

Psychological Semantic Parameters of Adolescents' Conformism in the Measurement of Value Orientations

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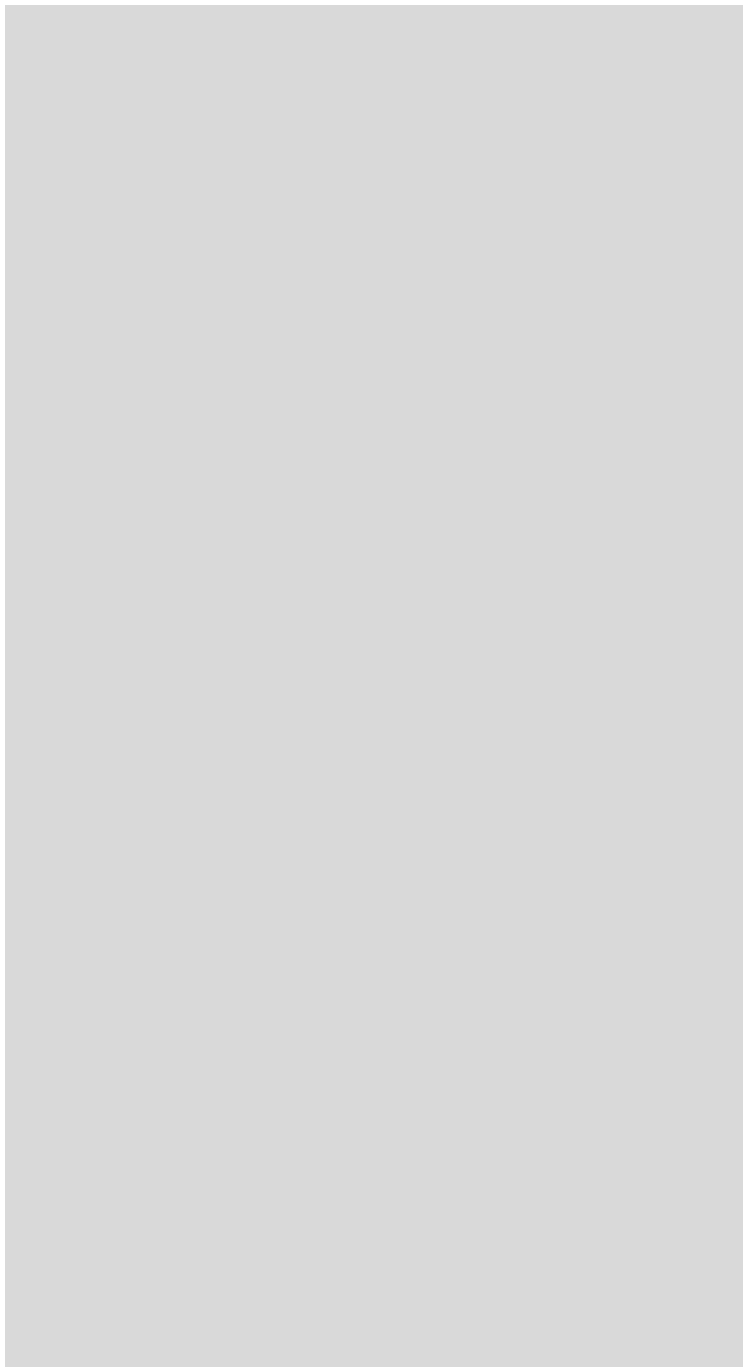
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Abstract: The aim is to theoretically substantiate and empirically study the psychological semantic parameters of conformism of adolescence and to establish the relationship with values. Value orientations as an important regulatory mechanism of personality behavior are revealed. Conformism is interpreted through social desirability as the individual's desire for positive and constructive interaction, exchange with society, during which the individual obeys the latter, presenting himself in a favorable light. It is noted that young people often change their values under the pressure of "significant others" and society, presenting themselves in a favorable light, implementing conformal behavior. It is established that conformism correlates with value orientations ($p < .01$; $p < .05$). It is noted that respondents with a high level of conformism are characterized by a change in values under the influence of the environment and people with low levels – this trend is not observed. It has been studied that in adolescence there is a shift in the orientation of the individual from focusing on other people to focusing on their own meanings and values. It is determined that a person with a high level of conformism can neglect his own values, and therefore change his own behavior, which can be regarded as a "challenge to the environment". It is offered to apply the received empirical results in training and to implement in educational and professional preparation of students-psychologists.

Keywords: *Conformity, values, significant others, student, youth.*

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1. Introduction

The changes that are taking place in our society affect not only the political, economic and social spheres, but also affect a fairly large number of people. A special category of the population, which acts as an innovator and the driving force of society are young people. At the same time, this category is quite sensitive to various suggestions, influences, and actions from the environment. The problem of formation and emergence of value orientations of youth on which the future of our society will depend is one of the important problems of modern psychology.

Everyone has a system of personal values, which are for her/him the defining orientations in everyday life. Formation and emergence of value orientations is a decisive step in the creation of personality. All life values are constantly changing, transforming, supplementing and rethinking. Adolescence is the most important stage in these processes. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the extremely powerful influence of society. Quite often young people quickly change their value priorities under the pressure of society, in particular “significant others”.

The problem of the conformism’s influence on the value-semantic sphere of youth requires more in-depth scientific analysis, coverage and generalization, the establishment of psychological determinants.

2. Literature review

“Value” is a phenomenon that is a part of the theoretical research of many sciences. In philosophy there is a section of axiology that studies values. The axiological approach involves the formation of a young person’s system of values that determine his attitude to himself, other people, and the world around him. Since the basis of responsible behavior of the individual is a system of attitudes, the core of which is the man’s value orientations, so the axiological approach is basic in the formation of moral responsibility of young people (Sopivnyk, 2016).

Social psychologists see in the values of the study of human socialization, its adaptation to social norms and requirements. Rokeach (1979) defines values as stable beliefs that are central to human life. Values are the principles that guide a person in life. They determine the behavior of the individual (Rokeach, 1979). It is necessary to distinguish between individual values and universal values. Individual – these are the values to which a particular person gives priority on the basis of their own attitudes and guidance, they are also called values of the individual. Universal values are socially defined and significant in society.

The value system functions in three planes: cognitive, emotional and conative. The cognitive plane is responsible for the content of values and their understanding, emotional – the estimation of values, their acceptance or rejection, behavioral – the ability and willingness to implement and follow a certain value in their behavior. We emphasize that it is necessary to take into account the socio-psychological continuum of this problem. It is expedient to consider values and value orientations in such a relation as “society – individual” (Krupnyk & Tkalenko, 2019; Shevchenko, 2019). It is known that during socialization the individual accumulates experience and knowledge of previous generations, perceives the influence of the peculiarities of their culture, and acquires socially accepted stereotypes of behavior that are always aimed at socio-cultural values.

We come to the conclusion that a wide and multifaceted range of values develops in the personal and social ties that are present in the practice of people. These connections are formed from birth. The value orientations of parents have a great influence, but the defining milestone for their expansion and strengthening is adolescence. We consider this time of life fundamental for the formation of human value orientations. Everyone focuses more or less on established values that are universal, but the world is changing, and these changes also affect the value systems of humanity. Therefore, value orientations may be subject to various tests and changes. Note that the value system must be flexible enough to withstand the various influences of the environment in different areas of everyday human life. Value orientations are able to perform a number of functions, including regulatory, motivational, normative and other functions. They are the means that form the spiritual component of the personality, and through which, the person of adolescence is guided in everyday life.

Adolescence is a stage of adaptation of an individual to adult life, an intermediate point between childhood and social maturity. At this time, adolescents acquire the ability to self-create their own value orientations. Integrating the experience of the past, the features of the present and expectations of the future, the individual embodies in the value orientations of the images of life goals, as well as chooses how to achieve them (Klenina, 2019). It is young people who set the pace and dynamics of society, and therefore we need to know the values and orientations of young people (Blynova & Kruglov, 2019; Ma et al., 2020; Vasylenko et al., 2020).

According to the focus on certain values, young people can be divided into three typological groups. The first group is people who prefer the previous values that society received from the Soviet era. These young people are prone to protests, pickets, disobedience under the leadership of

elders. The second group is those who completely reject the values of the past, defend the liberal ideology and values of those societies that have a developed market economy, a high level of social security. The third group is young people, who are characterized not just by the denial of the “old world”, but by intolerance of all values except their own. Scientists define this type of young as quasi-revolutionary, because they are so radical that they do not just seek to break their relationship with the old world, but are ready to destroy them (Baranivskiy, 2014).

We generalize that the system of value orientations can make assumptions about the nature of the development of general relations, the prospects for the development of society. The study and research of the value orientations of young people gives grounds to assert the extent of their adaptation to new social conditions. Thus, the perception of the environment, awareness and implementation of any activity is carried out and conditioned by subjective values, namely the personal value hierarchy. Value for adolescence is a criterion for estimation of his environment and events in which he participates. This estimation can be differentiated and traced in the approval, condemnation, acceptance or non-acceptance of certain actions, phenomena, objects, and people. The system of value orientations is dynamic, and therefore constantly changing. Some values that are significant and important at the moment may lose their priority. Thus, it is these psychological features that form the value orientations of adolescents, which are gradually transformed into a stable structure of values of a mature person.

A person is a biosocial being who is always in interaction with society. Society exists and functions according to its own rules, and has a very powerful influence on each individual. Consciously or not, however, the person subjects to the influence of the group in which he is included. This phenomenon is called “conformism”. Conformism can be considered as a kind of social influence, during which the judgments, thoughts, behavior, values of the individual change, because of his desire to meet the position of the relevant group. Conformism shows the degree of subordination of the individual to group pressure, his acceptance of a certain standard, stereotype of behavior, norms, values, values of the group (Kidinov, 2011).

Researchers Deutsch and Gerard (1980) identified two types of social influence of the group: normative and informational, according to which people yield to the pressure of the group because they depend on the latter to achieve two important goals: formation of an accurate idea of reality – informational influence and receiving the approval of other members of

the group – normative influence. They believed that both informational and normative influences gave rise to conformism (Deutsch & Gerard, 1980).

Moscovici (2008), in his turn, argued that the consent of the individual to the majority is the result of normative influence. Coming to the opinion of the reference group, a person compares his opinion with the opinion of other people. As a result, he is more interested not in his own position, values, but in how similar he is to other members of the group. Wanting to be like others, the individual agrees with the majority, he expresses the position or demonstrates the socially desirable behavior that the majority expects. Striving for positive and constructive interaction, exchange with society, the individual obeys him, presenting himself in a favorable light.

Social desirability of adolescence is an indicator of conformism – the lack of their own opinion, not implemented a meaningful system of values and beliefs. Social desirability in adolescence is characteristic of those who do not fully demonstrate subjective activity and have given up self-actualization in favor of adapting to existing circumstances. The indicator of social desirability in adolescence is an indicator of successful adaptability and passive adaptation to circumstances (Shevchenko, 2019). Based on all of the above, we classify social desirability to one of the manifestations of conformism.

Researchers Crowne and Marlowe (1960) have come to an understanding that conformal behavior correlates not only with the “facade effect”, but also with human needs for approval, self-defense and self-esteem. After analyzing the work of A. Edwards, we find a questionnaire to diagnose the motivation of approval, which is called the Crowne-Marlowe “Social Desirability Scale” (CM “SDS”) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Much later, this technique was repeatedly adapted, in particular Khanin (1976). Another researcher, Paulhus (2002), understands social desirability as the respondent’s tendency to provide unreasonably positive self-description, which leads to distortion of the psychological diagnosis results of personality traits and attitudes (Khanin, 1976). Paulhus and John (1998) identified two types of socially desirable responses: moral and selfish (subjective). The first group of answers is characterized by the fact that a person tries to meet social standards and norms of behavior, the other tries to embellish his/her social image as a subject of activity. The tendency to meet socially desirable responses can be both permanent and situational.

A person is always a member of a community plays an appropriate social role, which encourages him/her to adhere to a number of norms, responsibilities and rules. The formation of a system of expectations affects

the selectivity of contacts, attitudes, emergence which indicates its connection with the hierarchy of values (Blynova, Moiseienko et al., 2020). The social expectations of the group can affect the values of each participant in this interaction and to meet these expectations, the individual acts in accordance with social norms, changing their value system, and waiting for approval from the group.

We theoretically analyzed the phenomenon of “conformism” in the scientific literature. Conformism is seen as a kind of social influence, during which the judgments, thoughts, behavior, values of the individual change, due to the desire to meet the position of the reference group. Wanting to be like others, the individual agrees with the opinion of the majority, he expresses the position or demonstrates the socially desirable behavior that the majority expects, so we consider social desirability a manifestation of conformism. Conformism can be viewed on the positive side, i. e. as a social ability that helps to adapt, that ensures success in business. However, on the negative side, conformism combines the hiding of one’s own self, the management of the impressions of others, that is, deception and self-deception.

The aim is to theoretically substantiate and empirically study the psychological semantic parameters of conformism in adolescence and to establish the relationship with values.

We assume that adolescents will have a positive correlation between the psychological semantic parameters of conformism and a number of key value orientations; the received empirical results will be expedient to apply in training and to implement in educational and professional training of students-psychologists.

3. Methodology and methods

The methodological starting principles of the empirical research of the relationship between the psychological semantic parameters of conformism and key values are an algorithm that combines a series of sequential actions with the use of psychodiagnostic techniques. The key requirement in the selection of psychodiagnostic tools is the relevant reflection of the subject of research. This methodology has been tested in the process of studying the parameters of emotional intelligence (Cheban et al., 2020; Halian, Halian, Burlakova et al., 2020), adaptation processes (Blynova, Chervinska et al., 2020; Blynova, Kisil et al., 2020; Blynova, Popovych et al. 2020; Kononenko et al., 2020; Shevchenko et al., 2020; Topuzov et al., 2020), innovation (Fizeshi, 2020; Tsiuniak et al., 2020), as well as in the study of educational processes and motivational states of

young respondents (Blynova, Lappo et al., 2020; Halian, Machynska et al., 2020; Halian, Halian, Gusak et al., 2020). All these scientific researches are fully or partially connected with conformism and value orientations of young people.

Participants

The study was held from November 2019 to February 2020 among students of different specialties of two higher education institutions of Kherson State University (Kherson, Ukraine) (n=102) and Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (Chernivtsi, Ukraine) (n=32). In total, six groups of students, aged 18–21, with a total of 134 individuals, participated in the research. The mean age of the sample was 19.3 years (SD = 2.28).

Instruments

The empirical research was implemented during the first academic semester (2019-2020) with the use of targeted protocol observation, questionnaires and psychodiagnostic tools.

An empirical research of the value orientations of adolescents was carried out according to the method “Diagnosis of the structure of value orientations of a personality” (“DSVOP”) (Bubnova, 1999). This technique allows you to set the value orientations of a person in real life. The methodology consists of sixty-six closed questions and eleven scales.

DSVOP method scales: “Pleasant pastime and rest” – the main thing is to be able to spend your time at your own will, as well as to have the means to satisfy existing desires and have a good rest; “High material well-being” – the ability to earn money, invest and spend it at his/her own discretion, have a certain wealth and be a well-off person; “Search and enjoyment of the beautiful” – It is important to be able to see the beautiful in life, to enjoy the beauty and aesthetics of nature and people; “Help and mercy” – the value of helping, caring for people in need, the predominance of altruistic views of life; “Love” – as one of the most important values for each person, is to give love to others and receive it from each other; “Cognition of new” is the discovery of something new, interesting, unexplored, cognition of truth, nature and man and intellectual self-development; “High social status and management of people” – It is important to have a certain social status that will ensure a high status and role in society, which will directly manage others; “Recognition and respect of people and influence on others” – an important place is respect from people, gaining recognition that will influence others; “Social activity” – activity to events taking place in society, agreement or disagreement with the

changes taking place in it; “Communication” – it is important to maintain social contacts, to have a circle of communication that satisfies a person both emotionally and spiritually; “Health” – It is important to feel good, to have good health.

The next psychodiagnostic tool of our research is the conformism questionnaire (social desirability) D. Paulhus and O. John “Balanced inventory for desirable responding” (“BIDR”) (Paulhus & John, 1998). The questionnaire is based on the idea of the multidimensional nature of the variable, which forms a two-factor space for its study. The technique is designed to diagnose conformal responses. The questionnaire presents two scales: “self-deception” and “impression management”. “BIDR” consists of forty questions, which a student must answer with agreement or disagreement, using a seven-point direct rating scale of Stepel, where 1 – completely disagree, 7 – agree. The proposed psychodiagnostic tools are aimed at establishing the psychological content parameters of the studied phenomena.

The Crowne-Marlowe “Social Desirability Scale” (CM “SDS”), Crowne and Marlowe (1960), adapted from Khanin (1976) was used to diagnose approval motivation. The methodology consists of twenty statements, among which there are socially acceptable and socially unacceptable patterns of behavior with each of which the student agrees or disagrees. Each answer that matches the key is 1 point. The indicator of motivation for approval is received by summing all the points. It characterizes the motivational structure of the student and, in particular, the level of its dependence on favorable estimation from other people, its vulnerability and sensitivity to interpersonal and environmental influences. In other words, the scale allows you to get an indirect measure of a person's need for approval from other people. The higher the final score is, the greater is the motivation for approval. In turn, this is a person's willingness to show and present himself to others as fully compatible with the social norms of the individual, which is characterized by conformism. Low indicators show a rejection of traditional norms, excessive self-demands and a low level of conformism.

Procedures

The empirical research was implemented in four stages: 1) preparatory stage; 2) aerobic stage; 3) the stage of collecting empirical data; 4) stage of processing and analysis of research results.

The research is conducted according to ethical standards of committee on the rights of experiments of Helsinki Declaration (2013).

Statistical Analysis

Computer programs are used for statistical processing of the received data: "SPSS" v. 23.0 and "MS Office Excel 2010". It was defined arithmetic mean value of parameters (*M*) and mean-square deviation (*SD*). The minimum (*Min*), maximum (*Max*), arithmetic mean of the parameters (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) were calculated. Correlations were defined using the Spearman correlation coefficient (*r*). Differences between values of parameters at level $p \leq .05$ and $p \leq .01$ considered statistically significant.

4. Results and discussion

The received psychological content parameters were accessed according to the methods "DSVOP", "BIDR", CM "SDS", focusing on the scales minimum (*Min*), maximum (*Max*), the arithmetic mean of the parameters (*M*) and mean-square deviation (*SD*), which are presented in Tabl. 1.

Table 1. Mean values and mean-square deviations of the scales of the studied parameters
(*n*=124)

Source: Authors' own conception

Scale	Min	Max	M	SD
"DSVOP"				
Rest	2.0	6.0	4.35	1.02
Material well-being	1.0	6.0	3.29	1.31
Enjoyment	.0	6.0	3.36	1.29
Help	1.0	5.0	4.41	1.28
Love	.0	5.0	3.59	1.29
Cognition	.0	6.0	3.49	1.51
Social status	.0	6.0	3.14	1.52
Respect	1.0	5.0	3.98	1.38
Social activity	.0	5.0	3.01	1.35
Communication	1.0	6.0	2.79	1.11
Health	.0	6.0	3.21	1.29
"BIDR"				
Self-deception (SDE)	65.0	127.0	92.79	14.19
Impression Management (IM)	59.0	139.0	93.01	18.29
CM "SDS"				
Social desirability	2.0	17.0	9.56	3.39

Note: Min – minimum values; Max – maximum values (mean); M – arithmetic mean; SD – mean-square deviation.

According to the “DSVOP” (Bubnova, 1999) method, the most significant value orientations of the respondents were determined. Among them, “Rest” ($M=4.35$), i. e. for young people one of the main is the opportunity to “relax” and have a good time; “Help” ($M=4.41$) – the modern youth generation is sensitive and ready to come to help; “Respect” ($M=3.98$), which indicates the inherent desire of adolescence for recognition, which gives self-confidence and some approval. The lowest positions are “Social activity” ($M=3.01$) and “Communication” ($M=2.79$).

Spierman (r_s) correlation analysis was used to determine statistically significant relationships. A number of significant links have been established between the values of adolescents and social desirability. There is a negative relationship between the values of “material well-being” and “health” $-.177$; $p \leq .05$). We argue that the state of health does not depend on the level of material security. Of course, an individual’s financial situation can affect the quality of health, but no material well-being guarantees a good state of health.

The relationship between value indicators such as “Help” and “Love” is significant ($.284$; $p \leq .01$). The presence of a loved one encourages the desire to help, earn and support your partner. These two values are altruistic, because each of them is aimed at another person. This is evidence of the predominance of humanistic values of students, which are the foundation for constructive interaction with society.

There is a positive correlation between the values of “Help” and “Respect” ($.312$; $p \leq .01$), which means that when helping someone, a person expects and hopes for recognition from others. Through good deeds a person gains the respect of others. However, if you look at it from another angle, you can assume that the assistance provided may hide indirect manipulation (Krupnyk & Tkalenko, 2019) and influence on a person through the service provided.

“Cognition” is positively correlated with the indicator “Respect” ($.223$; $p \leq .05$). We justify this by the fact that respect in society is used by a person who strives for development, to learn something new, to cognize the truth and to get new skills and abilities. Through the cognition of the unexplored and the new, the progress of mankind takes place, and the person who is this discoverer has an influence on other people. That is, young men and women are open to cognition and self-development, which is very important in our time.

We note a significant relationship between the values of “Cognition” and “Social Activity” ($.223$; $p \leq .05$). Social activity is characterized by a person’s involvement in society events. This interest is an explanation of the

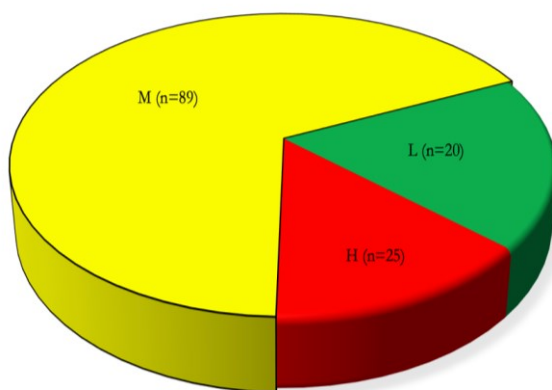
desire to learn new information and data, to take a very active and effective position, which may affect the support or disagreement with changes in society. Adolescence is characterized by activity, determination and own civic position, which is based on the cognition and learning of new information.

There is a positive correlation between the values of "Social status" and "Social activity" (.177; $p \leq .05$). Youth as an active participant in public life seeks to occupy an important public place that will ensure prestige and a corresponding role in society. Or, having a high social status, young people can influence changes in society, due to their position, and thus demonstrate their social activity.

Indicators such as "Communication" and "Health" have a significant positive relationship (.275; $p \leq .01$). To be healthy, you need to feel good, both emotionally and spiritually. This feeling can provide an appropriate circle of communication in which the individual feels comfortable.

We state that humanistic, hedonistic and social values prevail in the value sphere of young people. The predominant part of the youth is characterized by universal values, which serve as guidelines for further socially active life of young people.

In order to determine the general level of social desirability, the Crowne-Marlowe method "Social Desirability Scale" (CM "SDS") was used. As a result of processing and interpretation of the received data, the following results were received: 23 people had a low level of social desirability, 84 – an average level, and 17 – a high level of social desirability (see Fig. 1).



Note: H – high; M – medium; L – low.

Fig. 1. *Distribution of levels of conformism according to the method of CM "SDS" (n = 134)*
Source: Authors' own conception

The results of the research have a normal distribution, in which the average values are more common ($n=89$; 66.42%) than the last (extreme). The level of conformism of most young people is adequate to the external conditions and situations of social reality.

Statistically significant correlations between conformism scales and value orientations were established using the Spearman (r_s) correlation coefficient in Tabl. 2.

Table 2. *Significant correlation coefficients between conformism scales and value orientations*
($n = 134$)

Source: Authors' own conception

Scale	Material well-being	Recognition	Communication	Respect	Rest	Health
Self-deception (SDE)		.273**	.269*	-.211*		
Impression Management (IM)	-.326**		.173*		.499**	
Social desirability			.485**			.669*

Note: ** – $p < .01$, * – $p < .05$.

Positive values of correlation indicate the ability of the students to neglect certain values for the social acceptance by the community. Negative correlation values indicate that there are certain values that are a priority for a person and that he cannot break in order to obey the majority, sometimes to present him in the best light.

There is a significant negative correlation between Material Well-being and Impression Management ($-.326$; $p \leq .01$). We explain this connection by the fact that a person's tendency to "control" other people's impressions is related to the level of material well-being. We assume that such respondents, using their material status "playing hard to get" and thus try to embellish their social image. However, if there is a situation of choice between material and social, the priority will be given to the first factor. Significant is the negative relationship between "Respect" and "Self-Deception" ($-.211$; $p \leq .05$). This can be explained by the fact that, gaining the recognition and respect of people, the individual seeks to assert itself due to the fact that it will influence others. According to Edwards (1957), the

presence of such a tendency as social desirability indicates a lack of self-understanding or unwillingness to show personal shortcomings.

The positive relationship between parameters such as "Communication" and "Self-deception" (.269; $p \leq .05$) and "Communication" and "Impression Management" (.173; $p \leq .05$) is important. This connection can be interpreted as following, a person may neglect such a value as communication, not support certain relationships or relationships with individuals, in order to be approved, from the point of view of the reference group or society.

People with a high level of social desirability has a positive relationship between parameters such as "Rest" and "Impression Management" (.499; $p \leq .01$), "Social Desirability" and "Health" (.669; $p \leq .01$), as well as between "Communication" (.485; $p \leq .01$). That is, such people prioritize to win the affection and approval of society, rather than their own leisure, time and health. People with a low level of social desirability are not characterized by a change in value orientations under the influence of society. That is, for such people, the principle of following of their own positions and values is more important than the approval of society. Usually, these are individuals with a clear position in life, who do not take into account social expectations and requirements and are steadfast under the pressure of society.

It is established that the average level of social desirability prevails among young people as a manifestation of conformism, which indicates the adequacy of the perception of social influence. However, there are young people who have a high level of conformism, who are characterized by neglecting of values for the social approval. Individuals with a low level of conformism are stable in their values and do not change them under the influence of society.

5. Conclusions

1. Theoretical analysis of value orientations' problem of young people is carried out. It is emphasized that values are formed during the socialization of the individual, consolidating social norms and requirements, cultural features, past experience, traditions and social stereotypes. It is extremely important that young people do not betray their values under the pressure of "significant others" and society when they become mature.

2. Theoretical analysis of conformism is carried out. Conformism is interpreted through social desirability as the individual's desire for positive and constructive interaction, exchange with society, during which the individual obeys the latter, presenting himself in a favorable light. It is noted

that there is a risk of young people changing their own values due to social pressure.

3. It is established that the scales of conformism correlate with the value orientations of the individual ($p \leq .05$; $p \leq .01$). It is proved that young people with a high level of conformism are characterized by a change in values under the influence of society, people with a low level – this trend is not observed.

4. It is emphasized that a high level of conformism is a rather ambiguous phenomenon, because according to it a young person can neglect their own values, and therefore change their own behavior, which can be seen as a “challenge to society”, or neglect their own leisure, time and health obeying the group.

5. It is noted that the received results of neutralization of conformism for the formation of healthy value orientations with the help of psychological training should be operationalized in the training of students of psychology.

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