Abstract

TOR-157

Topic: «Households Economic Behavior»

Head of the Project:

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**The object of the research** is the population and households of Russia.

1. **Research goal**: the development of tools for the analysis and monitoring of households economic behavior in Russia, as well as the formulation of socio-economic policies to enhance social stability. This includes the assessment of the role of consumer demand and supply and monitoring their dynamics in the current economic conditions, evaluating and monitoring the well-being of Russian households, identifying and monitoring consumption in the sectors of culture, sports, healthcare, education, digital, and innovative consumption. The study also explores the economic consumption of households belonging to high-income groups.
2. **Methods used**: (1) desk research of Russian and foreign literature on the project topic, (2) mixed quantitative-qualitative sociological research, including conducting field sociological research such as representative surveys of the population using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method, non-representative surveys of the top decile of the population using personal standardized interviews and online self-administered questionnaires, semi-standardized leitmotif interviews with survey participants, (3) secondary analysis of focus group discussion materials collected in another project, (4) multidimensional statistical and econometric analysis of data from selective sociological studies, (5) statistical and economic (demand models) analysis of Federal State Statistics Service macroeconomic data, including the national accounts system.
3. **Empirical basis**: (1) data from mass population surveys conducted in 2023 as part of the project: «Households Economic Behavior» (HEB, population aged 18 and older; first wave sample – 6000 individuals, second and third waves – 6700 individuals), «Top Decile Survey» (18 and older; first and second wave sample – 1000 individuals), online youth survey (16-18 years old; sample – 2000 individuals), online decision-making survey in households (respondents aged 25-59 in partnerships/marriages; sample – 3000 individuals); (2) data from personal leitmotif interviews conducted as part of projects with codes TOR-157 and TOR-153 using the HEB dataset; (3) Federal State Statistics Service (Russia) macroeconomic data: Russian system of national accounts (SNA), Federal State Statistics Service publications «Regions of Russia»; (4) microdata from selective observations by Federal State Statistics Service: income and participation in social programs survey (SOPI[[1]](#footnote-1)), survey of household budgets (SHB[[2]](#footnote-2)), time use survey, comprehensive observation of living conditions of the population (COLC[[3]](#footnote-3)), survey of labor force (SLF[[4]](#footnote-4)); (5) microdata from other selective sociological surveys, including: Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey at HSE (annual data from 1994 to 2022), Institute of Social Policy's consumer behavior monitoring within the «Readiness for Change[[5]](#footnote-5)» survey (data for 2021, 2022, and 2023), survey « The Russians’ socio-economic coping strategies with the crisis» by the Laboratory for Studies in Economic Sociology (LSES[[6]](#footnote-6)) at HSE (2022); digital transformation monitoring of the economy and society by ISSEK HSE[[7]](#footnote-7), 2022; innovation behavior monitoring of the population by ISSEK HSE, 2020; (6) databases of the research company «Mediascope» for 2023; (7) “big” data from the Federal Taxation Service (FTS), access to which was obtained in November 2023, and the audit of which is carried out within the framework of the implementation of this project.
4. **Results of the work**:
   1. A systematic review of approaches to studying consumption, consumer behavior, and time budgets of the population within the fields of economics, statistics, sociology, psychology, and marketing.
   2. Development of methodology for assessing incomes, expenditures, and savings at micro and macroeconomic levels, considering changes in the system of national accounts (SNA) prepared by international organizations.
   3. Development of tools for empirical research on the level and dynamics of consumption in regions and prepared a new database of statistical data on consumption indicators in regions from 2011 onwards.
   4. Development and test of a toolkit for sociological research to analyze and monitor the economic behavior of households in Russia, including high-income population groups. The toolkit for assessing time budgets based on a simplified adapted diary method was tested. The methodology for studying subjective satisfaction with time budgets was refined, along with methodological approaches to studying time budgets, considering parallel activities and the distribution of activities over time intervals during the day.
   5. Conduction of three waves of population surveys on issues of economic behavior of households (EBH, sample 1 wave N=6000; sample 2 and 3 waves = 6700 respondents 18 years and older). Microdata bases of population surveys on consumption and time budgets were prepared, containing a panel component.
   6. According to the data from the first wave of HEB, approximately 60% of Russians aged 18 and above report that their expenses are roughly equal to their incomes. For nearly every third Russian (32%), expenses are usually less than the amounts they receive. The majority of the population aged 18 and above believes that their financial situation has not changed in the last few months (75%), while others more often mention its deterioration (15%) rather than improvement (9%). In the coming months, two-thirds (65%) of respondents also do not expect any changes. However, Russians are more optimistic about the future: the segment hoping for an improvement in their financial situation (16%) exceeds the proportion expecting the opposite (11%). Compared to 2022, the consumer behavior of most respondents remained relatively stable by the summer of 2023 – they either do not buy specific goods and services or purchase them in the same volume. However, the share of buyers for many items in 2023 has decreased compared to 2022, but the consumer behavior of the remaining buyers has stabilized or even become more active. Most of the funds from their personal budget are spent by Russians on food, leisure, and utilities. Also, common payments include expenses for information and communication (including mobile communication and the internet). In May-June 2023, the largest amounts were spent by Russians on travel, debt payments, and rental housing.
   7. Conduction of two waves of non-representative quantitative surveys of high-income (top decile by income) population groups (N = 1000 individuals 18 years and older in each wave). A microdata base of non-representative quantitative survey data was prepared.
   8. The data from the first wave of the “wealthy” survey showed that a characteristic feature of representatives of the top decile is a complex income structure, including income from both labor and accumulated capital. Diversification of income sources allowed a quarter of respondents to maintain their income level in the last year, and just under a third even increased it (primarily due to returns in the labor market or business, not investments). The key indicators of high status in the minds of this group's representatives are real estate and automobiles (or other means of transportation). More than three-quarters of respondents noted the unavailability of usual goods and services due to sanctions pressure, and about 40% made large purchases under the influence of negative expectations of further dynamics.
   9. The analysis of time budgets for high-income groups showed that, similar to gender differences, the time budgets of men and women in mass and most affluent layers are very similar: women spend more time on unpaid work than men, and in families with children, mothers spend more time on unpaid work than fathers. At the same time, representatives of the top decile by income are more inclined to “elite” types of leisure; they read books more often, attend cultural and sports events, restaurants, and bars, and watch TV less. The most acute deprivation is the deprivation of sleep, observed in all examined socio-demographic groups of the high-income population. It is also noted that wealthy people lack communication with spouses and other relatives, and in households with children – also communication and time for activities with children. Women more often note a time deficit for almost all types of activities, except communication and play with children. Not only do men lack time for children but it is also important to them, and this shortage negatively affects their quality of life according to subjective assessments.
   10. Conduction of two online surveys – one for youth aged 16-18 (N = 2000) and one for respondents aged 25-59 with spouses (N = 3000). Microdata bases of focused online survey data were prepared based on their results.
5. **Degree of implementation, recommendations for implementation, or implementation results (to be filled in if there is practical usability of the obtained results)**: Some research results were utilized in the preparation of analytical notes and expert opinions in 2023. The project results can be used for consulting government authorities and improving existing or developing new legislation in the areas of economic, tax, and social policies. Individual materials may be used for preparing courses for students, and the collected datasets can be used for the empirical part of graduation theses.

1. Selective Observation of Population Incomes – Выборочное наблюдение доходов населения (ВНДН) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Обследование бюджетов домашних хозяйств (ОБДХ) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Комплексное наблюдение условий жизни населения (КОУЖ) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Обследование рабочей силы (ОРС) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Готовность к переменам [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Лаборатория экономико-социологических исследований (ЛЭСИ) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge – Институт статистических исследований и экономики знаний (ИСИЭЗ) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)