Three or more children
Cooking courses	11.2	11.1	13.3	62.5
Driving school	26.9	10.6	10.7	59.4
Sewing and dressmaking courses	5.5	5.8	8.0	54.0
DIY courses (furniture repair, installation of smart gadgets, basic plumbing repairs, etc.)	8.9	9.0	8.5	5.4
Courses on organizing children's activities (the basics of conducting science experiments at home, building birdhouses, etc.)	4.2	2.9	6.3	5.4
Stress management training	8	6.6	5.4	8.9
Family psychology and child-rearing courses	6.1	6.9	8.0	46.3
Personal development training ("the art of negotiation," "the successful manager," etc.)	15.6	9.3	10.4	14.8
Professional development courses (advanced training courses, IT courses, etc.)	19.4	13.0	12.6	21.1
Digital literacy and cybersecurity courses for the family	10.1	8.5	8.9	14.8
Healthy-lifestyle courses	11.4	7.7	0.1	43.1
Courses on investing and on drawing up a family budget	10.6	10.3	10.7	48.1
Other	0.6	1.6	0.9	0.9

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

level of demand across the majority of areas is lower and more subdued, which may be linked to the constraints of resources and time, as well as to the partial satisfaction of needs during the earlier stages of parenthood. Childless respondents display a higher interest in courses connected with individual development and professional self-fulfillment (driving school, professional and personal development).

Table 15. Distribution of answers to the question "If you paid for any of the above-mentioned courses in the last 2–3 years, please indicate..." by the respondents' gender and marital status, %

	Mean	Gender		Marital status			
		Male	Female	Registered marriage	Cohabitation	Have been regularly dating for several years	Irregular, occasional contacts
How many courses exactly did you pay for?							
One course	74.7	77.1	72.8	73.0	71.8	80.6	77.6
Two courses	17.3	16.1	18.3	17.1	17.9	12.9	20.4
Three or more courses	8.0	6.8	9.0	10.0	10.3	6.4	2.0
What was their total cost?							
0 – sum not specified	38.6	39.1	38.3	41.9	53.8	22.6	28.6
Mean value, rubles	27276	25513	28698	24495	30556	30783	31602
Median value, rubles	25000	25000	25000	15000	27500	30000	30000
Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VoIRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).							

Source: data from the monitoring of the reproductive potential of the population of the Vologda Region, VolRC RAS, 2025 (N = 1,500).

The respondents' investment in training is limited and predominantly episodic in character, with a differentiation being observed both by gender and by marital status (*Tab. 15*). The majority of respondents paid for only one course. Men more often used a single course, whereas women invest somewhat more frequently in a larger number of courses – the share of those who paid for three or more courses is 9%, compared with 6.8% for men – and also display a higher average volume of expenditure. The largest outlays on training are characteristic of the respondents with less institutionalized forms of relationship (especially those “regularly dating” and those with “irregular contacts”), where the maximum values for average and median cost are registered. Lower values for the expenditure indicators can be traced among the respondents who are in a registered marriage, a fact which may be linked to the redistribution of resources toward family needs and to the constraints of the household budget.

In addition, it is worth noting the substantial share of respondents who did not indicate the amount they had spent, especially in the group of those in a cohabiting relationship. On the whole, the tendencies that have been

identified confirm the limited and unsystematic character of investments in the development of competencies, despite the previously identified high level of potential demand for training.

Conclusions and findings

Under contemporary conditions, the institution of the family has arrived at a compromise in how it fulfills its economic and reproductive functions, having achieved a work–family balance by opting for smaller families. Given the limited resources of households – especially those with children – and the instability of marital unions, one possible solution may lie in improving the quality of “family management”: the competencies that are required for the successful and optimally efficient organization of life and for the effective use of the resources that are available. Within the context of the competency-based approach, and by systematizing a pool of studies, a list of the competencies that it is important to form even before the stage of parenthood has been proposed. The unmet need for family competencies manifests itself in a differentiated manner. The members of multi-child families are consciously expressing a demand for them, especially for competencies in the spheres of financial literacy, health, family

psychology, sewing and dressmaking, cooking, and driving (the share of those who would like to acquire them ranges from 20 to 60%).

A distinctive feature of the public consciousness of Russians is a hybridity of family models, with the preservation of patriarchal and gender-conditioned patterns in the distribution of the powers and responsibilities of spouses, of children, and of relations among the members of the family group (both the nuclear and the extended family). For this reason, a gender differentiation in the practices and in the unmet need persists: among women, it is in the sphere of everyday household matters, the upbringing of children, health, and psychology; among men, it is in professional growth and DIY courses. This defines both the range of interests and the target groups for the kinds of training courses that are potentially in demand.

The link between the demand for family competencies and the orientation toward a family-and-child-centered way of life testifies to the importance of forming the basic competencies even before the creation of a family, as an element of the general education curriculum. Moreover, the fears that are associated with a lack of knowledge and skills concerning, for example, the upbringing of children, can provoke the postponement of childbearing and the choice of voluntary

childlessness. The advisability of the preventive formation of family competencies is also confirmed by the fact that the population's involvement in educational practices, against the backdrop of a high unmet need, points to the existence of constraints. Given that access is fee-based, families cannot always afford such expenses, and there is also, most likely, a limited supply of such courses. The question remains open, moreover, concerning the content of the proprietary courses and training that are on offer, their quality, and their correspondence with the country's demographic policy and traditional Russian values. A possible solution could be to launch a program for the development of family competencies in an accessible and institutionalized format, along the lines of the digital-literacy and financial-literacy programs that exist for the adult population.

The Ural demographers working under the direction of A.P. Bagirova have demonstrated that parental labor meets all the criteria of professional labor (Bagirova et al., 2017); for this reason, the formation of parental competencies – supplemented by competencies in the sphere of the everyday and financial well-being of the household as a whole – represents a promising avenue of work for the purpose of ensuring the reproduction of the population and the well-being of families with children.

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КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ КАК ФАКТОР БАЛАНСА РАБОТЫ И СЕМЬИ

Демографическая повестка в современной России ориентирована на поддержку семьи с детьми. Задача обеспечения воспроизводства населения связана с репродуктивным поведением с мало-детным доминирующим типом. Реализация репродуктивных намерений при высоких требованиях к качеству воспитания рационально ограничивается наличными ресурсами семьи, т. е. семья как социальный институт в первую очередь определяет баланс между экономической и репродуктивной функциями исходя из своих возможностей. С опорой на пул российских исследований нами обоснована роль компетенций как фактора эффективного использования ресурсов домохозяйств, показаны особенности распределения ролей и обязанностей супругов. В рамках компетентностного подхода проведен анализ потребности семей в различных видах навыков, необходимых для поддержания устойчивого семейного образа жизни и функционирования домохозяйства. Умения касаются прежде всего организации быта, финансового планирования, воспитания детей, распределения времени и совмещения профессиональной и семейной занятости. Запрос на компетенции, необходимые при семейно-детном образе жизни, дифференцирован в зависимости от пола, семейного положения и детности. Выявлено, что многодетные семьи имеют высокую неудовлетворенную потребность в компетенциях, а спрос на обучающие курсы для взрослых ограничен предложением и дороговизной. В заключение определены возможные направления работы по формированию компетенций, необходимых при семейно-детном образе жизни.

Детность, баланс работы и семьи, ресурсообеспеченность, семья, компетентностный подход.

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