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Hodnotové preferencie súčasnej mládeže

Value Preferences of Today's Youth

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Abstract

In our contribution, we focused on analyzing research findings related to value preferences among young people. We were interested in the value preferences of older school-age students. We also analyzed the factors that currently contribute to the formation of value orientation in humans, with an emphasis on older school age.

Keywords: Student. Child. Values. Value orientation. Youth.

Value is a term that is very often used in scientific disciplines, in various areas of social practice, and in everyday life. Therefore, this term has both general characteristics and specific characteristics determined by the conditions under which it is used. Kučerová (1996) states that values appear in various areas. Objectivist, subjectivist, and dialectical theories have all attempted to explain them. Each of these theories approaches their explanation from a different perspective. Different conceptions of values are also determined by the contrast between worldview and ideological differences and philosophical concepts. The study and explanation of value orientations is the subject of interest of various scientific disciplines, which only confirms that it is an interdisciplinary category. From a philosophical point of view, it is therefore an approach from the position of axiology (the study of values), from a sociological point of view, the social position is at the forefront, from an ethical point of view, the normative position is at the forefront, and in psychology, the content is understood as socio-psychological.

Most contemporary axiologists attribute the concept of value to everything that satisfies a person, that a person considers necessary, useful, strives for, values, and appreciates. Some authors point out that while things and phenomena in the surrounding world exist even without a subject, they only become valuable through their „ability“ to satisfy (or, conversely, not satisfy) its needs. Value is realized in the mutual relationship between the quality of the object and the quality of the evaluating subject. We also agree with this theory (Gabrhelová, 2020). Just as individuals have their diverse

personal values, social groups also differ in their choice of values. Universal values such as humanism, democracy, rights, and freedoms deserve general agreement (consensus) among people. We tolerate values that contradict humanism, even if we do not share them. Values are one of the most important components of a person's psychological development, mental maturity, and mental health. They play an important formative role in the development of a person's personality and contribute to the organization of the personality structure. Participation in values and experience with them deepens and broadens an individual's life satisfaction, regulates their attitudes and relationship to successes and failures, and ultimately forms the fundamental pillar of meaning for humans.

The study of the processes of evaluation and value creation is undoubtedly the basis for pedagogical theory. Pedagogy pays attention to the issue of values because it is education that fulfills the function of transmitting values in society in order to preserve and further develop culture. Effective education is only possible on the basis of a value-based approach. It is in the sphere of values that joy and happiness are felt and creativity is developed; it is in the sphere of values that the conditions for personal growth and maturation exist (Czerwiec, Ležucha, 2021).

An individual's value system is part of their interpersonal and intrapersonal framework, which strongly influences their connection to their social environment and their view of themselves. Various structures are formed within the value system, such as justice, truth, punishment, role models, etc. (Hudeček, 1986).

Value orientations are considered an important part of the personality structure, in which all the life experiences that a person has acquired in their individual development are summarized. It is generally assumed that the development of value orientations has its origins in the stage of historical development when the satisfaction of basic needs ceases to be the primary problem. The study of value orientations thus presupposes the recognition of changes in a person as a result of new conditions, the awareness of values for one's own internal orientation and for social practice. The problem of identifying value orientations presents relatively difficult challenges from both a methodological and methodical point of view (Krajčová, Pasternáková, 2009).

In addition to fundamental changes in value orientation caused, for example, by radical changes in living and working conditions, there may be a number of partial changes, such as in the order of values that an individual prefers within their value orientation. These changes have their own intensity, course, and causes, which can intersect and overlap in their own way. People attach greater value to facts that best correspond to, suit, and are consistent with their personality traits. A person's internal value orientation correlates significantly with their mental health. Greater differentiation and variability in value orientation influences personality development in a positive and stable

direction. A healthy value orientation tends to contain more values of approximately equal importance rather than a small number of extreme values.

We conducted research in connection with the analyzed issue. In this regard, we focused our attention on diagnosing the value preferences of older school-age students. In conducting the research, we drew on generally known facts about the development of individual societies. These societies are characterized by economic and political changes, demographic changes (the number of children per family is decreasing, the absolute number of children is decreasing, multigenerational cohabitation is breaking down, mortality is decreasing and life expectancy is increasing, the trend of unmarried couples living together is spreading, an increase in the number of children born outside of marriage, a decrease in family stability, an increase in divorce rates, an increase in the age of mothers at the time of their first birth, the emergence of new social phenomena and problems (e.g., poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, and more frequent single-parent families).

We used Ján Vonkomeř's (1991) standardized test to identify the value orientation of older school-age students. Our research was conducted on a sample of 415 respondents. The research findings show that our respondents place social value orientation in first place on average (GS 40,05). On average, educational value orientations are in second place (GS 36,16), followed by moral value orientations (GS 31,14), economic value orientations (GS 30,46), and, in last place, respondents placed aesthetic value orientations (GS 27,10) on average.

On average, the girls surveyed most often prefer social values (GS 42,18), followed by educational (GS 37,25), moral (GS 30,32), economic (GS 28,83), and aesthetic (GS 26,31) values (Table 1). The finding from the „HO“ questionnaire that the girls surveyed preferred aesthetic values the least was surprising to us. According to the research conducted on boys from the Slovak Republic, the average preference for values is as follows: social value orientation (GS 38,20), educational (HS 35,22), economic (GS 31,88), moral (GS 31,85) and aesthetic (GS 27,79).

Table 1: Average scores in value orientations of educational, aesthetic, moral, economic, social, and comparison of their levels

Values orientations	Average		
	girls	boys	together
educational	37,25	35,22	36,16
	Mann-Whitneyov U test	3,66 **	
aesthetic	26,31	27,79	27,10
	Mann-Whitneyov U test	2,53 *	
moral	30,32	31,85	31,14
	Mann-Whitneyov U test	3,23 **	
economic	28,83	31,88	30,46
	Mann-Whitneyov U test	4,39 **	
social	42,18	38,20	40,05
	Mann-Whitneyov U test	5,77 **	

Source: Own processing

When analyzing the tested significance of differences between the measured values of value orientations in older school-age students, we found a number of statistically significant differences.

A significant statistical difference between the measured values of value orientations was not confirmed in only one case, namely between the measured values for moral and economic values. In other cases, the significance of the differences between the measured values of value orientations was clearly confirmed. Analysis of the research results allows us to conclude that the significance of the differences between the measured values of individual value orientations is statistically significant.

Social values are the most preferred in the respondents' value system. The differences in the measured values of individual value orientations to the social value orientation are therefore clearly in its favor (at a significance level of 0,01). There is a significant statistical difference between the values pointing to educational values and aesthetic, moral, and economic values (at a level of 0,01 in favor of educational values). It follows from the above that there is also a statistically significant difference when comparing data referring to the level of social and educational values (at a level of 0,01 in favor of social values).

The differences between the measured values in the case of moral values (which are the third most preferred in the respondents' value system) and aesthetic values are statistically significant (at the 0,01 level in favor of moral values). If we compare the measured values of economic values only in relation to aesthetic values, the statistical significance is in favor of economic values (at the 0,01 level).

The aim of the research was to diagnose the value preferences of older school-age students. The research material showed that respondents prefer social values in their value system. Aesthetic values were the second most preferred. They were followed by moral values and educational values. Economic values were at the bottom of the respondents' value preferences. Female respondents ranked educational values first in their value orientation. Social values were second. These were followed by moral, economic, and aesthetic values.

The purposefulness and stability of value orientation also represent the stability of the personality itself. Understanding the process of development and the specific effects of value orientations, which form an essential part of personality characteristics, determines the direction of the personality in the future and the ability to consolidate an active social position. Although many authors state that needs are the starting point for the formation of value orientations, value orientations can largely be considered the result of the socialization process. As a result, a person develops their basic value orientation, which depends in many ways on the quality of external, exogenous factors, but above all on educational influences. If we consider humans to be social beings determined by a specific socio-cultural system, then different value orientations can be found in different cultural communities.

It follows from the above that a person's own value system represents a mutual hierarchical arrangement, a structure of recognized and desirable values. In this context, we often refer to a hierarchy of values. As we have already mentioned, value orientation means a person's focus on certain values of the material and spiritual culture of society. Value orientations are the most important part of the personality structure, representing a certain axis of consciousness, which is closely related to a person's thoughts and feelings, and from the perspective of which many life issues are decided. A person's system of value orientations represents the highest level of the dispositional hierarchy that regulates human behavior. It is likely that if we know a person's value system, we not only gain an insight into their personality, but we can also predict their behavior to a large extent. Certain values are usually interconnected, forming clusters or groups. We cannot take individual values out of context and interpret them in isolation, because their meaning depends on what other values, goals, aspirations, interests, etc. they are connected to and how they are connected.

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