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Published in the Slovak Republic  
European Journal of Contemporary Education  
E-ISSN 2305-6746  
2019, 8(3): 534-541  
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2019.3.534  
[www.ejournal1.com](http://www.ejournal1.com)

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## Dynamics of Students' Axiological Orientations in the Learning Process at Pedagogical University

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### Abstract

The system of axiological orientations determines the content direction of the personality and forms the basis of its views on the world around, other people, oneself, basis of world outlook, core of motivation and "philosophy of life". Axiological orientations are considered as the most important component of the internal structure of the personality. They provide stability and continuity of its behaviour and activities, and are reflected in the worldview, moral ideas, principles, and beliefs. The author presents the results of a case study to identify the dynamics of students' axiological orientations in the process of teaching at a pedagogical university and to determine the possibility of optimizing the development of individual axiological orientations through targeted psychological impact and training. Under the influence of such training, there is a change in the perceptions of subjects on the values associated with future life and professional activity. The study involved 58 people – third- and fourth-year students. There were used such surveys as the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS), the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) and S.S. Bubnova's survey "Diagnosis of the real structure of individual's axiological orientations". The obtained experimental data indicate that the system of students' axiological orientations has a dynamic nature, and the formation of students' axiological orientations is one of the most important ways of solving the problem of training a specialist.

**Keywords:** axiological orientations, students, learning process.

### 1. Introduction

Axiological orientations are considered as the most important component of the internal structure of the personality. They provide stability and continuity of its behaviour and activities, and are reflected in the worldview, moral ideas, principles, and beliefs. Today, the higher education

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system requires training of highly professional elite of society, specialists characterized by a high common culture level, development of the axiological orientations system and capable of translating them into practice of life and professional activity. From this point of view, the student age is the most sensitive in terms of forming a system of axiological orientations.

The matter of values and axiological orientations of young people is interdisciplinary in nature and is the focus of many sciences such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, pedagogy. Its significance is determined by the fact that axiological orientations function as regulators of human behaviour and all types of human activity (Vinokurova, 2007). Studies of such philosophers as S.F. Anisimov, A.G. Zdravomyslov, L.P. Buyeva, Yu.A. Zamoshkin, M.S. Kagan, L.P. Fomin, V.N. Sagatovskiy, I.T. Frolov, V.P. Tugarinov and others, has formed a categorical apparatus, which includes the concepts of "value", "axiological relations", "axiological orientations". Up to the present axiological aspects of personality development have not ceased to be the subject of close attention of all specialists working in the field of human knowledge.

The science of psychology has developed theoretical background for the development of the issues of axiological orientations formation at students. First of all, these are works by K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, L.I. Antsyferova, A.V. Brushlinskiy and others, which formulated the provisions on the formation of person as a subject of their life and their inner world. Typology of human values is considered in the papers by M.S. Burgin, V.A. Vasilenko. The issue of axiological orientation of personality is reflected in the works of domestic and international scholars (D.A. Leontiev, K. Rogers, V. Frankl et al) (Kulikova, 2015).

Axiological orientations are the most important components of the personality structure, according to the degree of which one can judge the level of personality development (Terentyeva, 2013). Axiological orientations and personal values have always been one of the important objects of psychological research. A great contribution to the study of the value orientations of young people was made by V.A. Yadov, V.G. Lisovskiy, A.G. Zdravomyslov, S.L. Rubinstein, E.S. Volkov and many others.

Axiological orientations are regarded by V.A. Yadov as "social values shared by the individual, serving as goals of life and main means of achieving them" (Yadov, 1970). According to A.G. Zdravomyslov, axiological orientations are "a relatively stable, selective attitude of a person to a set of material and spiritual goods and ideals, which are regarded as objects, goals, or means for satisfying the needs of a person's life activity" (Zdravomyslov, 2007). From the point of view of S.L. Rubinstein, value is the significance for a person of something in the world, but only a recognized value is capable of serving as a guideline for behaviour (Rubinstein, 2001).

According to D.A. Leontiev, personal values "are reflected in the structure of specific motives, in their semantic characteristic" (Leontiev, 2003: 225). D.A. Leontiev clarifies that the hierarchy of personal values is constant; the motivating force of needs is constantly changing; their system is characterized by a "dynamic hierarchy"; and the change of personal values is a crisis in the development of personality (Leontiev, 2003: 226).

As realized by B.S. Bratus', values are conscious and accepted by a person general meanings of their life. As the author notes, "it is common sense formations (in case of their understanding – values), which are the main constituting units of the individual, determine the main and relatively constant human attitudes to the main areas of life - to the world, to others and to oneself (Bratus', 1981: 50).

M. Rokeach, author of the most common in the international and domestic research methods for studying values and the personal ones, in particular, operationalized the view on values as the guiding principles of life, types of beliefs. According to M. Rokeach, values occupy a central position in the individual belief system and are the guiding principles of life. They determine how to behave and what state or lifestyle is worth conforming to and striving for.

The most developed concept of values is the one by Sh. Schwartz and W. Bilsky (Schwartz, Bilsky, 1987). According to the scholars, values are (1) ideas or beliefs on (2) desired final states, which (3) are manifested in a wide range of situations, (4) control the selection and evaluation of actions and events, and (5) are ordered according to their relative importance.

S.S. Bubnova distinguishes three hierarchical levels in the system of value orientations of the individual, corresponding to three levels of their studying: 1) the most generalized, abstract values: spiritual, social, material; 2) values that are enshrined in life activities and manifested as personal

qualities: sociability, curiosity, activity, dominance, etc.; 3) the most typical ways of individual behaviour as a means of implementing and consolidating property-values (Bubnova 1999: 38-39).

Values are the initial mental formations for setting goals and justifying their professional activities by a specialist. Values are both motivational and cognitive formations; they guide, organize, orient human behaviour towards specific goals and at the same time define cognitive work with information.

Axiological orientations are a subsystem of consciousness, which reflects the values recognized by person as strategic life goals and common world outlook. In other words, the system of axiological orientations includes, first of all, the principles of behaviour in society, as well as the principles of understanding their own behaviour and behaviour of other people. Studying at a university is one of the first stages of entering life activities, and it certainly has an impact on the hierarchical structure of axiological orientations (Kulikova, 2011).

Modern society recognizes the need to prepare graduates with a high level of culture and rich spiritual inner world. Formation of social position and axiological orientations of students is one of the most important ways to solve the problem of training a specialist with a high level of culture and a rich spiritual world (Golovakha, 2000).

Features of the axiological and motivational structure of the personality determine the direction and position of a person in relation to certain manifestations of reality. Axiological orientations play an important role in the regulation of human social behaviour, including the disposition of a person, goals and attitudes, interests, motives and even the "meaning of life" (Golovakha, 2000).

Student age in psychology is recognized as a sensitive period for the development of axiological, motivational and semantic formations of the personality of the future teacher. When choosing a profession, an individual unwittingly chooses the methods to regulate their behaviour that are closest to them, thereby, one way or another, they associate this choice with the values most significant for them. The most significant changes in the system of axiological orientations occur under the influence of professional activity (Seryy, 2009).

Axiological orientations of students are largely due to their professional orientation, the system of these orientations, as well as the system of values and personal meanings of a particular professional group have their own peculiarities.

L.G. Desfontaines says that the prevailing for the majority of the 1<sup>st</sup>-year students' values are ones of achieving, preserving their own individuality, developing themselves and establishing social contacts. This is explained by the fact that admission to the university coincides with the second period of adolescence and the first period of maturity, when students realize their individuality, uniqueness, development of self-awareness and formation of the "Self" image (Desfontaines, 2013).

For the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students, motives of achievement remain dominant, and the importance of financial position additionally appears. The motives for mastering a profession and acquiring knowledge are manifested in the growing importance of studying, education, and professional life. This can be explained by the fact that gradually with the acquisition of knowledge, students more and more deeply comprehend the subtleties of their future job, they form a certain attitude towards their future work activities. Family life also becomes significant for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students, which is associated with the desire to find a life partner (Desfontaines, 2013).

For the 5<sup>th</sup>-year students, values of achievement and high financial position prevail. The sphere of professional life and the sphere of family life dominate, which is explained by the formation of clear practical guidelines for future activities. There are new, becoming more relevant values associated with the material and family status, position; students move away from the collective life forms at the university (Desfontaines, 2013).

In the transition from year to year, there is a weakening of focus on oneself and on interaction in axiological consciousness, while the orientation of the individual on organizational activity remains constant, increasing to the final year. This is due to the fact that the graduate students' motivation changes and the main thing for them is not the motivation in studying, but the motivation in their professional affiliation consisting in the expression of the motive to master the profession and get a degree to test the knowledge gained at the university, and becoming oneself as a specialist (Zinevich, Lise, 2008).

In this context our research problem has been formulated as follows: “Is it possible to optimize the process of developing students' axiological orientations in the learning process at a pedagogical university?”

## 2. Materials and methods

In order to investigate the dynamics of students' axiological orientations, we conducted a case study based on Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University. The sample of subjects includes three natural educational groups consisted of 3rd- and 4th-year university students at the age of 19 to 22, enrolled in "Pedagogical education" as their major. The selection of subjects has been due to the curriculum specifics, involving the study of elective courses since the 5<sup>th</sup> term, which provided the opportunity to implement the authors' course "Axiological Orientations of Personality". The quantitative composition of the experimental sample is 58 people. When conducting a case study, a plan with preliminary and final testing of one group has been chosen. The control group was not formed.

We assumed that the axiological orientation of students is dynamic in nature. The process of developing an individual system of axiological orientations can be optimized through targeted psychological impact and training.

To identify priority axiological orientations of students, the Rokeach Value Survey was used (Karelin, 2000: 25-29). The system of axiological orientations determines the content direction of the personality and forms the basis of its attitudes to the world around, other people, oneself, basis of world outlook, core of motivation and life activities.

The dynamics of values has been determining using the Schwartz Value Survey (Karandashev, 2004: 35-46). The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire is designed to explore the values, ideals and beliefs that affect the person, but not always manifested in social behaviour. The second part of the Schwartz Value Survey is designed to study the values most often manifested in the social behaviour of an individual.

The study of the implementation of the axiological orientations of the individual in real life conditions has been carried out using S.S. Bubnova's survey "Diagnosis of the real structure of individual's axiological orientations" (Fetiskin et al., 2002: 18-20). The method is based on the idea that significant values are formed in the process of socialization of the individual as a result of common cultural values interiorization. The internalization process result is ambiguous, which leads to a significant spread of axiological orientations.

Statistical data processing has been carried out using correlation analysis with the r-Pearson correlation coefficient.

At the formative stage of the research, the authors' course “Axiological Orientations of Personality” was carried out. The content of this course assumed the development of ideas about the system of axiological orientations, its dynamics. The course program contributed to the formation of correct ideas about the essence of terminal and instrumental values (what is the *meaning, goal of being*, and what is the optimal *means* to achieve this goal). Overall logic suggests that the course “Value Orientations of the Personality” is presented in several main sections:

- 1) Theoretical aspects of values and axiological system;
- 2) Structure of axiological orientations of the individual;
- 3) Dynamics of axiological orientations. Structurally, the course program includes two units: theoretical and practical. In the process of getting acquainted with the main topics of the course, students were able not only to gain knowledge and ideas on the system of axiological orientations, but also to analyze their own system of values.

## 3. Results and discussion

In order to establish in the process of studying the dynamics of students' value orientations, we have conducted the final stage of the study after the implementation of the course program “Axiological Orientations of Personality”. Comparative analysis of the results of the preliminary and final stages is given below.

Analysing the results of the Rokeach Value Survey, we draw attention to the value, ranked in the preliminary stage of the experiment ranking positions below 4 and at the final stage risen to 50 % of subjects in the triad of the priority values. First of all, it is a group of *values of professional self-realization*, which includes an active life, interesting work, social recognition, productive life,



and development. The most striking dynamics can be seen in the values of "productive life" and "education" (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Subjects distribution dynamics by preferred values ranks by the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS)

Research stage	Distribution of subjects (n) by value ranks					
	Productive life			Education		
	Rank	$\bar{x}$	n (%)	Rank	$\bar{x}$	n (%)
Preliminary	1st rank	10.3	5.22	1st rank	10.5	9.86
	2nd rank	11.1	6.96	2nd rank	10.7	11.02
	3rd rank	9.7	9.86	3rd rank	11.1	15.66
	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	11.7	77.96	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	12.1	63.46
Final	1st rank	10.7	9.28	1st rank	11.7	15.66
	2nd rank	12.1	11.02	2nd rank	11.1	18.56
	3rd rank	10.3	9.28	3rd rank	11.7	29.58
	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	11.1	70.42	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	12.1	36.2

The "productive life" value distribution analysis (Table 1) allows us to state that at the final stage the number of subjects has increased, putting this value on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places by 4.06 % for each rank. Accordingly, there was a negative dynamic distribution test on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and lower ranks. These indicators show that after the implementation of the course "Axiological Orientations of Personality" students have become more reasonable to treat the value of "productive life". Young people may have simply begun to associate life productivity with future personal and life success.

Positive dynamics is also observed by the value "Education" (Table 1). At the final stage, the number of subjects who put this value in first place has noticeably increased (by 5.8 %). The number of students putting the value under consideration in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place has also increased (by 7.54 %). There is a significant increase (by 13.92 %) in the number of subjects who put this value in third place.

According to the Schwartz Value Survey, we can state the dynamics of the value of "social recognition" (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Subjects distribution dynamics by "social recognition" value ranks by the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS)

Research stage	Distribution of subjects (n) by rank		
	Social recognition		
	Rank	$\bar{x}$	n (%)
Preliminary	1st rank	6.5	15.66
	2nd rank	5.9	18.56
	3rd rank	5.2	12.18
	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	4.9	53.6
Final	1st rank	6.7	26.68
	2nd rank	6.2	29.58
	3rd rank	5.9	30.74
	4 <sup>th</sup> and below	5.7	13.0

At the final stage, the number of subjects with a high level (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ranks) at this value has increased by 22.04 % compared with the preliminary stage. It can be said that these subjects have an awareness of the social recognition importance for their future professional life. This value, if it is relevant for a particular person, has a strong influence on a number of personal characteristics:

character, interests, inclinations and even abilities. The expressed value of social recognition allows people to organize themselves, take leadership positions, become active and goal-oriented individuals.

The dynamics of the value of "social activity" is determined by S.S. Bubnova's survey "Diagnosis of the real structure of individual's axiological orientations" (Table 3). By analysing the results obtained by S.S. Bubnova's survey "Diagnosis of the real structure of individual's axiological orientations", it can be argued to reduce the number of subjects with low level at social activity value in order to achieve positive change in society and, consequently, increase the number of subjects with a high level at the value, which indicates a growth in motivation to achieve positive change in society through their social activity, and their desire to improve their professional life as a whole.

**Table 3.** Subjects distribution dynamics by "social activity" value ranks by S.S. Bubnova's survey "Diagnosis of the real structure of individual's axiological orientations"

Research stage	Distribution of subjects (n) by rank		
	Social recognition		
	Rank	$\bar{x}$	n (%)
Preliminary	1st rank	3.5	27.16
	2nd rank	3.1	30.74
	3rd rank	2.9	42.10
Final	1st rank	4.7	42.82
	2nd rank	3.9	31.9
	3rd rank	3.5	25.28

In order to establish the relationship and dynamics of axiological orientations of students in the period of study at a pedagogical university, a correlation of r-Pearson has been carried out. This calculation is made using the program *Statistica*. As a result of analysis of correlation results (Table 4) directly proportional strong positive relationship between "productive life" and "education" was found ( $r = 0.75$ ); between "productive life" and "social recognition" ( $r = 0.64$ ); between "social recognition" and "social activity" ( $r = 0.63$ ), with  $p = 0.05$ .

**Table 4.** Correlation matrix of interrelation of students' axiological orientations (level of statistical significance  $p < 0.05$ )

VALUES	r- Pearson			
	Productive life	Education	Social recognition	Social activity
Productive life	x	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.64</b>	0.55
Education		x	0.55	0.48
Social recognition			x	<b>0.63</b>
Social activity				x

These relationships are expressed in the following statement: the higher the level of education, the higher the rate of productive life is, i.e. students realize that their success in life is directly related to the level of education, and successful productive life and social activity will provide them with social recognition.

#### 4. Conclusion

Our study allows us to state that the formation of axiological orientations of students is one of the most important ways to solve the problem of training a specialist with a high level of professional and personal culture and motivation for productive life. The data obtained in the course of the study confirm the fact that the system of axiological orientations of students has a dynamic character.

The dynamics study of students' axiological orientations in the learning process has shown that the development process of the individual system of axiological orientations can be optimized through targeted psychological impact and learning. Under the influence of such training, there is a change in the perceptions of subjects on the values associated with future life and professional activity.

Thus, the study of the structure, hierarchy and dynamics of students' axiological orientations seems to us very productive to determine the orientation and professional success of the individual, the formation of professional consciousness of students, their psychological well-being, etc.

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