

Transformation of Value Orientations of Higher Education Applicants in Ukraine

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Abstract

The relevance of the study stems from the role of higher education institutions in shaping the national values among students of pedagogical specialities (educators, future teachers, social workers). The purpose of this study is to investigate the transformation of value orientations of Ukrainian students in the process of developing a democratic society. The study compared data from two age groups (55-60 years old; 18-28 years old). The study used a conversation that involved closed and open-ended questions. The results of the survey were analysed using the cross-sectional method, and directions for further work with the data were drawn up. The anamnesis of the responses is presented in the tables. The empirical study identified the main value orientations among students of pedagogical higher education institutions of the past and present time; investigated the hierarchy of youth values of the 80s, 90s and 2021; compared the transformation processes and formulated the main reasons for their changes in the Soviet period and in the period of independent Ukraine; determined the "brand" phenomenon of modern youth of pedagogical specialties, analysed the way self-development and self-realisation becomes a paramount value of personal orientations among young students. The materials of the study are of practical significance for the process of forming value orientations in higher education institutions. It is necessary to shape system of values among students (future teachers) as they will transmit this knowledge to the younger generation in educational institutions of different levels.

Keywords: axiology, students-teachers, modern youth, awareness, self-development and self-realisation, personality, self-concept

1. Introduction

Transformation as a concept in pedagogy and psychology began to be used in the mid-twentieth century. Sustainable approaches to shaping and achieving the quality of the new value system are being overcome. In the system of national values and values of European society in general, the transformation has been taking place for more than a century (Weiss, 2020). For many years, Ukrainian society has been undergoing a transformation of economic, political, cultural and social values. During this period, institutional reforms took place that changed young people's views on the socio-political, economic and legal spheres in Ukraine. The process of change is still underway, and therefore a reorientation of values is taking place in the minds of the majority of student youth. The democratisation of the legal order in the Ukrainian state has filled the value system of the youth with content. Personal needs and interests turn out to be the most important ones for most citizens of the Ukrainian state. The state, for its part, takes up the creative activity of its citizens and encourages them to engage in healthy egocentrism. The society of young higher education students is undergoing profound transformational changes that serve as the main ways and means of shaping the value orientations of their own life path. It is important that the speed of existing transformations accelerated after the events of the 2013-2014 Dignity Revolution, the Crimea annexation, and the deployment of hostilities in Donbas (Shcherbakova, 2017). Student youth is a population group that acquires the basic value orientations of being, working, everyday life and leisure time. With the intensification of the transformation

processes of the world community in the 21st century, social life has become an extremely complex and dynamic phenomenon. Therefore, it is important to establish value orientations and improve the techniques for the formation of life values among students, who are the driving force for the development of any society (Ocheretyaniy, 2020).

The issue of values has been studied by several sciences, proving that the problem of value orientations and national priorities is an interdisciplinary one. It should be examined from different perspectives of sciences such as pedagogy, psychology, sociology, philosophy and medicine. In psychological terms, values represent a person's self-image, self-worth, self-development, self-realisation and self-awareness. From a sociological perspective, value orientation determines belonging to a group, forms authority among peers, contributes to professional fulfilment, and the realisation of a person in a family role (father-mother). In philosophical terms, value orientations are an important component of the worldview of both the individual and the social group. It is the prioritisation of certain generalised human values: well-being, health, comfort, freedom, self-disclosure, etc. (Dann, 2018). In medicine, naturally, a person's main value is health.

Western scholars L. Baier (2016), R. Bidshahri (2017), C. Brame (2018), R. Ciftgul & A. Cetinkanat (2021) while studying the value orientations of students-teachers, used a student-centred approach, taking into account their sensitivity, mentality, personal reference points and life experience. Mentality plays an important role in shaping the life values of future teachers among both Ukrainian and Western students. Ukrainian scientists N. Shcherbakova (2017), A. Ocheretyaniy (2020) and G. Filipchuk (2016; 2018a; 2018b) suggests the formation of value orientations among Ukrainian students-teachers through the educational environment of the higher education institution. The pedagogical process is focused on the assimilation and actualisation by future teachers of national values as their own values and attitudes, through the integration of personal, cultural and social, social and political, as well as professionally oriented values. Currently, the factors that determine the specifics of the national values transformation that are taking place at this stage of the Ukrainian society's development have not been sufficiently studied. The scholars believe that intra-personal conflict caused by an ambiguity of life choices leads to an existential crisis. Studies on the problems of young people in the 1980s and 1990s have shown that value systems are not defined, transformations are slowed down, and the hierarchy of value orientations is disrupted (Shcherbakova, 2017). Therefore, the objective of the study is to investigate the way in which life choices of the younger generation affect the development of society in the future; what changes are required in the educational process. The content of cognitive activity and the scope of future social activities depend on the life orientations that are established during the student years. A certain level of education influences national values and makes the process of choosing and agreeing on one's future self-realisation goals more compromising and dialogical.

2. Materials and Methods

In the course of the study, the following methods were used: theoretical analysis of scientific literature by Western and domestic scholars (textbooks, monographs, theses, articles, college websites of the USA, Europe and Ukraine), synthesis, concretisation, generalisation of the conducted source analysis, method of analogy and modelling. Empirical methods included observation, surveys, interviews, mathematical processing of data. The experimental base for the study was Zaporizhzhia National University. The study of national value orientations of the students studying pedagogical specialities at Ukrainian universities was carried out in three stages. At the first stage of the study, statistical data on the formation of orientations of Ukrainian and US students were summarised, and the hierarchy of values of European and domestic students studying pedagogical specialities was highlighted:

– US students – 1) family; 2) self-development; 3) competitiveness; 4) patriotism; 5) health; 6) freedom of choice; 7) equality in relationships; 8) material security; 9) cheerfulness;

– Ukrainian students – 1) freedom of choice; 2) patriotism; 3) self-development; 4) personal "brand"; 5) creativity; 6) equality in relationships; 7) social activity; 8) material well-being; 9) spiritual pleasure; 10) family.

The second stage involved conducting a pedagogical study, which included observation, interviews and survey. Two groups of interviewees took part in the survey: teachers aged 55-60 and students of pedagogical specialities aged 18-28. A total of 208 people took part in the experiment. During the written survey, respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire with general information (name, age, profession) and 3 open-ended questions on life values (What is your highest value? Place the values according to their importance for you: family, work, leisure time, patriotism, promotion of your own "brand" (self-realisation). Have you realised your own "Self-image of a teacher" with the one you had when you were a student? (for the older generation)/ Do you have a "self-image of a future teacher"? (for students).

The third stage is the final one. An analysis of the survey, interviews and observation was carried out. An anamnesis of value orientations of students in Soviet times and modern Ukraine was formed. A comparative analysis of national values of those times and today was conducted. As a result of these models' analysis, the recommendations on the formation of national life values in higher education institutions have been developed. The recommendations are based on the experience of American researchers with the possibility of being applied in Ukrainian educational practice. The key factor in the experience of American scholars has been identified as the promotion of a personal brand, a desire among young people to present themselves to the world as individuals and professionals. American students have a desire for self-presentation on a mental level, and they have been learning this since their student days. The practical value of the results obtained can be used to improve the educational system of higher education in Ukraine precisely in the direction of shaping the value system of youth. It is therefore extremely important to train Ukrainian students who are future teachers to join the practice of their profession. Otherwise, if the process of self-development loses its relevance, slows down, and is ignored, the teacher's personality will not be able to meet the social demand of the population for a modern teacher and qualitatively form values of the future generation (Filipchuk, 2018a; 2018b).

3. Results

At the beginning of this research, the authors of the study have examined the existing literature, the works of modern scholars on the problem of value orientations transformation, national values of Ukrainian youth, the value system of a modern young teacher. The improvement and enrichment of the system of value orientations depends on the era in question - whether it is the period of world wars, the time of perestroika, the rebirth of independent Ukraine in the 1990s or the present time. The future of society and the world as a whole depends on what young people think. The young people of 1939-1945 believed it was necessary to give their lives for their fatherland; in the 1950s-80s they believed piously in their "leaders" and gave themselves up to work to rebuild their country; from the mid-80s to the 2000s, material achievements and family well-being were the main values; today, the morality of the past seems outdated and burdensome to modern youth, limiting freedom, the will and individuality. In ancient times, the processes of revolution and reform took place in barbaric ways; now, young people are socialised through political and governance processes (Shealy, 2016). In the late 1980s, the value of concepts such as democracy, freedom, law and the privacy of citizens from the state came to the fore. In the 1990s, the main values for young people were education, professionalism, justice, decency and honesty, which could both unite and separate the youth. At the present stage, what matters most is freedom of action, a minimum of restrictions, an interest in personal achievement from which society benefits in stability, orderliness, and democracy, but now in a new way compared to what was relevant in Soviet times.

However, any global ideas of educational reform and rapid technological development, the introduction of new educational standards are not possible without improving the level of the educational process in the country, since the "transmitter" of knowledge and cultural values is the teacher in the higher education institution and the teacher in the secondary education institution. The developers of the "New Ukrainian School" project believe that the main goal is to provide the younger generation with practical life skills and knowledge necessary for life. Therefore, the model of a modern teacher should include an awareness of the youth's problems, their interests, value orientations, which will be a national, culturally leading principle (Filipchuk, 2018b). For the teacher, the pupil, the student, the balance between skills in the natural sciences and the humanities is significant. Then a young person will be able to adapt easily to the new challenges of society. The youth of the Soviet era, for their part, had a hard time with the societal transformation of the 1990s. In reforming the education system, the focus should be placed on human excellence, developing human spirituality on the basis of national culture, which will lead to the transformation of society. This is because, firstly, the individual is the highest social value; secondly, social development requires the humanisation of needs; and thirdly, the formation of the individual takes place through national culture. The development of a self-sufficient individual as a citizen of their state, a nation, makes the problem of fostering national self-affirmation among student youth an urgent one (Soychuk, 2015). National values are the result of the formation of the nation itself, i.e. values are the achievements that have been formed by humanity throughout its historical development (Shcherbakova, 2017). Thus, every citizen has and independently develops his or her own value reality around him or her, in which he or she lives, and transforms it according to his or her needs on a particular life path.

The second stage of the study identifies how the national values of student youth have changed over the past 60 years. For this purpose, two groups of different generations were interviewed about the hierarchy of values during their student years. One group consisted of people from the older generation, while the other group consisted of young

people. During the interview, non-verbal reactions were observed and statements were recorded about one or another area of a person's life: family, work, leisure time, self-actualisation. The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Transformation of the Value Orientation Hierarchy of Students of Pedagogical Specialities in terms of Three Age Periods (defined in percentage terms)

No. s/n	Values of the nation	The youth of the 1980s	The youth of the 1990s	The youth of today
1.	Family	86	82	20
2.	Work	47	60	18
3.	Leisure time	59	24	41
4.	Patriotism	6	11	59
5.	Self-development	13	16	91

The third stage was to conduct a research anamnesis and determine conclusions. So, it can be seen that family was the main value of society until the early 2000s. At that time, family provided the fundamental basic needs of the individual. It remains a priority for today's young people, but after self-development and discovering their own "brand". The majority of respondents of the younger generation disagreed with the statement that it is necessary to get married in order to start a family. For most of them, marriage is a partnership, supporting each other in their endeavours. Recently, the institution of the family has been undergoing societal changes due to the transformation of young generations' perceptions of the role of women and men in society. Previously women were considered to fulfil only the role of mother and wife, but nowadays young girls are focused on finding fulfilment of their creative potential in society. Previously, the stereotype was that a man had to work and provide for his family, but nowadays young men aim to achieve success in society through their talents, and only then actively get involved in creating a family and raising their children.

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences R. Soyчук (2015) pointed out that in psychology there is a concept of "personal values" interpreting the individual as a socio-cultural reality. In other words, what is meaningful to an individual is the personal meaning of his or her already established values. Personal values have a content of the self, a "self-concept" that guides behaviour, shapes ideals and motivates one's activities. A person's self-image is a psychological new formation that reflects the surrounding reality through an individual's attitude towards himself or herself (Hart et al., 2015). For the subject, social values become an epistemological heritage, are assimilated by the subject and are endowed with emotions and feelings (Shcherbakova, 2017), distinguishing the human being from all living things in the universe. Thus, value orientations are the basis of national self-expression, national self-assertion of student youth. A person's understanding of himself or herself, of the self, constitutes the interiorisation of all the historical achievements of civilisation, because the national occupies a place among the individual and the universal.

Table 1 shows that work is not significant for today's young teachers. However, the results of the interviews led to the conclusion that what matters to young people today is how fulfilled they are in their work, rather than having a job as such. Young teachers are not trying to take up a position in their profession straight away, holding on to security and "confidence in the future" (as was the case for young people in the 1980s, 1990s). Modern youth seeks new risks, to invest in their own development, to fulfil themselves professionally in every corner of the world. After all, an educator's professionalism is determined by the number of recommendations and referrals from others. Through an example like this, the principle of the "self-concept" is demonstrated: first give value to oneself and then give it to the world. This is how the subject-object relationship in society is expressed. It is a vicious circle, without humanity there is no existence of value orientations, and without such orientations there is no existence of humanity. On the face of it, Soviet society was united, responsible and fair, but most respondents note that they did not always feel happy. The human need to "be heard" has become the watchword of the 21st century. For it is based on the human personality and the vitality of the nation, which, according to the pedagogical classics, will not form a strong state, a healthy and creative nation, noble men and wonderful mothers, courageous and grateful youth without culture (Filipchuk, 2018b). The main task of higher education institutions is therefore to educate the personality of future teachers.

4. Discussion

Despite the amount of information that one absorbs today, there is a lack of thorough knowledge with which one can fill his or her "self". Student youth of pedagogical specialities are on an active path to self-education, but do not try to downplay the importance of higher education in their lives. For today's young students, material values are of great importance, which they see as a means to achieve the highest goal. It is a link in gaining experience, career progression, acquiring additional skills, a tool in developing one's "name". The paradigm "culture – education – people – society – world" is therefore the methodological basis for global and national development. And the task that practical and scientific pedagogy has to address is how education and culture should be introduced from higher education curricula (Filipchuk, 2018b). Determining the results of this study, the authors conclude that today's young students pay great attention to the development of qualifications, take an active social position, and become a guarantor of protecting Ukraine's national interests. Student body consciously tries to contribute to the development of society. Most of the younger generation see education as a saviour from economic problems. A person with a stable "self-concept" is more adaptable to changing the type of activity. Student youths intend to work more, even if there is a crisis on the labour market. They believe that continuing education, self-development and self-improvement reduces the risk of job loss. Higher education represents a great gap in competitiveness; educational attainment is now perceived as a commodity rather than a measure of academic achievement. The results of sociological research carried out over various years show that 37-51% of those who think that they have not succeeded in life point to the fact that they have not received a higher education (32%) or have not been professionally trained (17%) as a reason (Dmitruk, 2017). Such limiting attitudes create fear and reluctance among young people to move towards self-actualisation.

Young girls and boys are creating a new era in modern gender history with their achievements. Between the ages of 25 and 28, young people want to get married, not because they want to start a family, but to "be with their own person" who will support them, be a partner and a pillar. Before having children, young men and women strive to have a career, realise their talents and abilities, and stabilise their material well-being. The surveyed ages' visions of a happy marriage differ. For the older generations, life satisfaction, living in a separate territory with one's family, as a prerequisite for family formation, was less important. Decent living conditions and remuneration for working hours are more important for today's young people who are ready to get married. Religious preferences, nationality, political views or affiliation to different social groups have no influence on the choice of marriage among today's students of pedagogical specialities. One of the characteristics of today's female students is that the desire to take care of family matters has greatly diminished. They see them as factors that discriminate against women and hinder personal development.

The democratic development of society implies gender equality. Value transformations at the level of consciousness go from conventional to post-conventional morality. For instance, justice, while it used to be an ethical category, is now becoming a legal, socio-economic one (Polishchuk, 2017). So if the question is about the future, the axiological distinction between girls and boys diminishes. According to the survey, students of pedagogical specialities in Ukraine have a positive attitude towards the continuation of traditions, the preservation of the family cult and are proud of their citizenship. The transformation of value orientations has affected the process of raising children. Young people consider responsibility, capacity for work, good manners, tolerance and respect, determination and perseverance to be the most urgent qualities to develop in their children. In turn, the youth of Soviet times oriented their children towards obedience, unselfishness and religiosity. Student youth are aware that parents have a right to live their own lives (as do their children), should not be given over to their children at the expense of their own well-being, just as children are not obliged to live their parents' lives. Fewer respondents expect the state's institutions to help them with life issues. It is they who, when comparing Ukraine to the well-being of other countries, criticise it and intend to emigrate. The reasons for such drastic decisions are as follows: the inability to achieve a certain material success, certain opportunities for education, the lack of democracy and the absence of the rule of law in Ukraine. These young people, who do not feel a sense of belonging to the national community, of being able to influence the process of democratisation of society, are characterised by a low evaluation of their own self, by the absence of themselves in the system of "self-concept".

The authors of the study, interested in the topic of student emigration, turned to the study by N. Dovganik and Yu. Chalyuk (2020), who investigated student youth's intentions to migrate. Those who would like to leave their locality: in 2016 – 39.4%, in 2017 – 36.9%; among young people who would like to leave their locality (immigration sentiment): in 2017 74.1% would like to leave Ukraine in 2016 – 66.6%; some of them have a constant upward trend of desire to leave: in 2015 – 52.3%, the most desirable countries to which young people would like to leave are EU countries: in 2016 – 40.6%, in 2017 – 45.6%. According to the authors of the study, such demand for study abroad is

due to the distrust of today's students towards dual degrees and franchise programmes. There are still no cases of a student with a Ukrainian diploma getting a job at a foreign education centre. However, in the study by N. Dovganik and Yu. Chalyuk (2020), when asked: "Do you want to emigrate from Ukraine?" many respondents said that they would like to study or work abroad for a while and then return to Ukraine. The older a person gets; the younger people want to return from abroad. Young people aged 14-19 are keen to migrate in order to study, and those aged 20-24 for the purpose of employment.

Part of the respondents (25.8%) believe that "how their lives will turn out depends on themselves". Instead, the older Soviet generation recalls that they associated the misfortunes of their younger years with external circumstances. This way of shifting responsibility hindered their development and the changes that the youth of the time realised were conditioned by the limits of the reality they had created. Consequently, the extent to which they succeed is determined primarily by the measure and nature of society's "collective memory" and the victory or loss of the values of "survival" over the values of "self-affirmation". With a decreasing sense of security in society, the differences between the traditional values of the older and younger generations are smaller than with greater levels of security (Dmitruk, 2017; Mujkic et al., 2019). Based on the experience of Western European educators, the learning process is built according to the life needs and capabilities of young people and an indispensable component in the formation of life values is the continuous support of the teacher in a way that is convenient for each student (Baier, 2016). Meanwhile, the current educational space of Ukraine's pedagogical universities has its shortcomings:

- the educational process requires the updating of content in accordance with modern new learning, innovative technologies;
- the development of own models, innovative technologies based on Western European experience is not integrated into Ukrainian mentality due to the lack of adaptability of the programmes;
- a decrease in the level of prestige and respect for the individual teacher due to low material provision.

A quarter of the respondents of the older generation noted that, despite the societal values of their youth, they still managed to enrich their inner "self", as well as develop and improve themselves in other ways. Having taken this particular path in their lives, the older generation has not stopped learning even now. It is in such cases that realising the value of European quality of education in the concept of "Lifelong Learning" is relevant. Its essence is the constant and purposeful acquisition of new knowledge for its practical use in the context of society. This idea is highly important for the cultural and aesthetic development of human beings as individuals (Weiss, 2020). In Ukraine, Universities of the Third Age are implemented in cities such as Kyiv, Kovel, Dnipro, Lviv, Uzhgorod and Poltava. This form of education was made possible by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through government funding and voluntary contributions. The programme, which provides lifelong learning, is based on the United Nations (UN) Education 2030 training programme. The programme Erasmus+ and Grundtvig is used for the elderly, which allows them to receive high-quality education in cooperation with European organisations. Ukrainians over the age of 50 also study in the Universities of the Third Age programme. This programme includes lectures, physical exercise, computer literacy and foreign language classes online or offline in a free format. The French and British models of such universities, which belong to the International Association of Third Age Universities, are currently in operation (Weiss, 2020).

The transformation of value orientations affects the level of satisfaction in life. The individual puts himself or herself first, ensuring his or her own needs and comfort. This is what determines the mentality not only of today's youth, but also of the older generations. Thus, while the number of people dissatisfied with their own lives in the 1980s was 10%, in the 1990s the figure was 18%, today's youth who are not satisfied with their lives constitute 4% (Zhdanov & Yarema, 2016). A small percentage of the older generation have also transformed their own value orientations of the national character and put their own well-being at the forefront, devoting more time to leisure and recreation. Thus, the democratisation of society and improved economic conditions have inspired humanity to reassess values and construct a new hierarchy. Personal needs and interests, professional development and the "brand" of one's name as a teacher come to the forefront for future teachers. It is about honour, respect and self-love, avoiding unprofessionalism and ignorance of the issues you teach. Trust in society stimulates creativity and the expression of individual talents. Public authorities and institutions of civil society, in their turn, should provide effective ways and organise activities for a harmonious transition from the personal to the social source of development (Dmitruk, 2017). The generation of young teachers has found itself on the threshold of change, when the values of those times have lost their relevance because they no longer match the needs of today's youth. Therefore, it is the students of pedagogical specialities who are called upon to transform the material and spiritual values in the minds of their future students by the logic of history.

5. Conclusions

The problem of shaping the value orientations of young people is always relevant in spite of societal changes. The driving force for social change is the youth. It is precisely the youth, acting as a guarantor of proactivity and perseverance, that is able to move towards a better life. And by changing oneself, one changes the surrounding world. Therefore, by choosing themselves first and foremost, their well-being, their comfortable life and their individual values, the young teacher will transmit to young students respect for themselves, love, trust in the world, a thirst for action, transformation and a desire to enjoy the activity in which they are engaged. Thus, for such an educator, family, leisure and politics will come last.

A society's value system is influenced by internal and external factors. The economic, political situation in the country plays an important role in the formation of national values. From the sources studied and the research carried out, it has been established that currently the priority values among young people are self-development, material values, leisure activities and patriotism. Institutions of higher education face the important task of updating the content of educational programmes, taking into account the national value orientations of higher education applicants, which will contribute to the development of the state through the younger generation.

It is precisely at this time of national transformations that young people can only be influenced by the example of the teacher. Modernity is such that young students are more willing to follow a mentor in whom they feel a love for the job, a thirst for life, and a high appreciation of themselves and their abilities. Such a teacher is able to change the space around him or her. The student is more willing to belong to a group of like-minded people who also strive for a better life for themselves, for society and for the country as a whole. The results of the study revealed that the percentage of young people who seek a better life abroad sooner or later come back and implement innovations in their home country.

The authors of the study believe that the issue is not only relevant, but also promising. The development of a model for the formation of value orientations and the identification of pedagogical conditions is a prospect for further studies on the formation of values among students of higher education institutions.

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