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DETERMINANTES SOCIO-PSICOLÓGICOS DEL DESARROLLO VALORATIVO EN ESTUDIANTES: ANÁLISIS META SOBRE CONDUCTAS NEGATIVAS Y LA INTERACCIÓN EDUCATIVA-SOCIAL

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the value preferences of 392 undergraduate students from health sciences, science and literature, and education faculties at universities in Tabriz during the 2023-2024 academic year, using a stratified random sampling method to ensure balanced representation of both entry-level and senior students. The findings reveal that students prioritize academic achievement, family welfare, and interpersonal harmony as core values guiding their behavior and aspirations. Moral values such as responsibility, honesty, and integrity were highly endorsed, indicating that ethical consciousness remains significant despite contemporary challenges. However, values related to formal recognition and social prestige showed greater variability, reflecting personal, cultural, and contextual influences. The results underscore the crucial role of educational environments in shaping students' psychosocial and moral development, aligning with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that emphasizes the impact of school contexts as critical microsystems. Positive educational experiences reinforce moral values and promote well-being, while academic pressures, teacher-student misalignment, peer conflicts, and institutional shortcomings pose challenges that may adversely affect students' mental health, social adjustment, and ethical sensitivity. The complex interaction of individual traits, family background, socioeconomic status, and school climate further influences value formation, highlighting the need for holistic educational strategies. The study advocates for value-oriented pedagogies, socio-emotional learning, and comprehensive support services to foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and collaboration, thereby preparing students for academic success and responsible citizenship. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the transformative potential of universities not only as knowledge centers but as spaces for cultivating ethically conscious, socially engaged individuals ready to contribute to a just and equitable society.

Keywords:

Value development, moral education, psychosocial factors, academic achievement, educational environment.

RESUMEN

Este estudio examinó las preferencias de valores de 392 estudiantes universitarios de las facultades de ciencias de la salud, ciencias y literatura, y educación en universidades de Tabriz durante el año académico 2023-2024, utilizando un método de muestreo aleatorio estratificado para asegurar una representación equilibrada tanto de estudiantes de nivel inicial como avanzados. Los hallazgos revelan que los estudiantes priorizan el logro académico, el bienestar familiar y la armonía interpersonal como valores fundamentales que guían su comportamiento y aspiraciones. Valores morales como la responsabilidad, la honestidad y la integridad fueron altamente valorados, lo que indica que la conciencia ética sigue siendo significativa a pesar de los desafíos contemporáneos. Sin embargo, los valores relacionados con el reconocimiento formal y el prestigio social mostraron mayor variabilidad, reflejando influencias personales, culturales y contextuales. Los resultados subrayan el papel crucial de los entornos educativos en la formación del desarrollo psicosocial y moral de los estudiantes, alineándose con la teoría de sistemas ecológicos de Bronfenbrenner, que enfatiza el impacto de los contextos escolares como microsistemas críticos. Las experiencias educativas positivas refuerzan los valores morales y promueven el bienestar, mientras que las presiones académicas, el desalineamiento entre profesores y estudiantes, los conflictos entre pares y las deficiencias institucionales plantean desafíos que pueden afectar negativamente la salud mental, la adaptación social y la sensibilidad ética de los estudiantes. La interacción compleja de rasgos individuales, antecedentes familiares, estatus socioeconómico y clima escolar influye además en la formación de valores, destacando la necesidad de estrategias educativas holísticas. El estudio aboga por pedagogías orientadas a valores, aprendizaje socioemocional y servicios de apoyo integrales para fomentar el pensamiento crítico, el razonamiento ético y la colaboración, preparando así a los estudiantes para el éxito académico y la ciudadanía responsable. En última instancia, los hallazgos enfatizan el potencial transformador de las universidades no solo como centros de conocimiento, sino como espacios para cultivar individuos éticamente conscientes y socialmente comprometidos, listos para contribuir a una sociedad justa y equitativa.

Palabras clave:

Desarrollo de valores, educación moral, factores psicosociales, logro académico, entorno educativo.

INTRODUCTION

Across many linguistic and cultural traditions, the concept of moral values is closely associated with intrinsic spiritual qualities. These internal dispositions serve as guiding principles for human behavior, encompassing ethical norms, behavioral expectations, and culturally endorsed standards of conduct. In this regard, morality and ethics often converge, and in scholarly discourse, the two terms are frequently used interchangeably. While ethical behavior reflects universal human ideals, the expression of morality is shaped by the specific socio-economic conditions within which individuals live. As social structures evolve, moral codes adapt accordingly; however, the notion of ethicality remains a fundamental and enduring construct.

A lack of value orientation in behavior, judgment, and social interaction necessitates critical inquiry into the value systems prioritized within different societies and the contextual factors that influence these hierarchies. In light of these considerations, this study aims to address the following research questions: How is the concept of value and value orientation established among school and university students? To what extent does parental educational attainment shape the transmission of social values? What role do religious values play in the formation of universal ethical standards? How do mass media influence individual value systems and intergenerational transmission of values? What is the relationship between personal achievement and the internalization of values? How does the prioritization of values differ across various stages of human development?

This meta-analytical investigation seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-psychological dimensions underlying the value-oriented development of students, as well as the societal and educational factors that mediate this process.

Understanding the evolution of value systems requires attention to the historical-philosophical paradigms upon which these values are based. Philosophical inquiry offers a foundational lens through which the concept of value may be assessed. In classical antiquity, the Sophists were among the earliest thinkers to posit the relativity of values, suggesting that moral standards are context-dependent and subject to human perception. In contrast, Socrates and Plato defended the objectivity of values. Socrates asserted that values possess an inherent, objective existence, while Plato maintained that moral truths exist in an absolute realm of Forms, where ethical concepts are either entirely "right" or "wrong," independent of individual or cultural variability.

Aristotle extended this line of thought, associating value with an objective orientation grounded in existence itself (Loxton et al., 2001). In the modern era, Immanuel Kant was the first to systematically problematize value as a

distinct philosophical category. For Kant, values are rooted in rational autonomy and the categorical imperative.

Conversely, existentialist thought, particularly as developed by Jean-Paul Sartre, rejected the notion of pre-existing value systems. Sartre contended that there is no intrinsic domain of values external to human action; rather, values are constituted through individual freedom and existential initiative. In this view, value does not precede existence but emerges from it. Similarly, Martin Heidegger criticized the artificial separation of value and existence, describing such bifurcation as a fundamental ontological error. From these perspectives, value becomes a construct embedded in the existential conditions of human beings.

Thus, the system of values functions as a regulatory framework, mediating between social reflexes, ontological realities, and epistemological preconceptions. It facilitates the alignment between individual worldviews and the broader structures of social life.

Despite ongoing theoretical engagement with the concepts of morality and ethics, significant contradictions and ambiguities persist in both academic and practical domains. Moreover, the absence of a formalized state program for moral and ethical education presents a substantial gap in policy implementation. Nonetheless, insights derived from historical precedents and contemporary societal dynamics can inform the development of new models for the moral education of youth.

Recent global developments underscore that economic instability, increasing social stratification, and the erosion of moral values have had profound adverse effects on various age groups, particularly among the younger population. These dynamics amplify the urgency of fostering robust frameworks for moral education within both formal and informal educational settings.

Education, understood as a comprehensive societal phenomenon, is an inherently complex and contradictory socio-historical process. It encompasses a broad range of determinants, including the lived realities of the younger generation, prevailing social relations, and modes of production, cultural practices, and the development of creative and spiritual capacities.

The transition of adolescents into mature, autonomous individuals represents a pivotal phase in the consolidation of the productive forces of society. Their successful moral and ethical development is essential not only for personal fulfillment but also for the stability and progress of the broader social order.

The moral development of youth occurs primarily through their internalization of essential elements of social experience. This transmission is facilitated by older generations through structured participation in communication, social practices, and institutional interactions. Within this intergenerational exchange, both adults and youth participate in systems of social relationships where one party assumes the role of educator and the other of learner.

Moral education is a multidimensional process involving the cultivation of moral consciousness, the development of ethical sensibilities, and the reinforcement of habits conducive to socially responsible behavior. Effective moral education must be deliberate, systematic, and goal-oriented, aiming to shape the ethical reasoning capacities and behavioral competencies of individuals.

Within youth collectives—such as classrooms or peer groups—moral education must operate on both collective and individual levels. While pedagogical strategies often emphasize group norms and collaborative activities, educators must also attend to the distinct character traits, moral understanding, and developmental needs of each student. This individualized approach should not be limited to those displaying disciplinary issues but extended to all adolescents to promote holistic development (Engelberg, et al., 1992).

Techniques such as positive reinforcement and corrective discipline are essential components of this process. Praise for constructive behavior and proportionate consequences for misconduct, when applied judiciously, can reinforce desirable conduct and discourage the formation of detrimental habits. These methods, when aligned with broader educational objectives, contribute to the ethical maturation of students and the cultivation of moral agency (Fabrega, et al., 1991).

The concept of value is inherently complex and multidimensional, attracting extensive exploration across disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, social psychology, and theology. Each of these fields offers direct or indirect insights into the nature, origins, and scope of values. Broadly defined, values can be understood as abstract, generalized behavioral norms that emerge within social groups and are rooted in emotionally invested commitments to shared goals and standards of conduct (Folstein, 1986).

Philosopher Paul Hanly Furfey highlighted that value arises as an attribute of volition, grounded in the intrinsic goodness of the object and realized through the relationship between subject and object. In this sense, values do not exist in isolation but depend on the dynamic interaction between human perception and external reality. Ontologically, value is dependent on existence—nonexistent entities cannot possess value. The more concrete a phenomenon, the more likely it is to be ascribed value; conversely, greater abstraction distances it from the realm of values.

Values serve as markers of society's idealized self, underpinning traditions that shape cultural formations founded on principles such as truth, justice, integrity, and compassion. The culture of values can be conceptualized as a systemic totality organized by ethical comprehension. Values imbue actions and events with meaning, functioning as a normative metric that distinguishes good from evil, right from wrong, and beauty from ugliness (Güler, 2008).

Importantly, the domain of value differs from that of information. Values rest on axiomatic truths, including: (a) the existence of a truth-based order to which all objective values are linked, (b) the transcendental nature of objective values, and (c) the communicability and demonstrability of values as intelligible constructs within intersubjective discourse. Values are durable, belief-laden, and manifest as conscious choices informed by intellectual and emotional dispositions, tied to the developmental process of value construction (p. 44).

Value discourse is inseparable from virtue, which denotes the internalized disposition, capacity, and competency of the moral agent to enact behavior aligned with a given value (Kolberg, 2002). Virtue thus represents the realization of value—a transformative state in which abstract principles manifest as concrete moral acts. To be virtuous is to have achieved an advanced stage of moral maturation. While a moral individual adheres to norms, a virtuous person transcends them, embodying deeper congruence between ethical cognition and action (Güngör, 1995).

This distinction invites clarification of morality, which emerges from innate inclinations and is realized through action. Moral theory systematically articulates normative judgments, defining good and evil, right and wrong, and includes both descriptive accounts and evaluative frameworks. Ethics, as Wienpahl (1948) argued, critically examines moral principles and their logical foundation. Together, value, virtue, and morality form a relational triad whereby moral behavior results from internalized values and cultivated virtues.

Morality functions as a societal equilibrium analogous to a natural law; just as water symbolizes life, morality symbolizes human community (Güngör, 1995). This raises philosophical questions about whether morality is an autonomous, conscious faculty or an emergent phenomenon shaped by environmental and epistemic factors.

Classical thinkers diverged on this. Socrates viewed morality as epistemic—virtue is knowledge, and wrongdoing stems from ignorance. Medieval thought subordinated moral knowledge to theology, while Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment empirical turns re-elevated knowledge above value (Kolberg, 2001). This introduced knowledge as an existential understanding that transcends mere facts, offering meaning to one's being. Such knowledge must guide university education to foster academic progress alongside ethical self-actualization and responsible citizenship.

University students, as intellectual elites, significantly influence societal trajectories. Their internalization of values affects future ethical, civic, and ideological frameworks.

Hence, cultivating socially recognized, universally accepted human values among students is both an expectation and a societal imperative. Understanding value orientations requires considering socio-demographic factors like gender, age, discipline, and family background.

Moral development arises through sustained interaction with educational, familial, and social environments. Contemporary moral education must foster positive traits while correcting misconceptions and unethical behaviors. Moral concepts gain significance only when internalized as spiritual convictions, manifesting in consistent conduct and mature identity. The unity of moral reasoning, emotional engagement, and behavior indicates the effectiveness of educational practices in moral evolution.

When moral growth is hindered—by inadequate pedagogy, family dysfunction, peer influence, or adverse cultural contexts—antisocial tendencies may consolidate, necessitating targeted psychological and pedagogical intervention.

Ethical interpersonal relationships within educational settings should model moral excellence. University students must be guided to cultivate core virtues such as civic responsibility, patriotism, collectivism, industriousness, idealism, reciprocity, and empathy. These form the ethical foundation for responsible social engagement and enable critical reflection on one's actions.

The formation of moral ideals during adolescence is crucial, linking ethical reasoning with motivation and self-improvement. Emotional responses like self-respect and dignity reinforce identity and moral autonomy. Integration of these ideals into personal identity fosters a persistent moral motive and internal ethical compass.

Broadly, moral and spiritual education is a strategic cultural resource shaping consciousness, social behavior, environmental responsibility, and interpersonal relations. Purposeful moral education cultivates personal maturity and societal cohesion, positioning it as a core component of higher education and human development essential for thoughtful, ethical societal participation.

The development and reinforcement of moral and ethical potential in students necessitates the integration of *rational*, *emotional*, *and cultural-creative strategies*. A multidimensional approach—incorporating intellectual, artistic, and social experiences—serves to foster moral consciousness and ethical maturity. Among the most effective pedagogical methods for this purpose are:

- Engagement in artistic and cultural activities, including music, theater, visual arts, and other creative disciplines, which stimulate students' ethical imagination and aesthetic sensibility.
- Emotional development in daily interactions, which
 plays a crucial role in harmonizing the individual with
 their environment. This includes the enhancement of

motivational, volitional, and interpersonal dimensions of personality. Emotional-volitional balance, effective communication skills, and psychologically supportive peer relationships significantly contribute to students' ethical resilience and socio-moral awareness.

 Evaluative feedback systems that assess not only academic mastery of scientific content but also the student's self-perception and internalization of ethical principles. Both external assessments and structured self-assessment contribute to the development of personal accountability and value-conscious reflection.

A particularly significant contribution to the moral formation of students is provided by subjects within the humanities curriculum, which hold vast educational and axiological potential. Courses such as literature, language, rhetoric, history, sociology, philosophy, and cultural studies collectively contribute to the formation of civic identity and moral competence. These disciplines are instrumental in cultivating the ethical foundations required for participation in modern civil society, including values such as patriotism, tolerance, civic responsibility, and commitment to democratic ideals.

Students acquire fundamental knowledge of human nature, ethical relations, social order, and environmental interdependence through these disciplines. As such, humanities education fosters spiritual awareness, value orientation, and moral sensitivity. The following criteria may serve as indicators for assessing the effectiveness of spiritual and moral education (Pandey & Najafov, 2025):

- Development of a scientific worldview that situates the individual within broader epistemological and ethical frameworks;
- 2. Emergence of an *inner sense of freedom*, enabling unity with nature, society, and self;
- 3. Demonstrated *self-affirmation* and positive self-identity formation;
- 4. Evidence of success in leading educational or civic-oriented activities;
- 5. Development of *accurate self-assessment* regarding values, behaviors, and social roles;
- 6. Formation of *behavioral patterns based on high moral principles*, such as justice, empathy, and responsibility.

As students engage in relationships within diverse social contexts, they accumulate moral experience and construct ethical habits. The deliberate organization of such experience—through guided participation in academic, cultural, and civic activities—leads to the formation of moral reasoning, emotional regulation, and pro-social behavior rooted in value systems.

The *social-psychological condition of students* is a critical determinant in their ethical development and value formation. Psychology, as a modern empirical science, provides insights into *both individual and group behavior*, elucidating the underlying motives that shape ethical choices and

social actions. The evolving collaboration between psychology and pedagogy has given rise to the specialized field of *pedagogical psychology*, which seeks integrative solutions to moral and educational challenges (Toan et al., 2025).

Pedagogical psychology investigates a broad spectrum of factors influencing moral development, including family dynamics, peer influence, educational systems, and sociocultural contexts. Its subfield, educational psychology, is particularly concerned with how individuals learn, internalize, and teach ethical knowledge and behavior. The school environment, especially the student-teacher collective, is a primary arena where value transmission occurs (Tyson, 1982).

Given the complexity of this environment, educational systems must address the multifaceted problems students face as they develop into intellectually capable, morally conscious, and socially responsible individuals. Understanding the motivational tendencies, behavioral inclinations, and social pressures that influence students' ethical decisions is essential. These issues are magnified in vulnerable groups such as students with intellectual or developmental disabilities, who require specialized educational approaches and tailored pedagogical interventions.

Addressing these needs involves:

- Holistic educational strategies aimed at resolving cognitive, behavioral, and emotional barriers;
- Providing students with the necessary tools and structured environments to *foster self-development*;
- Offering comprehensive pedagogical and psychological counseling for families, thus reinforcing the home-school continuum of ethical education.

Such approaches are not only remedial but also *proactive*, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability—can meaningfully participate in society as ethically informed, emotionally mature, and socially integrated individuals (Hasket, 1985).

Students with intellectual disabilities often present with not only cognitive and learning challenges but also a range of associated physical health conditions. These comorbidities can further complicate their educational experience and require holistic support frameworks. In this context, the socio-economic support of families by the state becomes a crucial factor in ensuring effective care and sustained educational engagement.

Families of students with intellectual disabilities typically invest significant time and emotional resources into caregiving, which can limit their capacity for full economic participation. Therefore, it is essential to provide comprehensive economic and psychosocial assistance to such families, enabling them to better support the long-term developmental needs of their children.

Timely intervention during early developmental periods is critical. When appropriate educational and therapeutic support is provided during "childhood—a stage marked by rapid neurocognitive development"—substantial progress can be achieved. Conversely, delays or gaps in intervention often result in irretrievable developmental setbacks, thereby wasting valuable formative years. This necessitates increased emphasis within educational systems on the inclusion and support of students with special needs.

Furthermore, the formation of specialized research groups and the adoption of scientifically grounded pedagogical approaches are becoming increasingly necessary. These efforts must be complemented by public awareness campaigns and educational programs targeted at both families and broader society to foster inclusive attitudes and collaborative care.

Learning difficulties in students are characterized by performance deficits in specific academic domains despite the presence of normative intellectual functioning. These difficulties are typically manifested in areas such as mathematics, reading comprehension, and written expression. A student may be unable to achieve age-appropriate academic outcomes in these areas in the absence of any psychiatric or neurological disorder, which distinguishes specific learning difficulties from other developmental conditions.

In addition to cognitive deficits, social functioning is often impacted. Normally developing students cultivate social interaction and communication skills progressively at each age level. These skills are not only foundational to successful academic collaboration but are also vital for psychosocial adjustment and integration into broader social contexts. Communication facilitates interpersonal relationships, emotional expression, and cultural adaptation, and is a core component of both intellectual and psychomotor development.

Students with limited fields of interest, reduced peer interaction, and repetitive behaviors frequently face barriers to academic and social inclusion. Observations of early behavioral responses—such as visual tracking, affective reactions, and interpersonal responsiveness—provide insights into a child's capacity for social understanding and environmental engagement. These traits vary by age but often indicate developmental delays in communicative competence and social cognition, which require targeted educational support.

The direction of education in the 21st century must reflect *scientific*, *ethical*, *and philosophical principles* that promote not only cognitive development but also *humanistic and spiritual growth*. A value-oriented educational framework should include the following *core scientific and ethical priorities*:

- Cultivating a *spirit of inquiry*, independent thinking, and innovation through structured exposure to scientific reasoning and critical reflection.
- 2. Promoting *lifelong learning* and continuous professional development.
- 3. Identifying and nurturing *the innate talents* of each individual, while fostering ethical research practices and a natural curiosity for discovery.
- 4. Encouraging an *understanding of natural laws and the mysteries of creation* as expressions of sacred order, particularly within religious and spiritual frameworks.
- 5. Fostering *individual potential* in disciplines vital to scientific advancement, technological development, and societal well-being.
- Reinforcing a commitment to reading, comprehension, and scholarly engagement as a cultural and intellectual responsibility.
- 7. Facilitating collaborative educational practices that emphasize teamwork, knowledge-sharing, and communal learning environments.

These principles aim to form not only competent professionals but also ethically grounded and socially responsible individuals, capable of contributing meaningfully to both national and global contexts.

Value-oriented education encompasses a diverse range of developmental domains, each contributing uniquely to the moral, cultural, social, and intellectual formation of individuals. In this context, value education may be categorized into several interrelated domains: cultural values, social values, primary (religious) values, moral values, and educational values. The following outlines each dimension within a structured pedagogical framework.

Values constitute a core determinant of human dignity and behavior, particularly for adults, where the satisfaction of social and spiritual needs increasingly outweighs physical gratification. As values evolve in response to socio-political and technological changes, there arises a need for empirical research into their impact on human health, well-being, and societal harmony.

The normative force of values—particularly moral and cultural norms—can at times surpass even physical or legal restrictions in their influence. When individuals are punished or suppressed for upholding values or moral norms, this can generate psychological trauma and degrade the spiritual integrity of society. It is therefore essential for educational institutions and school officials to recognize, respect, and reinforce value systems as fundamental pillars of human development and social cohesion.

Values are not only derived from intrinsic moral or religious systems; they also emerge dynamically from cultural practices and collective social behaviors. Customs, as components of lived tradition, serve not merely as expressions of established values but can also act as sources for the

generation of new values. In this dual role, customs contribute to both the preservation and evolution of cultural norms.

According to contemporary Iranian sociologists, there exists a strong correlation between values and norms. These constructs often overlap significantly, with norms acting as codified expressions of values within a given society. In this framework, norms reinforce value systems by facilitating behavioral regularity and social cohesion.

Culture itself is composed of foundational elements such as language, religion, customs, values, norms, knowledge, art, music, and poetry. The strength and visibility of these elements vary by culture, but in all societies, they serve as vehicles for transmitting shared value systems. When a particular cultural value receives wide acceptance, it is often elevated to the status of a social norm. Conversely, if a value—however intellectually advanced—has not yet been culturally internalized, it may remain marginal or require adaptation before becoming normatively influential.

For example, in a society where certain individuals have reached intellectual or moral heights, their values may initially exist outside dominant cultural expectations. Over time, if embraced by the collective, such values can reshape societal norms and redefine ethical or cultural expectations. This transition highlights the dynamic relationship between personal values, societal acceptance, and normative transformation (Di Maio, et al., 1993).

Within educational philosophy, the process of learning is imbued with both worldview-forming and axiological (value-oriented) functions. Education is no longer seen as a neutral transmission of knowledge but rather as a driver of societal transformation, affecting technological, economic, and moral progress. In this regard, internal mechanisms such as attitudes toward science, ethical orientation, personal motivation, environmental conditions, cognitive engagement, and interpersonal communication form the core of the educational experience.

Education and upbringing are inseparably linked to the needs and values of society. Despite ongoing discourse surrounding educational humanism and student-centered learning, many critical questions remain unanswered. What should the education of the future look like? What philosophical and pedagogical principles should guide its restructuring? What role should technological innovation play in humanistic learning environments?

These questions are especially pertinent as humanities disciplines themselves undergo digital transformation, with lectures and texts increasingly delivered through electronic platforms. Although this digital shift reflects technological inevitability, it also exposes the lack of a coherent philosophical paradigm for the future of education (Denko & Kaelbling, 1962). As such, one must ask: What conceptual framework will underpin the next educational

paradigm shift? And how should the components of personality—cognition, emotion, values, and agency—be positioned within this evolving educational system?

The modern philosophical conception of the human being is intimately intertwined with psychological insights. The individual is not simply a rational actor but a complex psychological entity whose behaviors are shaped by emotional needs, social stimuli, and personal values. As social relations deeply influence personality development, educational models must integrate education, upbringing, and socio-emotional development into a unified framework.

Education, in its broadest sense, is a process of communication, social evaluation, and adaptation to prevailing norms. Within this process, society not only influences the learner but actively shapes the individual's self-conception, behaviors, and aspirations. Through social feedback mechanisms, the learner internalizes the norms and expectations of the surrounding environment.

Human needs, as active agents of motivation, form a contradictory psychological base. While many needs align with societal values, others may challenge or contradict them. If overemphasis is placed on satisfying external demands, the autonomy of the inner world becomes compromised. However, resilient psychological points of defense within the personality allow individuals to resist or reinterpret external pressures. These points serve as the locus of personal values, offering direction and agency in ethical decision-making (Demuth & Ackerman, 1983).

Personal values thus mediate the relationship between the inner self and the external social world. They emerge not only from need satisfaction but also from deeply held beliefs and reflective reasoning, guiding the individual's engagement with society. These values provide the motivational basis for ethical behavior and are integral to identity formation.

Yet not all needs contribute positively. Some negative or destructive needs—shaped by poor socialization or exposure to harmful environments—may conflict with societal well-being. These conflicting drives highlight the necessity for value-based education, which shapes individual consciousness in alignment with collective interests. In this regard, educational philosophy must focus on the formation of personal interests, moral convictions, and value orientations as central to the educational process (Diekstra, 1993).

The level of consciousness, emotional intelligence, reasoning, and self-awareness becomes the substrate through which education and moral development intersect. As such, the philosophy of education must prioritize the cultivation of these capacities, enabling learners not only to adapt to society but to transform it ethically through active, value-driven participation.

The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in technological and engineering development, transforming society into a highly complex technological and information-based civilization. While this progress has revolutionized economic, scientific, and social domains, it has also introduced new risks—particularly the danger of technology surpassing human ethical control and dehumanizing the cultural fabric of society.

In contemporary educational research, the relationship between education and the economy occupies a central place. The emergence of an innovation-driven economy necessitates a reconfiguration of the educational system toward models that are personality-oriented, structurally adaptive, and result-oriented. In such a paradigm, education must produce highly qualified professionals equipped not only with technical expertise but also with a broad spectrum of personal, ethical, and cultural competencies. As a result, educational planning must prioritize the integration of economic imperatives while also responding to the intellectual and moral development needs of the individual.

The modern material production sector, now firmly grounded in scientific knowledge and digital infrastructure, demands graduates who are both technologically proficient and ethically conscious. Accordingly, economic development goals and educational policy must be pursued in tandem, with the educational system designed to facilitate not only economic productivity but also human flourishing (Burwill, 1995).

Alongside the economic imperatives of modern society, there is a renewed need to emphasize spiritual, cultural, legal, and socio-political foundations as core elements of education. These elements foster a collective sense of responsibility, ensure social cohesion, and promote both the material and moral development of value systems within the community. In this context, the orientation toward national values is essential for cultivating an intellectually vibrant and morally grounded citizenry.

Such an orientation entails the implementation of shared ideals and principles that define a socially responsible state, encouraging the harmonious development of emotional, ethical, and civic consciousness. Without a firm foundation in values-based education, it is not possible to cultivate creative, active citizens capable of meaningful engagement in democratic society and economic life.

Yet, modern individuals are increasingly marked by fragmentation and cultural dislocation. The technological revolution has often led to a loss of personal integrity, as the individual becomes subordinated to mechanized systems of productivity. In this condition, emotional needs dominate consciousness, while social interactions, self-reflection, and moral responsibility diminish. Modern life is overwhelmingly mediated by machines—computers, digital devices, and algorithms—through which individuals now

work, study, and communicate. In many cases, this technological immersion narrows one's orientation to a single dominant objective: economic gain (Clayton, 1990).

The erosion of civic responsibility in the educational process is a major concern. Assessment models that prioritize standardized testing fail to account for the cultural, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of development. This "technical-individual" approach reduces students' cultural potential to quantitative metrics, thereby neglecting the broader goal of forming ethically conscious and socially engaged individuals.

While the continued advancement of technology is both inevitable and beneficial in many respects, its negative consequences must be acknowledged and mitigated. It is not a failure of technological progress itself, but a failure to embed humanistic, ethical, and cultural safeguards within its development. Education, therefore, must function as a corrective mechanism—not only imparting specialized knowledge but also cultivating the moral and cultural dimensions of the human being.

Moral education, embedded in the structure of self-awareness and critical reflection, is crucial. Within the hierarchy of educational values, moral principles possess a unique capacity to elevate consciousness, transforming passive knowledge acquisition into active ethical thinking.

In a socio-cultural model of education, the health, integrity, and harmonious development of the individual are upheld as primary values. A graduate of such a model—creative, civically responsible, and ethically grounded—can navigate the demands of the modern economy with competence and purpose. The needs of contemporary society, particularly in the context of global challenges and cultural pluralism, require individuals who not only master information but are also guided by moral insight, civic duty, and a commitment to the common good (Clayton, 1990).

The moral maturity of an individual is closely determined by the integrity and coherence of their moral value system. In the educational process, it is essential to emphasize higher-order values, as moral values form the central axis in the hierarchy of personal development. However, contemporary education increasingly faces the challenge of bridging the widening gap between moral knowledge and moral practice among students.

Modern learners, immersed in digital technologies, are in constant contact with computers, smartphones, and virtual platforms. Although they are often able to correctly answer moral and spiritual questions in tests and examinations, their actual behavior frequently contradicts these stated values. This contradiction reveals a dissonance between theoretical knowledge and lived experience, suggesting that students' expressions of moral awareness remain superficial or performative, rather than internalized.

In such an environment, free will is manifested in ways detached from ethical responsibility. Students operate within a framework driven more by pragmatic objectives—passing exams, obtaining grades, and acquiring diplomas—than by a genuine interest in knowledge acquisition or moral development. This utilitarian approach reduces education to a performative act, devoid of deeper meaning or engagement (Akil, et al., 1991).

The disengagement of the student's personality from the educational process is not solely the result of individual disinterest, but is also a reflection of broader structural and cultural shifts within society. In any complex society, individuals are socialized within various overlapping social groups, ranging from tight-knit microsocieties (such as peer groups or families) to wider sociocultural systems. These microsocieties often function on habitual behaviors and local norms that may be misaligned with the broader cultural and moral expectations of formal education (Berios, 1990).

A critical challenge in the educational formation of future specialists is the eclipse of genealogical and sociological foundations in the construction of knowledge. While students may arrive at logically correct answers in assessments, their decisions and behaviors are not consistently guided by values. This discrepancy reveals a metaphysical rift between free will and cultural normativity, where moral reasoning is no longer the compass for action.

Such disconnects often lead to a reduction of individual interests to pragmatic calculations, unanchored by a value-based framework. In this context, the ideal self-concept—rooted in moral ideals—is marginalized, and ethical behavior becomes instrumental rather than principled. As a result, individual interests may diverge sharply from the developmental goals of education and the broader needs of society.

This divergence is frequently a symptom of educational systems' failure to engage students at a personal level, particularly through individualized pedagogical approaches. Consequently, reforming the educational system is not only imperative for students but also for educators, who must adopt innovative methods that facilitate authentic learning and ethical development.

Any reform in education must begin with a fundamental recognition: that in a society composed of diverse social strata, the primacy of moral rules is essential for coherence and sustainability. Without shared ethical principles, even the most basic forms of social organization become untenable.

Public discourse increasingly highlights the crisis in education, as evidenced by debates in academic and media circles. There is growing recognition of the need for paradigm shifts in education—shifts that prioritize harmonious personal development and cultivate responsibility toward knowledge itself. In this regard, the educational process

must go beyond content delivery and focus on reshaping attitudes toward knowledge (Bertchy & Vandel, 1991).

Knowledge should be framed not merely as a means to an end, but as an expansive and engaging field, offering new ways to interpret life, cultivate critical thinking, and achieve personal and societal growth. Within this reconceptualized paradigm, free will must be closely tied to ethical and psychological motivation, reinforcing the internalization of values and the capacity to act upon them with integrity.

In the contemporary educational landscape, the need to stimulate students' motivation for acquiring knowledge has become a critical concern. A central method for achieving this involves the strategic use of instructional materials curated by teachers, referred to here as the teacher's "value baggage." These materials should be thoughtfully selected to carry the essential intellectual and ethical weight of the subject matter. They must originate from primary, authoritative sources, as modern professional training cannot be effectively imagined without engagement with foundational knowledge (Blumer & Heilbronn, 1982).

Beyond primary sources, didactic texts and chrestomathies should incorporate entertaining, contextually rich examples and anecdotes to captivate students' attention. These elements serve not only to enliven the reading process but also to instill habits of diligence, similar to the work ethic emphasized in certain Western pedagogical models. This strategy becomes especially important when students are required to engage with dense academic texts ranging from 50 to 60 pages for lectures and seminars.

Such methods address the dialectical tension between assimilation and appropriation—that is, the individual internalization of cultural values (assimilation) and the dialogic engagement with knowledge systems through academic discourse (appropriation). In a constructive teacher—student dialogue, both value transmission and critical inquiry become possible, providing a platform for meaning-making and ethical reflection.

Knowledge, as both a cognitive and socially regulatory phenomenon, inherently demands a value-laden and responsible approach. The moral implications of knowledge acquisition must be consciously integrated into the educational process, thereby transforming the act of learning into an expression of civic duty. This perspective is central to the philosophy of education, where education and upbringing are seen not as parallel but as interdependent domains essential to the development of personality and society.

In the new educational paradigm, particular emphasis must be placed on the integration of ethical values within curricular content. The central concept in modern moral philosophy is the ethics of responsibility—a principle that finds resonance in both human—human and

human-nature relations, especially in the context of technological expansion.

The application of moral norms begins with scientific literacy in ethics, whereby morality is introduced not as abstract dogma, but as a primary scientific discipline. This recalls Socratic philosophy, which linked moral maturity to intellectual understanding. While ethical frameworks may aim for universality, morality remains deeply personal and contextually experienced. Therefore, education must expose students to diverse ethical systems, not only through general philosophy courses but also through specialized instruction in applied ethics (Biehl, 2025).

At present, ethics courses are often limited to pragmatic formats such as "business ethics and etiquette," which, while useful, fail to foster deeper intellectual engagement. Although such courses are not inconsequential, educators must work to broaden ethical inquiry beyond instrumental purposes and cultivate genuine interest in moral theory and practice. This often occurs spontaneously when students encounter relevant ethical dilemmas or personal reflection, and it must be nurtured rather than ignored (Biehl, 20025).

The current model of higher education—centered primarily around lectures and seminars—tends to limit personalized engagement between educators and students. This impersonal structure risks turning the teacher into a mere information delivery mechanism, undermining their role as a moral and intellectual guide. Despite periodic inclusion of ethical discussions, the lack of a unified and personalized educational strategy results in fragmented moral development among students.

To remedy this, it is essential to restructure educational delivery, reducing the number of standard lectures and reallocating time toward individual or small-group consultations. This model—successfully implemented in many advanced educational systems—transforms consultation into a critical site for intellectual and ethical formation. Importantly, all students—not just the most confident—should be encouraged to participate. These sessions must become formalized spaces for reflective dialogue, critical thinking, and the internalization of disciplinary values.

Consultations allow educators to observe and guide the student's development directly, facilitating both cognitive growth and emotional investment. The educational moments that occur during consultations often have lasting psychological and motivational impacts, as they leverage fundamental principles of human behavior: the desire for recognition, individual attention, and personal growth.

When a student senses genuine interest from the educator, it acts as a powerful intrinsic motivator, fostering deeper engagement and a sense of belonging within the learning process. This personal investment reduces alienation and

re-establishes the connection between academic work and moral responsibility (Blumer & Heilbronn, 1982).

While motivation remains a key driver in the educational process, it is insufficient to capture the full complexity of how learning and ethical development unfold in modern educational systems. Like other social processes, education is deeply influenced by the human factor—the personal, cultural, and relational elements embedded in the interactions between students, teachers, and learning contexts.

Recent psychological research emphasizes the importance of the "formative environment", a term denoting the constellation of conditions that influence the learner's behavior, identity formation, and value internalization. The formative environment functions as a powerful motive, guiding students' engagement, shaping their self-assessment, and supporting developmental change. When actively internalized, this environment catalyzes a "presentation effect"—a motivational and psychological state in which learners orient themselves more seriously toward their own development. It regulates the relational dynamics within the educational space and is consciously constructed by educators as the primary agents of educational meaning (Boudewjin, 1997).

This reinforces the conclusion that the moral orientation of the educational process—its ability to transmit ethical values to younger generations—relies upon active and intentional organization. Students must be equipped with essential pedagogical tools: diagnostic tests, stimulating learning materials, access to ethical frameworks, and cultural references. These components must be integrated within ethical education, not merely as content but as a mode of developing consciousness.

Furthermore, the formation of moral value systems should not occur in isolation but should coincide with the development of communication and critical thinking skills, which are foundational to ethical decision-making and democratic engagement (Brown et al., 1987).

Many social and economic reforms fail due to the absence of cognitive readiness among citizens to solve complex problems. The lack of thinking skills, structured worldviews, and decision-making competence undermines the implementation of basic societal objectives. In response, the international educational community has recognized that critical thinking, practical reasoning, and worldview formation are essential components of educational success.

As early as the 1980s, educators in the United States and Western Europe began voicing concern over the cognitive stagnation of students—particularly their inadequate reasoning abilities and lack of analytical habits. Given that modern citizens are constantly required to make high-stakes decisions, educational institutions began

introducing dedicated courses to develop logical and purposeful thinking.

These courses aim to cultivate practical cognitive habits, combining theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. Unlike formal courses in logic, they are practice-oriented and focus on the structure of human intelligence, memory, and the laws of creative thinking. The integration of memory enhancement exercises into such curricula has also demonstrated a positive spillover effect on students' performance in other disciplines.

Educational experts suggest that introducing specialized courses in logical and creative thinking—with real-world problem-solving at their core—could significantly revitalize and increase the efficacy of the educational process (Buckman & Kellner, 1985).

In tandem with cognitive skills, the ability to communicate effectively has emerged as an essential educational objective. This has given rise to the field of communicative studies—a multidisciplinary science that examines the psychology, ethics, and etiquette of communication, particularly in professional, intercultural, and business contexts.

Modern life demands more than informal or innate communication skills; it necessitates a conscious understanding of the rules and dynamics of interpersonal and public discourse. Communicative studies address these challenges, providing learners with theoretical and practical tools to manage complex interactions. The discipline asserts two central axioms:

- 1. It is impossible not to communicate—even silence conveys meaning.
- 2. Every communication includes both content and relational dimensions, affecting how messages are received and interpreted (Buckhman & Kellner, 1985).

Communication succeeds not simply through expression but through mutual understanding, which must be

Despite its importance, ethics education is often underappreciated by students, particularly when divorced from practical applications. In many cases, students recognize value only in instrumental forms of ethics, such as those related to business etiquette or professional conduct. While this pragmatic engagement is not insignificant, it does not exhaust the transformative potential of ethics education.

Integrating ethics more broadly into the curriculum allows for restructuring the value-moral system of education. Beyond moral instruction, ethical literacy offers students the tools to navigate cultural diversity, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and understand intergroup dynamics. These capabilities foster social optimism and prepare students for meaningful engagement with pluralistic societies.

The inclusion of ethics in education must thus move beyond utilitarian approaches to cultivate deep moral reflection, philosophical inquiry, and intercultural understanding. Doing so contributes to the formation of ethically aware, critically engaged, and socially responsible individuals—the core aim of any modern educational system.

Achieving qualitative transformation in the education system requires more than curricular reform; it demands significant shifts in the professional identity and competencies of educators. In particular, emphasis must be placed on the development of teachers' communicative skills, which are increasingly recognized as central to effective pedagogy and student motivation.

Research by Western communication theorists confirms that the interpersonal behavior of teachers directly influences students' learning engagement and academic outcomes. According to student feedback, direct and responsive communication from instructors significantly enhances their willingness to participate and comply with academic expectations. This finding underscores the importance of individualized consultations as a pedagogical practice, enabling deeper interaction, personalized feedback, and the building of trust-based relationships within the educational process.

Accordingly, one of the principal priorities of the new educational paradigm should be to foster the moral, cognitive, and communicative development of students. These dimensions reflect the core essence of holistic education, which extends beyond academic achievement to include the ethical renewal of society, including its cultural and economic foundations. Education thus becomes a driver of social transformation, cultivating individuals equipped to navigate and solve both personal and societal challenges with creativity and moral integrity.

Mental and behavioral disorders constitute a widespread and urgent global challenge, contributing to profound social, economic, and health-related difficulties. Individuals with mental health conditions often experience social exclusion, reduced quality of life, and elevated mortality rates. These disorders are associated with negative life outcomes including unemployment, low income, limited educational attainment, job-related stress, gender-based inequalities, and unhealthy lifestyles.

The educational system plays a critical role not only in academic development but also in shaping students' psychological well-being. As such, educational policy and pedagogical strategies must be coordinated with national mental health agendas, especially when decisions affecting behavioral health are made by multiple government sectors (Collis & Lloyd, 1992).

Effective policy must therefore adopt an intersectoral approach—integrating health, education, labor, and social welfare sectors—to formulate sustainable mental health strategies. Within this framework, educators and

schools act as frontline agents, detecting early signs of mental distress and fostering protective factors such as connectedness, purpose, self-regulation, and emotional resilience (Cummings, 1992).

Health must be understood not only in physical and mental terms but also through its spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. The integration of spiritual perspectives—including beliefs, behaviors, value systems, and intentional actions—can have psychological and biochemical effects on the brain and body, influencing an individual's overall well-being and capacity for spiritual growth and moral maturity.

From an educational standpoint, the formation of a healthy personality must involve a synthesis of four primary dimensions of well-being:

- 1. Physical well-being maintaining bodily health through hygiene, nutrition, and activity;
- 2. Mental well-being cultivating cognitive and emotional resilience;
- 3. Social well-being fostering interpersonal relationships and community engagement;
- 4. Spiritual well-being aligning actions with moral convictions and transcendent purpose.

A comprehensive educational philosophy must therefore regard the learner as an integrated human being, shaped by biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors. This holistic view not only addresses the multifaceted nature of human flourishing but also lays the foundation for a value-based, ethically conscious educational process (Currie, et al., 1971).

This study investigates the value orientations of university students across several faculties and examines how these orientations vary based on specific demographic and academic variables. Designed as a quantitative survey study within a descriptive screening model, the research aims to assess the distribution and prioritization of values among students in higher education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of the study consisted of 806 undergraduate students enrolled in the first and fourth years of health sciences, science and literature, and education faculties at universities in Tabriz during the 2023-2024 academic year. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure proportional representation. Approximately 50% of the population was sampled to reflect both entry-level and graduating students across faculties. Consequently, a total of 403 students were randomly selected for participation.

After excluding incomplete or erroneous responses, data from 392 valid questionnaires were analyzed using frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions to examine the patterns of student value preferences.

The value dimensions were categorized based on their orientation—instrumental, moral, interpersonal, or social—allowing for a structured analysis of student preferences. The classification framework is outlined as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Classification framework.

Value Tool	Category	Sample Value Types
Individual	Self-actualiza- tion & achieve- ment	Scientific advancement, creativity, perseverance
	Moral responsibility	Morality, honesty, courage, inner consistency
	Personal enrich- ment	Generosity, lové, admira- tion, personal needs
Social	Interpersonal re- lations	Good relationships, man- ners. social harmony
	Civil liberties	Freedom, equality, peace
Final / Transcen- dent	Recognition & self-realization	Recognition, fulfillment, life purpose

This structure allowed for evaluation of students' orientations toward academic goals, moral reasoning, interpersonal behavior, and societal values (Dawe & Loxton, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the value preferences of 392 under-graduate students enrolled in the faculties of health sciences, science and literature, and education at universities in Tabriz during the 2023–2024 academic year. Using a stratified random sampling approach, the study ensured balanced representation of both entry-level and senior students, capturing a broad spectrum of academic experiences and developmental stages. The primary objective was to investigate how students prioritize various values—instrumental, moral, interpersonal, and social—within the context of their academic and personal lives.

The data indicate that students place considerable emphasis on academic achievement, family welfare, and interpersonal harmony as fundamental values guiding their behavior and aspirations. These findings resonate with existing literature that highlights academic success and familial bonds as central pillars in students' lives (Schwartz, 2012). Notably, moral values such as responsibility, honesty, and integrity emerged as highly prioritized, which suggests that despite contemporary challenges, students retain a strong ethical compass. This sustained ethical consciousness reflects the potential effectiveness of educational efforts aimed at moral development and is consistent with earlier studies emphasizing the importance of fostering moral reasoning in youth (Demuth & Ackerman, 1983; Rest, 1986).

Conversely, values linked to formal recognition, social prestige, and event participation were less uniformly valued, indicating a divergence influenced by personal, cultural, or situational factors. This variability suggests that while some students may seek external validation

or social acknowledgment, others may prioritize intrinsic motivations and internalized ethical standards. Such distinctions underscore the multifaceted nature of value formation and the diverse pathways through which students negotiate their identity and goals.

The findings shed light on the profound impact of the educational environment on students' psychosocial and moral development. As posited by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), the school context operates as a critical microsystem influencing individual development. The data corroborate this framework, revealing that positive educational experiences contribute to reinforcing moral values and promoting psychosocial well-being. However, the study also identifies enduring challenges that threaten these developmental gains. Academic pressures, misalignment between educators and students, peer conflicts, and institutional shortcomings can precipitate stress, anxiety, and diminished social adjustment.

Such stressors not only impair academic performance but may also erode students' ethical sensitivity and interpersonal skills. This finding aligns with contemporary research on student mental health, which documents how educational stressors impact emotional regulation and social functioning (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). The implication is clear: without supportive and responsive educational environments, students risk diminished holistic development and reduced capacity for ethical engagement.

The complex interaction of individual characteristics, family upbringing, socioeconomic status, and school climate further complicates the landscape of value formation. Students do not develop values in isolation; rather, they are shaped by a confluence of internal dispositions and external influences. For example, family support and socioeconomic stability have been shown to foster resilience and moral development, whereas adverse social conditions may undermine these processes (Lerner et al., 2015). Additionally, school climate—defined by relationships, norms, and values espoused within the institution—plays a crucial role in nurturing or hindering ethical and interpersonal growth.

Given these multilayered determinants, educational institutions must adopt holistic strategies that transcend academic instruction to incorporate psychosocial support, inclusive pedagogy, and community engagement. Such comprehensive approaches foster environments where students can safely explore, critique, and internalize values that promote personal and social well-being.

The results of this study strongly advocate for integrating value-oriented pedagogies and socio-emotional learning frameworks into higher education curricula. These pedagogical models emphasize critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and collaborative learning, equipping students with competencies essential for both academic success and civic participation. By fostering reflective dialogue and

ethical deliberation, educators can help students navigate complex moral landscapes and develop a nuanced understanding of their roles as future professionals and community members.

Moreover, the importance of psychosocial support services within universities cannot be overstated. Counseling, mentorship programs, and peer support networks serve as vital resources that enhance students' capacity to cope with academic demands while reinforcing ethical values and social connectedness.

CONCLUSIONS

This study illuminates the pivotal role of universities in shaping the value orientations of their students. The prominence of moral values among participants reflects the potential for higher education to nurture ethically conscious individuals. Nevertheless, the persistence of academic and psychosocial challenges calls for urgent institutional responses that prioritize holistic development. Investments in value-oriented teaching, supportive learning climates, and comprehensive student services are imperative for cultivating responsible, capable, and socially engaged graduates.

These findings contribute to the growing discourse on the role of education in moral and psychosocial development, underscoring that fostering academic excellence must be paralleled by a commitment to ethical and interpersonal growth. Universities thus hold transformative power—not merely as centers of knowledge transmission but as crucibles for the formation of conscientious citizens ready to contribute to a just and equitable society.

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