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Perceived Social Values among Adults in the Fergana Valley: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT: Shared social values influence how adults interpret everyday conduct, responsibility, interpersonal behaviour, and social expectations. This study described how adults in the Fergana Valley perceive ten paired positive and negative social qualities in the contemporary social image of Uzbek adults. A cross-sectional descriptive survey was conducted during 2025–2026 among 364 adults aged 25 years and older from the Fergana, Andijan, and Namangan regions of Uzbekistan (172 men and 192 women). An author-developed questionnaire presented ten paired qualities and used a seven-category response scale ranging from strong predominance of the positive pole to strong predominance of the negative pole. Percentage distributions were calculated for each response category. Positive poles were predominant across all ten dimensions. Strong positive responses were most frequent for honor (74.44%), culture (67.06%), and conscientiousness (66.94%), whereas diligence had the lowest proportion (49.23%). Perceptions that both poles were equally present were most frequent for modesty–arrogance (8.68%), prudence–imprudence (8.56%), diligence–laziness (8.44%), and contentment–ingratitude (7.85%). The findings describe respondents' social perceptions rather than fixed psychological characteristics of the Uzbek population. They provide a descriptive basis for studying how shared social meanings may shape interpersonal environments and culturally responsive approaches to psychological and health-promotion work. Direct relationships with mental-health or other health outcomes were not assessed and require separate investigation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an integral part of general health and well-being, and contemporary public-health approaches increasingly emphasize the environments in which people live, work, communicate, and form relationships (World Health Organization, 2022). Psychological well-being is therefore not only an individual experience. It is also shaped by social relationships, perceived norms, opportunities for participation, and the broader conditions of everyday life. Within this perspective, the ways people interpret socially valued qualities can provide useful information about the social context in which well-being is experienced.

People rarely evaluate social behavior without reference to shared meanings. Responsibility, honesty, modesty, generosity, diligence, and honor can function as everyday standards through which individuals interpret themselves and others. These standards are not necessarily stable across time or identical for all members of a population. They are influenced by cultural learning, interpersonal experience, social institutions, and changing forms of communication.

National psychological images should therefore be understood as socially constructed representations rather than as fixed personality profiles of entire populations. Allport (1938) described personality as a dynamic organization, while cross-cultural research has shown that values and social norms are embedded in broader cultural settings. Schwartz (1992) demonstrated that value priorities can be examined systematically across societies, and Triandis (1995) emphasized the role of cultural patterns in shaping social behavior.

This issue is particularly relevant in contemporary Uzbekistan, where established forms of family and community interaction coexist with rapid changes in education, employment, communication, mobility, and access to global information. The resulting social environment may bring established expectations and newer models of self-presentation into contact. Rather than assuming that one replaces the other, it is useful to examine how adults themselves perceive the coexistence of different qualities.

The information environment is one possible context for these changes. Social-cognitive theory proposes that observation and symbolic communication contribute to the development of attitudes and behavioral expectations (Bandura, 2001). Digital media have increased the visibility of status, consumption, conflict, achievement, and self-presentation. The present study does not measure media exposure and therefore cannot test a causal media effect. It treats the contemporary information environment only as a context for interpreting why some respondents may perceive opposing qualities as coexisting.

The connection with human health is indirect but relevant. Social trust, responsibility, constructive interpersonal conduct, and a sense of belonging can form part of the social conditions in which people cope, participate, and experience psychological well-being. WHO emphasizes that mental health is influenced by interacting individual, family, community, and structural determinants (World Health Organization, 2022). Examining shared social perceptions can therefore contribute to a contextual understanding of psychological well-being, while recognizing that perception itself is not a clinical or health outcome.

The present study aimed to characterize adults' perceptions of ten paired social qualities and to identify which dimensions showed the strongest positive predominance and which showed greater perceived coexistence of positive and negative poles. The study was descriptive and was not designed to diagnose mental-health conditions, evaluate an intervention, or estimate health effects.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study design and participants

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used. Data were collected during 2025–2026 from adults living in the Fergana, Andijan, and Namangan regions of Uzbekistan. The sample comprised 364 respondents aged 25 years and older, including respondents aged 60 years and above. There were 172 men and 192 women. The three regions were considered within the broader sociocultural context of the Fergana Valley. The sampling approach was described in the study records as random sampling.

2.2. Instrument and procedure

An author-developed questionnaire was used to examine perceived positive and negative social qualities. Participants evaluated which pole of each paired characteristic they considered more prevalent in the contemporary social image of Uzbek adults. Ten pairs were examined: prudence–imprudence, patriotism–betrayal, conscientiousness–dishonesty, modesty–arrogance, contentment–ingratitude, diligence–laziness, honor–dishonor, generosity–jealousy, enlightenment–ignorance, and culture–unculturedness.

The response scale contained seven ordered categories: (1) the positive quality is most prevalent; (2) the positive quality is less prevalent; (3) the positive quality is even less prevalent; (4) both qualities are equally present; (5) the negative quality is even less prevalent; (6) the negative quality is less prevalent; and (7) the negative quality is most prevalent. This format allowed respondents to express degrees of perceived predominance rather than requiring a simple positive-versus-negative choice.

2.3. Data analysis

The analysis was descriptive. Percentages were calculated for each response category and compared across the ten paired dimensions. No inferential or predictive statistics were used in the present analysis. Percentages are therefore interpreted as patterns within the surveyed sample rather than estimates of the psychological characteristics of the Uzbek population as a whole. Because the questionnaire was developed for this study, the present analysis does not constitute a formal psychometric validation or diagnostic assessment.

2.4. Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was obtained from the Fergana Association of Psychologists (Approval No. 3/2026; approved August 10, 2026). All participants provided informed consent before participation. The study was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical principles for research involving human participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Across all ten dimensions, the strongest single response category was the positive pole. Honor showed the highest proportion of strong positive predominance (74.44%), followed by culture (67.06%) and conscientiousness (66.94%). Patriotism (61.47%) and prudence (61.36%) also exceeded 60%. In contrast, the strongest positive category was selected by 49.23% for diligence and 51.25% for modesty. Figure 1 summarizes these distributions.

The pattern indicates that respondents' contemporary social image was generally favorable across the ten paired dimensions. This should be interpreted as a representation of shared social perception within the surveyed adult sample, not as a measurement of individual personality or mental health.

Culture and conscientiousness were also strongly represented in the perceived social image. These responses point to the importance participants attach to socially regulated conduct, responsibility, etiquette, and recognized norms. Such perceptions are relevant to research on adult social environments because they show which qualities respondents regard as visible or valued in everyday collective life.

The equal-coexistence category provides a more nuanced part of the results. It was most frequent for modesty–arrogance (8.68%), prudence–imprudence (8.56%), diligence–laziness (8.44%), and contentment–ingratitude (7.85%). These percentages do not demonstrate social polarization by themselves. Instead, they identify dimensions in which respondents were relatively more likely to perceive both sides of a paired quality as present at the same time. This is consistent with a view of values as organized priorities that can contain tensions between different motivational goals (Schwartz, 1992).

The modesty–arrogance result may be considered in the context of changing forms of self-presentation. Contemporary digital communication makes personal success, consumption, status, and self-expression highly visible. Social-cognitive theory provides one framework for considering how observed models may influence social interpretation (Bandura, 2001). Nevertheless, the present study did not measure social-media exposure or social comparison, so a causal interpretation would not be justified. The finding is better treated as a direction for future research.

Diligence produced the lowest proportion of strong positive responses (49.23%), although the broader positive categories remained substantially more common than the negative categories. This distinction is important: the result does not show that laziness was perceived as dominant. Rather, responses concerning diligence were more dispersed across the scale. One possible contextual explanation is that contemporary adults encounter a wider range of work and achievement models, including conventional employment, entrepreneurship, and digitally mediated forms of work. Because occupational variables were not collected, this explanation remains tentative.

The public-health relevance of these findings is contextual rather than clinical. Social environments are part of the wider conditions in which people communicate, participate, experience belonging, and manage everyday demands. The present study does not measure those health-related outcomes. Its contribution is to describe social meanings that can be examined in subsequent studies of social determinants, psychological well-being, and health.

From an applied perspective, honor, responsibility, culture, generosity, and civic commitment can serve as culturally meaningful starting points for structured dialogue. Critical media-literacy activities may also help participants examine how success, status, conflict, and consumption are represented in digital environments. Psychologists and educators can use such discussions to

explore how traditional qualities can be expressed constructively under contemporary conditions. Any intervention based on these themes should subsequently be evaluated with validated measures of psychological well-being or health rather than assuming that the present perceptions themselves constitute health indicators.

Table 1. Distribution of perceived positive and negative qualities across the ten paired dimensions.

Quality pair	Positive most	Positive less	Positive even less	Both equal	Negative even less	Negative less	Negative most
Prudence–imprudence	61.36	23.07	4.52	8.56	1.07	0.59	0.83
Patriotism–betrayal	61.47	24.26	5.23	6.06	1.31	1.31	0.36
Conscientiousness–dishonesty	66.94	21.17	3.09	5.71	1.66	0.71	0.71
Modesty–arrogance	51.25	30.92	6.66	8.68	1.07	1.07	0.36
Contentment–ingratitude	55.53	27.47	6.78	7.85	1.07	1.07	0.24
Diligence–laziness	49.23	31.15	7.73	8.44	1.19	1.43	0.83
Honor–dishonor	74.44	13.67	3.33	6.18	0.95	0.83	0.59
Generosity–jealousy	55.77	28.66	4.88	7.73	1.55	0.83	0.59
Enlightenment–ignorance	56.12	28.42	6.90	6.30	1.07	1.07	0.12
Culture–unculturedness	67.06	21.28	3.33	6.42	0.83	0.83	0.24

Note. Values are percentages. Minor deviations from 100% in some rows are due to rounding.

4. LIMITATIONS

- The sample was drawn from three regions of Uzbekistan and should not be treated as nationally representative.
- The questionnaire was developed by the author and the present study does not report a formal reliability or construct-validity analysis.
- The study relied on self-reported perceptions and used a cross-sectional design; causal explanations cannot be established.
- The study did not directly measure psychological well-being, mental health, social support, media exposure, social comparison, or health outcomes.
- The relationship between the observed social perceptions and psychological well-being therefore remains a research question for future studies using validated measures.

5. CONCLUSION

Among the surveyed adults, positive poles were more frequently perceived as predominant across all ten paired social qualities. Honor, culture, and conscientiousness showed the highest proportions of strong positive predominance, while diligence showed the lowest. At the same time, modesty–arrogance, prudence–imprudence, diligence–laziness, and contentment–ingratitude showed comparatively greater perceptions of coexistence between opposing poles. These results describe a culturally situated social representation rather than an objective profile of Uzbek adults. The study therefore provides a descriptive baseline for future research examining whether and how shared social perceptions relate to validated measures of psychological well-being, social functioning, or health.

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Author Contributions

Alijon Dadajon ugli OSTANAKULOV: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Ethics Statement

Ethics approval was obtained from the Fergana Association of Psychologists (Approval No. 3/2026; approved August 10, 2026). All participants provided informed consent before participation.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings are maintained by the author. Because the dataset contains participant-level information, de-identified data may be made available to qualified researchers upon reasonable request, subject to applicable ethical and confidentiality requirements.

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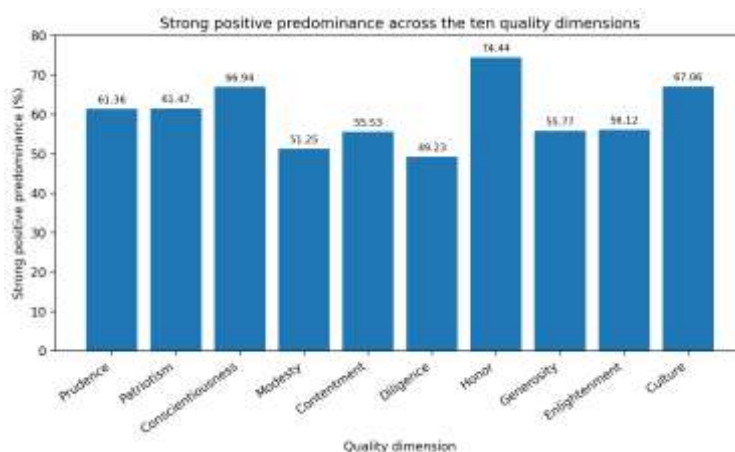


Figure 1. Strong positive predominance across the ten quality dimensions.