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**LIFE VALUES OF AMERICAN STUDENTS: HISTORICAL AND  
PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS**

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*The article presents the historical and pedagogical aspects of American students' life values problem. The scientific views of American scientists on the problem of life values are analyzed. The most common is the understanding of life's values as the foundation on which everyone builds their own life; as the principles of life, which determine how one should behave; as a belief that occupies a central position in the individual's system of beliefs. In different historical periods, the most important life values of American youth were the ability to intercultural communication, freedom of choice, professional competitiveness, family well-being. American methods of studying terminal and instrumental life values of students in the process of obtaining their education in higher educational institutions have been described. The following main terminal values of American students at the beginning of the twenty-first century are highlighted: the existence of a family, self development, freedom of choice (statements and activities), pluralism and democracy in public relations, patriotism and active social position, professionalism and competitiveness, financial security, health and fitness. Attention is drawn to the following functions of American students' life values: 1) orientational towards ideals and patterns of activity; 2) constructive about life strategies; 3) normative about behavior styles. Curricula and programs of American higher education institutions are aimed at developing the students' life values in the following areas: spiritual, mental, ethnopsychological, humanistic-communicative, social socialization, socio-political, professional competence and competitiveness, culture of health and safety.*

*Key words: values, value benchmarks, terminal life values, instrumental life values, life values, functions of life values, American students, education, higher educational establishments, historical and pedagogical aspects.*

**Introduction.**

A person's life values are the ones that organize their existence. Throughout the life path, each person chooses and complies with their values. Thus a certain system of life benchmarks that determines their behavior and livelihood is formed.

A teach stage of society's development, a specific system of values of its representatives is created. At the same time, changes in the political, economic, social and spiritual spheres of each society predefine the change of peoples' priorities in life. Along with that changes in the living standards of people, especially the younger generation, lead to a correction of public opinion. Education, namely higher education plays the leading part. Higher educational institutions, organizing the



educational process, orient their curricula and programs on the formation of such a system of life priorities of students, which, on the one hand, reflects the vital needs of society, and, on the other hand, directs it to the individual and comprehensive development of each person.

It should be noted that the changes that have taken place in the political and social spheres of Ukrainian society in the last four years have led to changes in the system of life values of Ukrainian youth. Patriotism, heroism, mercifulness, volunteering, charity came out to the foreground to a greater extent. Unfortunately, aiming for victory at any price hypocrisy, blasphemy, cynicism, indifference, insensibility to cruelty, low professionalism has also spread among young people.

Taking this into account, it is very relevant for the pedagogical practice of higher education in Ukraine to study problem issues of students' life priorities in different historical periods in the United States, which during its existence experienced various socio-economic and political upheavals and today has become one of the most developed countries in the world, including in terms of human resources.

Questions of the life values of American students were the subject of research of such American researchers as B. Gross, E. Hall, C. Kerr, V. Lechuga, B. Newman, R. Renner, C. Rogers, M. Seiden, J. Sheth, H. Smith, S. Schwartz.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the research of the problem of life values of American students made by American scientists from a historical and pedagogical standpoint. American humanist and educator K. Rodgers made a number of assumptions about values and life benchmarks: «1) the value process as a part of human life has an organic basis, based on human trust in the wisdom of the integral self, and not some of its part; 2) the effectiveness of this process directly depends on the openness of man to his inner experience; 3) the greater the openness of people in their internal experience, the greater the commonality of their values; 4) humanistic and constructive values are common to all people» [5]. Therefore, life values are the foundation on which everyone builds their own life [6].

In 1930's during great economic depression and social change in the US, the American president and scientist Franklin Delano Roosevelt [2] has developed a pyramid of personality efficiency in which he considers life values an important stepping point. Franklin's Pyramid is a comprehensive system of setting and achieving goals that are designed for an entire lifetime. This technique «is aimed at the future» – determines what needs to be done rather than concentrates on viewing the current activity in order to organize it.

Franklin considered the stage of determining the values of life as the most important in the construction of the pyramid – if an error would be made at that stage (for example someone chooses «knowledge» and «service to people», although in reality, «popularity» and «high social status» are important for the person) disappointment will inevitably follow. This means that first of all when choosing a life strategy it is necessary to make a list of life values and to make sure that the values selected do not contradict each other.



American scientist Clark Kerr believes that life values are an integral part of human spiritual life, justifying ideals and norms, uniting society spiritually. Therefore, when choosing a student's life values, one should not forget about their functions [3]. He highlighted the following functions of life values: 1) orientation towards the ideals and patterns of activity; 2) constructing a strategy of life; 3) normative with regards to behavior styles.

After World War II, American researchers E. Hall and D. Trager highlighted ability to engage in intercultural communication as the main value of American youth in the mid 1950's [12]. In 1954 E. Hall and D. Trager published «Culture as communication» in which the term «cross-cultural communication» was proposed for widespread use for the first time. The scientists understood this term as «the ideal goal to which a person should strive in their desire to adapt as well and effectively as possible to the outside world» [1].

In his writings in the 1980's K. Rogers drew attention to the importance of such a life value as «freedom». K. Rogers emphasizes that freedom is internal education, the ability to choose any of the alternatives provided from the outside [5]. Subjective freedom is seen by the American scholar as a sense of personal power, as the ability to make choices and to manage oneself. At the same time, he does not deny the influence of inborn and social factors as well as past experience on the behavior of a person which actually predetermines the choice made. He consistently adheres to the point that the notion of absolute freedom cannot be applied to explain the choices that people make [5]. It is necessary to emphasize that providing freedom to students according to Carl Rogers contributes to the development of their natural aptitudes, curiosity, ability to make choices, choose decisions and be responsible for them, develop their own values in the process of educational as well as other activities. When students make their choices and define their life they show growing confidence and pride for themselves.

Carl Rogers insists on creating an interpersonal atmosphere that would remove obstacles to productive learning and the student's comprehensive development. As a result of the teacher's positive attitude student's self-esteem rises and this directly contributes to unfolding creative potential of the individual.

Carl Rogers sees the goal of democratic education in helping those who learn to become personalities able to act according to the challenges of time, namely be able to act independently and bear responsibility for their actions; be capable of reasonable choice and self-control; capable of critical thinking, which makes it possible to evaluate the opinions of others; able, most importantly, to a flexible and reasonable adaptation, to new problem situations; capable of assimilating an alternative form of approach to problems with the free and creative use of all existing experience; capable of effective cooperation with others in various activities; those who work not for the sake of approval by others, but in order to achieve the goals that are useful for the society [6]. The democratization of education, according to Carl Rogers, manifests itself in the right of the subjects of the educational process to participate in the choice of goals, content of curricula or style of work. The most important value of the present is the ability to navigate in the situation of choice, to make the right and free choice, associated with specific responsibility and behavior, which makes a



person a bearer of ethical consciousness, who thinks in terms of values, allows you to exist fully in the cultural space [6]. According to Carl Rogers, freedom of the individual is a prerequisite for creativity. The basis of the self-actualization of the personality, which fully functions, as observes the scientist, lies in the mechanism of reflection, the desire for the creative implementation of deep personal meanings [5].

In the opinion of the American teacher, it is necessary not only to develop the student's personality comprehensively, but, most importantly, to create conditions under which the personality of young people will be capable of self-education, self-development, self-actualization, self-discipline [6].

American practitioner V. Lechuga names professional competitiveness to be the main life value of American students [4]. According to V. Lechuga's study since the labor market continues to demand more workers with postsecondary credentials, for-profit colleges and universities offer the training, degrees, and credentials that help students to remain viable in an increasingly competitive job market [4].

In American psychological and pedagogical practice, the most widely used approach to the study of values is the concept of M. Rokych, who offered a concrete definition of the notion of values. In his theory values are understood as a the kind of beliefs, the central position in the individual system of beliefs [7]. Values are the principles of life that determine how people behave.

American researcher Milton Rokych developed his own concept of individual's value orientations, understanding the value as a persistent belief in the fundamental superiority of some goals or modes of existence before others [7].

According to Rokych, value orientation in one way or another affects any social phenomena. At the same time, Rokych believes that human values are relatively not numerous and organized in the systems of values, and all people possess the same values, although in different degree [7].

Having divided all the values on the terminal (relating to the goals of individual existence) and the instrumental (related to the way of action and achievement of goals), Rokych conducted large-scale field studies in the 1960's-1970's on a nation wide American sample, suggesting that respondents hierarchically rank the values from two lists [7].

M. Rokych attributed to the terminal values our beliefs that relate to the goals or final states that the person seeks (active life, life wisdom, health, interesting work, the beauty of nature and art, love, financial well-being, the presence of good and loyal friends, public vocation, cognition, productive life, development, entertainment, freedom, happy family life, happiness of others, creativity, self-confidence). Instrumental values affect presentation of the desirable methods of achieving terminal values (for example, accuracy, good manners, tolerance, high life expectation, cheerfulness, diligence, independence, irreconcilability to disadvantages in oneself and others, education, responsibility, rationalism, self-control, courage in defending your thoughts, views, firm will, tolerance, breadth of views, honesty, efficiency in affairs, responsiveness) [7].

The concept of cultural and individual values is deduced on the basis of M. Rokych's understanding of these notions.



On the basis of M. Rokych's conception (terminal and instrumental values), Sh. Schwartz (90's of the XX century) is developing a new theoretical and methodological approach to the study of values [8]. The Schwartz method consists of two parts and measures the level of significance of ten types of values. The first part examines the normative ideals, values of the person at the level of beliefs, the structure of values. The second part examines the values at the level of behavior, the individual priorities that manifest in the society. Schwartz's method is used in American higher education for professional selection, career guidance, and identification of personality orientation [9].

The Schwartz questionnaire consists of 30 values (equality, inner harmony, power, pleasure, freedom, spiritual life, sense of community, stability of society, interesting life, meaning of life, politeness, wealth, nation's security, self-esteem, reciprocity in relationships with people, creativity, world peace, respect for the traditions, mature love, self-restraint, indifference to the others' cares, safety of the family and relatives, public recognition, unity with nature, novelty, wisdom, authority, true friendship, world of beauty, social justice) [9]. The student should choose the most important for him and evaluate on a scale from - 1 to 7 (-1 - is contrary to my principles, 0 - don't care, 1 - is not important, 2 - of little importance, 3 - is not very important, 4 - is important, 5 - important enough, 6 - very important, 7 - extremely important). Then other values are evaluated.

In a number of US private higher educational institutions [10] (Wheaton College, Wheaon, Illinois), Bernard College (New York), Tulane University (New Orleans, Louisiana), Tufts University (Mt. University of Emory (Atlanta, Georgia), Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, Mass.), Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut) they examine the values of their students in such perspectives: spiritual, mental, ethno-psychological, humanistic-communicative, social socialization, socio-political, professional competence and competitiveness, culture of health, basing on the works of Rokych and Schwartz.

Thus, the following main terminal values of American students at the beginning of the twenty-first century in these universities are highlighted: the existence of a family, self development, freedom of choice (statements and activities), pluralism and democracy in public relations, patriotism and active social position, professionalism and competitiveness, financial security, health and fitness.

These institutions' curricula and programs are further guided by a dedicated system of students' life values.

K. Rogers believes that the main goal of education is to promote personal growth of a child as well as the teachers. He was convinced that education should focus on personal development, forming «a fully functioning personality» [5] in the personal and social spheres of life. The system of life values and priorities changes accordingly.



### Conclusions.

Historical and pedagogical analysis of American students' life values leads to the conclusion that the target component of education has a special influence on forming a system of values and value benchmarks of the younger generation.

The study does not provide an exhaustive analysis of all aspects of the problem of American students' life values. Such issues as the hierarchy of life values of American students, the peculiarities of the educational process in higher education institutions of the USA regarding the formation of students' life values require further study and development.

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