

Prosocial Attitudes of Present-day Ukrainian Students

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Abstract

The article analyzes the personality orientation of today's university students in Ukraine. The study involved 225 students of the Kiev National Linguistic University of II and IV courses of five faculties. The study was carried out using Bernard Bass's Personality Orientation Inventory to determine the leading type of personality orientation: individualism, prosociality and efficiency.

According to the study, the students of all faculties showed a focus on business. The second most pronounced type of orientation was "self-orientation". The least pronounced vector of the personality orientation of today's students was "focus on communication". The latter becomes of paramount importance and poses the problem of insufficient prosocial attitudes. It requires a qualitative change in educational work with students.

Keywords: Values Orientation; Culture; Higher Education; Mass Culture; Youth

"Respect for people's freedom of belief does not imply any duty or requirement to respect those beliefs" The Oxford Declaration on Freedom of Thought and Expression [4].

Formulation of the problem

The spiritual values and worldview of the younger generation are formed throughout the entire stage of growing up and becoming a person. A large, if not the most important place in the process of their formation has always been occupied by higher education. After all, it is students who are the most dynamic and mobile part of society, which quickly responds to all changes occurring in it. And the task of higher education in our cultural tradition has always been to indicate professional and personal coordinates that would ensure the formation of prosocial value meanings for a future specialist [2].

In recent decades, in the era of geopolitical wars, clear criteria for such values in Ukraine have been blurred [1]. Today we see the ambiguity and uncertainty of the society's value system, the demand for distortions and propaganda of moral forms, value orientations and life rules that are not characteristic of the traditional mentality of the people of Ukraine. There was a huge discrepancy between what is being promoted in virtual hyperreality and what is actually happening.

The trouble is that drawing the line between virtual space and reality is often difficult. After all, even if you do not look at the TV screen or computer monitor, then you always have your smartphone, networks, advertising and more. And when, following Jean Baudrillard, you find that first you are shown a simulacrum, that is, a sign whose original is not actually present: say, "democracy", "success", "freedom", and in the end it turns out that the sign itself is a simulacrum, you regret that you cannot always remain in this pleasant kingdom of shadows.

You need to eat, wash, get real, where there are dirty streets, high prices, non-observance of traffic rules, promiscuous commercial development, fake drugs, crime, lack of roads, war, and where there is no one to appeal for protection. And then the real internal work begins to clarify not your imposed illusory, but your true meanings of life, those value attitudes that determine your true "I".

In this regard, a pilot study was conducted that would help us, teachers of higher education, to understand what actually today represents the value-semantic content of the personal "I" of our students.

Methodology

Participants, survey methodology and degree of reliability

The study involved 225 students of the Kiev National Linguistic University of II and IV courses of the faculties: Germanic and Romance philology, translation, Orientalism and economics and law. In this case, the popular methodology of the American psychologist Bernard Bass*, a famous researcher of social behavior, was used, designed to determine the type of personality orientation of a person and the degree of its severity. A total of 6075 student responses were analyzed. The technique allows to identify three main vectors of this orientation:

1. Self-centeredness (I), individuality - orientation toward reward and satisfaction of whatever people around us, authority, tendency to rivalry, irritability, anxiety.
2. Focus on communication (C) - prosociality - the desire under any conditions to maintain relationships with people, orientation to joint activities or helping people, the need for affection and emotional relationships with others.
3. Focus on business (B) - efficiency - interest in solving one's own problems, achieving one's own goals, ability to uphold one's own opinion in the interests of the business, neglecting the interests of others.

In order to ensure the reliability of the information received and the ability to see the essence of what is happening behind the external diversity of answers and assessments, appropriate data processing methods were applied. Statistical analysis of the results was carried out using the statistical software package IBM SPSS Statistics 23.0.

Results and Discussion

Data processing was carried out in three stages.

First step: Assessment of the sincerity of responses.

The questionnaire proposed to students was supplemented by a self-assessment scale for the sincerity of their own answers to the questions of the questionnaire (a scale from 0 to 9, where 0 is completely not sincere, 9 is completely sincere).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	The average	Middle quad deviation
Truthfulness	225	0	9	7,74	1,457
N valid (by the list)	225				

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the option "Validity of answers".

As one can see, the average indicator of the truthfulness of answers to the questions of the questionnaire is 7.7. At the same time, the standard deviation from the mean is 1.5 (normal), which indicates the complete representativeness of the indicator obtained and that the answers of most of the respondents are grouped around the mean according to the law of normal distribution.

We believe that the sincerity index of 7.7 (with a maximum of 9) can be considered satisfactory. We assume that among the reasons for the lack of sincerity may be: a) insufficient reflection of their own position by the students themselves; b) caution, distrust.

It is noteworthy that there was no significant level of correlation between a certain type of orientation (toward oneself, at communication, at work) and the degree of sincerity of answers. This indicates that it was not the personal dispositions that were chosen for analysis, but the external variables (those that were not included in the field of our study) that caused the students' incomplete sincerity.

Second phase: Studying the leading personality orientation of students.

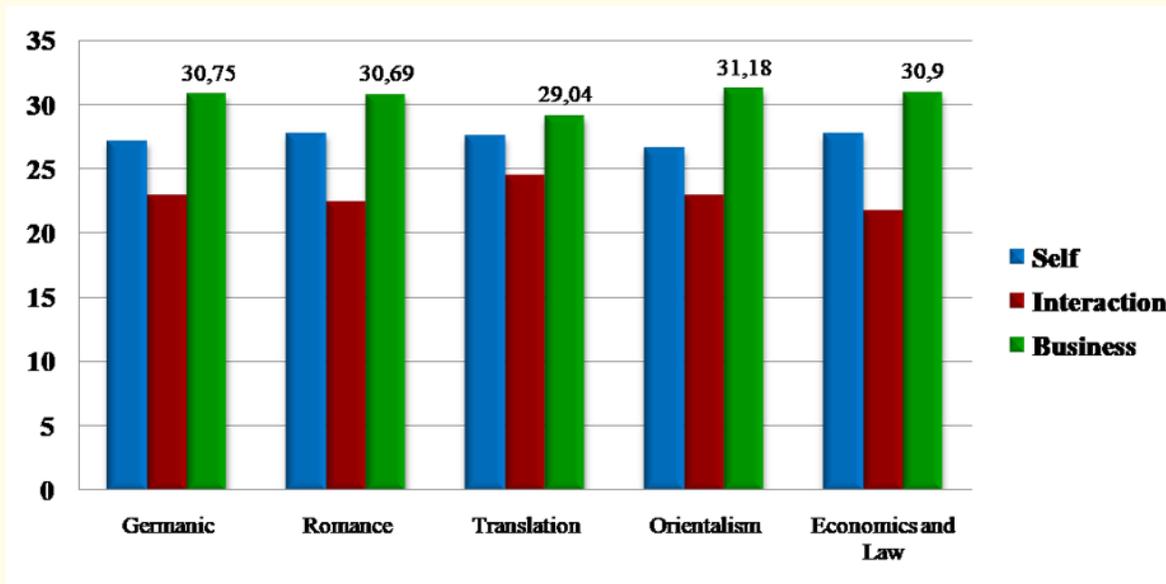


Figure 1: Continuous analysis (without differentiation by course).

As may be seen from the histogram, there is a pronounced tendency: the dominance of business orientation. It is noteworthy that this type of orientation is dominant among students of all faculties without exception. It implies an interest in solving one's own problems, achieving one's own goals, the ability to uphold one's own opinion in the interests of the cause, and neglecting the interests of others. It is difficult to talk about the position of each separate faculty in terms of focus on business, since there was a slight discrepancy in the indicators for each faculty. This difference has no statistical significance, since it may be due to the characteristics of the sample of subjects. The absence of significant discrepancies in the variable "Focus on business" among students of various professional profiles indicates that modern students, as they really are, and not as teachers would like to see them, are focused primarily on their own benefit, on achievement of one's own interests. This makes the problem of the formation of prosocial value meanings so important, since higher education is the last frontier of the educational impact on the student's personality.

The second most pronounced type of orientation is "self-orientation". Again, we observe a slight discrepancy in the performance by faculty. Focusing on oneself in the questionnaire means focusing on direct remuneration, aggressiveness in attaining status, authority, tendency to rivalry, irritability, and anxiety. The least pronounced directional vector of modern students turned out to be the prosocial vector "focus on communication". The desire to maintain relationships with people under any conditions, focus on joint activities, social approval, dependence on the group, the need for belonging and emotional relationships with people.

The task of the last stage of data processing was to establish a possible change in the orientation of modern students from II to IV courses.

A statistical analysis of the results showed the absence of such dynamics, namely the absence of statistically significant differences in orientation indicators between students of II and IV courses.

So, as follows from the results obtained, a modern Ukrainian student is focused specifically on getting educational services, preferably without much effort. He is primarily interested in himself, and he expects the faculty and all university staff to realize who is required to provide services and who should receive these services by paying for them.

It is quite obvious that the ideology of "educational service" distorts the value-semantic structure of youthful consciousness, complicates the work of the teacher and requires us to develop a true socially adequate position and, if necessary, its friendly explanation to students. In particular, training is a complex co-distributed activity, not a service that you can get, such as a massage session. In this new situation for us, we must do everything possible and impossible, to overcome the utilitarianism of the imposed ideology by solving a fundamentally different task - to reproduce the scientific and intellectual resources of the country's exhausted scientific institutions in recent years. By the way, if another five or six years ago, at the psychological consultation, the first place was the experience of young people in the field of personal relations, in particular with the opposite sex, then in the last two years we have seen a predominance of two problems: the problem of living conditions in hostels and the problem of teachers' and deans' personal attitudes to students.

Conclusion

Firstly, it follows from this study that the pressure of mass media and government officials, accustoming society that money is everything, has achieved their results. True, in our culture, money is everything for people of a certain quality, with whom, I assure you, few decent people would like to be at the same table. The main thing is resources that you should not even give to anyone for money. Our students and ideas in their hearts are our main resource. And our weakness is the lack of our own ideas, without which we cannot offer youth models of prosocial behavior. Here might be the tasks of preserving the environment (around the university and inside it), and helping the orphanages, and paying attention to the students themselves by the curators (joint events, interesting excursions with a discussion of general impressions, meeting interesting people, attention to living conditions in hostels etc). And although this study reflects the specifics of prosocial attitudes in only one university, there is every reason to believe that this is an accurate cast of the picture in the higher education of the republic.

Secondly, if we want to increase our students' value orientation not only on themselves, but on society, on its present and future, we must transfer educational work at the university to a qualitatively new level that would meet modern life requirements and development objectives prosocially oriented youth. Only one fifth of students are committed to prosocial values. How not to lose, but to consolidate and enrich this resource? Perhaps we should start by revising the plan of university-wide educational activities in terms of their present and educational potential. Say we have a freshman debut. Why are students just dancing? Why don't they recite prose and poetry? Why don't we have professional contests? Translation competitions? Author song contests? Why is there no discussion of good deeds, the same charity? Why not think over the system for creating the opportunity for our students to earn money for collective work, as it was once in student construction teams?

Thirdly, it should be based on the part of students who value their studies at the university and do not consider that they receive a service. Professors and teachers should generate ideas that would be exciting for students. Ideas which would make it possible for them to express themselves as a person in real situations of social assistance, implement their own socially significant projects, expand their own socially-oriented experience in solving socially significant matters. Here we need to create a think tank, allocate funds from our own resources, and not wait for handouts from Soros funds that finance precisely the unwanted attitudes of students. It is quite understandable that we cannot leave our students with their problems and let their processes of personal development take their course. And at the same time, it is necessary to realize that the old recipes for educational work no longer work. And the development of new principles of educational impact is a difficult task, requiring considerable intellectual and organizational efforts.

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