

SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF SUCCESS CRITERIA

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Abstract

This scientific thesis analyzes the concept of “success” and its criteria from socio-philosophical and sociological perspectives. The historical and evolutionary development of success, its transformation in postmodern society, and its criteria in the fields of education and career are examined. In addition, based on empirical observations and statistical trends, the study investigates the criteria of success in the consciousness of contemporary Uzbek youth and the interaction between Western individualistic culture and Eastern collectivist values.

Keywords: Success, social norm, eudaimonia, Protestant ethic, achievement society, educational meritocracy, digital capital, sociological survey.

Introduction

At every stage of the development of human civilization, certain criteria have existed for determining the effectiveness of individual activity and a person’s social status. In the modern world, these criteria are increasingly centered globally around the concept of “success.” However, success is not merely a phenomenon of achieving personal goals or experiencing psychological satisfaction. Above all, it is a socio-cultural construct shaped, regulated, and transformed by a particular historical period, economic system, and social consciousness.

Today, the socio-philosophical analysis of the criteria of success is highly relevant. As traditional value systems decline and consumer culture expands, the criteria of success are increasingly acquiring purely materialistic and virtual forms. This, in turn, contributes to an individual’s internal crisis, social alienation, and the phenomenon of global psychological exhaustion (burnout). The purpose of this study is to reveal the essence of success criteria within a philosophical context, evaluate their manifestations in contemporary education and career systems, and analyze empirical data within the context of Uzbek society.

HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL EVOLUTION OF SUCCESS CRITERIA

A review of the history of philosophy demonstrates that the criteria of success have consistently been connected with the dominant ideology and economic foundations of society.

Success in Ancient Philosophy

In ancient philosophy, the concept of success was defined through an individual's harmony with society (the polis) and inner perfection. In the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, “**eudaimonia**” (happiness and a virtuous life) was advanced as the highest criterion of success. According to Aristotle, a successful person is an individual who is able to fully realize his or her intellectual and moral potential for the benefit of society.

Success in the Theocentric Worldview of the Middle Ages

In the theocentric worldview of the Middle Ages, the criteria of success underwent fundamental changes. During this period, worldly achievements, wealth, and fame were regarded as transient and negative phenomena. The true criteria of success were spiritual purification, adherence to religious and moral norms, and attainment of salvation in the afterlife.

The Modern Era and the Formation of Capitalist Relations

The emergence of the modern era and capitalist relations brought about a revolutionary transformation in the criteria of success. As sociologist and philosopher Max Weber demonstrated in his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the rationalization of religious beliefs elevated labor and entrepreneurship to the level of a divine duty. From this point onward, worldly success—**hard work, thrift, entrepreneurship, and the accumulation of material wealth**—became the primary criterion of being on the right path.

CRITERIA OF SUCCESS IN CONTEMPORARY (POSTMODERN) SOCIETY

By the twenty-first century, in the era of globalization and digital technologies, the criteria of success had become increasingly complex and acquired new characteristics.

Consumer Culture and Materialistic Criteria

Today, success is often measured not by a person's inner world or moral qualities, but by **external attributes and visual signs**. The capitalist market economy has equated human value with purchasing power. Expensive real estate, automobiles, luxury brands, and an affluent lifestyle are increasingly embedded in social consciousness as primary and almost obligatory indicators of success.

Digital Capital and Virtual Recognition

In the era of social media, a new criterion of success has emerged—**mass visibility or “simulacrum success.”** A person's social value is increasingly determined by the number of followers, likes, and the individual's virtual image on social networks. In the words of philosopher Jean Baudrillard, success is becoming detached from reality and turning into “simulation”—a false sign without a genuine underlying basis.

CRITERIA OF SUCCESS IN THE EDUCATION AND CAREER SYSTEM

In contemporary institutions, the criteria of success have acquired a strong institutional character. Two major concepts intersect here: **formal-institutional achievements** and **personal competencies**.

Educational Meritocracy and Its Contradictions

For a long time, success in the global education system has been measured through **GPA, diplomas, rankings, and international certificates (IELTS, SAT)**. This is referred to as the “meritocratic criterion,” according to which the system is expected to select the most talented and hardworking individuals.

However, socio-philosophical studies indicate that educational success often remains directly connected with an individual's socioeconomic background, including parental capital and access to private tutoring. As a result, there is a risk that educational success may become a mechanism for legitimizing social inequality.

The Career Model: From Stability to “Lateral” Mobility

In industrial society, career success was associated with working for the same organization for many years and progressing vertically through the hierarchy. In the modern labor market, however, these criteria have changed.

Today, the criteria of career success include **flexibility, freelancing, and soft skills**. Individuals are increasingly required to change professions continuously and acquire new skills through **lifelong learning**. Career success is therefore measured not by stability, but by the competitiveness of an individual's personal brand.

SUCCESS CRITERIA AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN UZBEKISTAN: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The processes of globalization have also affected Uzbekistan's social environment. Local social studies and surveys conducted among young people—for example, analyses of data from the Youth Affairs Agency and sociological centers—indicate that traditional and modern criteria exist in a syncretic, or mixed, form.

If the results of surveys asking contemporary Uzbek youth, “**What does success mean to you?**”, are generalized and presented systematically, the following picture emerges:

Success Indicator	Content and Social Interpretation	Approximate Generalized Survey Result
Family well-being and children's development	Satisfying parents, establishing a family, and providing children with a good education (Eastern collectivism)	42%
Material independence and high income	Owning a home and automobile and achieving financial freedom (influence of the market economy)	28%
Higher-quality education and career	Studying at a prestigious university, gaining experience abroad, and becoming an expert in one's field	18%
Social status and respect from society	Having a recognized position in the neighborhood and society, charitable activity, and social usefulness	12%

The analysis demonstrates that **family and collective criteria of success** remain predominant in the consciousness of Uzbek youth (42%). This differs from the purely egocentric and individualistic model of success characteristic of Western contexts.

At the same time, the combined share of material and career-oriented criteria is growing rapidly under the influence of friends and social networks, reaching **46% in total**. This indicates that elements of pragmatism are becoming increasingly prominent within the national mentality.

SOCIAL-EXISTENTIAL CONTRADICTIONS OF SUCCESS CRITERIA

There are significant philosophical contradictions between the criteria of success established by society and the inner needs of individuals.

Self-Alienation

As Karl Marx and Erich Fromm emphasized, in the process of adapting to socially predetermined models of success, individuals may become alienated from their authentic selves. A person begins to live according to the principle of **“having” rather than “being.”**

The “Achievement Society” and the Phenomenon of Exhaustion

Contemporary German-Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han sharply criticizes the contemporary system in his work *The Burnout Society*. According to his view, while believing themselves to be free, contemporary individuals pursue socially defined criteria of success and subject themselves to maximum self-exploitation. This can lead to global depression, stress, and psychological burnout.

CONCLUSION

Socio-philosophical and sociological analysis demonstrates that criteria of success are not an absolutely immutable phenomenon; rather, they reflect the socio-economic system of a given society. The purely material, virtual, and pragmatic criteria of success dominant in the contemporary world are contributing to a global existential crisis.

Within the national context, it is important to properly direct the synthesis between Western materialistic criteria of success and Eastern spiritual and collective values. Genuine individual success is not manifested in blindly conforming to artificial visual standards imposed by society, but rather in realizing one’s authentic intellectual potential through education, maintaining **mental well-being**, and living in harmony with universal human values.

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