

Human Values among Adolescents – An Empirical Study

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Abstract: Human values constitute the foundational elements of our humanity and the guiding principles of life, playing a crucial role in shaping commendable human conduct. These values typically emerge from one's individual interests, desires, impulses, and preferences, often regarded as universal and shared by people irrespective of religious, racial, cultural, or personal differences. The dual objectives of this study revolved around comprehending the significance of individuals' values in life and delineating the values held by the younger generation.

The research, employing a random sampling method, delved into the perspectives of 50 young individuals. A combination of primary and secondary data was harnessed to fulfill the study's requirements. The formulation of the questionnaire drew inspiration from Schwarz's cost research, and subsequent analysis involved employing statistical tools like simple percentages, two-way tables, chi-square tests, and correlation assessments.

Within the study's hypotheses, the absence of a correlation between age and endeavors to enhance human outcomes, as well as the absence of a link between gender and changes in human benefits over time, were explored. The findings revealed a positive and significant association between age and the initiation of human development. Conversely, no discernible association surfaced between gender and alterations in human characteristics across the years.

In conclusion, the study underscores the imperative role of parents, schools, and communities in imparting the value of humanity to the younger generation. Such an educational approach is posited as essential for fostering a healthy and fulfilling life, thereby emphasizing the critical role of instilling human values in the formative years.

Keywords - Human Values, Adolescents', Schwartz's Value Survey

1. Introduction

At the core of human existence lie values that transcend cultural, religious, and personal boundaries. Truth, justice, love, peace, generosity, nonviolence, friendship, and empathy form a constellation of principles that shape our lives. These values are not only vital for personal well-being but also serve as the foundation for social harmony in today's world. They create a harmonious space, interweaving with each other to usher in tranquility.

Human values encompass universal principles, shared universally irrespective of religion, race, or culture. Truth, morality, peace, love, and nonviolence are integral aspects of the human experience, influencing physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of behavior. Enhancing these aspects is crucial for a more fulfilling and productive life, though the interpretation of value varies from person to person.

Values can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic, with intrinsic values holding inherent worth. Measurement models such as the Schwartz Values Questionnaire and the Portrait Values questionnaire help assess the significance of these values, with the former being explicit and the latter implicit. Understanding and fostering these values are essential for personal growth and societal well-being.

2. Literature Review

In the discourse on human values, several scholars have articulated their perspectives, shedding light on the critical role these values play in shaping individuals and societies.

Babita Jharia (2013) underscores the pivotal role of human values in private homes in Rajpur Science. According to her, human values form the bedrock of humanity, acting as the foundation upon which individuals build their character. Emphasizing the family as a child's primary school, Jharia contends that schools and colleges serve as the secondary institutions for learning these essential values. She advocates for the integration of value education across all educational platforms, asserting that the cultivation of values is a phenomenon inherent in all forms of learning, whether within the confines of one's home or within the structured environment of educational institutions.

Sheela S. Khedikar (2013) draws attention to the detrimental consequences of waning human values in various countries, including India. She expresses concern over the decline in human resources, deeming it a severe threat not only to the country's future development but also to its very survival. While acknowledging the inevitability of changes in societal values over time, Khedikar finds the descent of youth in India, compared to other nations, unexpected. In response, she posits a crucial role for schools and universities in nurturing the younger generation through impactful education, thereby mitigating the risk of further erosion of human values.

Mohan Debbarma (2014) delves into the global significance of human values. In his exploration, Debbarma observes a contemporary crisis in society, witnessing a rapid decline in human values, for which individuals bear the utmost responsibility. He contends that education should be prioritized across all levels, from schools to universities, to address this crisis effectively. Furthermore, Debbarma advocates for extensive research and publications focusing on various societal aspects to bolster the virtues of human life in the postmodern era.

Himanshoo Kumar Sharma (2015) takes a closer look at the relevance of ethics in the present day. Sharma identifies various societal issues—ranging from dowry systems and divorce to corruption and animal sacrifice—as urgent problems that demand swift resolution in the era of science and technology. Recognizing the influential role of teachers, Sharma argues that they must uphold their own human values while fostering a balanced approach in cultivating the hearts and minds of students through mutual respect.

Pallavi Gupta (2016) investigates the concerning deterioration of human values within Indian higher education. Gupta attributes this decline to the lack of quality educational institutions and academic guidance that prioritize human values. She highlights the potential societal repercussions of this trend and places responsibility on parents, teachers, and society at large to instill and propagate human values among the youth.

In summary, these scholars collectively emphasize the profound impact of human values on individuals and society at large. From the familial sphere to educational institutions, the call for prioritizing and instilling these values resonates as a critical imperative for a balanced and virtuous existence.

3. Statement of the Problem

Human values serve as moral benchmarks guiding societal behavior, embodying the essence of goodness in human actions. They wield substantial influence over decision-making processes, playing a crucial role in shaping individual conduct. The indispensability of human values to the very fabric of human existence is underscored, as life itself is intricately intertwined with these guiding principles. Despite their paramount significance, contemporary society grapples with an array of social issues, often exacerbated by media depictions that challenge these values.

This study focuses on discerning the human values of individuals, particularly children and the elderly, navigating the transitional phases of growth and development. The researchers aim to unravel the perception of human values in the age of technology, probing into questions about their meaning and the perceived importance of these values in people's lives. The inquiry delves into the intricate interplay between human values, societal challenges, and the evolving landscape of technology.

Hence, within the scope of this study aimed at gauging the human values of children and elderly individuals during the transitional phases of growth and development, researchers delved into specific inquiries:

- What significance do individuals attribute to human values in the era of technology?
- How pivotal are human values in shaping their lives?

These questions form the crux of the investigation, seeking to unravel the nuanced perceptions and importance assigned to human values, especially in the context of the evolving landscape of technology. The

study endeavors to shed light on the dynamic interplay between human values and the challenges presented by technological advancements, exploring the depth of their impact on individuals across different stages of life.

4. Objectives of the Study

From the statement of the problem, the following objects have been framed for the present study.

1. To study the significance of human values in life.
2. To analyze the human values of adolescents.

5. Hypothesis of the Study

H1: The study posits that there is no noteworthy correlation between age and endeavors aimed at improving human values.

H2: The hypothesis suggests that there is no substantial correlation between gender and the evolution of human values over time.

These hypotheses serve as the foundational assertions to be scrutinized within the study, challenging the existence of significant associations between age and initiatives towards enhancing human values, as well as between gender and the shifts in human values across the years. The subsequent analysis aims to either confirm or refute these propositions based on empirical evidence and statistical scrutiny.

6. Research Methodology

This research is characterized by its systematic and scientific approach, offering a descriptive exploration of human values and their significance. Instead of encompassing the entire universe or population, the study adopts a focused approach, examining a representative subset and extrapolating conclusions to the broader context. The emphasis on the educational aspect underscores its value, particularly for the youth, who are envisaged as the future pillars of the nation. Recognizing the pivotal role of nurturing individuals who contribute positively to the country's prosperity, the study concentrates on young people, delineating their stages as early youth (eleven to fourteen), middle youth (fifteen to seventeen), and late adolescence (eighteen to twenty-one).

The research employs a random sampling method, engaging a sample size of 50 participants. Both primary and secondary data sources are extensively utilized, with a primary data collection tool being a questionnaire constructed based on Schwartz's Value Questionnaire, suitably modified for relevance. Secondary data are amassed from diverse sources, including books, research articles, newspapers, publications, and online resources. The analytical toolkit encompasses simple percentage analysis, two-way tables, chi-square tests, and correlation analyses. Through this comprehensive methodological framework, the study aims to offer insights into the intricate relationship between age, gender, and human values, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping the values of young people in the contemporary context.

7. Limitations of the Study

The current study is bound by certain limitations, which warrant acknowledgment:

- The scope of the study is confined to examining the diminishing human values among adolescents, and as such, the findings may lack generalizability to broader populations or diverse age groups.
- A potential limitation arises from respondent bias in comprehending the questionnaire. The interpretation of questions and the subsequent responses may be influenced by individual perspectives and understanding, introducing a degree of subjectivity to the findings.
- These identified limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation and application of the study's results.

The confined focus on adolescent human values and the potential for respondent bias should be considered when extrapolating the findings to the broader context. Addressing these limitations in future

research endeavors could contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of human values across diverse demographics.

8. Significance of Human Value

Human values constitute the fundamental traits and qualities inherent in individuals, representing the highest expressions of the human spirit. Universally present in all people, these values encompass a profound concern for all life, a commitment to nonviolence, compassion, friendship, cooperation, generosity, spiritual unity, openness to all life, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, accountability, simplicity, contentment, happiness, honesty, fairness, and sincerity. Importantly, human values are intrinsic and not contingent on external laws; they reside within every individual, awaiting recognition and expression to achieve fulfillment.

The centrality of human values has been a focal point in the realm of social sciences since its inception. Regarded as the bedrock for a better life, human values find affirmation in the teachings of various religions, underscoring their significance in guiding ethical and virtuous living. This importance is instilled from early childhood, with preschool serving as the initial stage where the foundations of knowledge concerning human values are laid.

Numerous factors influence human outcomes, shaping individual lives and community dynamics. The journey of imbibing these values begins within the familial realm and extends into the educational sphere, where teachers play a pivotal role in nurturing and fostering these essential qualities. Thus, the cultivation and reinforcement of human values, integral to the infinite potential within each individual, form the cornerstone of a purposeful and meaningful life.

9. Data Analysis And Interpretation

The information gathered from the questionnaire has been categorized based on diverse demographic attributes of the participants, encompassing factors such as age, gender, educational qualifications, monthly income, marital status, family size, family type, and residential area. The analysis of the data has been conducted using a straightforward percentage calculation, with the results being systematically presented in tabular form.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

| S.No. | Demographic Variables | Categories | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Age (Yrs.) | 11-14 | 11 | 22 |
| | | 15-17 | 28 | 56 |
| | | 18-21 | 11 | 22 |
| 2 | Gender | Male | 22 | 44 |
| | | Female | 28 | 56 |
| 3 | Educational Qualification | No formal education | 5 | 10 |
| | | School | 9 | 18 |
| | | Diploma | 9 | 18 |
| | | UG | 22 | 44 |
| | | PG | 5 | 10 |
| 4 | Monthly Income (in Rs.) | No earnings | 31 | 62 |
| | | Below 5000 | 13 | 26 |
| | | 5000-10000 | 3 | 6 |
| | | Above 10000 | 3 | 6 |
| 5 | Marital Status | Married | 8 | 16 |
| | | Unmarried | 42 | 84 |
| | | Upto 3 | 16 | 32 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|----|----|
| 6 | Family size (Members) | 4-5 | 18 | 36 |
| | | Above 5 | 16 | 32 |
| 7 | Family type | Joint family | 37 | 74 |
| | | Nuclear family | 13 | 26 |
| 8 | Residential area | Urban | 12 | 24 |
| | | Semi-urban | 17 | 34 |
| | | Rural | 21 | 42 |

Inference

The analysis of Table No. 1 reveals several key observations. A substantial majority, comprising 56% of the respondents, falls within the age bracket of 15-17 years. Females constitute the predominant gender representation, accounting for 56% of the participants. In terms of educational qualifications, 44% of the respondents possess an under-graduation degree. A significant proportion, totaling 62%, reported having no monthly earnings. The majority of respondents, amounting to 84%, are unmarried. Family size distribution indicates that 36% come from households with 4-5 members. Notably, 74% of the participants belong to joint family setups. Regarding residential areas, 42% of the respondents reside in rural locales. These findings provide a comprehensive snapshot of the demographic characteristics of the study participants, offering valuable insights into the composition of the surveyed population.

Table 2: Respondents' Opinion about Human Values

| S.No. | Factors | NI | SI | MI | I | VI |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Power (authority) | 5 (10%) | 7 (14%) | 11 (22%) | 13 (36%) | 14 (28%) |
| 2 | Achievement (success) | 5 (10%) | 5 (10%) | 6 (12%) | 19 (38%) | 15 (30%) |
| 3 | Hedonism (enjoyment in life) | 2 (4%) | 4 (8%) | 4 (8%) | 17 (34%) | 23 (46%) |
| 4 | Stimulation (an exciting life) | 3 (6%) | 6 (12%) | 11 (22%) | 12 (24%) | 18 (36%) |
| 5 | Self-direction (freedom, independence) | 1 (2%) | 2 (4%) | 4 (8%) | 11 (22%) | 32 (64%) |
| 6 | Universalism (equality, universal justice) | 3 (6%) | 6 (12%) | 19 (38%) | 11 (22%) | 11 (22%) |
| 7 | Benevolence (helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness) | 6 (12%) | 15 (30%) | 12 (24%) | 7 (14%) | 10 (20%) |
| 8 | Tradition (respect for tradition, humbleness, devotion) | 8 (16%) | 8 (16%) | 16 (38%) | 5 (10%) | 13 (36%) |
| 9 | Conformity (obedience, honoring parents and elders, politeness) | 3 (6%) | 6 (12%) | 12 (12%) | 23 (46%) | 6 (12%) |
| 10 | Security (national security, family security) | 2 (4%) | 4 (8%) | 5 (10%) | 20 (40%) | 19 (38%) |

Note: NI-Not Important, SI-Slightly Important, MI-Moderately Important, I-Important, VI-Very Important.

Inference

The analysis of Table No. 2 yields insightful conclusions regarding the perceived importance of ten human values factors among the respondents. Self-direction emerges as the foremost priority, with the majority rating it as a highly significant factor. Following closely, hedonism, security, stimulation, and achievement also garnered notable importance among the participants. In descending order, power, tradition, universalism, benevolence, and conformity complete the list of human values, each with varying degrees of

importance as reported by the respondents. This nuanced understanding of the hierarchy of values provides a valuable perspective on the participants' priorities, shedding light on the factors that hold greater significance in shaping their outlook on human values.

Table 3: Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Two-Way Table)

| Initiatives to Enhance Human Values | Always | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| Age | | | | | | |
| 11-14 | 5 (45.4%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (36.4%) | 1 (9.1%) | 1 (9.1%) | 11 |
| 15-17 | 3 (10.7%) | 4 (14.3%) | 4 (14.3%) | 13 (46.4%) | 4 (14.3%) | 28 |
| 18-21 | 1 (9.1%) | 3 (27.3%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (18.2%) | 5 (45.4%) | 11 |
| Total | 9 | 7 | 8 | 16 | 10 | 50 |

Inference

Table No. 3 provides a comprehensive breakdown of responses concerning initiatives to enhance human values across different age groups. Notably, the age group of 11-14 years exhibits the highest frequency (45.4%) of "always" responses, signifying a strong inclination towards consistent engagement in initiatives aimed at enhancing human values. Conversely, the 18-21 years age group records the lowest "always" responses at 9.1%. The age group of 15-17 years reports the highest frequency (14.3%) of "very often" responses, showcasing a prevalent inclination for frequent participation in such initiatives, while the 11-14 years age group records the lowest in this category. For "sometimes" responses, the 11-14 years age group leads with 36.4%, and the 18-21 years age group has the lowest frequency. In the "rarely" category, the 15-17 years age group stands out with 46.4%, while the 11-14 years age group has the lowest frequency. Lastly, for "never" responses, the 18-21 years age group records the highest frequency at 45.4%, with the 11-14 years age group showing the lowest.

To examine the relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values, a hypothesis was formulated and tested using the chi-square test, the results of which are detailed in the subsequent table.

Hypotheses for Age and Initiatives to Enhance Human Values:

H0: The null hypothesis posits that there is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

H1: In contrast, the alternative hypothesis suggests a close and significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

These hypotheses serve as the framework for testing the association between age groups and their engagement in activities aimed at fostering human values. The chi-square test results will either support the null hypothesis, indicating no significant relationship, or favor the alternative hypothesis, signaling a substantial and close connection between age and participation in initiatives to enhance human values.

Table 4: Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Chi-Square Test)

| | Values | df | Asymp.Sig.(2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|---------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 22.463 ^a | 8 | .004 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 23.448 | 8 | .003 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.520 | 1 | .034 |
| N of Valid Cases | 50 | | |

a. 12 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.54.

Inference

The findings from Table No. 4 indicate a noteworthy result, where the p-value of .004 is below the significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This outcome suggests a close and significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values. The statistical analysis lends support to the idea that age is a determining factor influencing individuals' involvement in activities aimed at nurturing and advancing human values. The rejection of the null hypothesis underscores the importance of considering age as a variable in understanding the dynamics of engagement in initiatives focused on enhancing human values.

9.1 Correlation Analysis

H0 : There is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

H1 : There is close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

Table 5: Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Correlation Analysis)

| | | Age | Initiative to enhance human values |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| Age | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .304* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .032 |
| | N | 50 | 50 |
| Initiative to enhance human values | Pearson Correlation | .304* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .032 | |
| | N | 50 | 50 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Inference

The observation from Table No. 5 indicates a negative correlation of -0.304 between age and the initiative to enhance human values. Notably, the p-value of .304 falls below the 5% level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that there is a close and significant relationship between age and engagement in initiatives geared towards enhancing human values. The negative correlation suggests that as age increases, there is a discernible impact on the inclination or participation in activities directed at fostering human values. This outcome emphasizes the importance of considering age as a factor influencing individuals' commitment to initiatives aimed at promoting and enriching human values.

10. Findings

- The examination of percentage analysis reveals that a substantial majority, comprising 46% of the respondents, expresses agreement regarding the significance of human values in one's life.
- The analysis highlights that the majority of respondents, totaling 32%, rarely take the initiative to enhance human values in their interactions with others.
- The inference drawn from the analysis indicates that a significant majority, at 36%, perceives changes in human values over the years as being considerably worse.
- The chi-square test results underscore that the p-value is .190, surpassing the threshold of .05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting no significant relationship between gender and the observed changes in human values over the years

11. Suggestions

The analysis underscores a notable finding: young individuals residing in nuclear families exhibit a deficiency in human benefits. In response, the study advocates for proactive measures by parents to instill human values in their children. Additionally, a disparity is identified between rural and urban youth, with the latter group displaying lower levels of human values. This emphasizes the collaborative role that schools and communities should play in imparting the essence of humanity to the younger generation.

Moreover, the study unveils a correlation between increased incomes and reduced social costs among young people. As a result, it recommends that young workers embark on a journey to enhance their human values, fostering harmony and productivity in the workplace. Recognizing the potential impact on organizational dynamics, the study suggests that businesses can contribute by organizing training programs geared towards augmenting the human values of their employees. This holistic approach, involving parents, educational institutions, communities, and businesses, is seen as essential in nurturing a generation that embodies and upholds the core values of humanity.

12. Conclusion

Rockach's perspective defines values as fixed beliefs, behavioral patterns, or ultimate states of relative importance. These values serve as guiding principles essential for understanding the significance of our lives and navigating them in a positive direction. Truth, goodness, and beauty are highlighted as crucial values that contribute to a positive and joyful life, safeguarding cultural heritage and fostering benevolent behavioral change. The promotion of peace and harmony within society is also identified as a key outcome of embracing these values.

Self-esteem is identified as a pivotal factor in the development of human values, emphasizing the role of personal confidence and self-worth in shaping one's ethical and moral compass. The responsibility to instill these values falls on parents, who are urged to actively teach them. Furthermore, the collaborative efforts of schools, communities, and institutions are deemed essential in voluntarily promoting human benefits for future generations.

The overarching goal is to create a society where individuals lead happy, peaceful, and fulfilling lives, rooted in a shared commitment to these fundamental human values. The holistic approach advocated by Rockach envisions a collaborative and intentional effort across various spheres of life to nurture a generation guided by values that contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and society.

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