

The regulatory power of social expectations: developing a measurement scale

The regulatory power of social expectations

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Abstract

Purpose – This research is devoted to the study of social expectations, and the purpose of this paper is to elaborate the instrument of their measurement based on the main spheres of influence.

Design/methodology/approach – The research was conducted using a mixed methodology: a series of semistructured interviews and a survey. In the first stage, 15 interviews, and in the second phase, both online and offline surveys (306 participants) were conducted to test the social expectations scale designed. The qualitative phase highlighted the most important areas of social expectations, identifying how they can influence individual behavior. Afterward, the scale of social expectations was developed, and its prognostic function was confirmed.

Findings – It was revealed that expectations influence goal setting, motivation, public opinion orientation, emotional experience and decision-making.

Originality/value – This study is an attempt to construct a measurement tool for social expectations and close the gap for many studies that used the concept without operationalization.

Keywords Motivation, Social norms, Validation, Measurement, Social expectations

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

What does society comprise? As Norbert Elias suggested in 1991, our society is a “society of individuals” (Elias, 2001). In this way of reasoning, the individual is perceived as maintaining the freedom of choice, the only one who is responsible for his or her destiny. However, despite the apparent autonomy, people cannot be completely free in their actions due to various constraining factors. In particular, the structure of society has a restricting function, which was described in Anthony Giddens’ (Dickie-Clark, 1986) agency-structural approach. Thus, individuals who intend to remain members of the community, follow, in one way or another, the life paths built up without their active participation. It is social expectations that become a kind of mechanism for regulating human behavior on the way to achieving goals.

In the social sciences, the concept of “social expectations” has gained popularity mainly with the development of role theory and the works of George Herbert Mead (Baldwin, 1986), Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 1962) and Ralph Linton (Linton, 1945). Interest in the concept emerged from a series of discussions on how an individual’s position in society determines his or her behavior. However, both sociologists and representatives of a related discipline – social psychology – still lack coherence in the understanding of this phenomenon and, consequently, the developed methodology of research. Expectations were considered within the framework of interactionism, analyzing the behavior of an individual according to the expectations of society (Goffman, 1959; Cooley, 1922), in the theories of motivation, focusing on how a person builds a line of behavior



according to the expected result (Vroom, 1964; Bandura, 1969), structural functionalism as a macro perspective (Habermas, 1991), phenomenology with a central concept of “background expectations” (Schutz, 1972), Berger and Luckmann (Dreher, 2016) and other social and humanitarian disciplines. Social expectations are thus “one of the most important and poorly understood phenomena, the impact of which is reflected in all stages of personality formation and development in ontogenetic and professional aspects” (Popovich, 2014, p. 54).

Despite the rich use of this term in various areas of sociology and the recognition of its fundamental meaning in the study of action, no tool has been developed to measure social expectations, appearing to be a large theoretical and methodological gap. The use of the term “expectations”, sometimes at opposite poles of reflection (individual – culture, objective – interiorized, etc.), on the one hand, creates the ground for its application in a wide range of research, on the other hand, complicates it, grounding it particular study. Some existent tools (measuring social expectations and their development in children) (Baldwin *et al.*, 1969), behavioral adaptivity assessment system (Pearson Assessments, 2015) are mainly based on psychology and medicine and are not based on sociological theories that include not only individual behavior, but also norms specific to a particular society.

The psychological approach examines social expectations in the context of interpersonal relationships and conformity to desired roles of behavior in a particular community (Clay *et al.*, 2016; Rand *et al.*, 2016). As emphasized by Hasegawa, who incorporated a “social expectation” perspective in the study of Japanese civil society development, it is an “internalized social norm for individuals and organizations, thus for society as a whole, about what people should do” (Hasegawa *et al.*, 2007, p. 180). Yet, studies of social expectations within the framework of sociology were limited to a theoretical reflection on the definition of social expectations and their functions (Hasegawa *et al.*, 2007; Kosmas, 2003), interpretations of which differed from theory to theory.

When researchers intend to study a phenomenon that is likely to be influenced by social expectations, they face the problem of not being able to verify this assumption at a quantitative level, thus limiting themselves to qualitative research. For example, in the work aimed at studying procrastination predictors (Parfenova and Romashova, 2020), it was essential to confirm the impact of social expectations on this phenomenon. Being an important component in the construction of personality (Kosmas, 2003), it can be applied to study the reasons for a person’s behavior in a wide range of areas where the influence of other individuals on decision-making is not neglected: career choice, level of motivation in work, communication patterns, trust in institutions, political engagement, willingness to take financial risks and other dispositions.

However, there was a problem of measurement tool absence to test this hypothesis at the quantitative stage. In every study that examines this term, there is a need to create an instrument each time, limited to a narrow topic of study, such works are accompanied by the following expressions “expectations concerning” (Gill *et al.*, 2013), “expectations regarding” (Brouwer and van Exel, 2005), “expectations among” (Summer *et al.*, 2017), while the complex study of expectations is only described in “research perspectives”. Thus, the problem that needs to be solved scientifically is the lack of methodological reflection on the concept of social expectations and the lack of a tool to measure it despite the rich theoretical component of this term in the scientific literature that motivates researchers to include it in their works.

Social expectations in the context of sociological research

To develop a visible comprehension of how social expectations can be measured, the theories of their possible mediators towards individual behavior will be analyzed one by one.

Social expectations

From a sociological perspective, the concept of “social expectations” is used in many ways. For example, phenomenology uses the concept of “knowledge of common sense” - something that is “taken for granted” by all and expected from others (Schutz, 1972). Adopted further by ethnomethodology, the concept of “background expectations” as the basis for “the world of common sense” has been tested in a series of Garfinkel’s experiments (1967) aimed at identifying this maintained world in various everyday situations.

A broader view of social expectations can be seen in Pierre Bourdieu’s theory (Bourdieu, 1993) of habitus – the general normative expectations that a person takes for granted as a way of “living his life”. Here, Bourdieu stresses that the individual unconsciously reproduces the practices of his community; they are in his body and are perceived as his own intentions. Similarly, in terms of structural functionalism, this idea takes a significant position. Habermas’ (1991) theory of the “public sphere” is closely linked to “social expectations.” This space – a place or environment – is for the development of public opinion and public harmony through collective discussion. It is a place where people with a common interest arrive together to discuss “the public interest”, to implement social practices, to actualize the “public sphere” and “community”. Thus, social expectations are a set of new hopes created by the practice of public communication and mutual action (Bellah *et al.*, 1985, p. 269), so that they work as a motivation for socially relevant action.

Popovich’s work, which presents a retrospective analysis of the study of social expectations, is valuable for considering them in the theory of motivation. He formulates the main idea of processual theories of motivation in the following way: the greater the value of a certain outcome and the higher the probability of getting the reward, the more effort the person will put into achieving the result (Popovich, 2014). Following the logic of the author, who considered the role of social expectations in the creation and development of personality, we can identify the following meaningful theories of motivation: the general “matrix”, presented by Heckhausen (2008), the model of motivation by Vroom (1964) and the theory of social learning by Bandura (1969).

The regulative function of expectations

Describing the regulative function of social expectations, it can be highlighted that there is one mechanism that can stop a person from crossing the border of norms – emotions. In cultural anthropology, three emotional components are commonly used to classify different cultures: fear society (or culture of fear), shame society (also culture of shame or culture of honor and dignity) and guilt society (or culture of guilt) (Hesselgrave, 2002). Fear, guilt and shame are emotions that arise when an individual does not conform to norms, thus acting as a regulator of his or her behavior. Thus, in this research, it is decided to outline these three types of emotions.

With a sense of shame, Goffman links the threat of breaking social ties, highlighting that the shame is the most social emotion (Goffman, 1959). According to Benedict (2005), while shame is the product of representing oneself in the eyes of others, guilt is purely individual and nurtured in the individual in a process of socialization. As for the emotion of fear, it will be analyzed in terms of existing negative consequences of actions or the existence of negative sanctions threatening individual health and life quality.

Social axioms

As mentioned above, all of the work relating to “expectations” in one way or another has not been studied in sociology and has only been applied to specific and narrow topics, such as

students' career expectations. In this paper, the work on social axioms will serve as background empirical material.

Social axioms are defined as shared beliefs that reflect a person's world view of how the world works. According to Bond's research, differences in people's behavior are not always determined by their values (e.g. Schwartz values). For instance, in his study (Bond and Leung, 2004) values played no role in finding differences between individual traits and social roles between Chinese and Americans. Therefore, from his point of view, it is logical to assume the existence of other types of psychological constructs that might condition behavior: for example, expectations and beliefs (Leung, 1987). Subsequently, M. Bond and K. Leung developed a research program aimed at studying common beliefs, which they denoted as "social axioms".

The dimensions of social axioms proposed by authors include social cynicism, social complexity, rewarding practices, fate control and religiosity (Bond and Leung, 2004). The tool of social axioms is currently the closest to the meaning of social expectations. It not only assesses the individual's perception of generally accepted attitudes but also includes a behavioral component directed by those attitudes. However, many of the judgments used in social axioms may not relate to social expectations. Expectations are not notions of the functioning of society as axioms but are a willingness and choice to shape the behavior upon these notions. It is worth repeating that one cannot exclude the possibility of behavior against expectations, either of specific social institutions or incorporated ones.

Conceptualization

The conceptualization became possible through a review of previous studies and the qualitative stage of this research. The concept of social expectations is divided into the three spheres according to the results of the interviews: expectations of the parental family, own family and the sphere of work and education. The combination of work and education in one sphere is justified by the fact that middle-aged informants did not distinguish them during the process of interpretation. Each domain includes a list of indicators – the respondents' subjective assessments and some external measures. A more detailed operationalisation will be outlined further.

Behavioral attitudes are divided into 5 main dimensions, each of which comprises a number of particular items: goal setting, processual motivation, self-realization, orientation towards the opinion of others and expression of emotions.

Methodology

The methodology was designed to address following tasks:

- (1) Identification of the most significant areas of expression of social expectations.
- (2) Identification of some behavioral attitudes in which expectations may play a role
- (3) Development and validation of a measurement tool
- (4) Determining the role of expectations in outlined behavioral attitudes.

The third and fourth tasks could not be accomplished without the previous two due to the lack of knowledge about social expectations in terms of their operationalization. For the first two tasks, a qualitative methodology was used which consisted of two sub-stages.

In the first sub-stage, 2 cognitive interviews were conducted in which respondents were asked to express their attitudes towards the statements from the social axioms questionnaire. The purpose of this stage was to clarify the importance of each judgment to the informants.

Since social expectations are operating in all spheres of an individual's life, it seems difficult and almost impossible to create an instrument that covers all of them. Testing the social axioms questionnaire was necessary in order to discover which areas of life and aspects of action were considered most important to interviewees.

After the aforementioned step, it was possible to construct a guide of a semistructured in-depth interview that afterwards was conducted with 15 informants. These interviews covered the biographical aspect and provided detailed information about following/violating social expectations, accompanied by various emotions, which regulate individual behavior: fear, shame and guilt. It was revealed in detail why and under what circumstances a person might act contrary to the expectations of others, and what barriers might hold him/her back forcing to act under expectations. By understanding the process of action in line with expectations, it was important to test its performance at a quantitative level.

At the qualitative stage, the sample is targeted, that is, it is of the type in which specific conditions, people or cases are intentionally selected in order to obtain important information that cannot be obtained in any other way. The design of this sample will use a theoretical saturation approach, that is, interviews will be conducted as long as new research participants add new concepts to the theory being developed.

The following method of data collection was an online survey that included the elaborated scale of social expectations and operationalized behavioral attitudes as well as socio-demographic characteristics of respondents to make an explorative analysis of expectations' level among different social groups. The sample was stratified and the population was represented by Russians between the ages of 30 and 60, thus covering the early and middle working age according to Levinson's classification (Levinson, 1986). The choice of this category is explained by the relatively wider scope of expectations imposed. A total of 306 respondents were surveyed, of which 246 respondents met the given criteria. Further data analysis was conducted only on this fraction of respondents. The sample was stratified by age criterion. As for the choice of only one country, it is explained by the fact that in order to develop a valid instrument, cultural variations between countries must be taken into account. Cross-cultural research is not the aim of this study, and the choice of a multinational sample would possibly have caused an interpretational constraint.

Discussion of results

Testing social axioms

Before the main series of interviews the task was to identify meaningful areas, aspects of action in which social expectations play the most significant role. For this purpose, two cognitive interviews were conducted, during which informants were asked to comment on their attitudes towards the statements contained in the questionnaire. The questionnaire originally contained 126 judgments; the aim was to find out what respondents considered most meaningful in their lives, which was analyzed based on their reactions during the interview, the number of comments, and the degree of interest shown towards the particular statement. The questionnaire was reduced to 61 statements. They were mainly related to shaping the future, motivation to achieve goals, success at work and less frequently to attitudes towards authority and religion. It was decided to address these aspects of life during the main interview.

After testing the questionnaire of social axioms and revealing the list of statements that produced a rich narrative, the main interview guide ended up containing the following thematic blocks:

- (1) Achievement of goals in a professional environment (getting an education, general ideas about an ideal career, meeting expectations),

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- (2) Implicit Expectations (interpretation of expectations, constraints),
 - (3) Decision-making process (processual motivation, decision-making process under uncertainty),
 - (4) Emotions as a mechanism of transmission of expectations.

Interview phase

Spheres of influence

The analysis of the main interviews revealed the following areas governed by social expectations: parental family, own family, work and education and the physiological sphere. In this chapter, each area will be discussed in turn.

- (1) Parental family
- (2) Own family
- (3) Education and work
- (4) Physiology

First, the parental family was mentioned by informants in terms of categories such as giving the child the freedom to choose a future career and education or, conversely, enforcing the child's choices, parental pressure and control. An important category that was interpreted by informants as affecting future behavior was the persistence or gradual decrease of parental control. The pressure could be expressed in various forms of behavior: a punishment by parents, managing their choices, assigning duties and responsibilities to the child.

In terms of imposing choices on the child, there is a flip side to supporting his/her choices. The informants interpreted this the following way: when parents supported their choices in childhood, they became more autonomous and responsible for the future, and thus retained the ability to remain independent in adulthood. Conversely, they attributed their behavior, which depended on the opinions of others, to the fact that parents had to make decisions for them.

In their own family, the informants had the following categories: the need to become a good husband or wife, based on the general idea of an ideal wife in Russia. The main difference between the own family and the parental family was that the own family was more restrictive in its decision-making freedom. This could be explained by the fact that middle-aged people were more preoccupied with taking care of their own family and were estranged from their parents. This was especially true for nonextended families, which dominated among informants. Interviewees relied not only on themselves but also on their spouses. Some of them felt that it was not possible to make decisions without the consent of their spouses.

Speaking about the field of work and education, middle-aged informants tended not to distinguish between the two stages in their lives. Informants disclosed their education mainly in terms of freedom of choice, which was regulated by parents and their expectations. In terms of work, they were divided into two semantic parts: colleagues and bosses. The team at work was the main carrier of social expectations. It was permeated with informal norms of behavior, most often accompanied by topics of violating or subordinating social expectations, emerging emotions and mechanisms for regulating behavior, which will be mentioned below.

Informant N^o2: But I can talk to a lot of people at work, I can talk to the guys, with everybody, take advice there: "Can you imagine this situation that I have, this is what you think it is, what if I do – would it be bad? Would not it? What if I do it?" I mean I can talk to my work colleagues, I can talk to my mother, I can talk to my mother naturally if we are not in conflict (female, 44 y.o.).

An interesting fact was that informants did not mention friends as bearers of social expectations. It was the team at work that acted as the “generalized other”. Colleagues were represented as being on the same hierarchical level as the respondent, thus sharing the same informal norms and having social expectations for each team member. The supervisor is a different semantic category because he or she is one step above the work team and thus is the subject who sanctions the behavior of the team as a whole and establishes the rules of conduct.

The physiological domain is unique and unexpected to this study because it is out of the actors’ control. Whereas the other areas of social expectations listed above are more ‘imposed’, in the sense that informants have the right to choose whether or not to follow them, and are generally aware that their behavior can be altered according to these imposed norms; physiological processes are ‘self-evident’ as standards to be followed. That is, what is controlled and altered in the actor’s efforts (in the realm of family and work) is not an unwritten rule to be obeyed. And what is uncontrollable (physiology) is the most obligatory rule, without the right to choose whether to follow it or not.

Informant N^o1: Well, because there’s nowhere to go, you fart there and they’ll say, “What have you done, aye-aye-aye! That’s exactly what they’ll say (female, 54 y.o.).

Informant N^o2: Yes, I’m sorry, I’m not going to poop in the street – that’s the rule, and you follow them. And there are still some norms, someone is trying to impose on someone that it should be that way (female, 44 y.o.).

In terms of the subjects of broadcasting social expectations, the team at work was described above as an important carrier of informal norms. In addition to these subjects belonging to the sphere of “education and work”, the following subjects were identified.

Subjects of broadcasting social expectations

- (1) Parents
- (2) Team at work (colleagues)
- (3) Cultural norms
- (4) Religion

Parents are the main transmitters of social expectations through upbringing and communication with the child. The parental family is the source of primary socialization and lays down the main trends in human behavior. Parents broadcast expectations through guidance, comparison of the child with peers (mostly in a negative aspect), punishments and appeals to their own vast life experience.

Informant N^o6: You have to say, “Tanya got an A yesterday, well, you can do it, you can do better than her”. It motivates you in a completely different way and gives you a head start for the future. And if you always say someone is better, someone else is prettier, it’s just another way of breaking the will, of suppressing the desire. Again, you listen to the opinion of others (female, 42 y.o.).

Regarding the work collective, it is worth emphasizing that it acted as a “generalized other”. The work collective was presented as being on the same hierarchical level as the respondent, thus sharing the same informal norms and having social expectations for each member of that collective.

“The government,” or rather the cultural norms accepted in Russia, also acted as a transmitter of social expectations, which was on a step above the parents, and most likely adopted by them. “The government” was often the main culprit for the respondent’s unsuccessful future. Informants mentioned a desire to change the system in Russia so that

their own lives would be better. Frequent answers to the question “why” were “because this is Russia,” that is, explaining the behavior of others and one’s own as a consequence of cultural unspoken norms accepted in society.

Religion also acted as a separate subject of broadcasting social expectations, but unlike other spheres, it was mentioned only in the constructive, positive and utilitarian aspect. Religion can be compared more precisely with the “state,” because these subjects have written norms of behavior. However, if in the state they are interpreted objectively, i.e. it is necessary to fulfill what is written in the literal sense (not to kill and not to steal), then religion did not mention the negative consequences of not fulfilling the instructions in the Holy Scriptures. Religion acted as an aide in the education of children, as a way of dealing with unpleasant emotions, and as a way of constructing oneself as an ideal member of society. Religion has acted as a major aid in combating social expectations that are perceived as oppressive and limiting one’s freedom of choice.

Informant N^o8: This is exactly the understanding of God’s word as the law. I, for example, remembered certain things about raising children and raising my daughter. I learned that, for example, you cannot beat a child in anger (female, 55 y.o.).

Mechanisms for broadcasting social expectations

Three types of emotion were identified from the literature review: guilt, shame and fear. However, it was not known how informants interpreted the emergence of these emotions, what were the causes and conditions for their expression. The category “conscience” was also noticed during the interviews, which proved to be a complex definition of guilt and shame. In this chapter, 3 emotions will be analyzed.

Fear was mainly related to the presence of a specific health threat, punishment by legal authorities and supervision at work. Informants also tended to interpret various emerging emotions as fear, such as fear of judgment, which is consistent with Tudor’s assumption that fear is an aggressive emotion for all others (Tudor, 2003). But substituting fear of consequences for the definition of all emotions creates difficulties for further operationalization, so it was decided to settle on a narrow interpretation of the concept in the light of the threat to health or the presence of objective negative consequences.

Feelings of shame and guilt deserve further elaboration, as they are procedural in nature and can influence individual behavior without objective sanctions. Interviewees acknowledged that shame is more of a short-term feeling than guilt, but other than that, opinions were scattered. For some informants, shame is something that cannot be prevented, whereas guilt can. Others said that guilt was more a consequence of an unavoidable action. Some respondents stressed that they were attempting to deal with feelings of guilt and shame.

Informant N^o3: Well, yes, of course. That’s what I think is a normal human reaction to draw lessons. I mean, how to say? So as not to repeat it in the future, I think that . . . well, it is normal (male, 32 y.o.).

Informant N^o4: You have come to the idea that everyone should be equal in both work and punishment. In responsibility first and foremost, let’s call it that (male, 43 y.o.).

Informant N^o1: And this feeling of guilt does not leave me, although I try to deal with it, I try to get rid of it, but it’s very difficult. I have guilt about a lot of things (female, 54 y.o.).

It was recognized that shame engages people as members of a community, whereas guilt can be more individualized. Despite the mention in the literature review of shame culture and the suggestion that shame would still be more important to the individual, informants still perceived guilt as a heavier and more important emotion.

The quantitative phase will need to test exactly how shame and guilt are related to an individual's processual motivation and which emotions are most pronounced in different areas of social expectations. As a result of the qualitative stage, it was possible to articulate insights for the development of the social expectations measurement tool. Since several domains of their influence were identified, it was decided to construct scales according to them. The physiological sphere was excluded from operationalization because it was the most declarative in nature and was rather closer to an axiom.

Elaboration of social expectations measurement instrument

In general, in the process of operationalization of the concept and elaboration of empirical indicators, statements were formulated for each of the three areas, which were selected based on the results of the qualitative stage. Thus, the testing was conducted separately for each of the three scales. In the process of testing, 246 respondents were surveyed. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). After reverse scoring some of the statements, all of them were standardized into a single score with higher values indicating a greater level of social expectations in a particular sphere.

The algorithm of analysis consisted of two successive steps: first, calculation of the Pearson correlation for each judgment relative to the total sum of responses and second, estimation of the α -Cronbach coefficient to determine the internal consistency of these points. Initially, it was intended to sift out statements with Pearson values below 0.5, but because of the small number of them in the scales, it was decided not to discard judgments having a significant connection with the summation index. In the first stage, the scale of parental expectations consisted of 15 items own family expectations – 11 items and work expectations – also 11 items. After successive deletion of statements that had a negative contribution to α -Cronbach, scales were left with 11, 5 and 9 items respectively. All scales with left items have demonstrated satisfactory and good internal consistency (parental expectations: $\alpha = 0.77$, own family expectations: $\alpha = 0.89$, work expectations: $\alpha = 0.78$).

Of course, the suitability of combining all statements into a single scale is a reason for discussion, but based on the results of a qualitative interview, we can conclude that social expectations in each sphere can correlate with each other in intensity. In other words, among informants, some did not feel restrictions of their freedom both at work and in their own family. No opposite cases were identified where social expectations were perceived as a limiting factor in one area but were denied in another.

Consequently, an attempt was made to combine the judgments about the expectations of different spheres into one tool. Not all initial statements were included in the final scale; they were selected on the same principle as items for the scales of each sphere separately. As a result, all of them correlated significantly with the general index. The statements, which showed the correlation below 0.3 were discarded. Thus, 29 judgments were included in the final scale (Table 1). When one of the items is excluded from the scale, the consistency becomes slightly lower. Thus, the scale consistency index is 0.88, which is an indicator of very good quality.

Survey phase

The results and conclusions drawn from the interviews were statistically validated. Data for the survey was collected using an online survey, which was chosen given the advantages of this method in answering some of the sensitive survey questions. The result was 306 complete questionnaires. Thus, the target audience for the quantitative stage was people between the ages of 30 and 60 who are in the early and middle maturity category.

Sphere	Statement
Parental family	<i>Degree of agreement with</i> My parents often reminded me of who I should become My parents determined my choice of institution (after school) My family expected a lot of me I did not want to let my family's expectations down I want to show my parents what kind of person I have become My parents often gave me lessons Now I must, in turn, take care of my parents Sometimes I lied to my parents so as not to let their expectations down I feel guilty about not paying enough attention to my family Sometimes my parents are embarrassed by me in front of friends and acquaintances My parents have always been supportive of my choice I can say that I was an independent child My parents rarely punished me My parents put pressure on me as a child The pressure went away with age
One's own family	<i>Degree of agreement with</i> I have to be a proper husband/wife I am responsible for my family I often consult family members when I make decisions The welfare of my family is more important than my freedom of action I have to set a good example for my family I am obliged to work outside my favorite occupation in order to provide a decent standard of living for my family I sacrifice my interests/desires for my family When I'm in trouble, I try not to show it at home I feel guilty about not paying enough attention to my family Some members of my family feel uncomfortable with me in front of friends and acquaintances My family restricts my freedom of action
Work and education	<i>Degree of agreement with</i> I often worry about what my colleagues might think of me I would like to change the field of work I would be scared to approach my boss with an initiative As a child, I dreamed (imagined myself in) another field of work I had originally planned to get a different specialization I regret not being able to be what I planned to be (in terms of work/education) I want to show my colleagues how great I am I try to maintain my established image in the team I hide my aims and intentions from my colleagues I would never complain to my boss about my colleague I have never compared myself to my colleagues
Table 1. Statements for the social expectations scale	Note(s): *The statements remaining after selection for the final scale are highlighted in bold

Level of social expectations depending on socio-demographic characteristics

It is supposed that there are significant differences in the average level of social expectations in the sphere of own family in relation to marital status. In Table 2, one can see that at the 95% confidence level, there are reasons to reject the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the average level of social expectations.

Pairwise comparisons show a significant difference in the average level of social expectations of the family between respondents who have never been married and those who are legally married. Social expectations of the family are higher for those who are officially

married. This is logical in general, as those who have never been married may not have a family of their own at all. However, those who have never been married may have children, their proportion being only 12%. This means that it cannot be concluded at this stage that it is marriage that can lead to higher expectations of a partner and children from an individual. Next, we carry out the same analysis, but separately among women and men.

Among men there is no significant difference in the level of social expectations of their own family depending on marital status. Yet among women, as shown in Table 3, there is a significant difference in the level of social expectations of their own family depending on marital status. At the 95% confidence level, we can reject the null hypothesis of equality of the average level of social expectations of one's own family across marital status groups.

When testing the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the level of social expectations of one's own family depending on gender, no significant difference was found (sig = 0.785). Thus, two important conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the level of social expectations of one's own family does not differ depending on gender, in other words, it is equal for both men and women. However, social expectations of own family are higher for officially married women than for unmarried women, while for men these differences are insignificant.

Regarding work and education expectations, it is assumed to differ significantly according to the level of education received. It is assumed that the level of social expectations is higher for those who have a higher level of education. However, this hypothesis is refuted. According to paired comparisons, there are significant differences in the average level of expectations only between those who have several higher education degrees and those who have incomplete higher education.

The level of social expectations is higher for those who have incomplete higher education. This result can be explained by the fact that social expectations are by definition subjectively perceived norms rather than objective ones. Those with incomplete higher education may feel more often that they have to prove to others that they are at the same level as those who have

Target variable – social expectations of own family				
Tukey's test				
Marital status	Marital status	Difference in averages	Std. error	Sig
Yes, I am legally married	Yes, cohabiting	1.40076	0.98312	0.612
	Never have been married	3.01440*	0.74347	0.001
	Divorced	1.71029	0.75661	0.162
	Widow/widower	-0.7659	1.78138	0.993
Never have been married	Yes, I am legally married	-3.01440*	0.74347	0.001
	Yes, cohabiting	-1.61364	1.11415	0.597
	Divorced	-1.30411	0.92046	0.617
	Widow/widower	-3.7803	1.85691	0.252

Note(s): *The difference in the mean is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2.
Level of social expectations of own family depending on marital status

ANOVA					
Level of social expectations of own family					
	Sum of squares	df	Mean	F	Sig
Between groups	206.135	4	51.534	3.887	0.005
Within groups	1683.743	127	13.258		
Total	1889.879	131			

Table 3.
Level of social expectations of own family depending on marital status for women

several higher education degrees, whereas respondents who have several higher education degrees feel less frustration. Moreover, when dividing the sample into men and women, it was found that for women there is no significant difference in the average level of expectations depending on education, but for men this difference is significant.

The next hypothesis was that job expectations would be different for respondents living in different towns and cities, depending on their size. The null hypothesis was that there were no significant differences. However, this hypothesis does not hold at the confidence level (sig = 0.6). It was therefore decided to see if this was the case for men and women separately. For women, no significant differences were found in the level of expectations depending on the city of residence. For men, however, pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between those living in a megapolis and in a rural area. They are higher for men in rural areas. It may have a similar explanation to the previous finding. Men in large cities are less frustrated about their choice of employment. Another interpretation could be the difference between norms in big cities and in rural areas, where the former are dominated by individualism and the latter by collectivism, where the individual should not stand out and should conform to what others expect of him.

An additional conclusion could be that for women, by definition, the level of social expectations is lower than for men, regardless of other factors. Whereas, for men, significant factors can be identified that cause variation in their level of expectations in the workplace.

Contribution of social expectations to behavioral attitudes

The following model (Figure 1) consists of several levels: first, it is a latent variable of the general level of social expectations, which comprises indicators of expectations of the three spheres. In this model, the general index of social expectations has no direct influence on behavioral attitudes but is only a product of the scales of the three areas (Table 4). At the 95% confidence level, one can reject the null hypothesis that the regression coefficients are zero (sig in all cases = 0.00). Indeed, it is reasonable to combine the three factors into one overall

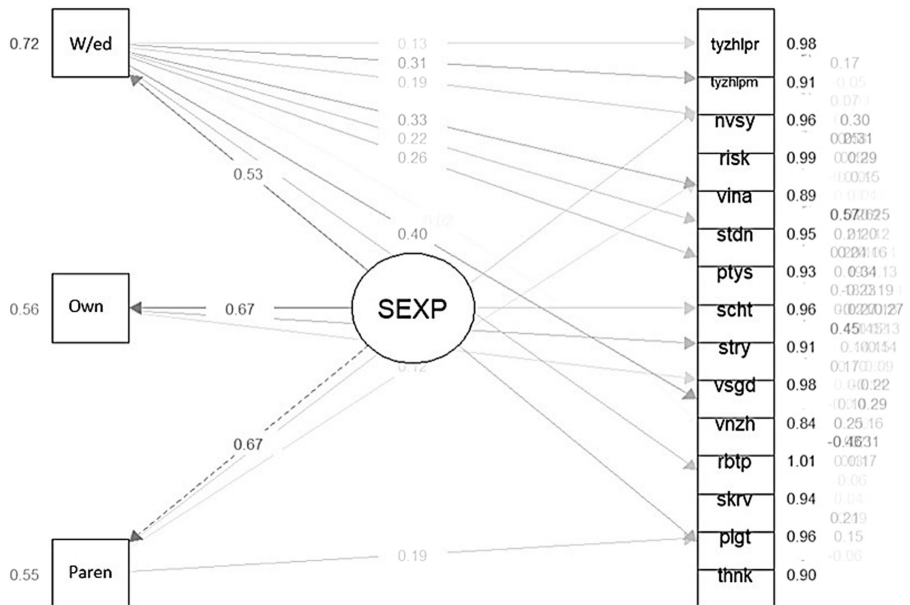


Figure 1. Model of social expectations and behavioral patterns

Variable	Coefficient	Significance	The regulatory power of social expectations
<i>Social expectations (SEXP)</i>			
Parental expectations	0.322	0.000	
Expectations of one's own family	0.215	0.000	
Work and education expectations	0.399	0.000	
<i>I often wonder what others will think of me</i>			
Work and education expectations	4.232	0.000	
<i>A man should only rely on himself</i>			
Parental expectations	1.856	0.005	
<i>I hide goals and intentions from other people</i>			
Parental expectations	-3.728	0.002	
Expectations of one's own family	-3.064	0.001	
Social expectations	9.520	0.000	
<i>I was able to find a job that I love</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	2.497	0.002	
Work and education expectations	-4.902	0.000	
<i>I have to work in a field I do not like in order to maintain a decent standard of living</i>			
Parental expectations	-3.912	0.001	
Expectations of one's own family	-5.923	0.000	
Social expectations	17.167	0.000	
<i>I always achieve my goals</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	2.058	0.001	
<i>I try to follow all generally accepted standards of behavior</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	3.506	0.000	
<i>I find it difficult to ask other people for help</i>			
Parental expectations	-5.886	0.000	
Expectations of one's own family	-2.373	0.024	
Social expectations	10.640	0.000	
<i>It's hard for me to make decisions</i>			
Parental expectations	-2.685	0.021	
Expectations of one's own family	-3.604	0.000	
Social expectations	7.988	0.000	
<i>I respect public opinion</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	2.364	0.001	
<i>I'm trying to fight my addiction to public opinion</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	-2.989	0.004	
Social expectations	6.911	0.000	
<i>I am often ashamed of myself/my actions</i>			
Expectations of one's own family	-2.551	0.008	
Social expectations	6.121	0.000	
<i>I often feel guilty about past wrong choices</i>			
Parental expectations	-2.337	0.030	
Expectations of one's own family	-3.753	0.000	

(continued)

Table 4.
Model of social expectations and behavioral attitudes with a latent variable

Variable	Coefficient	Significance
Social expectations	11.574	0.000
<i>Agree with the statement "He who does not take risks does not drink champagne"</i>		
Parental expectations	1.854	0.023
<i>Not everything in this life is up to me</i>		
Parental expectations	3.022	0.020
Social expectations	-7.422	0.014
Expectations of one's own family	2.682	0.008
Work and education expectations	4.608	0.001

Table 4.

factor. The tests show that Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) (0.93) and comparative fit index (CFI) (0.98) are greater than 0.9, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) <0.08 (0.05) and standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) <0.05 (0.04), indicating that the model is satisfactory. Akaike (AIC) is 16386 and Bayesian (BIC) is 16886 and Chi-squared is 1093.623.

Interpreting the results of this model, it is first worth emphasizing that it is indeed appropriate to add to the model the overall level of expectations as a latent variable, decomposed into three separate domains. All predictors are significant at the 95% confidence level. Social expectations in work and education have a positive effect on the frequency of concern about what others will think, on the frequency of hiding goals and intentions from others, on having to work outside of one's favorite field to maintain a decent standard of living, on trying to overcome dependence on public opinion, on the frequency of feelings of shame and guilt, on the belief that not everything depends on the individual, on the perception that helping others is hard work and on the difficulty of making decisions. Hence, if the level of social expectations in the sphere of work and education increases by 1 point, the difficulty for an individual to ask for help from other people increases by 4.7 points. Thus, in this model, it is expectations in the sphere of work that influence the majority of behavioral attitudes.

As for the expectations of one's own family, they contribute significantly to the frequency of goal achievement, and positively to the frequency of following generally accepted norms of behavior, as well as the orientation towards public opinion. The initial assumption that high levels of social expectations would result in the individual achieving fewer goals and becoming less ambitious was not confirmed but rather rejected. This can be explained by the fact that one's own family provides occasions for achieving new goals, maybe not personal goals, but aims for the benefit of the family and the household.

Parental family expectations influence fewer attitudes, and this may be explained by the fact that parental family influence is lower among middle-aged individuals. Analyzing the sample of respondents from 18 to 60 years old (287 respondents), a significant negative correlation (Kendall correlation) can be traced between age and subjective assessment of the level of parental family pressure (sig = 0.011; -0.114), a judgment that parents are uncomfortable for the respondent (sig = 0.02; -0.105), a positive correlation with a statement that parents rarely punished the respondent (sig = 0.06; 0.122) and that it is the turn of the interviewee to take care of his family (sig = 0.00; 0.236). So, according to the model derived, parental family expectations make a significant positive contribution to the perception that one should rely only on oneself, to risk-taking propensity and a negative contribution to the statement that it is hard for the respondent to seek help from other people.

Thus, these results can be interpreted as follows. First, social expectations do not affect all aspects of a person's life. However, a sphere-by-sphere examination of social expectations

reveals the fact that an increase in the level of expectations in the parental family can lead to a person relying more on himself or herself to make decisions, believing that risk can bring benefits, and being able to turn to other people for help, which are generally positive characteristics and similar to the description of exactly a successful person in the eyes of informants (at the qualitative stage).

The regulatory power of social expectations

Regarding one's own family, the high level of expectations in this area is accompanied by the tendency for the person to comply with public opinion, to follow behavioral norms and to achieve his/her goals more often. In this case, goals do not relate to personal and selfish intentions, but rather goals for the benefit of the family.

Conclusion

The lack of a comprehensive tool for measuring social expectations, despite the rich theoretical background of this term in the scientific literature, is a problem for researchers in different fields, as the fact of the presence of the concept of social expectations itself in many theoretical frameworks motivates researchers to include it in their studies. At the moment, social expectations are included either in qualitative studies without the possibility to test their significance as a predictor of behavior, or in quantitative ones, but of a relatively narrow scope.

This paper aimed to develop a theoretical and methodological approach to measure social expectations and to determine their impact on adult behavioral attitudes. The research was conducted using a mixed methodology, with 15 informants participating in the qualitative phase and 306 in the quantitative phase. Methods such as analysis of variance, linear regression and structural equations method were applied as part of the analysis.

As a result of the qualitative stage, four spheres were identified in which informants emphasized the influence of social expectations: the sphere of work and education, the sphere of own and parental family, and the physiological one. The expectations of the first three areas, according to the interpretation of the informants, are associated with "imposed", while the violation of the expectations of the physiological sphere is perceived as impossible. The subjects of broadcasting were parents, the team at work, cultural norms and religion.

The outcome was a Likert scale instrument measuring social expectations separately for the three most important areas of life according to the interviews: work and education, own family and parental family, and the complex. An analysis of the predictive power of social expectations on behavioral attitudes revealed that they predominantly influence goal setting, motivation, opinion orientation, emotional experience and decision making. Conclusions were drawn as to what theoretical approaches could be used to analyze social expectations.

Implications

The development of the instrument makes sense because of its potential predictive power, being a determinant of individual behavior. Only a narrow range of behavioral attitudes have been used to test it, but in the future, it is possible to monitor the impact of social expectations on quite different parameters and a wider range of areas of an individual's life.

From a theoretical perspective, this study could be replicated in other countries to verify existing differences in cultural norms and to add other culturally specific components to the scale. The scale would presumably be suitable for all age categories, as middle age was taken as the central sample, and people of this age have the widest range of expectations, which is limited for older and younger generations. Thus, removing aspects of work expectations (colleagues, supervisor) may be appropriate for the currently unemployed younger generation or the retired older generation; removing aspects of own (nonparental) expectations may also be appropriate for the younger generation.

The developed tool can be used in the future for all kinds of research from various fields where social behavior is taken into account. In the future, it is possible to test the predictive power of social expectations concerning an individual's political activity, willingness to take financial risks, level of his or her work motivation and other dispositions.

Social expectations undoubtedly play an important role in a person's life and accompany him or her all the way through, indirectly and gently guiding individuals in the "right" direction to maintain the integrity of society. The words of the authors who devoted their works to a theoretical analysis of the concept of social expectations are confirmed by this study. And further research on this concept as an important predictor of "action" deserves the attention of the scientific community.

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