

## Spiritual and Moral Upbringing in Cossack Education: Problems and Ways of Their Solution

### Educación espiritual y moral en la educación de los cosacos: problemas y formas de su solución

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## Summary

The study discusses the main problems of churching as the spiritual and moral development of students of Cossack educational organizations. The conceptual foundations of Cossack pedagogy are revealed. The concept of Christian religious doctrine and the contradictions between its implementation in the Orthodox religion and Cossack culture are given. Christian psychology and Christian anthropology are substantiated as the methodological basis of spiritual and moral education of Cossacks. The frequency of spiritual and moral education in the content of organizational, pedagogical and psychological Cossack education is presented. The results of monitoring the churching of the Cossacks of 11 registered Cossack hosts of Russia are presented.

**Keywords:** Spiritual and Moral Education; Christian Religious Doctrine; Motivation of Spiritual and Moral Education; Emotional Experience; Personal Reflection; Adjustive Behavior; Monitoring the Churching of the Cossacks.

## Resumen

El estudio discute los principales problemas de la iglesia como el desarrollo espiritual y moral de los estudiantes de las organizaciones educativas cosacas. Se revelan los fundamentos conceptuales de la pedagogía cosaca. Se da el concepto de doctrina religiosa cristiana y las contradicciones entre su implementación en la religión ortodoxa y la cultura cosaca. La psicología cristiana y la antropología cristiana están fundamentadas como la base metodológica de la educación espiritual y moral de los cosacos. Se presenta la frecuencia de la educación espiritual y moral en el contenido de la educación cosaca organizacional, pedagógica y psicológica. Se presentan los resultados del monitoreo de la iglesia de los cosacos de 11 anfitriones cosacos registrados de Rusia.

**Palabras clave:** Educación espiritual y moral; Doctrina religiosa cristiana; Motivación de la educación espiritual y moral; Experiencia emocional; Reflexión personal; Comportamiento adaptativo; Monitoreando la iglesia de los cosacos.

## Introduction

In recent years, in Russia and in other countries where Cossack societies take place, an integral system of continuous Cossack education has been formed, from kindergarten to higher education institutions. Moreover, the values and traditions of the Russian Cossacks are most holistically reflected in Cossack pedagogy.

The pedagogy of the Cossacks, as a rule, refers to the direction of pedagogical knowledge and empirical pedagogical experience about the nature and patterns of the development of the phenomenon of the Cossacks as a subject of Russian culture, realizing the all-Russian social vector of freedom and democracy. It is the pedagogy of a cultural alternative to the trends of absolutism that have prevailed for centuries, which expresses the cultural and historical ideas of free, democratic development of an individual in the Russian sociocultural tradition (Lukash, 2008). Moreover, the main ideas are: the upbringing of younger generations on the ideals and values of the Cossack culture and the centuries-old Russian tradition of democracy; the formation of the personality of a free person, rooted in their small homeland, culture and history of Russia; education of youth in the spirit of patriotism, “Russianness” and sovereignty; the formation of psychological readiness in the minds of youth for “serving the fatherland not because of fear, but because of conscience”.

From the point of view of E. P. Belozertsev, pedagogy of the Cossacks is a derivative of the all-Russian cultural model and has such constants as:

- Orthodox spirituality, which forms the deeply moral, spiritual basis of the life of the Cossack society and personality, which allows building harmonious relations with God, the world and people;

- openness to the external perception of other cultures through the use of selection mechanisms and adaptation of external borrowings while maintaining cultural and ethnic uniqueness;

- traditionalism is a property-algorithm of the upbringing content in the pedagogy of the Cossacks, requiring constant reference to their history, culture and the basics of the Cossack idea, namely: the free development of personality, democracy, Orthodoxy and the ideals of serving the fatherland (Belozertsev, 2004).

Thus, the pedagogy of the Cossacks is based on deep Russian tradition. However, as noted by S. N. Lukash, one should not consider the pedagogy of the Cossacks as a simple reproduction of the past. The modern pedagogy of the Cossacks as an innovative idea, which is at the initial stage of its scientific and theoretical understanding and development, embodies the synthesis of the traditional and the new (Lukash, 2012: 366). Its innovativeness is characterized by the emergence of new forms and models of educational activities, the formation of spiritual and educational spaces that determine its significant sociopractical orientation. In this regard, it goes beyond the framework of the traditional education system, acquiring the functions of social pedagogy, which mobilizes on a spiritual basis the personality of a student. The category “tradition” in the pedagogy of the Cossacks is understood as a synthesis of three components – conservation, continuity and development, being the starting point for the emergence of pedagogical innovation (Lukash, 2012: 366).

Pedagogy of the Cossacks is characterized by another important feature of the upbringing content: effectiveness – a property determined by the agonal (from Greek *agon* – struggle, competition) Cossack mentality. It is expressed in quick response to changing circumstances, the person’s desire to take responsibility in difficult life situations, actively act in accordance with their inner beliefs and values, mobilizing forces to overcome obstacles (Belozertsev, 2004).

It should also be noted that Cossack education historically implies a high level of general and special education, preparation for military service and labor activity, but also the education of a patriot and citizen based on the spiritual and moral development of the personality of Cossacks. Moreover, the spiritual and moral development of the individual is the backbone of the entire Cossack education.

Cossacks have long been in the Orthodox faith and the very membership of Orthodoxy was the only right by which a person could join the Cossacks. If the person determined in the Cossacks was of a different faith, then they should have been baptized into Orthodoxy. The Orthodox faith for the Cossacks is not just religious teaching, not only a combination of dogmas and canons in the form of commandments. It is an integral system of world perception, which was formed throughout the history of the Cossacks. For centuries, Orthodoxy has served and remained the spiritual foundation of the Cossacks. The Cossacks, in turn, are loyal defenders of the Orthodox faith.

Thus, spiritual and moral education in the system of Cossack education is associated with the Orthodox faith, as the spiritual and worldview foundation of the Russian Cossacks.

## Methods

The analysis of scientific and psychological, scientific and pedagogical, philosophical, journalistic literature and Internet sources, generalization and systematization of theoretically and empirically obtained data were carried out. Original questionnaire methods “Religious self-identification” and “Orthodox image of life” were used as diagnostic tools in monitoring the problem “The Churching of the Russian Cossacks”. The total number of respondents amounted to 8,247 people. Representatives of 11 Cossack hosts took part in the study: Volga Cossack Host (856 people), Don Cossack Host (1,045 people), Yenisei Cossack Host (788 people), Transbaikal Cossack Host (640 people), Irkutsk Cossack Host (522 people), Kuban Cossack Host (923 people), Orenburg Cossack Host (549 people), Siberian Cossack Host (948 people), Terek Cossack Host (645 people), Ussuri Cossack Host (521 people), Central Cossack Host (810 people). The study was carried out during the period from September, 2014 to September, 2019.

## Results and discussion

As practice shows, the spiritual and moral development of the Cossacks in the direction of the Orthodox religion is not without problems. Therefore, for example, one can observe a certain “positioning of Orthodoxy” and not a deeply spiritual experience of a Christian associated with the actions and deeds committed. It should be noted that it was Orthodoxy that always saved the Cossacks as a kind of distinctive ethnocultural society. Whenever there was a departure from Orthodoxy, there was a split among the Cossacks. Moreover, even the *raskazachivaniye* (decossackization) that took place in the modern history of Russia during the Soviet period was not without a departure from the Orthodox faith. Subsequent *raskazachivaniye* is the result of treason by the Cossacks of the Orthodox faith. The foregoing allows us to say that the revival, or rather the formation of the new Cossacks, is inseparable from returning to the Orthodox faith. The latter is connected with the churching of the Cossacks.

Spiritual and moral education in the Cossack education abroad also has several issues. It should be borne in mind that more than 70% of Cossacks and their families emigrated abroad because of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing civil war. The result of all this was the assimilation of their descendants into the culture of those countries where the Cossacks emigrated. Thus, the descendants of Cossack emigrants adopted Catholicism and Protestant religions. Along with this, liberal Western ideology negatively affected the preservation of the Cossack culture and traditions of the Cossacks. All this was reflected in the Cossack education and poses the task of educating the descendants of the Cossacks in the Orthodox religion and the churching of the Cossacks as the basic task of spiritual and moral development in the system of Cossack education.

Consequently, one of the tasks of spiritual and moral education in the system of Cossack education is the creation of conditions aimed at churching students of educational Cossack organizations. The latter involves solving several problems.

**The first problem** of churching in the system of Cossack education is the contradiction between Christian morality, oriented to the “Man – God” relationship system, and secular morality, presented in the “Man – World” system and implemented through customs, “Cossack morality”.

It should be noted that Christianity is a religious doctrine “out of this world”, it exists exclusively in the “Man – God” system. In this regard, much of what is valuable in this world has no value to Christians. In other words, the mundane loses all meaning in the relationship between man and God. From the Holy Scriptures of the *New Testament* and the Creations of Church Fathers, it follows in many ways that Christians are “newcomers and wanderers” on earth. Moreover, their residence is “in heaven” and that they are moving into the “eternal house” of the Kingdom of God (Bibliia: Pervoe poslanie Petra: NIV, 2001: 1211; Bibliia: Poslanie k

Filippiitsam, Poslaniia apostola Pavla: NIV, 2001: 1288; Bibliia: Vtoroe poslanie k Korinfricanam, Poslaniia apostola Pavla: NIV, 2001: 1264). Christians should not pile up treasures on earth [Epistle to the Philippians, p. 1288]. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Bibliia: Poslanie k Filippiitsam, Poslaniia apostola Pavla: NIV, 2001: 1017). For a Christian, one should not pursue selfish ambitions, or be too burdened with the sorrows of earthly life. Christianity is largely personalistic, in it, there is a dialogue of an individual with God through prayer, through spiritual search, through spiritual deed, etc. The personalism of Christianity can be traced through the commandments of the Savior presented in the *Sermon on the Mount* (Bibliia: Ot Matfeia sviatoe blagovestvovanie: NIV, 2001: 1015-1016; Bibliia: Ot Luki sviatoe blagovestvovanie: NIV, 2001: 1091-1092). It is in the “commandments of bliss” that there is a call not to the people, but individuals.

It is also necessary to consider the fact that in the culture of the Cossacks the system-forming is the will (“put the Cossack will in the best of life itself!”). In other words, the psychology of freemen and *veche* democracy is characteristic of the Cossacks. Christianity is based on God’s will and its adoption as a law: “Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Bibliia: Ot Luki sviatoe blagovestvovanie: NIV, 2001: 1091-1092). “Your kingdom come. Your will be done” – every Christian prays. Moreover, this is the greatest spiritual freedom of man, by their will to choose the Will of God. “My desires are nothing, the manifestation of the Divine Will through me is fundamental”. This is the self-denial of their own ego and of the manifestation of free wills of the individual. “Follow the rules and customs of your people” – the moral norm of the Cossack life says. In addition, if morality is immoral, if traditions lead a person away from God, which is primary: “the customs of the people” or God?

Along with what has been said, Christian doctrine itself, being metacultural in the world, involves projection in a certain culture: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant. All this often leads to the fact that in the conditions of assimilation, the descendants do not see much difference between Orthodoxy and other Christian denominations. Moreover, Catholicism and Protestantism in the modern “Western world” are more understandable and acceptable. All this makes it difficult to accept Orthodoxy in everyday life, and, in many ways, problems arise in the churching of the Cossacks.

**The second problem of spiritual and moral education** in the system of Cossack education is that until today the prevailing approach in the educational space of Cossack educational organizations of the Russian pedagogical, psychological science and philosophy is the cultural and historical approach of L. S. Vygotsky, developed later in the paradigms of the system-activity approach A. N. Leontiev, L. S. Rubinstein and other Russian and Soviet scientists and philosophers. Moreover, in the 1990s interning with the humanistic psychology of A. Maslow and several other Western scholars and philosophers, a cultural and historical approach emerged expressed in the form of personality-oriented education and upbringing. The sources of the cultural and historical approach and humanistic psychology are the same – Marxism and the modern Western liberal ideology that arose from it. Talking about personal freedom, social equality, fraternity, etc., liberal ideology erases the spiritual and moral foundations of the national mentality, often reducing a person to the state of an animal that satisfies their vital needs. The Cossacks are the social force that is able to withstand this. The patriarchal way of life of the Cossacks, on the one hand, and the adoption of man as a person, as an image of God, as a unique individuality, in no way agree with a cultural and historical approach or with humanistic psychology. Moral education in the system of Cossack education should be built on Christian anthropology, Christian psychology, Orthodox cultural studies and Orthodox pedagogy.



**The third problem** of moral education in the system of continuous Cossack education follows from the previous one. It is psychological, organizational and pedagogical support of the process of moral education.

Today, there is an opinion among teachers of Cossack educational organizations (as, incidentally, among teachers of other educational organizations, including higher ones): informed means motivated. However, this is a misconception. For example, doctors are aware of the dangers of smoking tobacco or alcohol, but how does this affect their motivation to use both? It is necessary to shape behavior, but it is not easy to inform. This approach takes place in Christian psychology (which, in principle, is consistent with the approach in cognitive psychology). In this case, the following sequence takes place:

- Emotional experience
- Personal reflection
- Adjustive behavior

*Emotional experience* acts as a stimulus for the choice of a particular ionic model of behavior. It is through emotional experience that the need for certain actions is actualized or formed. It is through emotional experience that a person initially chooses how to behave in a particular situation.

Speaking of moral education in the system of Cossack education, it should be noted that a person should experience emotion of joy from contact with the Church, from being present at church services, participating in the liturgy, etc. To start the Church Sacraments not because of coercion, not because it is obliged and so it should, but “by the desire of the heart,” because there is a need for it. It is in this direction that moral education in Cossack education is necessary.

The development of *personal reflection* in the system of Cossack education is the development of personality along the path from egocentrism to altruism. What is reflection? From the point of view of Christian psychology, it is “the ability of the soul to turn back on itself,” it is self-awareness of oneself as an object for evaluating in comparison with other objects (people as individuals), self-objectification. Thus, the development of personal reflection is inseparable from the development of individual intelligence in students of Cossack educational organizations. Moreover, in this regard, one of the effective means of development is cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance in social psychology is mainly interpreted as a state of tension that occurs whenever a person simultaneously has two cognitions that are psychologically contradictory to each other (Aronson, 1998; Myers, 2012). With regard to the educational process, cognitive dissonance is accompanied by the emergence of a problem situation, psychologically determined by the state of intellectual difficulty in finding the optimal solution. Within the framework of moral education organized in the system of Cossack education, cognitive dissonance assumes the contradictions between “Christian morality” and “secular morality”, between knowledge of the Christian commandments presented in *the Sermon on the Mount* and knowledge of moral standards presented in the traditions and customs of the Cossack image life and culture. The resolution of such contradictions is the resolution of cognitive dissonance, there is the formation of a moral attitude towards situations arising in war and everyday life. Thus, the creation of cognitive dissonance in the organization of moral education in the system of Cossack education is the development of personal reflection of the Cossacks.

The formation of *adjustive behavior* involves the “crowding out” of the moral attitude to the situations of Cossack life in war and everyday life from the level of “awareness” (personal reflection) to the level of “motivation” (Cossack lifestyle). In this case, there is a model of the Cossack’s behavior as “Defender of the Orthodox faith”, “Sovereign” and “Fatherland works”. In this case, the psychological mechanism of “satisfying the current need for an adequate social

situation” is triggered. In many ways, this mechanism is dynamically implemented in the traditions and customs of the Cossacks.

**The fourth problem** of moral education in the system of continuous Cossack education is associated with the attitude to the Cossacks of individual public figures, scientists, philosophers, etc. It is believed that the Cossack is not necessarily an Orthodox person, they can profess any religion, be a Muslim, a Buddhist, or practice paganism (*Rodnoveriy, Slavic Native Faith*). However, it should be noted that the ancestors of the Cossacks, according to several historical studies, became Orthodox Christians much earlier than Prince Vladimir the Great baptized Kievan Rus.

Often one hears from representatives of certain Cossack general education organizations: “You are coming to us with the Orthodox faith, and so what, that we have created a Cossack cadet class. First, we educate the cadets. It so happened that we were forced to use the word ‘Cossack’ in the name of the cadet class. And then the parents will be against it if we start to engage in Orthodox education and the children have the right to believe in what and in whom they want”. There is also a restrained attitude of individual representatives of the Cossacks to the Orthodox faith.

All of the above negatively affects the organization of moral education in the system of continuous Cossack education.

To study the spiritual and moral development of the Cossacks in the context of the Orthodox religion, in the period from 2014 to 2019 monitoring was conducted under the leadership of the Synodal Committee on the problem of churching of the Cossacks of the Russian Federation. The feature of this monitoring was that for the first time the concept of an integrated approach to understanding churching was used. According to it, the phenomenon of churching has a complex structure and can be described by 10 basic factors. Depending on the severity of these factors, one can talk about the level of churching as a whole.

The following factors were identified as churching factors:

1. Baptism in the Orthodox faith;
2. Relation to the church (visiting the church);
3. Knowledge of prayers
4. Knowledge of the rules of behavior in the church;
5. Personal involvement in the Orthodox faith (wearing a cross, presence of the Bible in the house, presence of icons in the house, etc.);
6. Marriage (matrimony)
7. Baptism of children
8. Sacraments: repentance (*confession*) and communion (*eucharist*)
9. Sacrament of anointing (*unction*);
10. Observance of fasts and ritual forms of behavior of an Orthodox person (*consecration of a house, alms, cooking ritual food, name day, etc.*).

In the process of monitoring, we were interested in questions of how each of the factors in the churching of the Cossacks is related and how each of them affects the churching. For this purpose, we used the methodology of correlation and regression analysis, which is widely used in psychology and sociology and allows us to talk about a high level of reliability of the results. Without plunging into mathematical calculations, we want to say that correlation analysis allows us to establish the presence or absence of a relationship between the individual factors of the phenomenon under study (the churching of the Cossacks). Regression analysis makes it possible to determine how each factor affects the effective indicator – the churching of the Cossacks as a

result of a change in one or more signs of a single factor with a fixed value of unaccounted signs (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*Correlation between the individual factors of the churching of the Cossacks*

Parameters	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>	X <sub>7</sub>	X <sub>8</sub>	X <sub>9</sub>	X <sub>10</sub>
Baptism in the Orthodox faith X <sub>1</sub>	1	,235	,784	,634	,610	,554	,643	,524	,598	,684
Relation to the church X <sub>2</sub>		1	,416	-,078	,418	,617	,284	,720	,572	,427
Knowledge of prayers X <sub>3</sub>			1	,789	,896	,853	,907	,815	,915	,946
Knowledge of the rules of behavior X <sub>4</sub>				1	,840	,655	,901	,618	,658	,848
Personal involvement X <sub>5</sub>					1	,942	,977	,896	,911	,985
Marriage (matrimony) X <sub>6</sub>						1	,888	,908	,968	,927
Baptism of children X <sub>7</sub>							1	,829	,884	,984
Repentance and communion X <sub>8</sub>								1	,856	,898
Unction X <sub>9</sub>									1	,925
Forms of behavior X <sub>10</sub>										1

From the data of the correlation matrix, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant relationship between almost all factors. An exception is the factor “Relation to the church (visiting the church)”. This factor does not have a statistically significant relationship with all other factors. The foregoing indicates that the factors of churching form a certain system, within which a high interconnection of its elements is observed. This means that the implementation of each factor involves the implementation of all other factors. The absence of any factor violates the churching system, i.e. reduces its integrity and effectiveness.

The low connection of the “Relation to the church (visiting the church)” factor with all other factors in no way suggests that this factor is not significant for churching, it simply exists outside the system, as a kind of autonomous value. In other words, it should be implemented in addition to the existing system of factors (Table 2).



**Table 2.**  
Significance of the churching parameters (*determined using regression analysis*)

$Y = a_0 + a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + a_5X_5 + a_6X_6 + a_7X_7 + a_8X_8 + a_9X_9 + a_{10}X_{10}$
<p>A0 – constant  A1 – variable coefficient “Baptized Cossacks”  A2 – variable coefficient “Relation to the church”  A3 – variable coefficient “Knowledge of prayers”  A4 – variable coefficient “Knowledge of the rules of behavior in the church”  A5 – variable coefficient “Personal involvement in the Orthodox faith”  A6 – variable coefficient “Marriage (matrimony)”  A7 – variable coefficient “Baptism of children”  A8 – variable coefficient “Participation in the sacraments of repentance and communion”  A9 – variable coefficient “Participation in the sacrament of anointing (unction)”  A10 – variable coefficient “Observance of forms of behavior”</p>
$Y = 0,02 + 0,049x_1 + 0,025x_2 + 0,122x_3 + 0,072x_4 + 0,145x_5 + 0,095x_6 + 0,146x_7 + 0,147x_8 + 0,096x_9 + 0,083x_{10}$

Using regression analysis, it was found that 98% accounted for factors affecting the churching of the Cossacks ( $a_0 = 0.02$ , which indicates unaccounted factors at the level of 2%). The most significant factors are:

- “Participation in the sacraments of repentance and communion”;
- “Baptism of children”;
- “Personal involvement in the Orthodox faith”.

It is these factors that should be considered primarily when organizing the churching of the Cossacks. However, as the study showed, these factors are not yet at a sufficiently high level. It should be noted that all other factors are also significant. They should be implemented in the organization of the processes of the churching of the Cossacks and, as previously mentioned, should form an integrated system.

## Conclusion

The organization of moral education in the system of continuous Cossack education is not limited to the aforementioned problems. The above problems primarily affect the methodology of building moral education in Cossack educational organizations. Their solution will make it possible to better build the churching of Cossacks and Cossack youth in the system of Cossack education.

In addition, the monitoring allows us to formulate several urgent tasks that require a primary solution in the joint activities of the committee, diocesan departments, Cossack confessors, *atamans* and their assistants (comrades) for interaction with the Russian Orthodox Church. Such activity should be reflected in enlightening and educational work aimed at the formation of attitudes, models of behavior and the image of Orthodox people among the Cossacks:

- Resorting to the sacraments of repentance and communion, the sacrament of marriage, unction;
- Baptism of children;
- Experiencing personal involvement in the Orthodox faith through the wearing of a cross, the presence of Holy Scripture and icons in the house.

The above must be supplemented with:

- knowledge of prayers;
- knowledge of the rules of conduct in the church;
- observance of fasts and ritual forms of behavior.

Together, this forms an integral system for the churching of the Cossack.

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