

The Ethnic Diversity and the Value Orientations of the Adolescents: Differences and Similarities



Psychology

Keywords: Value orientations, hierarchy of values, life styles, educational family atmosphere, cultural context.

Lulzim Murtezani

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia

Abstract

Background. The values, i.e. the value orientations are significant elements of a person's constitution. They mainly depend on the context, i.e. the culture to which the individual belongs. Hence, the factors, such as the family surrounding (the degree of education of the parents and their style of upbringing children), the national and religious background, and other demographic characteristics have a significant role in their formation.

Purpose. Having these influences adequately, the goal of this research is to examine the value preferences of the youth from different cultural origins.

Sample. The sample research consists of 117 adolescents, mainly high schools students, separated in three equal groups according to their ethnic background (Albanians, Macedonians and Turkish).

Results. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the data (ranking according to M –values; the t-test and ANOVA) indicated a) an existence of a hierarchy of values with domination of the values: family orientation (M = 4.67), altruism (M = 4.53), utilitarianism (M = 4.43), and cognitive style (M = 4.22) which was expected as a reflection of the transitional conditions with which Macedonia copes; b) significant differences in the respondents regarding the gender; c) important changes on the degree of preference of particular value orientations considering the educational atmosphere in the family. According to the educational level of the mother, the differences are noticeable in terms of the utilitarian and popular styles, for which an important F relation at a level of significance 0.01 ($p < 0.01$) was established; d) differences among the respondents that were emphasized more in terms of ethnic background. For almost all value orientations, significant differences (F relation at a level of significance of 0.01 and 0,05) were noticed in the Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish high school students.

Conclusions. Similar to other research, these data confirm the assumption of culture's important role in the value orientation of the youth. By identifying the value priorities of the youth from different ethnic backgrounds, society and science together will successfully create strategies for multicultural education practice.

Introduction

The human values are one of the many concepts in modern psychology. The values of the individual are important and almost inseparable from the personal characteristics, such as the traits. According to Allport (Allport, 1961), the orientations towards values are levels which reveal the human traits.

Without doubt the values depend on the context, experience, and the culture to which we belong to. Hence, the nurture and forming of the values is explained by taking into account the cultural factors: racial and ethnic belonging, family influence, the mass – media, the parenting style of education, films etc. Adequately to these influences, the expectations for the changes of the value priorities (preferences) along time are logical. According to this logic, in the post – socialist countries, the newly formed changes of the transition imply forming of different values and life orientations of the people as frames of behaviour in a democratic society. But, is this so simple having in mind that people do not react the same to the external influences due to their

social and cultural differences? In this context, we need to mention that the needs or the innate temperaments are an important source of the basic value orientations (Rokeach, 1973).

Along with these personal traits, the factors such as education, age, gender and profession have an important influence on their value priorities (Inglehart, 1997; Schwartz & Bardi, 1997). Usually, the individuals have the same experiences (traumas, relations with the parents, immigrations), which largely determine the evaluation of the people regarding the importance of the values (Feather, 1995).

Hence, we can say that the type of the preferred values of people depicts the different personal and social influences on them. We assume that if the life experience is different in terms of the culture to which the young people belong to, they will consequently prefer different values.

Analogously to the previously stated, we chose to scrutinize this delicate question in young people which differ according to gender, education of their parents and cultural origin.

1. Method of research

Adequately to the fact that the research is not conceptualized in a sense of determination of the causal relation of the variables, a non – experimental approach was used as a method of the research.

1.1 Subjects and procedure of collecting of data

The sample of the research consists of students (a total of 117), aged 17 to 18, from high schools in two cities in the west part of Macedonia (Tetovo and Gostivar), as typical representatives of communities with mixed ethnic composition of the population.

1.2 Instrument

In the research, a scale for determination of the value orientation of Likert type was used. It consists of ten lifestyles, and each of them is operational as a kind of short description of a lifestyle, which is very similar to Morris's study of "the lifestyles" (Morris, 1956).

1.3 Processing the data of the research

The processing and analysis of the empiric data are done with the use of procedures of descriptive statistics (Arithmetic middle, standard deviation) and analysis of the variability compared to the results subjected to the Kruskal Wallis's test.

2. Results

2.1 A Degree of preference of the lifestyles of the respondents at the level of the overall sample

The results given in Table 1. indicate different degrees of preferences of lifestyles by the respondents. They were supposed to make a choice on a scale from 1 to 6, from "I do not prefer it at all" to "I prefer it the most", regarding the 10 offered lifestyles.

By looking at the scores for the degree of preferences, we get an idea for the highest and lowest ranking lifestyles. It is evident that the following lifestyles are with the highest ranking: religious ($M = 4.76$); family orientation ($M = 4.67$), altruism ($M = 4.53$), utilitarianism ($M = 4.43$) and the cognitive style ($M = 4.22$). They are followed by promethean ($M = 3.99$), egoistic style ($M = 3.98$); hedonistic ($M = 3.91$); popular ($M = 3.26$) and at the bottom of the rank list is the power style ($M = 2.94$).

Table 1. Ranking of the lifestyles according to the degree of preference of the overall sample.

Lifestyles	M	SD	R
family orientation	4.67	1.130	2
utilitarianism	4.43	1.147	4
Popular	3.26	1.609	9
Promethean	3.99	1.079	6
Power	2.94	1.487	10
Altruism	4.53	1.111	3
cognitive	4.22	1.267	5
Egoistic	3.98	1.390	7
Hedonistic	3.91	1.286	8
Religious	4.76	1.179	1

The obvious popularity of the religious and family style point out the influence of the changes of the transition. Currently, the young people give importance to the religious style (*Rank*, 1), which was not characteristic two decades ago – in the communistic period. The popularity of the family style depicts the traditional cultural living of the people. Otherwise, in conditions of general crisis and uncertainty, it is almost a normal phenomenon for the young people to find assurance in religion and the family core (*Rank*, 2). Even in times like these, their important orientation is the altruism (*Rank*, 3), which implies the cognition of their firmly determined pro-social orientation.

The fact that they give high ranking to the utilitarian (*Rank*, 4) and cognitive (*Rank*, 5) lifestyles demonstrates their rational orientation in life. Simply, they do not want to be in the role of observers of what is going on in their surrounding, but they want to be creators of the present and future. Similarly, *Inglehart and Baker (2000)* found that the orientations changed from traditional to laic – rational values in almost all industrialized societies. *Inglehart (1997)* emphasizes that if young people face existential uncertainty, they will value the materialistic values more. In this study, the clear determination for pro-social, utilitarian and cognitive lifestyle signals beginning of a new (pragmatic) mentality of the young people as a reflection of the global trends throughout the world.

2.2 The gender of the respondents and their preference of a lifestyle

We expected that the factor gender will distinguish the respondents in the preference of lifestyles. Namely, the styles as religious – traditional, family lifestyle and altruistic lifestyle would be most desirable for girls. However, the results of the *Kruskall – Walli's* test refuted this

assumption, by not showing significant differences between genders for any value orientation (Table 2.). We consider that this is a consequence of the exposure to identical social circumstances of the young people, at the expense of relativisation of the gender differences.

Table 2. Lifestyles of the respondents of male and female gender

	Fam.	Uti.	Pop.	Pro.	Pow
Chi-Square	.898	.583	.626	.237	2.611
Df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.343	.445	.429	.627	.106
	Alt.	Kog.	Ego.	Hed.	Rel.
Chi-Square	.478	1.02	.676	.203	.918
Df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.490	.312	.411	.652	.388

2.3 The preference of lifestyles and the education of the parents

We believe that the educational climate in the family, the education of the father and mother, will reflect greatly on the preferred value orientations of their children. In our case, the education of the father did not turn out to be a relevant predicate of the value orientation of the young people. However, the analysis of the results according to the education of the mother provided statistically significant differences (ANOVA) regarding the utilitarian (in favour of the respondents whose mothers have completed elementary and high school education) and popular lifestyles, for which an important F relation at the level of significance of 0.01 and 0.05 has been established (Table 3.). The respondents whose mothers have university education give higher ranking to the popular lifestyle than their peers whose mothers have completed elementary education. This tendency supports the assumption that the mothers with university education have a high degree of ambitions for their children.

Table 3. ANOVA for the education of the mother and the value preferences

Variables	Source variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Util.	Between Groups	19.329	2	9.664	8.265	.000
	Within Groups	133.304	114	1.169		
	Total	152.632	116			
Pop.	Between Groups	17.018	2	8.509	3.424	.036
	Within Groups	283.290	114	2.485		
	Total	300.308	116			

2.4 Value orientations of the respondents of different ethnic origin

It is an assumption that the experience in different cultural groups, such as the ethnic ones, makes people have different orientations in life. Maybe these differences are not so stressed as much as we perceive them, however it is a fact that they often function in the form of stereotypes and prejudices for other groups. The ethnic belonging reflects history, tradition and the shared experience of an ethnicity. In this way they develop their own ways of thinking and perception of the reality, and with these attitudes, as well as values according to which they differ from the

members of other ethnic groups. In the research, we started from the assumption that the ethnic diversity of the young people also produces diversity in the value orientations.

The analysis of the results with the use of the ANOVA – technique confirms the expectation according to which the young people from different ethnic groups are guided by different basic values. In this research, for almost all lifestyles, significant statistical differences among the young Albanians, Macedonians and Turkish people have been determined (Table 4.).

Table 4. ANOVA about the value preferences and the ethnic belonging of the respondents

	Fam.	Uti.	Pop.	Pro.	Pow
F	10.613	5.372	6.543	.798	7.102
Sig.	.000	.006	.002	.453	.001
	Alt.	Kog.	Ego.	Hed.	Rel.
F	8.611	12.692	3.969	5.885	40.015
Sig.	.000	.000	.022	.004	.000

With the goal to determine the validity of these indicators, since the ANOVA goes only in one direction and is more adequate for results of experimental circumstances, all the scores were subjected to non-parametric technique of analysis, i.e. the Kruskal – Wallis’s test (Table 5.).

Table 5. The value preferences and the ethnic belonging of the respondents

	Fam.	Uti.	Pop.	Pro.	Pow
Chi-Square	17.545	8.400	13.098	1.293	13.561
Df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.015	.001	.524	.001
	Alt.	Kog.	Ego.	Hed.	Rel.
Chi-Square	21.938	21.779	7.648	8.241	57.151
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.022	.016	.000

The indicators were almost the same in the application of the Kruskal – Wallis’s technique for analysis of the ones acquired through the ANOVA. Regarding the family style, the difference between the Albanians and the other two ethnic groups of respondents is significant. This difference is more obvious when the Albanian group of respondents is compared to the Macedonian one. Perhaps, giving greater importance to the family style is more emphasized in young people, who are more dependent, primarily economically, on the support of the parents. For the utilitarian style, this difference goes in favour of the young people from Macedonian ethnicity. Regarding the style of popularity, the Albanians and Macedonians differ from the Turkish respondents, in whom a significantly lower value has been noticed regarding this style. Regarding the Promethean style, there are no significant differences among the respondents. Most probably, the tendency for immediate participation in the life situations (as a mark of the promethean orientation), gives more a reflection of the general situation in the society, in which everyone lives together, rather than it being related to the cultural agents. Regarding the style of power, the Macedonians give significantly higher rank, unlike the young Albanians and the Turkish people. As far as the altruistic style is concerned, the Albanians are more different than the Macedonians. We consider that this is due to the collective orientation directed by the tradition. The results regarding the cognitive style are almost identical, the difference being that the young Albanians and Macedonians are more prominent than the young Turkish people. As far as the hedonistic

style is concerned, the young people of Macedonian ethnicity are most prominent. Hedonism is a mark of the adolescence when a main agent of the behaviour is the enjoyment in life, and this requires material means. In the religious style, the young Albanians and Turkish people differ from the Macedonians, namely they have given a very high rank to this lifestyle. As a matter of fact, the Islam religion traditionally is shared by most of the Albanians and Turkish people, and because of this they show a similar degree of preference. This conclusion is made in a study of the values of the high school Albanian students (Murtezani, 2004), where a high degree of preference of the family and religious style, as traditionally collective, has been found. Similarly, some analysed values indicated that the collectivism is a modern value of guidance in the Turkish culture as well (Hofstede, 1991; Schwartz, 1992). It is obvious that they are transferred from the parents to their children (Albert, I. & Trommsdorff, G., 2003). The data from another research (Frizhand, 2007), in which a lower rank of the religious and family style by the young Macedonians is determined, are interesting. In this research, we have no pretension to explain the differences in the value priorities in detail on the account of the ethnic belonging. We consider the introduction to the value determinations of the young Albanians, Turkish people and Macedonians as a tool for improvement of their collaboration, i.e. an opportunity for promotion of the intercultural dialogue and cohabitation, which is very important for a multiethnic society which pretends for a membership in the European Union.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

With the conveyed research on a random sample of high school students, we aimed to determine how relevant are the factors such as gender, education of the parents and the ethnic belonging, for their value preferences. The research indicated that: a) The gender of the respondents is not statistically important for their value priorities; b) The education of the parents also does not influence considerably the value orientations, which the respondents will determine, with the partial connection of the education of the mothers with two value orientations, and c) The ethnic belonging of the respondents renders significant differences in the degree of their preference of the offered lifestyles.

3.2 Recommendations

This paper was not conceptualized for detailed analysis of the issue regarding the value orientations of the young people of different ethnic origin, but to give an answer to the general question whether the differences among the different ethnicities exist, which was actually proven, i.e. they are real. However, the challenge is for the society to manage these differences, especially when dealing with the young people. There are different alternatives: The differences to be treated as a source and as a means to strengthen the separated worlds of the young people, or to work on the promotion of respect of the ethnic diversity and with this to build a multicultural reality in the society. We believe that in our country, the second alternative corresponds to the aspirations for membership in NATO and the European Union.

References

1. Albert, I. , Trommsdorff, G. (2003). *Intergenerational Transmission of Family Values*. XIth European Conference on Developmental Psychology. Milan, Italy.
2. Allport, G.W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
3. Feather, N. T. (1995). Values, valences. and choice: The influence of values on the perceived attractiveness and choice of alternatives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68,1135-1151.
4. Frichand, A. (2007) *Vrednosti, vrednosni orientacii, moralni stavovi i modeli za identifikacija vo razlicni vozrasni grupi*. Magisterski trud: Skopje
5. Hofstede, G. (1991). *Culture and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
6. Inglehart, R., Baker, E.W. (2000). Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values. *American Sociological Review*, 65, 19-51.
7. Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and postmodernization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
8. Inglehart, R. (1977). *The silent revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
9. Morris, C.W. (1956). *Varieties of human value*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Murtezani, L. (2004). *Stilet e preferuara të jetese te nxënësit e shkollave te mesme të Tetovës*. Disertacion i doktoraturës: Tetovë.
11. Rokeach, M. (1979). *Understanding human values*. New York: Free Press.
12. Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.
13. Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theory and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology (Vol. 25)*. New York: Academic Press, 1-65.
14. Schwartz, S. H., Sagiv, L., Boehnke, K. (2000). Worries and values. *Journal of Personality*, 68, 309-346.
15. Schwartz, S.H., Bardi, A. (1997). Influences of adaptation to communist rule on value priorities in Eastern Europe. *Political Psychology*, 18, 385-410.