THE MODERN CONCEPT OF VALUE ORIENTATION

Diana ANTOCI

Associate Professor, PhD, Tiraspol State University, Republic of Moldova

Abstract

The present article includes theoretical study of various scientific papers concerning value and value orientation with the reference to definitions, characteristics of structural components of value orientation, correlations with different elements of personality system, factors impact upon the process of value orientation development. The analysis of the scientific approaches and their attempts to define the value orientations highlighted some unclear positions and controversies that led to elaboration of own definition for the notion of value orientation.

Keywords*: value, value orientation, behavior, attitude, conviction.

1. Introduction

The notions of 'value' and 'value orientation' are currently used with different intentions by various social agents. Although there is a relative consensus in the interpretation of the given concepts, there is also a lot of unclarity, ambiguity, and controversy. This uncertain situation is conditioned by

the presence of various significant registers of the value and value orientation concepts, but also of the referential variants for the evaluation of the phenomena mentioned.

Problems related to human values are some of the most important for the sciences that are concerned with the study of man and society, among which they are mainly involved in the sciences of education, pedagogy, psychology, etc. This finding derives from judgments that proclaim that values are the integral basis for both a particular subject and a whole society. The disintegration of value base obligatory causes a crisis situation, the overcoming of which is only possible by conquering new values. Updating values to a considerable extent guides the convictions, attitudes, behaviors of individuals in general, values having the status of specific regulators of human actions.

Personality undoubtedly needs educational assistance in acquiring content supporting values that form an ensemble of value orientation; and the result of conquering and holding them is conditioned by the quality of the social, educational factors, etc.

The initial approach to the concept of value orientation highlights multiple questions of scientific reflection. For example: what is the complex definition of the concept? What content does the entire value orientation ensemble have? What are stages of its formation? How does the process of value orientation unfold? What is the difference between value and value orientation? and so on.

By examining the definitions of the terms 'value' and 'value orientation', we find the presence of various, multidisciplinary and contradictory scientific approaches, although some scientists consider them synonymous, some equate them, and others try to differentiate them by reflecting only their broad aspects.

2. **Theoretical approaches**

In examining the notion of value orientation we highlight two constituent elements: 'orientation' and 'value', which in a certain way denotes their area of action and the results of this influence.

In DEX dictionary, we can find the following interpretation of 'orientation': "the action of (orientation) and its outcome; figuratively - trend, inclination; conviction, conception" (DEX, 1998). 'To orientate' means "to know where to head to reach a destination, recognizing, establishing direction, finding the way; to determine the best way to follow in certain circumstances, the attitude, the most appropriate solution, to act appropriately; to send someone in a particular direction" (DEX, 1998).

Generally speaking, as defined by DEX, 'value' means "acquiring certain things, facts, ideas, phenomena to meet social needs and ideals generated by them; the sum of qualities that give price to an object, a being, a phenomenon etc.; importance, meaning, price, merit" (DEX, 1998).

By analyzing these dictionary definitions we have tried to synthesize them and therefore we have obtained the following result: 'value orientation' is an action aimed at establishing the direction, identifying the effective ways to follow, under certain circumstances, in order to acquire facts, ideas, phenomena to meet the social requirements and the ideals generated by them, forming the most appropriate, adequate attitude that gives price to an object/action expressed through behaviors. This broad definition can be explained from the perspective of the internal and specific characteristics of an object (animate or inanimate), and also of facts, principles of a human being with a focus on social needs and general principles outlining social life.

The notion of value is a fundamental notion for philosophy. Philosophy explains the world through logical values, but it tends to explain everything that transforms the world according to ethical human ideals. Philosophy shows how

reality emerges, how it evolves, and then the value of all its changes. The concept of value from the philosophical point of view was examined by the Romanian scholar Petre Andrei in the work "Philosophy of Value".

P. Andrei has established that the phenomenon of value is the psychic phenomenon, a feeling that accompanies a judgment, which seeks to achieve a purpose in different forms. But man establishes different values according to the outer circumstances or his spiritual provisions. The author highlights a large number and variety of values, which can be classified according to certain criteria (validity, quality, subject, motives, object, psychic faculty, and their area of use), establishing a harmonious hierarchy of values (Andrei, 1997).

P. Andrei (Andrei, 1997) argues that a diversity of values is not a sign of anarchy because they can be grouped or classified according to a certain criterion, thus establishing a harmonious hierarchy of values. The scientist raises such a question: how can these values be ordered and what criterion can be used? And he replies in the following way: a classification is not only an ordering, a grouping of ideas to facilitate scientific labor, but it must serve a theory, consist of real judgments so that by grouping and subordinating things one can form their theory.

From the perspective of sociological approaches, T. Parsons defines values as 'the ultimate mobile' of the actions of individuals and collectivities, as defining elements for social life (Parsons, 1937, apud Paladi, 2011]. Hence the way to identify their manifestations, both by behaviors and by attitudes, the latter being the direct expression of values.

For M.Rokeach (Rokeach, 1973, apud Paladi, 2011) the values are similar to attitudes. Attitudes are, however, more elementary, and values are deeper, determining attitudes. This is a generally accepted point of view in sociology today. The distinction between the two concepts becomes clearer if we note that

attitudes refer to specific objects and situations, while values are guidelines associated with more general classes of objects and situations.

Cl. Kluckhohn proposes the following classic definition of value: "an explicit or implicit distinction, for an individual or characteristic of a group, of what is desirable, which influences the selection of available modes, means and goals of action" (Kluckhohn, 1951, apud Voicu, 2010).

M.Rokeach denotes that value is "a lasting belief that a certain path or purpose of existence is socially or personally preferable to an opposite path or purpose" (Rokeach, 1973, apud Voicu, 2010) [apud 11].

From a psychological point of view, V.Sopov and L.Karpushina (Karpushina, 2007, pp.61-66) define the notion of value as an attitude of the subject to various facts, events of life, subjects (people) and objects and recognizing them as important in life. The authors analyze the following correlating values and spheres of life: self-development, spiritual satisfaction, creativity, social contacts, personal prestige, financial well-being, skills, personal level of individuality, the sphere of professional life, education, acquiring knowledge, family life, social life, entertainment, and physical activity.

Personal values present one of the most important subsystems of the personality content sphere. Taking into consideration the classification of the psychological nature of individual values proposed by D.Lentyev, the authors L.Karpushina and A.Kaptsov (Karpushina & Kaptsov, 2006) assume that personal values have a double essence. On the one hand this presupposes the relation (the ratio, the attitude) that has the function of direction and structuring, on the other hand the values are in the same line with the needs and the learning motives, leading to study valuing, which manifests the stimulating power, the orientation and motivation function.

B.Voicu (2010) mentions that, from the psychological perspective, values represent the elements of individuals' orientation in the surrounding world. They constitute the decoding of possible actions to identify potential gratifications, benefits deriving from the scales of each preference, depending on personal motivations, needs and aspirations. From the sociological and anthropological point of view, scientists define values as being within the individual, different from each other, but having an important social determinant, expressed and induced by norms, customs and ideologies. According to Clifford Geertz's (Geertz, 1984, apud Voicu, 2010) position, values, like beliefs, are nothing more than individual perceptions of collective values and cultures specific to each culture and internalized through socialization.

Value orientations arranged into a value system are of major importance in an organized personality system that has an impact on the whole life and penetrates into all layers the subject is involved: social, economic, political etc. Cl. Kluckhohn defines value orientation as an "organized and generalized concept, influencing behavior, nature, humanity, human relations with others and desirable and undesirable as they may be related to the environment and inter-human relations" (Kluckhohn, 1951, apud Voicu, 2010). Religiosity can serve as an example of value orientation, and the religious ritual, manifested by attitudes towards church, prayer, fasting, etc. is an example of the value.

Values do not exist by themselves, independently. Any value determines and is determined by other values. M.Rokeach notes that these dependencies are not coincidental. Humans are consistent beings, which implies the existence of a minimal harmony between the values of each individual. It is unlikely, for example, that a profoundly religious person should militate for tolerance towards homosexuals or for gender equality (mainly Christianity and Islam, religions in which women traditionally have a secondary role). Value guidelines in these areas

are interdependent, even if they are distinct. Moreover, values never exist separately, but are integrated into value systems. Here the relationships between them are organized in a consistent way, forming a latent way of guiding individuals in all their actions, as a result of stable, lasting patterns, whereby each individual unconsciously structures his or her beliefs about purposes of existence and modes considered desirable to achieve them. Like C.Kluckhohn, M.Rokeach perceives a hierarchical organization of values, with central values that become priority. The value system is relatively stable, but it can be changed by changing the value hierarchies, and their priorities (Kluckhohn, 1951, Rokeach, 1973, apud Voicu, 2010).

Value stability is, however, superior to that of attitudes, which change more easily, being determined by different sets of values, not necessarily central ones.

On the other hand, the interdependence of values makes the centrality of some of them in fact represent the centrality of a wider set of values. Hence the difficulty of distinguishing between value orientation and value, the two terms are generally used as interchangeable.

The individual can be described to the extent that he or she reacts to certain situations, that is, according to the characteristic features of his or her behavior. It can also be described in terms of motivation with reference, for example, to the values to which the motivation is attached. These two types of measures (motivation and values) are important for individual assessment.

N.Silistraru (2006) believes that value orientations are often given the same meaning as convictions - the product of the later development of the individual. The phenomenon of conviction means that the disciple has discovered his/her Self and realized what values s/he has internalized. It follows that social directives become convictions due to a beneficial activity of acquiring

knowledge. Not all social directives are elevated to convictions, so many remain unconscious regulators of behavior.

Convictions are expressed through generalized social, moral, aesthetic, political, etc. ideas. Although the knowledge in question has an important role in the formation of convitions, it is wrong to think that knowledge is transformed into convictions. In the absence of previous social directives, new knowledge cannot turn into convictions - regulators of behavior, man does not know about directives, and it seems to him that based on knowledge, the convictions - regulating behavior have emerged. At the same time, convictions are the ultimate, final stage in the autonomous development of the personality's position (Silistraru, 2006).

Sociologists and researchers in other fields, by conviction, understand the verbal tendencies of man in behavior. But mankind has long noticed that good tendencies are not always materialized through good deeds. Therefore, in the theory of education, personality is regarded as a subject of beliefs not only because it has 'beautiful dreams' or is ready to discuss what s/he believes or what s/he does not believe (Silistraru, 2006). In the theory and practice of education, convictions are interpreted as real driving forces of pro-social behavior, corresponding to the conscious attitude towards the objects of this behavior, the educator's orientations in different situations of the human realities, and the educator urges the one being educated towards self-determination in complicated social situations.

The value system of a person can serve to determine what s/he is doing or how successful s/he is. Their immediate decisions, like long-term projects, are influenced by their own system of values. Their personal satisfaction generally depends on the possibility, more or less, of expressing their own values in everyday life. The existence of incompatible values or the conflict between their

own values and that of others are often the origin of personal and interpersonal problems.

T.Vianu (1979) examines values as objects of consciousness, included in the desired action independently of their connection to certain things, that is, with those concrete supports which were named assets. However, values contents also comprise the indication of the concrete support for connection with them. Not every value can be linked to any concrete support. When it encompasses, for example, charity, it is absolutely clear for the consciousness that it is the value of a human character or action, that is, a personal value. But when we have an economic value, such as edibility, there is no doubt that we are dealing with value that can only be linked to things, that is, of real value. There is no possibility of encompassing charity as the value of things, nor of engraving edibility as the value of some people. Although as part of people's diet they consume organic beings, they do not consider these as individuals but as things. People attribute the value of things to edible animals. If people attribute the value of a person to a reputable animal, they cease to attribute the actual value of the edibleness to it. Thus, any value in a specific situation is also given the indication of a concrete type of support which is meant to accompany the respective value.

T.Vianu (1979) approached value from a closed or open system perspective. The scientist considers that the system of values appears as such closed to its inner limits and joints. But it appears as open as it can get richer content, between these limits and fixed joints. And because, speaking of a closed or open axiological system, a metaphoric use of words can be given, the metaphor can be continued, saying that the system of values seems closed in the configuration lines of its surface but open in its depth, as one that can receive the unlimited contributions of new desires.

3. Value orientation in correlation with components of personality system

Russian scholars have conducted research on the relationship of trust with personality value guidelines. The studies conducted by T.P. Scripkina, P.N. Shihirev, M.J. Dvoeglazova have shown that trust determines not only the behavior, the style of communication, etc., of the human being, but expresses the integral characteristic of the personality that sufficiently reflects the whole complex of human attitude to people (the social world), objects (material world) and person. Such approach is traditional for the national scientific school of the psychology of trust, in which the phenomenon of trust is viewed through the prism of the personality's subjectivity, and the manifestations of trust belong to the sphere of the social psychology of the individual. Confidence, acting as a condition for any human activity (according to T.N. Skrypkina), appears as a phenomenon that largely determines the system of a person's relationship to the world and to themselves, and the process of creating trust is a process of correlating the value attitude of an individual to himself/ herself and his/her partner by interaction (Skrypkina, 2003).

Thus, the system of trusting relationships of an individual is closely related to the system of value orientations of the individual. This relationship becomes even more obvious when analyzing the content of the concepts 'value orientations of a personality', 'life values of a personality', 'value-semantic sphere of a personality', etc. As the analysis shows, the definition of concepts related to the value sphere of a personality reflects the characteristics similar to the content of the manifestation of the trust phenomenon: "personal value orientations of an individual are manifested in the ability to take responsibility for finding goals in life and realizing these goals, helping to adapt to constantly changing conditions, living life more meaningfully" (Penikov, 2000).

"The value attitude can be formed to the objects and attributes of both external reality (money, objects, people, etc.) and the person's inner world (self-confidence, development, self-improvement, etc.)" (Gorodetskaia, 2004). In the above characteristics we can note their substantial affinity with the characteristics of trust manifestation, moreover, both trust in the social world (people) and the world of objects (money, objects), and oneself (self-confidence, self-attitude, etc.). The presence of similar elements in the theoretical definition of the content of the phenomenon of trust and the system of value orientations of an individual determines the relevance of correlating these phenomena on an empirical level in real life manifestations of an individual.

In the theories of Russian scientists, motivation is examined in relation to value orientations. E. S. Chugunova, R. X. Shakurov, E. Yu. Iyataeva, D. A. Leontyev believe that the study of the value-motivational characteristics of the personality is especially significant in the process of managing people. In their opinion, depending on the value orientations, a motive can act as a socially significant, significant for a given group or community, and individually significant. In connection with the conditions of activity and the nature of the need for motivation, material or spiritual impulses can be brought to the fore.

Values as the most important regulator of life of people and social groups determine decision-making in situations of choice and impose a strong imprint on behavior. Value orientations ensure the stability of the individual, certainty and consistency of behavior, constancy of the relationship of a person with the social world, with other people. Values encourage action, determine the content, and focus of any activity.

In the scheme of social determination of individual values by Jagodzinsky, the process of influencing individual values by those of the community is described. Individual internalizes norms specific to several groups,

to which s/he relates cognitively, evaluatively and affectively, developing his/her own individual values. Some of these may become common values for some of the members of one or more of the membership groups, subsequently transferring again to individuals and manifesting themselves through individuals and behaviors.

M.G. Rogov (2005) notes that values are discovered by the subject in stages - first through emotional reactions, then through a stable emotional attitude and, finally, through a rational assessment. Values-means and values-goals are experienced to varying degrees, but both have an emotional side. It is because of this that they can change places, 'turn' into each other.

The structure of a system is understood as the organization of the connections and relations between subsystems and elements of a system, as well as the composition of these subsystems and elements, each of which has a specific function. Such an understanding is not quite suitable for describing developing systems, and it is them that most often come across in psychological research, in which the structure is also only relatively stable. Therefore, T. N. Savchenko proposes for developing systemic entities "the following understanding of the structure of the system, which includes: the space of elements, the system of relations assigned to them, a set of stable links between the elements, as well as establishing laws (functions) of the relationship of the elements with each other and with other systems and their interaction" (apud Karpushina & Kaptsov, 2007).

Personal values are one of the most important subsystems of the semantic sphere of personality. Based on the classification of the psychological nature of individual values proposed by D. A. Leontiev (2003), we assume that personal values are twofold. On the one hand, these are relations that have the guiding and structuring function of this value, on the other hand, values are on the same level

with needs and motives, representing value formations that have a driving force, i.e. they have an orientation and motivational function (Juravliova, 2006).

Lomov B.F. noted that "in the process of life in society, each individual forms the most complex — multidimensional, multi-level, and dynamic — system of subjective personal relations" (see Juravliova, 2006), i.e. the value system is hierarchical and changeable. Moreover, as a result of changes in social conditions of life, "changes affect not so much the totality of the values themselves, but their structure - the mutual relationship of significance" (Juravliova, 2006, p. 36). Throughout his/her life, a person repeatedly rethinks, revises and experiences the values that are a natural result of changes in living conditions, the needs of the individual, the restructuring of its relationship with the outside world.

4. Value orientation through our own position

The values of the whole system of personality values can be determined by analyzing their manifestations: either convictions, attitudes or behaviors, which constitute the structural contents of the value orientation.

A value orientation is expressed through various behaviors, attitudes, convictions found in relation to other value orientations and their components. B. Voicu mentions that attitudes and behaviors can be the expression of many values. The attribution of effect manifestations to the cause values immediately imposes as a new difficulty in studying the values. The solution is, as usual, a careful, consistent theoretical explanation, afterwards validated by empirical data analysis.

Initial formation of values in human beings occurs gradually. The process is initiated through the formation, outline and promotion of behaviors, which

based on the approval/disapproval of a single person or the social environment (dominant for children) under the impact of the situational or general circumstances are permanently modeled. The behaviors accepted / not accepted by the social environment, of fulfillment / dissatisfaction based on the expectations reached / unrealized establish positive or negative affective associations, accumulate knowledge and gradually outline the attitudes of the subject towards the internal and external reality. Successively, convictions of different complexity are formed and, therefore, the value is outlined. The cognitive psychic processes of the personality, the affective sphere, being in correlation with the motivational one has a major impact on the constitution of attitudes and convictions. The process of forming values depends on the potential of the personality and the social environment in which it develops.

Socialization represents the individual's effort to acquire the behaviors they observe in other subjects, to be the component part accepted by the group, fulfilling the role granted and taken over, and accepting the status offered. Unlike internalization, socialization is a process that runs in the opposite direction, from the individual to the society. By internalizing these "normal" behaviors, the individual becomes a social being, a moral being, as E. Durkheim calls it.

If the externalized behaviors are accepted by the members of the social environment of which the subject is a part, their experimentation continue and constitutes the foundation for the development of positions, knowledge, beliefs that are likewise formed based on the experiences and knowledge accumulated in childhood and throughout life, developing in parallel attitudes that correlate with beliefs and manifest themselves in various situations. Finally, these behaviors, attitudes, convictions lead to the gradual formation and development of values within the personality. Shaping values from the perspective of the verticality and laterality of their contents depends on the knowledge and experiences of the

personality. After the formation of values in the personality structure, the action of hierarchy and influence on the externalization of attitudes, convictions and behaviors is already reversed: under the aegis of values, attitudes, convictions, behaviors are manifested.

Therefore, the mechanism of value formation is a continuous process, which starts with externalization of internalized behaviors, involving the cognitive sphere of the subject, after forming attitudes and convictions in which the corresponding value takes shape and develops perpetually and interacts with / conditions other values. This mechanism is specific to value orientation.

Thus, value orientation encompasses the ensemble of convictions, attitudes, behaviors that are in a hierarchical relationship and monitored by a value or a number of values in the value system of personality as part of a social environment. Also a unitary result of the correlation of the hierarchical values according to the current preferences and situations of personality constitutes a system of values, which is constantly changing or not changing for a certain (static relatively short) period of the subject's life and dynamic in development over a longer period of life.

The action of values in human activity takes place in the opposite direction: values guide convictions, these in turn guide attitudes and, correspondingly, behaviors.

5. Conclusions about the relevance and implications of the research

This is a theoretical study, focused on different positions, opinions, theories of scholars regarding the interpretation of the concepts of value and value orientation. The analysis carried out highlighted controversial definitions, similarities in the use of the concepts of 'value' and 'value orientation',

questionable positions regarding the structural components constituting the value orientation.

The structural contents of the value orientation need to be researched multidimensional and logical and rank relationships need to be determined the both in their internal system, and with the elements of the personality system from the perspective of the pedagogical, psychological, sociological scientific fields, etc. The existing scientific data, on the one hand, and the pressing needs of contemporary society, on the other hand, denote the perspective implications in the study: the major impact factors in the formation of the personality value system; the constituent components of the value orientations and the evolution process from the structural perspective in ontogenesis; the role of the monitored process in shaping the values and their consequences on the whole personality.

References

Andrei, P. (1997) *Filozofia valorii*. Ediţia a III-a. Iaşi: Polirom. 240p.

DEX '98 (1998) *Dicţionarul explicativ al limbii române*, ediţia a II-a, Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan", Editura Univers Enciclopedic. 1192 p.

Paladi, O. (2011) *Implicarea conştiinţei de sine în sistemul de valori al personalităţii adolescentului*. Teză de doctor, Chişinău. 214p.

Râmbu, N. (1997) *Filosofia valorilor*. Bucureşti: Editura didactică şi pedagogică R.A. 235p.

Silistraru, N. (2006) *Valori ale educaţiei moderne*. Chişinău: Institutul de Ştiinţe ale educaţiei. 176p.

Vianu, T. (1979) *Teoria valorilor*. Bucureşti. 485p.

Voicu, B. (2010) Values and the sociology of values, pp. 249-294. *Sociology*. Lazăr Vlăsceanu, coord. Iaşi: Polirom. Retrieved from:

https://www.academia.edu/3190136/Bogdan_Voicu._2010._Values_and
_the_sociology_of_values_pp._249-
294_in_Laz%C4%83r_Vl%C4%83sceanu_coord._Sociology_Ia%C5%9
Fi_Polirom._in_Romanian_language_

Городецкая, И. М. (2004) Ценностный аспект этнотолерантности **//** Зависимость, ответственность, доверие: в поисках субъектности. Материалы Международной научно-практической конференция 24-26 июня 2004 г. в 2 кн. Кн. 1 Ежегодник Российского психологического общества. Москва: Ижевск.

Журавлева, Н. А. (2006) Динамика ценностных ориентаций личности в российском обществе. Москва: Изд-во «Институт психологии РАН». 335 с.

Карпушина, Л.В., Капцов, А.В. (2007) Структура личностных ценностей //*Вестник Самарской гуманитарной академии*. Серия «Психология». № 1. с. 61-67.

Карпушина, Л., Капцов, А. (2006) Социокультурные детерминанты отношения к жизни современного подростка. *Aspecte psihosociale ale procesului educaţional*. Chişinău: IŞE. с.109–111

Леонтьев, Д. А. (2003) *Психология смысла: природа, строение и динамика смысловой реальности*. Москва: Смысл. 487 с

Рогов, М.Г. (2005) Теоретические основы исследования ценностно-мотивационной сферы личности руководителей. В: *Мотивация в психологии управления*: сб. матер. Четвертой межвуз. науч.-практ. конф. Самара, 8 — 9 октября 2005 г. Самара: Самар. туманит. акад. 108 с. с.22-31

Скрипкина, Т. П. (2003) Доверие аксиологическая составляющая личностно-развивающего педантического общения // *Психология*

общения: социокультурный анализ. Материалы Междунпродной конференции. Ростов н/Д, 2003.

Пеньков, А. И. (2000) Изучение ценностных ориентаций // *Психология XXI века* / под ред. А. А. Крылова. СПб: 2000.