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PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PREFERRED VALUES
OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The main aim of the study was to explore the personality traits and preferred values of the university students. The study was carried out on a sample of 170 respondents. Two research questionnaires were used: the Neuroticism-Extroversion-Openness-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) and Schwartz's Values Survey. There was no significant differences between women and men in the preferred values, but men scored higher than women on Neuroticism domain. The student's place of residence and student's academic year differentiated statistically significant results obtained in this research in some of the preferred values. Students from the village had higher means in Stimulation, Universalism, Benevolence, Conformity, and Security than students from the city. In addition, the results revealed that students second-third academic year had higher scores on the Power, Achievement, Self-Direction, and Universalism than students first year.

Key words: *personality traits, values, university students.*

Основною метою дослідження було вивчення особливостей особистості та переважних цінностей студентів університету. Дослідження було проведено на вибірці з 170 респондентів. Було використано дві дослідницькі анкети: інвентаризацію нейротизму – екстраверсії – відкритості – п'ять факторів (NEO-FFI) та дослідження цінностей Шварца. Не було суттєвих відмінностей між жінками та чоловіками у переважних цінностях, проте чоловіки набрали більше значення, ніж жінки, у домені невротичних захворювань. Місце проживання студента та студентський навчальний рік диференціювали статистично значущі результати, отримані в цьому дослідженні, у деяких з кращих значень.

Ключові слова: *риси особистості, цінності, студенти університету.*

Основная цель исследования заключалась в изучении личностных качеств и предпочтений студентов университета. Исследование проводилось по выборке из 170 респондентов. Использовались два исследовательские вопросники: «Невротизм – экстраверсия – открытость – пять факторов» (NEO-FFI) и оценка ценностей Шварца. Существенных различий между женщинами и мужчинами в предпочтительных значениях не было, но мужчины оценивали выше, чем женщины в области

нейротизма. Студенческое место жительства и студенческий учебный год дифференцировали статистически значимые результаты, полученные в этом исследовании по некоторым из предпочтительных значений.

Ключевые слова: *личностные качества, ценности, студенты университета.*

Personality encompasses the relatively stable feelings, thoughts, and behavioral patterns a person has. Personality different peoples form each other. Psychologists defined personality in different ways. Some of them defined it as enduring dispositions that cause characteristic patterns of interaction with one's environment (Goldberg, 1993; Olver & Mooradian, 2003). The other defined personality as characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors over time and across situations (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007). Personality is a set of psychological traits and mechanism within the individual which is organized, relatively endured, and influences the individual's adaptation to the environment (Pervin & John 1997). A trait can be defined as a relatively stable characteristic that causes persons to behave in certain ways (Pervin, 1994). Traits are the consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors that a person exhibits across situations. That is, someone who scores high on a trait will exhibit psychological states related to that trait more often and to a greater extent than individuals who score low on that trait (Fleeson and Gallagher, 2009).

The personality is rather stable, but doesn't mean that it not change. In fact, personality is shaped, especially during childhood and adolescence, and changed throughout life. Peoples have changed and evolved as a result of their own life experiences, the process of socialization they received in early childhood, relationship with other they were exposed to, social roles performed by them, successes and failures they had in their life events. People tend to become more socially dominant, more conscientious (organized and dependable), and more emotionally stable between the ages of 20 and 40, whereas openness to new experiences may begin to decline during this same time (Roberts, Walton, Viechtbauer, 2006).

Although personality is mainly related to physiological processes, it's also environmental components like society and its culture can contributes to development an individual's personality. Personality traits are determined by the culture to which people live in. Every society prescribes certain forms of behavior for the individuals and tends through its culture (different social norms, beliefs, attitudes) to create a basic personality type with a complexity of characteristics. People who are kept isolated from their respective societies cannot develop their personality according to the demands of such societies. So, the influence of society upon personality is of considerable importance (Olver & Mooradian, 2003).

Personality researchers proposed a differences models of traits. For example, Raymond Cattell developed model of personality based upon sixteen

traits. Hans Eysenck proposed a model of personality based upon just three universal traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion and Psychoticism. Zuckerman (1994) proposed five personality traits: Impulsive Sensation Seeking (we can treat impulsivity and sensation seeking as independent dimensions) Neuroticism, Sociability, Aggression/Hostility (Zuckerman, 1994).

The best developed model concerning personality traits is the Big Five introduced by Costa and McCrae (Costa & McCrae, 1994). This model of personality can be used to describe the most salient aspects of personality. It combines people's attitude, emotions and behavior, and was defined as a consistent pattern of thought, feelings, or actions that distinguish people from one another (Goldberg, 1993). Personality analysis is mainly based on a five-factor model, covering such aspects as extroversion (engagement with the external world, positive and optimistic attitude, sociability); neuroticism (tendency to experience negative emotions); agreeableness (altruistic nature, people-oriented attitude); conscientiousness (organizing skills; ability to develop motivation and perseverance in striving after goals), openness to experience (intellectual curiosity, appreciation of art, sensitivity to beauty). The each of the five personality factors represents a range between two extremes. In the real world, most people lie somewhere in between the two polar ends of each dimension (McCrae, Costa, 1999).

Individuals who are extroverts are talkative, assertive, energetic, outgoing, excitement seekers and enthusiastic. They enjoy being the center of attention and meeting new people. People who are low in extraversion tend to be more reserved and have to expend energy in social settings.

Individuals who are high on neuroticism are anxious, hostile, vulnerable, tense, unstable and self defeating. They have tendency to experience negative moods and do not know how to interpret and regulate their emotions. They seem to use avoiding and distracting coping strategies, such as denying, wishful thinking, and self-criticism rather than more approaching strategies. In contrast, people with low level of neuroticism are able to manage and regulate their emotion effectively and convert the negative ones to a more positive emotions such as change their perceptions of the situations.

Individuals who are agreeable, they are kind, altruistic, tolerant, forgiving, warm, sensitive and compassionate. Individuals with high level of agreeableness are assumed to be optimistic, can engage in effective interpersonal relationship, are able to perceive, express and regulate emotions effectively. Agreeable traits include empathy, consideration, friendliness, generosity, and helpfulness, as well as an optimistic view of human nature. Agreeable persons tend to believe that most people are honest, decent, and trustworthy, and are less likely to suffer from social rejection.

People who are conscientious are productive, reliable, responsible, systematic, punctual, achievement oriented, dependable and thorough. People with high conscientiousness are organized, plan ahead, and exhibit impulse

control. They have no problem to resist temptation or delay gratification. They are able to motivate themselves to perform a task that they would like to accomplish.

Openness to experience includes traits like having wide interests, being imaginative and insightful, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity. Individuals who are high in openness are artistic, original, creative, and open to new ideas. People low in this trait are often much more traditional and dislike changes in their life (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & John, 1992).

Many reports found gender differences in rates of personality traits. Women scored higher than men on Neuroticism. The one of Neuroticism in which women do not always exhibit higher scores than men was Anger, or Angry Hostility. Women consistently scored higher than men on Agreeableness and related measures, such as tender-mindedness. No significant gender differences were typically found on Openness/Intellect, Extraversion and Conscientiousness domains (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae 2001, Feingold, 1994).

Costa et al. (2001) investigated gender differences across specific aspects of Five Factor Model domains. They found that men scored higher in some facets of Openness, such as Openness to Ideas, while women scored higher in others such as Openness to Aesthetics and Feelings. Men scored higher in some facets of Extraversion such as Excitement Seeking and Assertiveness, while women scored higher in other Extraversion facets such as Warmth, Gregariousness, and Positive Emotions, Men and women appear to differ little on either specific aspects of Conscientiousness (encompassing such qualities as diligence, self-discipline, orderliness, and goal-orientation) or the sub-dimensions it comprises. However, these differences between women and men were small and were not consistent across cultures (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001).

Not only personality traits, but more cognitive elements like personal values may be motive of engagement and functioning people in their everyday life.

Values motivate behavior. Rokeach (1973) found that people act according to their values because there is a need for consistency between one's beliefs and one's behavior (Rokeach, 1973).

Values can be treated as existential. They possess concrete meaning in concrete situations and contexts as well as cross situational character (Schwartz, Sagiv, & Boehnke, 2000). They make up the essential criterion which allows to estimate someone's behavior as well as to characterize the particular order. Some values are very important for the person, while others are less.

Values make up a cognitive representation of challenges, which individual would undertake to survive biologically, to function best in the group as well as to have a satisfying life. Shalom Schwartz treats values as personal goals. The values possess the character of sensible goals which all people try to reach in their lives. The values motivate people to act, also to undertake challenges (Schwartz,

1992; Schwartz, Sagiv & Boehnke, 2000).

The researchers are searching for the universal, culture-free contents, in spite of their essential differences. According to Shalom Schwartz, the values construct the cognitive representations of challenges (the goals), which people meet in all the cultures: biological challenges which make people survive; social challenges, which make people interact as well as the challenges placed for an individual by community, in which the given individual exists. These values are the basic principles that guide individual behavior throughout life (Schwartz, 1992). So, the researcher treats values as personal goals. It means, that if we know the values of a person, we can more or less foresee what goals, will be realized by him in practice.

Schwartz has identified ten meaningful groupings of values. They have tend to cluster together most closely, and therefore provide a meaningful and relatively simple way to group and organize individual values. The ten value domains (and sample values for each) are: Power (social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image, social recognition), Achievement (success, capable, ambition, influential, intelligence, self-respect), Hedonism (pleasure, enjoying life, gratification of desire), Stimulation (daring, a varied life, an exciting life, novelty), Self-Direction (creativity, curiosity, freedom, choosing own goals, independent, private life), Universalism (protecting the environment, a world of beauty, unity with nature, broad-minded, social justice, wisdom, equality, a world at peace, inner harmony), Benevolence (helpfulness, honesty, forgiving, loyalty, responsibility, true friendship, a spiritual life, mature love, meaning in life), Tradition (devout, accepting portion in life, humble, moderate, respect for tradition), Conformity (politeness, honoring parents and elders, obedience, self-discipline), Security (national security, social order, safety, family security, reciprocation of favors, healthy sense of belonging) (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz, 1994).

Different combinations and hierarchies of the values represented in Schwartz's theory motivate behavior for different reasons, and guide behavior differently. The particular categories of values create so called "meta-categories", which may to be introduced in two dimensions. There are following poles of these dimensions: 1) self-oriented (Self-Enhancement/Openness to Change), 2) other-oriented/stability (Self-Transcendence/Conservation). They can be grouped into four meta-categories, which include the following groups of values: a) Self-Transcendence: Universalism and Benevolence; b) Self-Enhancement: Hedonism, Achievement, Power; c) Openness to Change: Stimulation, Self-Direction; d) Conservation: Security, Conformity, Tradition.

People generally agree about which values are most important and which are in the bottom of their hierarchy. Cross-cultural research on personal values reveals commonalities in the meaning of values and some similarities in personal hierarchies of values of across cultures. All over the world, benevolence values are among the most important, whereas power, tradition, and stimulation values

are among the least important. This shared hierarchy of values does not mean, however, that individuals and cultures not differ in their values – they differ substantial. People vary in how each value is important for them and hence vary of endorsing these values. Furthermore societies vary in the importance their members attribute to each value (Schwartz& Bardi, 2001; Sagive & al 2010).

Gender is one of the factors that can influence the personal values of people. The results of empirical studies on the effect of gender on personal values are inconclusive. Research of Schwartz and Rubin (2005) revealed that men attributed consistently more importance than women did to power, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and self-direction values. In contrary, women attached more importance to benevolence and to university and less to security values. Sex differences was small and explained less variance than age and much less than culture (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) found that only power is more significant for male university students, while benevolence and universalism are more significant for female students (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005). Karakitapoğlu Aygün & Imamoğlu (2002) noted only a few non-significant trends for some of the value domains between women and men. Specifically, there was a non-significant trend for the women to be more inclined toward universalism and for the men to be more inclined toward a normative frame of reference (Karakitapoğlu Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002).

The obtained results suggest that gender-related differences in values tend to be rather few and inconsistent. These findings imply the gender-related similarities in values than differences.

The purpose of the present study is to analyze the personality traits and preferred values system of the university students. A review of the theories and previous researches concerning personality and values system allow me to form my own research hypotheses. For the purpose of my research, I assume that there are statistically significant differences between various socio-demographic characteristic of students on the personality traits, especially between women and men on Neuroticism and Agreeableness dimensions. Furthermore, I assume that there are statistically significant differences between various socio-demographic characteristic of students on values system, especially between students from city and village and between students first and third academic year on

2. METHOD

Participants

The research was conducted among the university students during their classes. Students were informed about the goals of the research. The sample consisted of 170 respondents. The same groups of respondent were women (50,00%) and men (50,00%). All of the student were aged between 19–24 years. More than half of students (58,82%) were inhabitants of cities, and less than half (41,18%) were inhabitants rural areas. Very similar groups of the respondents were students of the first (32,35%), the second (32,95%) and the third (34,70%) academic year.

Questionnaires

Student were asked to complete two research questionnaires: NEO-Five Factor Inventory and Schwartz Value Survey.

The first questionnaire to be used was the NEO-FFI in polish adaptation of Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak and Śliwińska (1998). The NEO-FFI measure the five major dimensions of personality: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience. This questionnaire contained 60 items, 12 statements for each of the five factor. The instrument includes self-descriptive responses by the participants using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert-type scale. Coefficients alpha reliability in the polish version for the NEO-FFI were: Extraversion (.77), Neuroticism (.80), Agreeableness (.68), Conscientiousness (.82) Openness to experience (.68).

The second questionnaire to be used was the Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992) containing 57 values. The Value Survey was translated and adapted into the Polish language. Each value was rated on a 9 point scale, ranging from «opposed to my principles» (-1) over «not important» (0) to «of supreme importance» (7). Reliabilities of the values types were as follows: Power (.73), Achievement (.70), Hedonism (.66), Stimulation (.67), Self-direction (.63), Universalism (.76), Benevolence (.68), Tradition (.54), Conformity (.57), Security (.61). Reliabilities of the four meta-categories of values types were as follows: Self-Enhancement (.78), Openness to Change (.74), Self-Transcendence (.73), Conservation (.67).

Results

To explore the personality's big five factors of universities students various statistical analysis were performed. The results showed that all students achieved higher scores on the dimensions Conscientiousness (M=6.61, SD=2.16), Extraversion (M=6.47, SD=2.02), and Agreeableness (M=5.47, SD=2.18) than on the dimensions Openness to Experience (M=4.24, SD=2.03) and Neuroticism (M=4.15, SD=1.96).

The means of five traits of personality were compared across socio-demographic groups. Only student's gender and student's place of residence differentiated statistically significant results obtained from the survey persons. The results of student's gender are presented in table 1.

Table 1

T-test analysis results of student's gender and five traits of personality

Five traits of personality	*Women N=85*		*Men N=85*		t- test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Extraversion	6.48	1.77	6.45	2.24	-0.07
Neuroticism	3.78	1.79	4.51	2.06	2.46**
Agreeableness	5.18	2.19	5.76	2.14	1.73
Conscientiousness	6.64	2.13	6.57	2.20	-0.21
Openness to experience	4.12	1.99	4.36	2.08	0.75

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

In comparison to women, men scored significantly higher only on neuroticism dimension, t(168)=2.46, p<.01. There was a non-significant trend for the men to be more inclined toward agreeableness than women (p<.08). The students from the village scored significantly higher on Agreeableness trait than the students from the city (M=5.92, SD=2.10 vs. M=5.16, SD=2.10, t(168)=-2.28, p< .01). There were no differences on the other personality scales.

The next step in the research was to know the values system of the respondents using Schwartz's Values Survey. The results showed that the most important values for all students participated in the research were: Security (M=4.67, SD=0.94), Self-Direction (M=4.62, SD=0.94), Conformity (M=4.59, SD=1.05), Benevolence (M=4.57, SD=0.83), Hedonism (M=4.56, SD=1.13), Achievement (M=4.37, SD=0.98) and Stimulation (M=4.13, SD=1.20). The less important values for students were: Universalism (M=3.91, SD=0.99), Power (M=3.73, SD=1.13) and Tradition (M=3.53, SD=0.89).

The means of ten categories of values were compared across socio-demographic groups. The student's place of residence and student's academic year differentiated statistically significant results obtained in this research. Differences between student from village and city are presented in table 2.

Table 2

**T-test analysis results of student's place of residence
and ten categories of values**

Values	Students living in the city N=100		Students living in the village N=70		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Power	3.61	1.16	3.88	1.06	-1.51
Achievement	4.28	1.04	4.50	0.88	-1.41
Hedonism	4.52	1.22	4.62	0.99	-0.53
Stimulation	3.96	1.29	4.37	1.01	-2.19**
Self-Direction	4,56	0.98	4.71	0.87	-0.99
Universalism	3.76	1.05	4.12	0.87	-2.32**
Benevolence	4,42	0.83	4.77	0.80	-2.67***
Tradition	3.43	0.94	3.66	0.80	-1.62
Conformity	4.38	1.04	4.87	1.00	-3.04***
Security	4.54	0.98	4.86	0.86	-2.18*

*p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001

The results showed that in comparison to students from the city, student from the village attached more importance to Stimulation, t(168)=-2.19, p<0.01; to Universalism, t(168)=-2.32, p <.01; to Benevolence, t(168)=-2.67, p<.001; to Conformity, t(168)=-3.04, p<.001; and to Security, t(168)=-2.18, p<.05.

Taking academic year into account, results showed that in comparison to students of the first year, students second and third year had higher scores on the Power (M=3.40, SD=0.96 vs. M=3.89, SD=1.07 and M=3.85, SD=1.27, F(2,167)=3.29, p<.05), Achievement (M=4.13, SD=0.82 vs. M=4.41, SD=0.96 and M=4.55, SD=1.04, F(2,167)=2.78, p<.05) and the Self-Direction (M=4.32, SD=0.93 vs. M=4.70, SD=0.82 and M=4.83, SD=1.00, F(2,167)=4.71, p<.01). In comparison to students third year, students first and second year attached less importance to Universalism (M=4.24, SD=1.11 vs. M=3.59, SD=0.84 and M=3.87, SD=0.91, F(2,167)=6.58, p<.001).

Different combinations and hierarchies of the values motivate individual behavior for different reasons, and guide individual behavior differently. The particular categories of values create so called «meta-categories». To examine whether the four value dimensions differentiate between student's place of residence and student's academic year in a similar way as the individual values did, T-test analysis were conducted to compare the scores on the four value dimensions among the groups.

The results showed, first, that students from village scored higher than students from city on the Conservation dimension (M=4.87, SD=0.83 vs. M=4.46, SD=0.91, t(168)=-2.92, p<.001), on the Openness to Change dimension (M=4.54, SD=0.84 vs. M=4.26, SD=0.98, t(168)=-1.91, p<.05) and on the Self-Transcendence dimension (M=4.44, SD=0.76 vs. M=4.09, SD=0.84, t(168)=-2.77, p<.001).

Second, the results also indicated that in comparison to students first academic year, students second and third year putted more weight on Openness to Change values (M=4.10, SD=0.82 vs. M=4.46, SD=0.85 and M=4.55, SD=1.05, F(2,167)=3.87, p<.01), on Self-Enhancement values (M=3.94, SD=0.73 vs. M=4.31, SD=0.81 and M=4.32, SD=1.03, F(2,167)=3.50, p<.01), and on Self-Transcendence values (M=4.02, SD=0.71 vs. M=4.24, SD=0.77 and M=4.43, SD=0.93, F(2,167)=3.61, p<.01).

The aim of this study was to assess personality traits and preferred values system of the university students in relation to socio-demographic variables (gender, age, academic year, place of residence).

Analysis of students' personality profile showed that men scored higher than women on Neuroticism dimension, and students form village scored higher than students from city on Agreeableness dimension. There was no significant differences on other personality dimension between groups.

The student's place of residence and student's academic year differentiated statistically significant results obtained in this research in some of the preferred values. Students from the village had higher means in Stimulation, Universalism, Benevolence, Conformity, and Security than students from the city. These combinations of the most important values created peoples who are more conservative, openness to change and self-transcendence in the meta-categories of values.

In addition, the results revealed that students second-third academic year had higher scores on the Power, Achievement, Self-Direction and Universalism than students first year. These combinations of values created peoples more oriented to self-enhancement, openness to change and self-transcendence in the meta-categories of values. It means that university education could have some impact on students' personal values. The better educated respondents seemed to be more oriented to achieve success, independence, freedom and favor universal over conservative values. The two research hypotheses have been confirmed

A limitation of the current study was small number of respondents and homogenous age group. It could be the reason for the lack more statistically significant difference across various socio-demographic groups on their personality traits and preferred values.

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