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**STUDY OF PERSONALITY'S VALUE-BASED SELF-  
DETERMINATION AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATION**

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***Abstract***

The ongoing social changes contribute to revisiting the person's attitude to the surrounding reality, objectives and purposes of human activity, which allows the individuals to self-determine and find their place in various spheres of life. The article reveals the notion "value-based self-determination". The study was aimed at determining the initial level of the individual's value-based self-determination at different stages of university education. The psychodiagnostic methods included "the Morphological test of life values"; a method for studying the personality's value structure by R. Inglehart as modified by Yanitsky. The article provides characteristic of value-based self-determination at different stages of training. It presents the results of an empirical study of the value-based self-determination among students of junior and senior years of study and allows formulating the following conclusions: 1. Value-based self-determination is a multi-level dynamic system that enables the individual to pursue the choice of life goals based on the values alignment and systematization. 2. The components of value-based self-determination are the individual's life values and value orientations. These components are interdependent within the structure of value-based self-determination. 3. Individual features of the tiered hierarchy of value-based self-determination are governed by the value direction and the individual's type of value orientations. The predominance of humanistic values over prestigious and pragmatic ones corresponds to a high level of value-based self-determination. 4. Modern young students undergo values reassessment, forming new life orientations and professional strategies, which is most often accompanied by an identity crisis.

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**Keywords:** Personality, students, university education, self-determination, value-based self-determination.



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## 1. Introduction

At the present stage of social development, the prevailing situation in the country dictates the growing urgency of the problem of self-determination. Due to the socio-economic crisis, the human attitude to the surrounding reality, as well as the objectives and purposes of human activity, are being revisited. Reconsidering will allow the individual to self-determine and find his or her place in various spheres of life.

## 2. Problem Statement

The term "self-determination" is used in psychology, pedagogy, sociology, philosophy to describe the process of a life perspective forming, a person's growing up, a profession choice (Wehmeyer, 2014; Barker, 2015; Soloviev, 2016; Martin, Mithaug, Cox, Peterson, Van Dycke, & Cash, 2003; 박경숙, Insoo Oh 2016; Sheldon Kennon & Prentice, 2017; Lohbeck, 2016; Lachapelle et al., 2005; Bülbül & Arslan, 2017). As the review of scientific literature shows, the concept "self-determination" is quite complex and ambiguous.

Having summarized the existing definitions of self-determination within the framework of various approaches, one can state that practically all scientists agree in their interpreting of self-determination: the essential characteristic of self-determination is the choice of one's own position, which depends on the inner activity of the subject. Thus, the psychological science studies self-determination as a personal new formation related to such personality traits as an internal position, responsibility, orientation, independence, etc.

To clarify the concept "self-determination", researchers (N. S. Pryazhnikov, A. V. Sal'kov, V. D. Povzun, M. R. Ginzburg, N. N. Istomina, and others) distinguish its various types: life, personal (as the highest level of life self-determination), professional, self-determination in culture (as the highest level of personal self-determination), axiological, etc.

Self-determination is viewed as a complex, multi-stage process of human development, and different types of self-determination are constantly interacting. In some cases, they precede one another, for example, personal self-determination can precede and contribute to the professional one; most often they occur simultaneously, changing their places, as cause and effect.

It is necessary to emphasize that the idea of the relationship between the individual's self-determination and the values belongs to Ginzburg (1988). In his opinion, self-determination has an axiological nature and stands for an active definition of one's position with the reference to a socially developed system of values, the definition of the life purpose on this basis. According to him, axiological self-determination, or self-determination with the reference to values is genetically the initial one, determining the development of all other types of self-determination throughout the person's life and serving the basis for the individual development. Axiological self-determination generates and conditions the individual's self-determination in the social, professional, family and other spheres of public life.

Latukha's (1999) and Povzun's (1996) studies treat value-based self-determination as the basis of any other kind of self-determination, because reassessment of values goes on throughout the person's life,

and each particular individual faces a problem of correlating social values, cultural values with his or her own values, which is a problem of value-based self-determination.

Discussing the essence of value-based self-determination, most authors (E. A. Latukha, V. D. Povzun, A. V. Kiriakova, E. V. Kostryukova, T. A. Nosova, A. A. Presnov) make an emphasis on the fact that this is primarily a process, an act and a result of a person's choice of his or her own position, goals and means of self-realization and self-development in the specific circumstances of life. Value-based self-determination is the major mechanism of a person's obtaining and manifesting inner freedom; the freedom is exercised on the basis of value orientations as a result of a complex dynamic formation (Kiriakova et al. 2000).

According to Genisaretsky (1995), the value changes make up not just a background but a hidden basis for various transformations, a premise for economic, political, and social reforms (the concept of human factors of modernization) and their ultimate criterial goal (the concept of the human qualities of a life style).

Changes in the individual's value-based consciousness are a natural result of a human life and constitute the main content of the process of personality redefinition. The person's life is "the history of the actualization of certain values and the overthrow of others" (Rubinstein, 1973). The interminable character of the process of value-based self-determination is justified by a constant reassessment of values that continues throughout the human life.

The individual adopts selectively all the values accumulated by the society. This choice is guided by the orientation of the individual, since the choice of values comes down to a selection of not only the best values, but also of the most appropriate for the direction of the personality development (Reprintseva, 2017; Burmistrova & Kulcheyko, 2017). Moreover, the choice is limited by "the individual's cumulative life resource", which embraces energy (health status), time (age, lifespan reserve), natural strengths (gender, abilities), social strengths (education, social background, qualifications, profession), self-esteem, a level of personal ambitions (Naumova, 1996).

Summarizing the researchers' points of view on value-based self-determination, we should note that the term denotes the process of the individual's acquiring the reason, goals and resources of his or her own life in space and time. It includes the definition of oneself with the reference to general cultural human values in order to identify and substantiate one's own life position, a concept in the space of culture and the historical time.

Proceeding from the scientific sources review, we believe that the criteria to measure the level of value-based self-determination include the life values and value orientations that determine the personality orientation and personality type.

### **3. Research Questions**

Experimental work was carried out on the basis of Kemerovo State University. The sample size of the subjects amounted to 466 people. The study involved students of junior and senior courses: 50% of respondents were in the first year, the same number were in the fourth year; 20% of them were males, 80% were females.

The individual's value-based self-determination was assessed according to the following algorithm: the components of the individual's value-based self-determination were identified, specifically life values, value orientations that underlie the personality's value orientation and personality type.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the experimental work was to determine the initial level of the individual's value-based self-determination at different stages of training at a university.

#### **5. Research Methods**

We have measured the level of the individual's value-based self-determination with the help of "the Morphological test of life values" (Sopov & Karpushina, 2002) and R. Inglehart's methods as modified by Yanitsky (2012).

The main diagnostic construct of the questionnaire in the "the Morphological test of life values" (F. Sopov & Karpushina, 2002) are terminal values. The methodology presents scales including a list of life values: self-development, spiritual contentment, creativity, active social contacts, one's own prestige, high financial position, achievement and preservation of one's own individuality.

The proposed values refer to differently directed groups: spiritual and moral values and egoistically prestigious (pragmatic) values. The first subgroup of values includes self-development, spiritual contentment, creativity and active social contacts reflecting the moral and business orientation. Accordingly, the second subgroup of values contains prestige, achievements, financial position, and preservation of individuality. They, in turn, reflect the egoistically prestigious orientation of the individual.

The methodology also enables eliciting the expression of values in various spheres of life.

A qualitative analysis of the results of the survey employing this methodology made it possible to assess life ideals, the hierarchy of life goals, or beliefs about the behavioral norms viewed by a person as a standard.

R. Inglehart's method as modified by Yanitsky (2012) allowed justifying the orientation to the adaptation value (survival and security), socialization value (social approval) or individualization value (independence and self-development).

Subjects were referred to one of three types depending on the majority of choices they made:

1. "Adaptable" (orientated to order and stability in society, material prosperity and preservation of strength and health).

2. "Socializing" (priority is given to family well-being, career, respect from others and public recognition).

3. "Individualizing" (implies the possibility of intellectual and creative self-realization, the possibility to enjoy democratic rights and freedoms, as well as the construction of a more humane and tolerant society).

#### **6. Findings**

The individual's value-based orientation was elicited by the method "the Morphological test of life values" (Sopov & Karpushina, 2002). The results analysis demonstrated that young females are striving to achieve concrete and tangible results ( $t = 2.77$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ), to increase their educational level, to expand their horizons ( $t = 3.56$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ), they are oriented toward family values ( $t = 2.15$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ). In

young males, the sphere of physical activity ( $t = -3.25$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ) acquires a special significance, which, from their point of view, is an important component of life activity (Table 1).

At the early stage of educational training (in the first year), creativity ( $t = -2.70$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ), high material position ( $t = -3.16$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ), preservation of one's own individuality ( $t = -2.55$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ) are honestly significant for students. The sphere of hobbies ( $t = -3.36$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ) and the scope of physical activity ( $t = -3.74$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ) are important for the first-year students. The fourth-year students are more focused on the achievement values than the first-year students; they are also characterized by the desire to find something new in the discipline under study, to participate in research work. In addition, students take more interest in classes that provide a number of opportunities for creativity.

The obtained data allowed determining the value-based orientation of the individual (humanistic, pragmatic and indefinite). It was found that most young males and females (50% and 48%) demonstrate an indefinite value orientation. As many as 32% of young males and 35% of young females are oriented to prestigious values; spiritual and moral values (self-development, spiritual contentment, creativity and active social contacts) prevail among 18% of young males and 17% of young females. About half of the students in the first and fourth years of study are characterized by an indefinite value orientation (Table 2).

**Table 01.** The results of the survey employing the method "the Morphological test of life values" taking into account the gender and stage of education in the university

	Young males	Young females	t	p	Stage of training		t	p
					I	IV		
LV 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV 3	-	-	-	-	1.93	2.13	-2.70	0.007
LV 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV 6	-	-	-	-	2.01	2.246	-3.16	0.001
LV 7	2.20	1.95	2.77	0.00	-	-	-	-
LV 8	-	-	-	-	1.93	2.12	-2.55	0.01
LS 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LS 2	2.34	2.00	3.56	0.00	1.99	2.15	-2.11	0.03
LS 3	2.16	1.95	2.15	0.03	-	-	-	-
LS 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LS 5	-	-	-	-	1.89	2.13	-3.36	0.001
LS 6	1.87	2.17	-3.25	0.001	1.97	2.25	-3.74	0.001

Note. The table shows only significant differences. Here and below, LV and LS are the indicators of the Morphological test of life values, where LV1 is self-development, LV2 is spiritual contentment, LV3 is creativity, LV4 is active social contacts, LV5 is one's own prestige, LV6 is a high financial position, LV7 is achievements, LV8 is preservation of one's own individuality; LS1 is sphere of professional life, LS2 is sphere of education, LS3 is sphere of family life, LS4 is sphere of social activity, LS5 is sphere of hobbies, LS6 is sphere of physical activity.

**Table 02.** Representation of the value orientation in the groups of subjects (%)

Value orientation	Groups of subjects				
	Young males	Young females	1 year	4 year	Students *
Spiritual and moral	18	17	20	15	6
Prestigious orientation	32	35	30	38	31
Indefinite orientation	50	48	50	47	63

\* The average for the entire student sample.

We believe that a large percentage of students with an indefinite value orientation can be attributed to the fact that freshmen are still in the process of adapting to a new environment and new social conditions, trying to achieve optimal interaction of participants in the educational process within systems "student-student", "student-teacher", "student-curator". They are sufficiently aware of the difficulties associated with training. For the fourth-year students, this condition is associated with a situation of uncertainty: the learning process is nearly complete (we have already noted that the study was conducted at the end of the fourth year of training) and it is necessary to learn how to develop strategies for one's own life (professional one and life in general) and change the ways of interaction, activity. In addition, they start to realize the responsibility for the result of their activities, which contributes to the ongoing changes in the value system.

Then the types of orientation were recoded according to their significance where 1 is best, 0 is worst:

1 – humanistic orientation of the individual;

0.5 – indefinite;

0 – pragmatic.

Thus, the assessed value of the personality orientation (X1) was within the range from 0 to 1.

An evaluation of the type of the person's value orientation was studied with the help of R. Inglehart's method as modified by Yanitsky (2012): due to the differences in the hierarchy of value orientations, the following types of personality were distinguished (individualizing, socializing, adaptive and intermediate type).

When comparing value preferences in groups of young males and young females, it was revealed that adaptation values dominated in 26% of young males and 24% of young females. The focus on the socialization value is found in 40% of young females and 28% of young males. The predominance of individualization values was revealed in 8% of young males and 3% of young females. The young males of this group, rather than the young females, are characterized by the desire of intensive interaction with the environment, of independence, of having no restrictions that interfere with the individual's activities and life, of intellectual and creative self-realization.

The most significant differences in the described types of value-based orientations were found for the groups of students of the first and fourth years (Table 3).

**Table 03.** Representation of types of value-based orientations within the groups of subjects

Value-based orientation type	Groups of subjects				
	Young males	Young females	1 year	4 year	Students *
Adaptation values	26	24	20	30	25
Socialization values	28	40	40	39	39
Individualization values	8	3	6	2	4
Intermediate type	38	33	34	29	32

\* The average for the entire student sample.

It is noteworthy that the number of students focused on the value of adaptation increases to the fourth year of study (in the first – 20%, in the fourth – 30%). This may be due to the students' desire for emotional

security and material independence. The socialization values are shared by an almost equal number of the first-year (40%) and fourth-year (39%) students. A high percentage of those who have chosen the socialization values confirm the results of a study by Yanitsky (2012), which revealed the most significant differences in the prevalence of the described types of value-based orientations in age groups, where young participants in the groups were less likely to focus on the adaptation value and, more often, on the socialization value and individualization value than older people.

We found that the percentage of students focused on the individualization value is reducing from the first to the fourth year (6% and 2%, respectively). This fact, in our opinion, is due to the fact that priority at senior courses is given to the development of intimate personal relationships, the ability to love and be loved in the interpersonal relationships with a partner, and the search for a mate. An important component of this relationship is care and responsibility for the partner's well-being, as well as readiness to perceive another, and realize his or her distinctive characteristics as a manifestation of his or her individuality and uniqueness. Moreover, all this contributes to the desire of the individual to act beyond the boundaries of the requirements set by the situation and role prescriptions.

A third part of the respondents in the first (34%) and fourth (29%) years do not have a well-defined system of value orientations, and, therefore, an intermediate type has been identified. The results we obtained agree with the opinion of E. Erickson that the education in a higher educational institution is a "legally fixed delay" in the person's acceptance of the role of an adult, which he calls "a psychosocial moratorium" in the context of the value system formation (Yanitsky, 2012). Young people are in the very midst of the ongoing identity crisis or decision-making period, busy with an active "search for oneself."

A fairly small number of students (4%), focusing on the individualization value, is the norm. According to A. Maslow, self-actualizing people make less than 1% of the adult population.

Then the personality types were recoded according to their significance where 1 is best, 0 is worst:

1 – individualizing type of personality;

0.66 – socializing;

0.33 – intermediate;

0 – adapting.

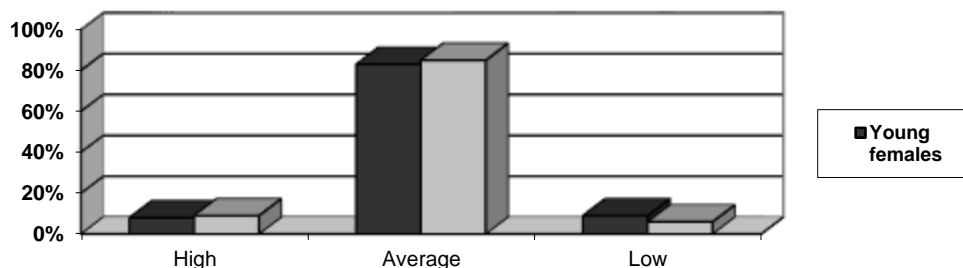
Evaluation of the personality type (X<sub>2</sub>) was within the range from 0 to 1.

To determine the evaluation of the individual's value-based self-determination, we used the following formula:

$$X = (X_1 + X_2) / 2.$$

Then we considered the level of value self-determination in the groups involved in the study.

The study showed that the majority of students (85% of young females, 83% of young males) have an average level of value self-determination (Figure 1).



**Figure 01.** The ratio of students' sex and levels of the personality value-based self-determination (%)

It has been established that the students at the initial stage of training had the higher level of value-based self-determination than that of the fourth-year students ( $t = -4.37$ , with  $p < 0.01$ ). This occurs due to the peak of the crisis of professional identity. In our opinion, this stage (the fourth year of study) is characterized by an axiological crisis, which is expressed in the discrepancy between the desired and the actual (Table 4).

**Table 04.** Relationships between the stage of training and the level of value-based self-determination (%)

Stage of training	High	Average	Low
Initial stage of training	13	85	2
The final stage of training	6	83	11

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the main results of the study make it possible to formulate the following conclusions:

1. Value-based self-determination is a multi-level dynamic system that enables the individual to pursue life goals according to the values alignment and systematization.
2. The components of value-based self-determination are the individual's life values and value orientations. These components are interdependent within the structure of value-based self-determination.
3. Individual features of the tiered hierarchy of value-based self-determination are governed by the value direction and the individual's type of value orientations. The predominance of humanistic values over prestigious and pragmatic ones corresponds to a high level of value-based self-determination.
4. Modern young students undergo a process of value reassessing values, forming new life orientations and professional strategies, which is most often accompanied by an identity crisis.

Throughout the professional training, the knowledge of the objective situation of young students' psychological development will enable implementing in the future the strategy that will help create conditions for a more harmonious development of the individual.

It should be noted that at the stage of professional training, it is necessary to create psychological and pedagogical conditions, taking into account the students' age-specific, socio-psychological and individual characteristics. They will allow them to carry out vocational training more effectively, to achieve quality education (knowledge, skills, abilities) and upbringing (ideological and moral development, will strengthening, professionally important qualities of the student).



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