Gender Differences in Value Orientations and Motivation Among University Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine gender differences in student’s value orientations and the role of parental educational influence, specifically the question whether those affect the level of undergraduates’ academic motivation. The Work Importance Study and questionnaires assessing the professional values and academic motivation were administered to university students (208), males and females from South-West University of Blagoevgrad. The results showed that there were gender differences in social orientation. Women scored higher on social values than men did. Among the value orientations, self-orientation and material orientation were found as great importance, predicting university students’ expressed choice for their self-actualization.

Keywords: value orientations, professional values, academic motivation, university students, gender.

1. Introduction

Presented article introduced the traditional, theoretical and at the same time practical issues. Certainly, this relates not only to Bulgaria but also to other countries around the world because societies most likely, are regardless of their cultural characteristics and should be interested in how young generations perceive themselves or find their place in the future. The recent socio-cultural condition in Bulgaria, characterized by the transformation of the economy, the political and the people’s life, leads to a significant change in the person’s value orientation. Living standards and financial situation in Bulgaria are low compared to most EU (European Union) countries.

What do students see in their future career? Which values dominated their professional lives? Do they appreciate self-fulfillment and intrinsic satisfaction or only economic rewards and material security? The answers are significant not only from the theoretical point of view but for their important implications for the strategies of professional institution. One of the reasons it is important to analyze motivation is because of it is significant influence on students’ academic work and in their achievement. As a consequence, value orientations and motivation are two variables for joint study.

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People aim for different rewards based on their divergent work values. In general, work values can be defined as each worker’s desired outcomes from his/her work. For example, some working persons might believe that monetary rewards are the most important outcomes of work. Other workers might emphasize intrinsic rewards, such as self-growth, attainment, and recognition from others, rather than monetary or extrinsic rewards (Ueda & Ohzono, 2013).

What are values? They are underlying directives to behavior; assumption on which constitutions, laws, and social mores are based; the “goods” for which humans strive or to which they owe allegiance. What are “goods”? Motivating forces that are intrinsic to human nature or to humanity’s place in existence (Reichley, 2001). In both action and thought, people are affected by their past experience, cultural and social norms, and values. They shape attitudes and behavior over the course of people’s lives (Schwartz, 2011). The changes in values have been observed across the world. Their shift has been attributed to several factors: younger people attending university courses; the increased use of new technologies, the political discourse of universalism, the benevolence values, etc. (Danis et al., 2011). According to Super (1970), values derive from needs and are more general than interests; work values are goals that one seeks to attain to satisfy a need. They are the result of interactions between the person and the environment (Super, 1995). According to Roe and Ester (1999) work values have a more specific meaning than general values and are related to working activity and general values.

The most typical classification of work values is a two-category system used to describe intrinsic and extrinsic work values (Gahan & Abeysekera, 2009; Hegney et al., 2006; Hirschi, 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). Extrinsic and intrinsic values are not opposite ends of a continuum, but rather two dimensions of work values that are usually somewhat positively correlated in empirical studies (Johnson, 2005). Professional values are a reflection of the value that a person ascribes to work, the meaning that a person attributes to that work, and a person’s humanistic values. Work values are thus concerned with how an individual will demonstrate interest in the work at hand at the level of values (Tutar & Yilmazer, 2012).

University is a time in life when students are clarifying not only what they value in their lives, but also what they value in work (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007). University students are in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood — between adolescence and adult life. This period is characterized by the formation of personal identity, and career decision-making (Hunter et al., 2010). For example, a study by Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) found that university students most important work values in their long term career choice were intrinsic interests (i.e. job itself, autonomy), high anticipated earnings, contributions to society, and prestige. In addition, university students (men) were more likely to support extrinsic work values (i.e., high anticipated earnings, availability of job openings) whereas university students (women) were more likely to support social values (i.e., contributions to society, working with people).

The work values are closely related to the career choices, so the study of work values in university students becomes important (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007), especially for human resources personnel. Because each subculture defines what appropriate behavior is for its members, individual behavior rests upon the value system. Variables such as sex, age, socioeconomic status are expected to be major determinants of the value a person hold (Baytchinska, 2011; Garvanova, 2013). The more important a value, the more pronounced should be the influence on satisfaction of its perceived attainment possibilities - this is in full agreement with the theory (Sverko et al., 1995).

On the one hand, youth is associated with importance for ability, independence, achievement and self-assertion, and on the other hand a student expresses importance to the economic status, achieving professional success and personal development. In this context, the important value orientations in the process of the students’ professional and personal
development in the Bulgarian university as measured by the WIS/SVP (Trentini et al., 2007) will be the focus of the current research interest.

Under the international coordination of Super’s colleagues, a large international project called Work Importance Study (WIS) was initiated in which researchers from numerous countries all over the world were joined. The project’s aim was to investigate the importance of work in comparison with other activities and the rewards that youth and adults seek in their major life roles, especially the role of worker. From the beginning, WIS teams paid particular attention to theoretical models and empirical methods pertaining to the assessment of values and work salience (Ferreira-Marcues & Miranda, 1995). Scientists from 12 countries worked together, but the most active were those from Australia, Italy, Canada, Poland, Portugal, the USA, Spain and Croatia (Knežević & Ovsenik, 2001). The origin of the Work Importance Study (WIS) was developed as a network of national projects. While WIS was under way, several psychologists (Descombes, 1980; Super, 1980) conducted parallel preliminary studies that built upon an earlier formulation (Super, 1949, 1973; Super & Bohn, 1970).

Definition of terms and concepts are the following:

**Needs** are wants (Maslow, 1954) manifestations of physiological conditions such as hunger, and related to survival. They are the result of interactions between the person and the environment (Super, 1995).

**Values** (Allport & Vernon, 1931; Allport, Vernon & Lindzey, 1960; Rokeach, 1973) are the result of further refinement through interaction with the environment, both natural and human.

**Interests** (Fryer, 1931; Sagiv, 2002; Strong, 1943; Wach & Gosling, 2004) are the activities within which people expect to attain their values and satisfy their needs.

According to Super (1995) theoretical formulation, interests are closer to actual behavior than are needs and values. Needing (lacking, wanting) leads to valuing something that seems likely to meet that need. Somewhat at this point rather abstract, as are the labels attached to values, for instance, “material,” “altruistic,” “power,” and “beauty.” Valuing material things may lead to seeking wealth; power, to seeking position of authority; beauty, to painting, gardening or just having an attractive home or workplace. People generally seek wealth through managerial, investment, and other presumably remunerative occupation, or perhaps in marriage; they may hope to achieve power in the ownership or management of an enterprise or in politics. People who seek beauty may be interior decorators, or sculptors. Valuing leads to action, and action involves occupation with an activity, which may be paid employment or voluntary participation.

Therefore, one practical implication of this theory of the structure of personality is that those who seek to understand motivation (why people do things) must study needs. On the other hand, those who want to understand what people needs will lead them to seek should study values. But most important in practice is to identify achieved goals as related to subjects’ interests (Super, 1995). Values are intermediaries between motivation, interests and expectation, which direct the behavior of individuals in certain situations.

According to the gender roles traditionally established in the Slavic culture, we might expect that women would value more highly such qualities as Altruism, Social Interaction, Personal Development and Aesthetics, whereas men would give greater weight to Physical Activity, Authority and Autonomy (Sverko et al., 1995).

For that reason, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between value orientations and academic motivation among university students. The research questions are: 1) What is the prevalence of value orientations among Bulgarian university students? , 2) Is there a gender difference in students’ value orientations? 3) What is the role of parental educational influence, and whether those affect the level of undergraduates’ academic motivation?
2. Methods

2.1 Participants

About 208 university students filled and returned a battery of three questionnaires. The students from different study programmes (Psychology, Pedagogy, Mathematic and Economic) represent SWU “Neofit Rilski” from Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

2.2 Measurements

2.2.1 Bulgarian version of the questionnaire WIS/SVP examines the hierarchy and structure of professional values, based on a model in 21 scales of values, of three items each and reveals a five-dimensional structure (Trentini et al., 2007).

2.2.2 Academic motivation questionnaire for assessing the level of academic motivation (Radoslavova & Velichkov, 2005).

2.2.3 Optimism/Pessimism method for measurement of generalized expectancies for outcome valence (optimism and negative expectations) (Velichkov, Radoslavova & Rasheva, 1993).

3. Results

3.1 Demographic data

The total number of tested students was 208, administered from different study programmes, men (n = 64; 30.8%) and women (n = 144; 69.2%) of SWU” Neofit Rilski” Blagoevgrad. The study programmes were Psychology (n = 68; 32.7%), Pedagogy (n = 52; 25%), Mathematic (n = 41; 19.7%) and Economic (n = 47; 22.6%). Only fifteen students were married (7.2%) and 193 of them (92.8%) were single. Thirty-eight percent of participants (n = 79) were living in a small town, 23.1% (n = 48) in a village and 38.9% (n = 81) in a major town. The participants were currently unemployed (18 to 30 years old) university students (M = 21.24; SD = 2.56).

3.2 Bulgarian version of the questionnaire WIS/SVP

The Bulgarian version of the (WIS/SVP) examines the hierarchy and structure of professional values, based on a model in 21 scales of values, of three items each. The instrument determines the basic values, important for the individual in his job. This information could be used in career development, formation of business teams, creation of motivational programs or in recruitment and selection. The WIS/SVP scale includes twenty-one values: Ability Utilization, Achievement, Advancement, Aesthetics, Altruism, Authority, Autonomy, Creativity, Economic Rewards, Life-Style, Personal Development, Physical Activity, Prestige, Risk, Social Interaction, Social Relations, Variety, Working Conditions, Cultural Identity, Physical Prowess and Economic Security. The instrument contains sixty-three items. The items are sentence completions introduced by the incomplete sentence “It is now or will be important for me to __.” Responses are on 4-point Likert scale of 1 = no importance; 2 = some importance; 3 = important; 4 = very important. The WIS/SVP can be administered to people of secondary school age, university students and employed adults. Administration time is from thirty to forty-five minutes (Trentini, Bellotto & Bolla, 2007). The study determined the reliability of the WIS/SVP by using Cronbach’s α coefficient. In the research the reliability indices of the five scales of Material Orientation, Self-Orientation, Independence, Challenge, and Social Orientation were satisfactory (.85, .80, .78, .71,
Data were statistically processed by means of SPSS. These five value factors are interpreted as values orientations and named:

Factor 1: Materialistic Orientation, defined by Economic Rewards, Economic Security, Advancement, Prestige, Cultural Identity and Personal Development. This factor is defined by “extrinsic values” that stress the importance of economic conditions and material career progress. An example of item is “A job in which I am paid enough to live really well”.

Factor 2: Self-Orientation, defined by Esthetics, Personal Development, Ability Utilization, Achievement and Advancement. All the values are inner-oriented goals important in personal development and self-realization, e.g. “A job in which I know by my results when I’ve done a good job”. Ultimately, this factor is defined by “intrinsic values” that are important in the satisfaction of higher-order needs.

Factor 3: Independence, defined by Creativity, Autonomy, Life-style, Authority, Social Interaction and Variety. This factor stresses the importance of an autonomous way of living, e.g. “A job in which I can decide how to get my tasks done”.

Factor 4: Challenge, defined primarily by Risk and then by Physical Prowess and Physical Activity. This factor shows a competitive type of orientation, e.g. “A job in which I can test the limits of my abilities”.

Factor 5: Social Orientation, defined primarily by Altruism, Social Interaction, and Aesthetics. This factor includes the group-oriented values, e.g., “A job in which I work with people that I like”. The results show that the most important value orientation for university students was Materialistic Orientation (α=.85) defined by Economic Rewards, Economic Security and Advancement. The second most important professional value orientation was Self-Orientation (α=.80), defined by Esthetics, Personal Development and Ability Utilization.

Result of a t-test performed to discover differences that occurred between the five value factors scale WIS/SVP by gender. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between men (M=24.13; SD=4.60) and women (M=25.65; SD=3.74) Social Orientation (t_{102}=2.32; p=.02). First, women scored higher on social values than men did. However, the group of male students (M=21.89; SD=4.86) valued Challenge Orientation (Factor4) more than women (M=21.17; SD=4.26). For male students, it was important to be active in their work as in sport or other physical activity. This seems to fit a cultural stereotype of gender differences. For both genders was placed great importance of intrinsic values (Esthetics, Personal Development, Ability Utilization, Achievement, and Advancement). For these students future work is identified as a means of self-actualization, as a way of finding a life role, as a means of implementing one’s self-concept. In fact, males had higher levels for Challenge value Orientation (Physical Activity, Risk and Physical Prowess).

The next step of total number tested students of SWU” Neofit Rilski” Blagoevgrad (n=208) was to discover differences that occurred between the five value factors scale WIS/SVP and different study programmes (Psychology, Pedagogy, Mathematic and Economic). The result of a one-way ANOVA performed to discover differences that occurred between the five value factors scale WIS/SVP by specialty indicated that there were statistically significant to study programmes differences in Materialistic (F_{201}=3.033; p=.03) and Social Orientations (F_{204}=7.384; p=.00). The study revealed greatest importance of Self-Orientation and Materialistic Orientation, whereas different study programmes scored low on Challenge. In Materialistic Orientation the students enrolled in Psychology major placed a greater emphasis on economic rewards and economic security than Mathematic major students (LSD=.044). Students enrolled in Pedagogy major attached a greater extent importance to the “instrumental” professional values than Mathematic major student (LSD=.003) (Table 1). Furthermore, the results of a Social Orientation indicated
that there were statistically significant differences between students in Psychology and Pedagogy majors (LSD=. 002); Mathematic and Pedagogy majors (LSD=. 000); Economic and Pedagogy majors (LSD=. 001).

Table 1. Variance analysis-one way ANOVA to Study programmes Differences in WIS/SVP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIS/SVP</th>
<th>Study programmes</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materialistic</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>42.74</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>3.033</td>
<td>3.201</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>43.94</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematic</td>
<td>40.46</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>42.15</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>21.57</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>7.384</td>
<td>3.204</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>21.10</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematic</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>21.39</td>
<td>4.46</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In particular, the students enrolled in Psychology major scored higher importance by Altruism and Social Interaction than Pedagogy major (see Table 1). In addition, students at Mathematic major placed greater importance than Pedagogy major on enhanced the social, economic and professional status. Also, students enrolled in Economic major attach more importance on working with other people than Psychology major.

3.3 Academic motivation

In general the analysis accepts the assumption that the academic motivation is part of motivational orientation targeted at the professional development of students (Radoslavova & Velichkov, 2005). The questionnaire for assessing the level of academic motivation gives an opportunity for researching the internal readiness of the pupils and the university students for active attitude towards the learning process. In the constructing of a method and in the psychometric indicators are laid allegations, which reflect an active attitude towards the educational process, internal self-discipline and pursuit of complementarity and expand of the gained knowledge. 11 statements have been formulated, which have content, answering the high academic motivation.

Regarding student' motivation, the analysis showed that about 39.9% (n=83) of the students had a strong, and 32.2% of them (n =67) had a moderate academic motivation. 24% out of the respondents required weak academic motivation and 3.8% of the student were absent.

In conclusion, the analysis showed that young people dominate (72.1%) with a strong and moderate level of academic motivation.

Table 2. Independent samples t-Test related to father educational level in academic motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father educational level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23.98</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An interesting finding from this study was that parents’ (father) educational level affects the level of students’ academic motivation. Which means that the students with highly educated parent (father) are more academic motivated than the students whose parent has upper secondary education (see Table 2). In fact, the parent education exerts a stronger influence on the chances of students to receive higher education, as well is associated with the family status.

It was performed an independent samples t-Test to assess possible differences in the means of Academic motivation among men ($M=21.13$; $SD=5.55$) and women ($M=22.58$; $SD=5.31$). There were no significant differences between genders. Also, the result of a t-test related to mother educational level in Academic motivation showed no significant differences ($M_{[secondary]}=21.95$; $SD_{[secondary]}=5.37$) ($M_{[higher]}=22.68$; $SD_{[higher]}=5.58$).

Finally, the results show that for Bulgarian university student’s higher education is the ideal. Young people are motivated to learn, which is associated with the pursuit of self improvement and self-fulfillment. Students with father higher level of education, expressed greater motivation focused on developing skills, knowledge and professional qualities necessary for the university specialty than respondents with father secondary education ($t_{[200]}=2.87$; $p=0.005$). One of the effective means of the formation of the motivation for study is the development of the self-control and self-estimation.

3.4 Optimism/Pessimism (negative expectations)

Pessimism and optimism are considered primarily as cognitive constructs associated with the activity or passivity toward the future, underestimating the volitional factor in both attitudes. The roots of optimism are in the peculiarities of individual development in childhood and the practices of parental care and family education. Negative expectations are secondary. They are formed in adulthood through the gradual and inevitable accumulation of negative life experiences. Optimism can be defined as a stable personality trait related to positive expectations regarding future events. Optimists are people who expect that good things will happen to them, while pessimists expect bad things to happen. The roots of these constructs are theoretical and empirical studies on motivations and how they are expressed in human behavior expectancy-value models of motivation (Scheier & Carver, 1985, 1994).

The method for measurement of generalized expectancies for outcome valence Velichkov, Radoslavova, and Rasheva (1993) give an opportunity for researching the levels of optimism and negative expectation of the university students. In the theoretical constructing of a method and in the psychometric indicators are laid seventeen statements, the scale of optimism is 10 statements and a negative expectation is seven. Responses are on 5point Likert scale of 1 = no agree; 2 = disagree; 3 = some agree; 4 = agree; 5 = very agree.

Regarding student’ generalized expectancies, the results showed that about 70.2% of the university students had an average level of optimism, 27.4% of them had high level of optimism and only 2.4% of the students had low level of optimism. The results of this study further revealed an average negative expectations level among 71.2% of the students and 16.8% of them had high negative expectations level. The low negative expectations level was 12.0%.

It was performed an independent samples t-Test to assess possible differences in the means of optimism ($M_{[men]}=38.08$; $SD_{[men]}=5.85$) ($M_{[women]}=38.18$; $SD_{[women]}=5.17$) and negative expectations among men ($M=20.23$; $SD=4.55$) and women ($M=20.40$; $SD=4.35$). There were no significant differences between genders.

The correlations matrix using *Pearson r*, showed that there was a positive and significant correlation between five value factors, academic motivation and optimism; optimism and respondents age ($r=.19$; $p=.007$) ($p < .01$). Also, the results showed significant correlation
between factor 5 (Social Orientation) and negative expectations (r = .17; p = .016) (p < .05). Meanwhile, there was a negative correlation between optimism and negative expectations (r = -.33; p = .000) (p < .01). The results further revealed a positive and significant correlation between academic motivation and optimism (r = .31; p = .000) (p < .01); factor 2 (Self-Orientation) and optimism (r = .26; p = .000) (p < .01); factor 2 and academic motivation (r = .22; p = .002) (p < .01); factor 4 (Challenge) and negative expectations (r = .24; p = .000) (p < .05). There are significant correlation at (.05) level between five value factors.

4. Discussion

This study came to address an important issue of understanding the value structure, motivation and optimism/pessimism of students. Furthermore, it shows significant differences between genders among Bulgarian university students that led the related to comparison and interpretation of value orientations of both genders.

But, some significant differences between genders did appear. In particular, the Social Orientation was scored higher by female university students than male students. In particular, men placed a higher value on the extrinsic aspects of work (for example living according to their ideas). In most of the value orientations women scored higher than men on social-oriented values, whereas men scored higher than women on Challenge value orientation. It is easy to assume that both Physical Prowess and Risk values would be higher for males than for their female counterparts. Accordingly Kaya et al. (2019), study longitudinally examined the influence of masculine norms and gender role conflict on eudemonic psychological well-being among young adult college men. Results demonstrated that both masculine norm conformity and gender role conflict were predictive of increased and decreased well-being among young adult men. Specifically, the masculine norms of power and playboy were negatively associated with prospective well-being. The low standing of Physical Prowess suggested idealistic rather than realistic attitudes toward work (Hornowska & Paluchowski, 1995).

There was a tendency, however, for women to score higher than man. In this study, women also placed greater importance than men on helping people and spending time with family (Altruism). Fletcher and Major (2004) discovered that both males and females achieved similar levels of altruism motives or work values. Vacha-Haase (1994) discovered that male had higher levels of altruism than females. Therefore, these results appeared contradictory to past findings. Moreover, Aesthetics and Social Interaction values might be more closely associated with female students. Moreover, according to the results of the study investigated the relationship between the university students’ value orientation and their attitudes toward the environment, female students manifested a more positive and friendly attitude to the environment than did males students (Jahangiri & Zarei, 2016).

Presented Materialistic Orientation results with variance analysis-one way ANOVA and Least Significant Difference (LSD) shows that the students enrolled in Psychology and Pedagogy majors attach particular importance to “extrinsic values” that stress the importance of economic conditions and material career progress. Moreover, materialistic and pragmatic values might be more closely associated with Economic major whereas, Mathematic major students assign limited importance to Economic Rewards, Economic Security, Advancement, Prestige, Cultural Identity and Personal Development. The results of a Social Orientation indicated that students enrolled in Mathematic major placed great importance of the group-oriented values. Further, the Psychology major scored higher than Pedagogy major on social-oriented values (Altruism, Social Interaction etc.). Finally, the students enrolled in Economic major are characterized by the particular attention pay to personal ability, comfortable and safety environment.
An interesting finding from this study was that students with highly educated parents are more academic motivated than the students whose parents have only high school (secondary) education. Also, the analysis showed that young people dominate with a strong and moderate level of academic motivation. Further, the result shows that the university students had an average level of optimism and negative expectations.

Specifically, results indicate that students with highly educated father are more academic motivated than the students whose fathers have only secondary education. This could be attributable to the fact that as people become better-educated, their knowledge of the environment increases and a friendlier and positive attitude toward the environment follows. People’s knowledge and awareness of the environment has a direct bearing on their attitude toward their surroundings (Jahangiri & Zarei, 2016).

Additional, the correlations provides reason to confirm that respondents by Self-Orientation placed greater level on optimistic and positive attitudes toward work. University students characterized by Challenge type of orientation, more expressed negative expectations and attitudes derived from financial and physical insecurity than students characterized by Social Orientation. For example, people who have an optimistic orientation towards life tend do have positive expectations regarding the future, to realize that the desired is possible and to persist in their efforts. Pessimists, in turn, have negative expectations, strive less, tend to become passive and give up more easily on their goals (Norem & Cantor, 1986; Scheier & Carver, 1985). This study of data suggests that gender is probably not a determining factor for the positive and negative expectations of university students regarding their future experiences.

The national Italian study administered in 1995 with WIS/SVP (Trentini et al., 2007), shows the scores of university students lay in the following top values: Personal Development, Ability Utilization, Life-Style, Social Relations and Aesthetics. The least values that were endorsed by the study were Physical Prowess, Risk and Authority. Based on the results and considering each national sample (Trentini & Muzio, 1995) of Work Importance Study (WIS), the following characteristics of university students stand out: the Canadians are characterized by the great importance they attach to Authority, Prestige, Advancement and Economics (Economic Security and Economic Rewards in international use are combined as the Economic scale), whereas they rate Aesthetics, Life-Style, Social Interaction and Risk as less important. The Italians have a higher score for Physical Activity and Social Interaction and lower score for Aesthetics, Economics, Advancement and Prestige. The Portuguese respondents attach particular importance to Advancement, Creativity and Working Conditions, whereas they attach limited importance to Prestige and Risk. The Croatian sample is characterized by the particular attention respondents pay to Working Conditions, whereas they obtain lower scores for Authority, Autonomy and Life-style. The Americans attach considerable importance to Advancement, Authority, Social Interaction and Prestige and feel Creativity and Life-style are less important. The Belgian sample attaches considerable importance to Social Interaction and a limited one to Working Conditions. The Japanese students attach particular importance to Aesthetics, Risk and Creativity and limited importance to Advancement and Social Interaction. Last, the Poles consider Life-style, Economics, Variety and Risk to be more important, whereas they attach less importance to Advancement, Authority, Social Interaction and Physical Activity.

In sum, prevalence of intrinsic values (Esthetics, Personal Development, Ability Utilization, Achievement and Advancement) and the low valuation of extrinsic values (Risk, Physical Prowess) may suggest a society in which material problems are considered unsolved and social conflicts absent or unworthy of attention. Young people not only emphasize the life of the spirit, but they also pay greater attention to material life and the quality of life. This is an important finding in that it demonstrates that income and permanent job was an important value for young people.
5. Conclusion

In summary, it could be said that young people, particularly students, are the great hope of Bulgarian society to implement cultural transformation and socio-economic progress. Bulgarian university students consider having a high standard of living, use all skill and knowledge in order to develop as a person to be more important, whereas they attach less importance to risky things, tell others what to do and physical prowess. This study demonstrated that professional values may be universal in nature but depending on other factor such as gender, study programmes, motivation, and expectation. An interesting finding from this study was that students as a whole reported more intrinsic work values and less extrinsic values. The prevalence of intrinsic values and the low valuation of extrinsic values may suggest a society in which material problems are considered largely solved and social conflict absent or unworthy of attention. The study revealed that young people acted and lived, according to their ideas. They develop as a person or design new things. In contrast our value hierarchy could be an expression of nonfulfillment of the values people feel are important. It could be that because the conditions for their fulfillment are not good and people stress their importance.

Of course, these results come with their own important caveats – they may not generalize to other groups beyond young Bulgarian men and women at college, and they are based entirely on participants' self-reports of their own values and wellbeing. Clearly more longitudinal research is needed, arguably using scales that are not phrased with an inherent bias against professional values, and also including outcome measures not only for the students, but also for those people who live and work with them.

However, in this case values could be interpreted not as generally positive objectives that an individual aims to attain but rather as expressions of aims that are not likely to be fulfilled. The shifting of gender roles has happened quickly. Men and women are still experimenting to their new roles and rules related to them.

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References


