

PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF THE FORMALIZATION OF VALUES IN REQUIREMENTS WITHIN A VALUE SYSTEM AND A MULTICULTURAL SYSTEM

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Abstract: In this article, values in a multicultural environment are systematically analyzed in a broad sense and from various perspectives. Numerous theoretical approaches to this issue are grouped. It is also noted that the currently existing approaches to values lead to differences in their structure. In this context, the transformation of national-moral values among students divides young people into different camps. The main purpose of the study is to determine the formation of students' value orientations, the changes that occur in them, and the role of socio-psychological factors in this process. According to the results of the experimental study, age is one of the main factors that directs the transformation of values. As age increases and the influence of the social environment grows, moral categories in the hierarchy of values are replaced by material categories. The study showed that for student youth in a multicultural environment, an adequate assessment of moral values directly depends on their intellectual level and worldview. It was found that high intelligence and a broad knowledge base in young people allow them to adapt to a new environment within cultural diversity,

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preserving their conservative status despite external pressures. In conclusion, it can be stated that to prevent the deformation of moral values, students' self-awareness and understanding of their national identity, along with the development of their analytical thinking skills, play a leading role in regulating their behavior.

Keywords: students, multicultural environment, values, transformation, youth

Introduction

A multicultural environment is a social space characterized by diverse religions, ethnic backgrounds, and tolerance. Every year, hundreds of students from various countries and cities come together to bring different cultures together. Here, their tolerant behavior toward one another and their adaptation to the environment influence the formation of students' personalities and value orientations. Both the negative and positive effects of cultural integration manifest in their value systems. Students who are exposed to different cultures learn new customs and traditions, compare them to the habits they are accustomed to, and form a universal personality (Kapterev, 1982). Values are studied within the scope of the social and humanitarian sciences, particularly philosophy, psychology, and sociology. From a philosophical perspective, Socrates and Plato, unlike other thinkers, emphasized the existence of internal objectivity. More precisely, according to Socrates, there are truths that are universal to humanity, that is, values. (Najafov, 2025) However, as research shows, multicultural environments clearly demonstrate the dynamic nature and transformation of values. In such an environment rich in cultural diversity, social-psychological factors—including intra-group and inter-group interactions—play a role in the formation and development of students' values. According to Schwartz's (2012) theory of fundamental human values, an individual's value orientation is the fundamental basis that lays the groundwork for their adaptation to different cultural environments. While Schwartz views values as a relatively stable internal compass, according to Berry (1997), values serve as an internal



scale. In this regard, it should be noted that according to the acculturation model, students' adaptation in a multicultural environment depends on the strategy the individual chooses. (Berry, 1997) It is concluded that students with an integrative strategy are able to balance their value systems across different environments. This study investigates the psychosocial factors that influence the formation of students' value systems in a multicultural environment and examines their role.

Literature review

The reaction of members of social groups in a society to cultural diversity has resulted in the emergence of monolithic, plural, and multicultural environments. (Cox & Blake, 1991). What distinguishes a multicultural environment from others is that cultural diversity is a core value. In other words, each group member is encouraged to embrace the values of other groups and to respect the uniqueness of the individual (DeSensi, 1994). Individuals belonging to the same culture share a common language, space, symbols, values, beliefs, and goals. All of these are part of the meaning-making process that creates a foundation for the connection between the individual and the culture. (Bruner, 1990; Shweder, 1990). The value system and norms of the mine play an important role in how students adapt to the educational process and communicate with teachers. These are social, cultural, value, and psychological components. (Häyrynen et al., 2021; Jabbarov, 2021; Vakil, 2021). Students from different religions, languages, ethnicities, and statuses come together in the same educational space. Changes in the educational process, such as the creation of opportunities to study in different locations, result in an increase in the multicultural environment. Thus, students learn new behaviors, but it is noted that various barriers are still created for both teachers and students (Yerken & Nguyen Luu, 2022). Some studies focus on the specific problem of teaching Muslim women, which is extremely relevant for many countries (Harum et al., 2024; Orhani, 2023). Culture is one of the means of influence to which people are exposed and exists outside the individual. Additionally, it has been noted that such an influence of culture manifests in people in the form of stimuli that direct attention to the individual



or to the group, or to material or spiritual values. (Schwartz, 2014). This influence is also reflected in the language structure, specifically in the use of pronouns. (Kashima & Kashima, 1998). Values also stem from culture. In other words, the ethnic affiliations and groups that unite individuals play a significant role in their emergence. (Boehnke, Hadjar, Baier, 2007). Culture itself consists of a number of fundamental elements. Our habits and customs in society and our values not only shape our existing beliefs but also create the conditions for the emergence of new, non-existent values. In particular, values arise not only from moral or religious systems but also from the collective social behavior and practices of society. Customs and traditions, which emerge from cultural practices and social norms, can serve as both an expression of values and their source. (Najafov, 2025; Jabbarov et al, 2024; Jabbarov and Ibrahimova, 2013). The concept of value is inherently complex and multidimensional, attracting extensive research across disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, social psychology, and theology. Each of these fields provides direct or indirect information about the nature, origin, and scope of values. Broadly defined, values can be understood as abstract, generalized behavioral norms that arise within social groups and are based on emotional commitments to shared goals and standards of behavior. (Folstein, 1986; Jabbarov, 2021; Jabbarov, 2018).

To understand the evolution of value systems, one must look at the historical-philosophical paradigms on which these values are based. Philosophical approaches provide a foundational lens through which the concept of value can be evaluated. In classical antiquity, the Sophists were among the first thinkers to propose the relativity of values. They argued that moral standards were context-dependent and subject to human perception. In contrast, Socrates and Plato defended the objectivity of values. Socrates argued that values have an internal, objective existence, while Plato claimed that moral truths exist in a realm of absolute forms, where ethical concepts are either “right” or “wrong” regardless of individual or cultural variation. Aristotle expanded this line of thought, linking value to an objective dimension grounded in existence itself. (Loxton et al., 2001; Jabbarov, 2021).

In modern times, Immanuel Kant was the first to systematically problematize value. For Kant, values were rooted in rational autonomy and the categorical imperative. In contrast, existential-



list thought, particularly as developed by Jean-Paul Sartre, rejected the notion of pre-existing value systems. Sartre argued that there is no intrinsic realm of values external to human activity; rather, values are created through individual freedom and existential commitment. In this view, value does not precede being, but arises from it. Similarly, Martin Heidegger criticized the artificial separation of value and being, describing such a bifurcation as a fundamental ontological error. From these perspectives, value becomes a construct situated within the existential conditions of human beings. Philosopher Paul Hanley Furfey argues that values arise only in existing entities; the more a phenomenon can be determined, the more it is valued, and the more abstract it is, the more it is perceived in the exact opposite way. Therefore, value manifests as a volitional quality in relation to the human perception of human and object relationships.

Thus, the value system serves as a regulatory framework, mediating between social reflexes, ontological realities, and epistemological prejudices. This facilitates alignment between individual worldviews and the broader structures of social life. Despite ongoing theoretical research on concepts of morality and ethics, significant contradictions and uncertainties remain in both academic and practical spheres. Schwartz has sought to identify the values that play a significant role in people's lives, which are fundamental in any sphere of life and in any situation. According to Schwartz, the source of values is based on the 3 universal requirements of the human being, a universal entity; the needs of individuals as biological organisms, the demands of coordinated social interaction, and the needs for survival and well-being of groups. (Schwartz, 1994; Jabbarov, 2018).

If a person holds a certain value, that value will retain its essence in any situation. Therefore, people's value system will influence their attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making (Schwartz, 1992, 2006). Schwartz's (1992) theory shows that all people in the world are united around ten core values, but the interrelationship between these values is different for everyone. Some of these values complement each other, while others are in conflict. Additionally, Schwartz (2012) created the "circular structure of values" to more clearly illustrate these values. Schwartz's (2006) theory of values explores the relationship between human behavior and values. He states that every behavior a person performs



arises from a balance between opposing values. In other words, for any given action to occur, one value is activated, while its opposing value is necessarily suppressed. From this perspective, although values are considered constant, research clearly shows that they are subject to transformation. Analysis of the results indicates that values are dynamic. Furthermore, even during the formation stage, values are subject to transformation and transmission. (Kuczynski & Navara, 2006). A transformation occurs in the value system of adolescents and young people, both in its explicit and implicit forms. It should be noted that this process is particularly evident in a modern transitional and multicultural environment. (Grebennikova et al., 2019; Vakil, 2021). Many experimental studies have been conducted on the influence of the environment on values. It has been found that the value systems of adolescents and young people in urban and rural areas align more with the values of their peers than with those of their parents. Additionally, it has been determined that differences also exist in the value systems of adolescents and young people in urban and rural areas, with demographic factors playing a key role in the emergence of these differences. (Jabbarov, 2021).

Methodology

The study was conducted among students from various majors at Baku State University. The purpose is to identify the psychosocial factors that influence the formation of students' value systems in a multicultural environment. The Kohlberg Method and a Questionnaire were used during the study. N=150 students participated in the study. The student population consisted of 50% male and 50% female students. Based on age range, 50 participants were in the 18-20 age category, 50 in the 21-23 category, and 50 in the 24-26 category. Based on their academic performance, participants were classified into 3 groups: 50 poor, 50 good, and 50 excellent. The Kohlberg methodology is named after Lawrence Kohlberg, and his theory of moral development states that cognitive development progresses through three levels of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984; Rita, 2018). As emphasized by Dr. Rita (2018), Kohlberg identified three levels of moral judgment: pre-conventional, conventional, and



post-conventional. “Each level corresponds to increasingly complex stages of moral development.” (Rita, 2018, p. 43).

Results

Table 1. Attitude toward movement by gender and education variables

Gender	Attitude towards action	Attitude toward education			Total
		Bad	Average	Good	
Girl	It depends on the situation	8	7	3	18
	Incorrect	11	5	6	22
	Correct	6	13	16	35
	Total	25	25	25	75
Boy	It depends on the situation	8	6	3	17
	Incorrect	12	7	5	24
	Correct	5	12	17	34
	Total	25	25	25	75

As the table shows, differences in attitude toward the action are influenced by worldview and intellectual level. Overall, when students approached the given situation from a moral perspective, they correctly evaluated the behavior. Although average and good students correctly assessed the given situation from a moral standpoint, when measuring the attitude of poor-performing male and female students toward the action, a result was obtained indicating a misjudgment by the students. Although both male and female students considered the action to be correct, the female students were more assertive in defending their opinions than the male students.



Table 2. Preferred values of respondents by gender and age

Gender	Values	Age			Total
		18-20	21-23	24-26	
Girl	Friendship	5	6	5	16
	Fairness	10	7	3	20
	Money	6	8	13	27
	Fame and Glory	4	4	4	12
	Total	25	25	25	75
Boy	Friendship	7	7	4	18
	Fairness	10	4	10	24
	Money	5	6	11	22
	Fame and Glory	3	8	0	11
	Total	25	25	25	75

Young students aged 18-20 have placed importance on “Fairness”. Male students outnumber female students. Students in this age group are mainly in their second and third years. At this stage, the value in second place for female students was “Money”, while for male students it was “Friendship”. In the responses of 21-23-year-old students, however, certain changes in their value system are already evident. In female students in this age group, the value of “Money” has taken precedence compared to those aged 18-20. In male students of this age, however, the value of “Fame” has come to the fore. Trends towards self-affirmation and thoughts about the future are having an impact. As the table shows, the value of “Fairness” ranks last among male students. The reason for this is that, when students were asked, it was determined that the experience of certain negative situations during their education has an impact. Looking at the responses of students aged 24-26, a sharp increase in the value of wealth is noticeable. For female students, the value of “Money” is a priority. Moral qualities have been replaced by the values of wealth. As students grow older and their worldview develops, their perspective suggests that having a normal level of money—through social status, prestige, and economic well-being—plays a crucial role in the preservation of other spiritual values. When considering gender, the values of “Money” and “Fame” are dominant among girls, whereas “Friendship”



and “Fairness” are preferred by boys. The study showed that whilst students in earlier age groups offered unsubstantiated responses when commenting on actions, in later years they substantiated their answers with rationally thought-out explanations.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it was determined that contradictory aspects were identified in the value system of students. A conflict is observed among students, as they strive to preserve moral values, while on the other hand, material values that are important in real life take precedence. The respondents’ answers indicate that in a multicultural environment, students’ adequate understanding of values depends on their intellectual level, level of knowledge, gender, and cognitive level. The results of our study are indirectly consistent with a number of studies. (Jabbarov, 2018; Jabbarov et al., 2024; Mustavayev, 2025). The results of the study suggest that the formation of a value system is one of the core components of personality. The emergence of values depends on the factors of the socio-psychological environment. The correct development of values is possible through enhancing the ability of self-awareness. To achieve this, one must master the skills of introspection and analysis-synthesis. The study is limited by the small number of respondents and the fact that it was conducted only among a specific university and age group. The research findings show that values play a role in directing students’ behaviour. As students get older, they place a higher value on moral actions, while their tendency to assess actions as situationally dependent decreases. A multicultural environment enables students to have an adequate self-perception, possess national values, and understand their moral and psychological parameters at a high level.

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