Gender Stereotypes in Family Relationships in Modern Kyrgyzstan: Psychological, Religious, Socio-philosophical and Cultural (Spiritual) Aspects

Dinara Osmonova
Elnura Talgarbekova
Symbatkhan Shakirova
Artem Golov
Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn
Kyrgyz Republic

Erik Orozaliev
Bishkek State University named after Kusein Karasaev
Kyrgyz Republic

Abstract

Gender stereotypes can have a significant impact on the psychological state of individuals in the family, shaping their perceptions of themselves and their role in relationships, which renders the study of different aspects of this issue important and relevant. The purpose of this paper is to study the dynamics and nature of stereotypes in family relations in the context of the Kyrgyz society of the 21stcentury. The study uses the methods of abstraction, analysis, systematization, and generalization. As a result of the study, it was found that gender stereotypes continue to influence the dynamics of family relationships in Kyrgyzstan, given that they are formed and supported by various sociocultural institutions, such as the family, the school, and religious communities. The study also revealed that gender stereotypes in the family can become a source of conflict and obstacles to personal development, limiting the opportunities of each family member. Overcoming these stereotypes requires a comprehensive approach that includes educational programmes, awareness-raising, and support from the State. In addition, examples of equal family roles, cultural and educational activities, as well as the promotion of economic self-

sufficiency and the active involvement of young people in overcoming gender stereotypes are important factors. It is also noted that globalization and the media play a significant role in the formation of gender stereotypes, but they can also contribute to their revision and overcoming through supporting diverse and inclusive representations of gender roles in society. The findings provide a basis for developing strategies and programmes to address gender stereotypes in family relationships.

Keywords: *gender stereotypes, religious factor, discrimination against women, masculinity and femininity, male roles.*

1. Introduction

Religious beliefs and practices can greatly influence the development of gender stereotypes within family dynamics. They are also integral components of the socio-cultural fabric of a society and serve as manifestations of its values and conventions. Gender stereotypes frequently align with the cultural and spiritual customs of a given society. An examination of these factors will elucidate the correlation between gender stereotypes and the cultural legacy of Kyrgyzstan, while also aiding in comprehending the impact of these stereotypes on values and customs within family dynamics. Kyrgyzstan possesses a diverse cultural and religious heritage, resulting in distinct socio-cultural environments that shape the development and perpetuation of gender stereotypes within households. In Kyrgyzstan, family ties are intricately connected to social norms and values, which exhibit a high degree of stability and resistance to change. Analysing local customs, beliefs, and socio-cultural dynamics is necessary for studying gender stereotypes.

According to Botokanova (2022), in traditional Kyrgyz society, there were rigid patterns of male and female behaviour determined by the family institution. According to the researcher, in this cultural environment, the man as the head of the family had absolute authority, and all family members obeyed to him unconditionally, which led to the fact that the material and moral-psychological well-being of the family

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depended entirely on his decisions and actions. However, the twenty-first century has seen a change in these stereotypes, which emphasizes the need for in-depth research into this issue to fully understand the mechanisms of the socio-cultural model and its consequences.

Kyrgyzstan's society continues to suffer from gender inequality, especially in the social sphere, as Usenov (2021) notes. According to the researcher, the process of globalization supports gender stereotypes rooted in culture, thereby worsening the situation of women. Eliminating gender discrimination is a difficult task because it contradicts established local customs and traditions. However, the scholar highlights the fact that, in recent decades, there have been significant changes in perceptions on gender roles, which may lead to equalization of the social position of men and women in the business sphere. Further research on this issue is required to identify the factors contributing to the changes and their consequences.

Edilova and Usenov (2021) contend that the Kyrgyz Republic's democratization process actively shapes gender policy. Researchers note that the education system in Kyrgyzstan plays a key role in the formation of gender stereotypes, which are based on the ideas of masculinity and femininity. The researchers note that gender stereotypes create inequality and sexism by asserting that men and women do not have equal rights. In education, researchers say, occupations are often associated with a particular gender, reinforcing inequality and affecting socioeconomic status. The researchers note that gender equality implies the opportunity for each person to realise his or her potential through education, so there is a need to revise values and move towards supporting gender equality in the educational system, which requires more in-depth research.

The accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century stimulated the emergence of secondary schools, but the priority of marriage, which also favoured early marriages, deprived many girls of education. The researchers note that during the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), women had a better

chance of education because the Soviet era promoted the idea of everyone's participation in the country's development. As a result, many women became actively involved in labour and public life. However, researchers claim that the reactivation of gender stereotypes occurred after the Kyrgyz Republic gained independence. The researchers argue that the family ideal formed during the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), where the active mother played an important role, has been replaced by conservative ideas about the role of women as housewives.

These social and economic changes have led to a decrease in women's participation in public life, as noted by Aliyarova and Ashimova (2022). The researchers emphasize the relevance of discrimination against women in Kyrgyzstan's economy and social spheres in the twenty-first century. Despite the excess of girls in schools, social traditions encourage men to work, increasing employment inequality. More research on this topic is needed to understand what factors contribute to the persistence or change of gender stereotypes in twenty-first century Kyrgyz society.

Tashybaeva and Marzabaeva (2022) emphasise the close connection between the concept of gender equality and the fundamental principles of social justice and human rights. They note that, in modern society, it is necessary to consider the positions and interests of various social groups, including women, who represent a significant part of the population of Kazakhstan. It is important to emphasise the need for further research on this issue to better understand its social impact and develop effective strategies to manage these changes.

The aim of this research is to study the evolution of stereotypes in family relations in Kyrgyz society, paying attention to their variability and peculiarities in the 21st century.

2. Materials and Methods

The paper identifies the peculiarities of the formation and strengthening of gender stereotypes through the interaction of various

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socio-cultural institutions, including family, school, and religion, as well as the use of mass media. It was possible to investigate and understand what specific factors contribute to the formation and maintenance of gender stereotypes in the family environment.

The authors established the nuances of gender stereotypes, a significant aspect of socio-cultural dynamics in the 21st century, using the analytical method. The authors highlighted the observed progress in reducing the discrepancies between male and female roles. However, the analysis revealed several gender stereotypes that persistently shape different aspects of family life within this context. In addition, the analytical method identified potential negative consequences of gender stereotypes in family relationships, such as conflict, dissatisfaction, and violence. The paper also examined each family member's choice limitations and identity development in the presence of gender stereotypes, which is important for understanding the impact of gender norms on sociocultural dynamics in the family environment.

Using the method of abstraction, the study focused on the general abstract concepts and tendencies underlying the formation and overcoming of these stereotypes. The authors explored the nuances of overcoming gender stereotypes, which necessitate not only education and awareness but also respect for individual abilities and human rights. This method also established the influence of the media, globalisation, and economic change on the creation and progression of gender stereotypes. The influence of cultural and socio-economic factors on the formation of stereotypes about the roles of men and women in the family and society was studied, revealing the peculiarities of these factors in the framework of tools for revising and overcoming gender stereotypes.

The study used the systematization method to generate a comprehensive set of strategies and tools for overcoming these challenges. Various aspects of the problem were assessed, and the most effective methods for influencing the change of gender stereotypes in this context were identified. The study identified the necessary aspects,

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including education and information, examples of equal family roles, support from the state, cultural and educational activities, development of independence, dependence and involvement of young people to successfully overcome gender stereotypes in the family. It was possible to identify key strategies for more effectively overcoming gender stereotypes in the family environment.

The work also used the method of generalisation, which was one of the key tools of the research, which made it possible to examine the data obtained in order to identify common patterns and trends. The work was able to identify various aspects of gender stereotypes in family relations and their impact on the socio-cultural dynamics of modern society in Kyrgyzstan. A fuller understanding of the complex nature of gender roles and their impact on the lives of families and society was gained. In addition, the study considered the various challenges and obstacles to achieving full equality, which included discrimination in the workplace and wage inequality; this facilitated a more comprehensive approach to solving the problem and proposing specific measures to overcome them in contemporary Kyrgyz society.

3. Results

Gender stereotypes in families continue to be a significant aspect of sociocultural dynamics in the 21st century, despite broad changes in societal attitudes and values. Although there has been some progress in reducing the discrepancies between male and female roles within family structures, gender stereotypes still permeate various aspects of family life. In modern Kyrgyzstan, gender stereotypes in family relations represent an important problem that deserves attention and research. Some studies confirm (Tabassum & Nayak 2021) that gender stereotypes violate basic human rights. This is because such stereotypes limit men and women's ability to develop their competences, professional skills, and decisions about their lives. Gender stereotypes are preconceived notions of what men and women should be like that determine their roles and functions in society and the family

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(Priyashantha et al. 2023). Such stereotypes manifesting in family relations are a product of the complex interaction of various socio-cultural institutions that influence the formation and maintenance of certain ideas about the roles and behaviour of men and women in the family (Saifnazarov & Saifnazarova 2023).

The family, as the primary social institution, plays a key role in transmitting gender norms and values from one generation to the next (Yagan Güder & Ata 2018). Children's early family experiences and behaviours can strongly influence their perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes. From a psychological standpoint, social upbringing, cultural norms and traditions, and interactions with the environment shape gender stereotypes. They influence people's expectations and behaviour in family relationships, determining, for example, the roles of husband and wife and the distribution of responsibilities and power within the family. Negative stereotypes can lead to conflict, dissatisfaction, and even violence in the family. Psychological factors such as parental behavioural patterns, perceptions of role expectations, and degree of self-awareness can have a significant impact on stereotyping and its evolution over time. Mothers returning to work after childbirth often face unequal employment conditions, as manifested by the assignment of less attractive or less demanding tasks and negative evaluation by colleagues of those mothers who are career-oriented compared to those who prioritise family responsibilities. In addition, men may face stigmatisation as 'unmasculine' if they take on most of the household responsibilities, while women may be labelled 'cold' and 'selfish' if they neglect to take care of household chores. Furthermore, it is often women, but not men, who have the primary responsibility for managing the household (Chaney et al. 2019).

School plays a key role in gender stereotyping as it is an important agent of socialisation where children learn social expectations and roles related to their gender. Curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods significantly shape perceptions of gender among students (Kollmayer et al. 2018). Lessons and teaching materials may contain gender biases

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that assert traditional roles for men and women, as well as gender advantages or limitations. For example, history or literature textbooks may present historical or literary characters according to traditional gender stereotypes, which affects students' perceptions of the roles of men and women in society. However, schools can also be environments that help to challenge gender stereotypes and create a more equitable environment. Modern educational programs increasingly include materials and lessons that aim to highlight gender inequality and violence, as well as develop gender literacy and empathy skills. Teaching methods based on cooperation and collaboration, as well as bringing diverse voices and experiences to learning, can contribute to a more inclusive environment where children can express their interests and ambitions freely and without fear, regardless of their gender (Makhmudova et al. 2023). Thus, school is an important factor in the formation of gender stereotypes, but it also represents a potential environment for overcoming them and developing a more equal society.

Religion plays a significant role in the formation of gender stereotypes in the family, as many religious beliefs and customs determine the social roles and responsibilities of men and women (Osmonova 2018a, 2018b). Religious doctrines, rituals, and socio-cultural traditions can reinforce or question existing gender perceptions (Fiske 2017). In some religious movements, women may be called upon to fulfil certain family responsibilities, such as caring for the household and raising children, while men may be expected to be the family's protectors and primary breadwinners. Religious texts and traditions may enshrine these social roles and responsibilities, reinforcing gender stereotypes in family life. However, religion can also be a factor in conceptualising and redefining traditional gender roles. Some religious communities and theological movements actively discuss gender equality and support the principles of inclusiveness and respect for the rights and freedoms of all members of society. In this context, religious leaders and communities can be agents of change, helping to redefine

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outdated gender stereotypes and promoting more equitable and inclusive family relationships. Thus, religion is an important factor in shaping gender stereotypes in the family, but at the same time, it can also be a platform for revising and softening these stereotypes in line with contemporary values and needs of society.

Modern Kyrgyzstan often perceives religious teachings, particularly Islam, the dominant confession, as fundamental to family relations. In Islam, as in other religions, there are certain norms and prescriptions regarding the behaviour of men and women in the family, which can become the basis for the formation of gender stereotypes. For example, the Islamic law, Sharia, prescribes that a man should be the breadwinner of the family, and a woman should take care of the household and children. However, believers' interpretation of religious teachings can vary. In some cases, religion may serve as a justification for maintaining gender inequalities and stereotypes, while in others it may serve to overcome and transform them. For example, modern interpretations of Islam may emphasise the equality of all people before God and call for respect for women's rights. The media play an important role in shaping gender perceptions and stereotypes by broadcasting certain images and roles of men and women (Fernandez & Menon 2022; Shamilishvili 2019). Stereotypical representations of gender roles, which are often prevalent in film, television, advertising, and other media forms, can reinforce existing gender norms and create constraints on individual freedom and expression.

Modern Kyrgyzstan frequently links gender stereotypes in family relations to traditional socio-cultural norms and values, which define the roles and functions of men and women in the family and society. In accordance with generally accepted gender stereotypes, there is an assumption that certain spheres of activity are traditionally associated with a certain gender. For instance, society often associates men with earning money and protecting the family, while it assumes women to handle domestic duties and raise children. In this context, family responsibility overload has a greater impact on women than on men,

given the stereotyping of family roles (Duxbury et al. 2018). The explanation may lie in the fact that, despite changes in gender roles, women in modern society are still primarily responsible for domestic and household chores, as well as childcare. As a result, the overload of family responsibilities may significantly increase the level of stress and pressure on women, whereas in men, this factor may have a less significant impact on their overall psychological state. Gender stereotypes in family relations continue to play a significant role in determining the distribution of family responsibilities and the impact on men and women's psychological well-being.

Globalisation, migration processes, and economic and political changes are also significant factors that affect the formation and evolution of gender relations in family and community spheres (van Driel & Davids 2020). Globalization, as a process of increasing interdependence and interconnections between countries and regions, creates new opportunities and challenges for gender equality. On the one hand, it promotes new ideas about equality and respect for human rights, including women's rights, which can contribute to changing stereotypes and roles in the family and society. On the other hand, globalisation can lead to increased inequality and discrimination, especially in underdeveloped countries where access to education, health care, and resources is limited for women. Migration flows also are impacted by gender relations, as they change socio-cultural dynamics in society and bring new perceptions and practices into family life. Changes in the economy and politics also play a key role in defining gender roles and relationships. Increased opportunities for women in labour and politics can facilitate their participation in decision-making and increase their self-awareness, which affects their status and influence in the family and society. However, wage inequality, restrictions on access to resources, and discrimination in the workplace remain obstacles to the full realisation of gender equality.

Overcoming gender stereotypes in family relations in modern Kyrgyzstan can be achieved through a number of interventions and strategies (Table 1).

Table 1. *Ways to overcome gender stereotypes in family relationships in modern Kyrgyzstan* – Source: compiled by the authors

Aspect	Description
Education and awareness	Promoting gender literacy and highlighting issues of gender inequality in educational institutions, the media and public events will help increase awareness and understanding of gender stereotypes.
Example of family roles	Family patterns in which parents equally distribute duties and responsibilities among themselves can serve as an example for other families and help overcome traditional gender stereotypes.
State support	Government policies aimed at creating equal opportunities for men and women in labour, education, health, and other areas can help change gender norms and values in society.
Conducting cultural and educational events	Organizing courses, seminars, and discussions on gender issues, as well as cultural events aimed at combating gender stereotypes and promoting equality between men and women.
Development of economic independence	Helping women gain education, access resources, and opportunities to develop their own businesses or careers can reduce their dependence on traditional gender roles in the family.
Youth Engagement	Teaching youth skills to collaborate, empathize, and respect a diversity of gender identities and expressions can help change gender stereotypes and create more inclusive environments.

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Debunking gender stereotypes requires a comprehensive approach and efforts on the part of various sectors of society, including government bodies, educational institutions, media, civil society, and the private sector.

It is worth noting that the twenty-first century has witnessed a shift in perceptions of gender roles, due in large part to women's active participation in the labour force. This shift in the perception of gender stereotypes is due to a variety of factors, including socio-cultural and economic changes, as well as the changing role of women in society (Eagly et al. 2020). Over time, women's work activities have become more recognised and demanded, leading to a change in traditional perceptions of women's role in society. Women have become actively involved in various spheres, overcoming previous gender barriers, and expanding their opportunities for professional and personal development. This, in turn, has contributed to a change in society's perception of the role of women, as well as the destruction of stereotypes that certain types of work are exclusively male or female. Increasing the level of education among women has also played a significant role in changing gender stereotypes in the world. With the increase in educational attainment in Kyrgyzstan, women are gaining access to more qualified and better-paid positions, which affects their status and position in society. Traditional ideas about women's role and opportunities in the professional sphere undergo revision as a result of this process, leading to the formation of new gender stereotypes and expectations towards women in the workplace.

Sociocultural and economic changes also have a significant impact on changing gender stereotypes. With the rapid development of information technologies and the global economy, new types of professions and opportunities for women are emerging, stimulating changes in their role and status in society. The strengthening of women's entrepreneurship and the active participation of women in political and public life also contribute to the revision of traditional

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gender roles and expectations. However, despite these positive changes, gender stereotypes continue to pose challenges. Problems arise in the areas of reconciling professional activities and family life, workplace discrimination, and wage inequality between men and women.

4. Discussion

This study revealed that gender stereotypes continue to influence the dynamics of family relations in Kyrgyzstan. The study underscored how socio-cultural institutions like the family, school, and religion shape and support these stereotypes. The study also revealed that gender stereotypes can cause conflicts in the family and limit personal development. Overcoming these stereotypes requires a comprehensive approach that includes education, awareness, and government support. Examples of equal family roles, cultural and educational activities, the development of economic self-sufficiency, and youth involvement are important elements in this process. The study also discussed the role of globalisation and the media in the formation of gender stereotypes, as well as their potential to revise and overcome these stereotypes. Reviewing the findings of other studies and comparing them to this paper will provide a better understanding of the mechanisms of gender stereotyping and its impact on social relations, contributing to the development of a more comprehensive and objective view of the issue.

Grau and Zotos (2018) note a cultural lag in the representation of genders in advertising, which has long adhered to traditional role templates. According to researchers, current evidence suggests positive changes in role representations, and women have long been portrayed in a less favourable light despite their potential and abilities. However, according to the researchers, this trend has begun to change in the 21st century. Men's role models have undergone a noticeable shift, presenting them in more 'soft' and egalitarian roles when interacting with their children. In today's society, companies and media are increasingly paying attention to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) segment, which previously received little attention

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and coverage. Given the aforementioned research, it is important to acknowledge that the media continues to play a crucial role in forming gender stereotypes, yet contemporary trends aim to transform conventional perceptions of men and women.

Gender stereotypes have a dynamic nature, which means that they are fluid and evolve over time and in different socio-cultural contexts, as emphasised by Bhatia & Bhatia (2021). Researchers are convinced that men and women's perceptions are influenced by a variety of factors and can change in response to social, economic, and cultural changes. Traditions, values, and customs passed down from generation to generation shape stereotypes about men and women, as the researchers point out. The researchers assert that these attitudes, rooted in culture and society, shape perceptions of what men and women should be in a specific cultural setting. Compared with the results of this study, such findings correlate with previous research on gender stereotypes and emphasise the importance of considering sociocultural context and the dynamics of societal change when studying gender stereotypes and their impact on men and women.

Rudman and Glick (2021) hypothesise that gender roles, from school age to work and personal life, limit freedom of choice and hinder gender equality. Their study uses real-life case studies to analyse the origins and maintenance of male dominance, as well as the impact of traditional romantic ideals on the reinforcement of heterosexual relationships. Comparison with the results of this study allows us to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms of gender role formation and their impact on social relations, which contributes to the development of a more complete and objective view of this issue.

Based on the theories of gender construction, Fetterolf and Rudman (2014) confirm that women, regardless of their relative income, often report doing more housework compared to their spouses. This fact indicates the persistence of traditional gender roles where women assume primary responsibility for household chores. However, income affects the amount of housework differently for men and women.

Researchers found that support for traditional gender roles has a mediating effect on the relationship between income and household chores for women but not for men. This indicates that women's income may boost or reduce their household chores depending on the degree of support for traditional gender roles in the family. On the other hand, the researchers are convinced that perceptions of fairness in the distribution of housework mediate the effect of income on domestic chores for men but not for women. Men may feel more justified in reducing household chores if their income is higher, while for women, earnings has less influence on rethinking the allocation of household chores.

Building on the results presented above, it is worth noting that an important issue for 21st-century society is the need to address the socio-cultural and economic factors that support or weaken traditional gender roles in the family and society. It is important to endeavour to create conditions that allow men and women to freely choose their roles in the family and to share household responsibilities equally, regardless of their income or perception of justification.

A study conducted by Aarntzen et al. (2023) reveals that, in family dynamics, gender stereotypes prescribe that mother, rather than fathers, prioritise family responsibilities over work. Researchers note that this internalisation of gender norms may lead to greater feelings of guilt in mothers compared to fathers, especially in situations where they choose work over family time. The more implicit gender stereotypes present in mothers, the greater the conflict between work and family responsibilities. Furthermore, mothers who felt guilty were more likely to report work–family conflict on days when they worked overtime.

Researchers also emphasise that implicit gender stereotypes influence how parents make decisions about work-family balance. This reflects their attitudes towards the choice between professional careers and family responsibilities, which causes emotional strain in relation to these decisions. However, the influence of gender stereotypes is gradually decreasing in the modern world, despite its significant impact

on family relations in modern society, including Kyrgyzstan. Studies conducted by various scholars shed light on the variability and evolution of gender stereotypes in modern society. The results of scholars' work show that cultural perceptions of gender are gradually changing, reflecting positive changes in the roles of men and women.

Gender roles limit freedom of choice and hinder the achievement of gender equality, highlighting the importance of studying this issue. As a result of comparative research, it becomes clear that traditional gender roles still have a significant impact on the decisions and behaviour of parents in the family, including the case of Kyrgyzstan. Women still often feel more emotional strain and guilt associated with balancing work and family, which emphasises the need to take gender considerations into account when developing strategies to support family well-being. It is also important to consider that income and perceptions of fairness play different roles in determining household responsibilities for men and women, requiring an individualised approach to family issues. Overall, these studies emphasise the importance of creating conditions for free choice of roles and equitable sharing of responsibilities in the family, which is a key aspect of striving for gender equality in modern society.

Conclusions

Gender stereotypes in families remain a significant aspect of socio-cultural dynamics in the 21st century. Despite some progress in reducing discrepancies between male and female roles, they still permeate various aspects of family life. In modern Kyrgyzstan, this problem is particularly acute because gender stereotypes limit the opportunities for men and women to develop and express themselves professionally.

Various socio-cultural institutions, including the family, school, religion, and the media, interact to form and reinforce gender stereotypes. They can lead to family conflict, dissatisfaction, and violence, as well as limit each family member's choices and personal

development. This is why it is important to overcome gender stereotypes through education, awareness, and respect for individual abilities and human rights, which contributes to a more equal and inclusive family environment. The media, globalisation, and economic change play an important role in the formation and evolution of gender stereotypes. However, they also represent potential tools to revise and challenge these stereotypes, contributing to the development of more equal and inclusive family relationships.

This paper has developed a number of tools for overcoming gender stereotypes in family relations in modern Kyrgyzstan, which require a comprehensive approach that includes education and information, examples of equal family roles, support from the state, cultural and educational activities, the development of economic self-sufficiency, and youth involvement. It is critical for society to recognize the changing roles and opportunities for women in society and the workplace, which contributes to overcoming traditional gender stereotypes. However, to fully achieve equality, we must address and overcome challenges such as workplace discrimination and pay inequalities.

Further research should focus on analysing policies and programs to combat gender stereotypes and promote gender equality in the family and society, which would allow assessing the effectiveness of existing measures and identifying potential areas for improvement.

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Dinara Osmonova

affiliation: Department of Religious Studies, Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn, Kyrgyz Republic
position: Professor, Full Doctor
e-mail: dina.osmanovva@gmail.com
research interests: art, contemporary culture.

Selected publications:
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Elnura Talgarbekova

affiliation: Department of Psychology, Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn, Kyrgyz Republic
position: Doctoral Student
e-mail: elnura.talgarb@outlook.com
research interests: culture, literature.

Selected publications:
(2023): "Evolution of family relationship in Kyrgyzstan", in *Social and Legal Studios*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 155-163.

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Symbatkhan Shakirova

affiliation: Department of Psychology, Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn, Kyrgyz Republic
position: Associate Professor, PhD
e-mail: sym_shakirova@hotmail.com
research interests: theology, religion, sociology.

Selected publications:

(2023): "Principles and models of distance learning young people", in *Youth Voice Journal*, vol. 3, Special Issue, pp. 21-31.

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Artem Golov

affiliation: Department of Philosophy, Theory and History of Culture, Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn, Kyrgyz Republic
position: Doctoral Student
e-mail: artemgolov4@outlook.com
research interests: philosophy, history of culture.

Erik Orozaliev

affiliation: Department of Social Work and Practical Psychology, Bishkek State University named after Kusein Karasaev, Kyrgyz Republic
position: Professor, Full Doctor
e-mail: erikorozaliev@hotmail.com
research interests: psychology, sociology.

Selected publications:
(2022): "Actual problems of Kyrgyzstan: Results of sociological research", in *Science, New Technologies and Innovations of Kyrgyzstan*, no. 9, pp. 180-186.
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