

Review

Human values in education: Reflecting on the core

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Accepted 07 November, 2011

An in-depth study is initiated in values and human values in particular along with contributions of various researchers. An historical peep into value literature is followed by retrospections on the connections between values and education. The human values' interventions in the academic field are probed for their utility. The response[s] of the education system is deciphered with societal and community needs in the backdrop. How Value Education elevates man is emphasized. The Western and Eastern thoughts on the captioned subject are compared. The Value System of East Asia and India is delineated. The Universal Values and the changes it would bring about are emphasized.

Keywords: Values, human values, value system, human values' interventions, value education, universal values.

INTRODUCTION

What is value? Where does value come from? What are personal values? How do our values influence the choices we make in our life? What are human Values? Is there a distinction between values and human values? For centuries these questions have been central to understanding people's motivation and decision making. Not surprisingly, there have been many different answers to these questions; because of which there have been inquisitiveness to secure an understanding. Values have been defined as "the most distinctive property or defining characteristic of a social institution" (Rokeach, 1979, p.51). They are critical aspects of organizational culture (Schein, 1997, p.22). Rokeach, (1973, p.20) has further discussed the relationship between values and needs. He said, "values are the cognitive representations of needs, and man is the *only animal* ^[1] capable of such representations and transformations". The words *only animal* is to be reflected in a metaphoric sense; for there are several viewpoints. [The] valid definition of man, within the context of his knowledge and of all of mankind's knowledge to-date [is]: "A *rational animal*." ("Rational," in this context, does not mean "acting invariably in accordance with reason"; it means "possessing the faculty of reason." A full biological definition of man would include many subcategories of "animal," but the general category and the ultimate definition remain the same) (Rand, 1979, p. 58).

Rokeach defined a value and value system this way: "A *value* is an enduring belief that a specific mode of

conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preference to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-states of existence. A *value system* is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance" (Rokeach, 1973, p.5). 'Preferable' means that one goal is preferred to something else, so that the values have a hierarchal order. 'Mode of conduct' refers in Rokeach research to the 18 instrumental values and 'end-state' refers to the 18 terminal values ^[2]. Based on the approach of Rokeach, Shalom Schwartz and Wolfgang Bilsky (1987, p.550 – 562; 1990, p. 878 - 891) generated a conceptual definition of values that incorporates the five formal features of values recurrently mentioned in the literature. Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance (Schwartz, 1992, p. 3 – 4). Again value is defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes (Rokeach and Rokeach, 1989, p. 775 - 784). People's values develop and get shaped as a product of the learning and experience they encounter in the socio-cultural living in which they are placed. Values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be (Jacob *et al.*, 1962, p. 6 - 38). Values are individual preferences with a wider connotation, including informal and formal organization, cultures as well. Value is a conception that influences the

selections from available choices of actions (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 338 - 343). Researchers are generally agreed that there are very important variables that influence the decision-making process (Feather, 1995, p. 1135 -1151). According to Schwartz' and Bilsky's theory (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, p. 550 – 562; 1990, p. 878 – 891); Burgess and Schwartz, 1994, p. 12) values are cognitive constructs that play role as well as motivating justifiable behavior. Schwartz (1992) defined values as trans situational, desirable goals which serve as guiding principles in one's life and which vary in their importance for an individual. Feather (1988, p. 381 – 391; 1992, p. 102 – 124; 1995, p. 1135 - 1151) has proposed that values can be viewed as abstract structures – a source of person's beliefs about desirable goals life and desirable or not ways of behaving. These beliefs have an oughtness or normative quality. Values have their source in basic human needs and in societal demands too. Values are properties of the person; they are hierarchically organized because they differ in their importance of the self. According to Feather (1995, p. 1135 - 1151) subjective values are relatively stable and they maintain some stability of behavior across situations and across a time frame. In the achievement motivation literature subjective 'task' values have been defined more specifically as how tasks meet the different needs of individuals (Eccles *et al.*, 1983; Wigfield and Eccles, 1992). The model put forth by Eccles proposed four major components of subjective values: *attainment values or importance, utility values or usefulness of the tasks and cost*. Building on Battle's (1965, 1966) work, Eccles *et al.*, defined the attainment value as the importance of doing well in a given task; this component is similar in certain respects to notions of intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985, Harter, 1981). Utility value or usefulness refers to how a task fits into an individual's future plans. Cost refers to what the individual has to give up doing a task. Once embraced, values become our standards of importance (Gellermann *et al.*, 1990). They also serve as criteria for making decisions and setting priorities and lie behind the explanations and justifications we give for our actions. Without the capacity to formulate and act on values; life on the human level would not exist. This is what differentiates human beings from other beings in the creation.

A Brief History of Value Research

In the past century, a great deal of research was devoted to the study of values. The first systematic attempt to measure values was Allport and Vernon's (1931) Study of Values. According to Allport (1961, p. 454), a value is "a belief upon which a man acts by preference). The Study of Values yielded ipsative measures of six value types: aesthetic, economic, political, religious, social, and theoretical. Even after its initial development, this value

measure was still widely used for counseling, pedagogical, and research purposes (Kopelman *et al.*, 2003). Since Allport, many other researchers have contributed to the broad study of values. An important and much cited contribution was made by Rokeach (1973). His theoretical writing and value survey both renewed interest in this fascinating domain. He defined a value as aforesaid in the second para of this paper. Rokeach further saw values as enduring beliefs and identified two kinds of values: instrumental and terminal values. Instrumental values are beliefs concerning desirable modes of conduct (e.g., ambitious, obedient). Terminal values are beliefs concerning end states of existence (e.g., comfortable life, equality). After Rokeach (1973), several other researchers gave their own definition of values. Super (1980, p.130) defined a value as "an objective, either a psychological state, a relationship, or material condition, that one seeks to attain". Another example is Hofstede (1980, p. 18) who defined values as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others". However, for a more elaborate definition we had to wait until Schwartz and Bilsky (1987), who defined values as "(a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (p. 551) on the basis of broad overview of the value literature. According to this definition, values are stable motivational constructs that represent broad goals and apply across contexts and time. An important merit of this definition is that it distinguishes values from attitudes by pointing at their generalized nature, whereas attitudes are people's beliefs about specific objects or situations (Roe and Ester, 1999). It was with this conceptual definition of values that Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990) took the first steps towards a tentative theory of the universal content and structure of human values.

Education and values have lot of close knit connection; there is a high degree of super imposing mutuality between the two. Educational theorists agree that values are at the foundation of a philosophy of education, and the curriculum theory and education policy choices usually follow the philosophical values (Dewey, 1943, 1946; Kneller, 1967). Solitis (1981) argued that the issue of value choices is at the foundation of all curriculum decisions. Years earlier, Dewey (1932) and Tyler (1949) identified values, such as the nature of mankind, the purpose of humankind on earth, the social interaction as the bases for both educational philosophy and curriculum development. Theorists as diverse as Bennett (1986), Wynne (1985, 1988), and Apple (1979), have noted that values are needed, both as a philosophical foundation for the curriculum, and as leading to moral values to be reinforced in the curriculum. They, however disagree, as to which ones to teach and how to teach them (Beane, 1990).

'Human Values are the positive, desirable qualities of character such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, responsibility, compassion, altruism, justice and respect inherent in all human beings. ... (They) are fundamental to human existence and span across cultures, nationalities and classes. ... (They) cultivate an environment of trust, transparency, responsibility, caring, respect, cooperation, quality and excellence'. {Extract from Education Material "Human Values and Ethics in the workplace" Source: UN-HABITAT and Global Dharma Centre, 2005}. In a similarly titled material it is corroborated that 'Human Values are instinctively felt, cognitively grasped, discussed as a shareable experience, although classical literature does not make a distinction between values and human values ... although the different of this value enquiry cover all areas of human concern like ethics, religion, art, science, social science, law etc., no separate or special significance is attached to the term human values' (Gustavsson *et al.*, 2005). Dr. Eknath Gawande (1994) defines human values; 'When human values are inculcated through curriculum to transcend to cognitive, affective and psychomotor level for conducive development of individual, society, national and international understanding, it is called value education; value education claims a vast field for its coverage to mould the behavior and transform the right ways of action in day-to-day life activities.'

In the Academic sessions (learning processes) *human values' interventions* were effectively used with specific questions like: *Think of someone who has made a positive impact in your and others life. Think about the instances and the time. Think of the dialogue/communication. What was the quality (of interactions) or value that the person had that made an impact or difference on you? If everyone in the world had that quality or value, how would the world be a different place than what is it today? What makes those values so important? What are the feelings and emotions that are aroused then? What types of activities promote these behaviors? What type of words and gestures generate positive responses amongst people?*

The *educational system* must aspire for the good of the community and the society at large. The education must promote a vision of permanent change; human beings must be generators of a transformation ...with emphasis in man's dignity and (human) values that convinces him ... (as the one who) dynamically participates in the changes that benefits the human race. ...Education system must contribute to the knowledge and significance of man as a person. ... Education ... understand human trajectory ...: dreams, knowledge's, ignorance's, doubts, fears, certainties, hates, loves, hopes, disillusion, health's ideology, illness, death, his own image and the interaction with the world. The system must contemplate that human being is not only created, but also a creator, is not a living being that acts in a

passive way, he makes freedom and reasoned choices to be in harmony and unity with his own environment for a particular purpose, reflecting his rationality and will (Tapia, 2009). Well, the arguments put forward by Tapia could raise a seemingly provocative reaction like a son being born to a barren woman! Man-the creator is above all a creator of his own self. "...Being the cause is at the same time a form of creativity. It is the same creativity for which the *basic raw material* is man himself. We cannot [...] simply identify "man-the creator" with human activity, and "man-the material" with what goes on within the human subject. Whereas it is true that deeds always constitute a way of surpassing human passivity" (Strózewski, n.d.). Man experiences himself as the subject when something happens to him. Whereas, when it is him who acts, he perceives himself as the cause [...]. Our experiences are linked to structures. The structure "man acts" and the structure "something happens within man" seem to divide the person, as it were, into two separate worlds (Wojtyła, 1994)." Human values or moral education should not be reduced to an analysis of rules and prohibitions; rather it should focus on a person's general style of relating to self and others. Values education must work towards the liberation of individual from the shackles of fear and distrust. It should...empower...to give and receive love, and develop brotherhood... (Kapani, 2000, p.196). Prof. Chakraborty has emphasized three aspects of human values: (a) Universal, trans-cultural human values as ideals; (b) Culture-specific operative human values that translate the ideals into actionable conduct in a given culture; (c) Culture-specific operative human values that derive from certain altogether different human ideals (Chakraborty, 1999, p.19). The value systems of various cultures have led to the congruence of thought, word and deed. The sample reflections, stretching across a span of over eight decades, clearly shows that profounder stream of Western thinking too had been continuously assailing the march of science – technology - led changes in society and organizations. 'I am compelled to fear that science will be used to promote the power of dominant groups, rather to make man happy, (and) I shall confine myself wholly to the effect of science and enabling us to gratify our passions more freely... '(Russel, 1927, pp. 5, 7). 'The democratized ... man ... has lost his form: he is no longer determined from within and so far no longer a free man' (Keyserling, 1938, p.204). Nothing that relies merely ... on the material order of things can hope for more transitory success; change which is law in this unstable domain may have the worst consequences in every respect, and these consequences will come with all the more lightning rapidity as the speed of change grows greater and greater ... (and) 'Among the many that Westerners often blame the eastern civilizations for their steadiness and stability ... these characteristics show that these civilizations partake of the immutability of the principles

... : it is because the modern civilization is lacking in principle that is eminently unstable..(Guenon, 1941, pp. 106, 82). 'Man's true enemy is within himself; it lies in the strength of his own uncontrolled passions and appetites ... new – born power over nature has not tamed these; on the contrary, it has rendered them more violent because it has given them greater opportunity for gratification' (Joad, 1947, p.55). 'The more we do and the more we accomplish, the more end is vanity and vexation ... the more needs and the more disappointments' (Dewey, 1959, p.108). '... man has suffered another loss in his more recent development: the traditions that had buttressed his behavior are now rapidly diminishing. No instinct tells him what he has to do and no tradition tells him what he ought to do.' (Frank, 1963, p. 168). 'The fact that the contents of our thinking, feeling, billing are induced from outside and are not genuine, exists to an extent that gives the impression that these pseudo acts are the rule, while the genuine or indigenous mental acts are the exceptions' (Fromm, 1969, p.213). 'The progress that we call civilization is an improvement in technology, science and the impersonal manipulation of power, is not an improvement in morals – that is, in ethics' (Toynbee, 1976, pp. 306 -7). 'More than any other casual system with which science now concerns itself, it is variables in human value systems that will determine the future' (Sperry, 1983, p. 109). 'No act is right or wrong in itself. Everything depends on its relation to the agent, whether it is chosen freely and with full acceptance of its consequences or is done abstractedly, in imitation of the acts of others or in self-deception' (Smith, 1989, p.14). 'A measure of our confusion is that we continue to try to solve the problems that have been brought about or exacerbated by our use of technology -- with more technology used in the same way' (Harman and Hormann, 1990, p. 97).

The value system of East Asia viz. strong family ties, savings and frugality, hard work, team work, social contract with the State, stakeholder with the State, consciousness in upbringing their children, responsible press, collectivism. The value system of India is competitive ability, clear objective, simple organization, committed people, openness, responsibility and quality. This is evidenced by the following:” □□Ego sublimation rather than ego assertion □□Sacrificing spirit rather than fighting spirit □□Team achievement rather than individual achievement □□Spiritual attainment rather than material prosperity □□Self-control rather than outside control □□Concept of duties rather than concept of rights □□Yielding rather than dominating □□Concern for this world and its improvement □□Respect for and search for all truth, whatever be its source” (Indian Ethos and Values, n.d., p 15).

In the 21st century, we must continue to tap the Universal Values (cooperation, freedom, peace, respect, happiness, honesty, humility, love, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance and unity) each human being holds

within – providing an opportunity to look anew at what is important in their life, to reconnect the values of their culture, explore attitudes to actualize those very values. We have to regain man as the unique source that makes sense of our lives, projecting ... a totality which must cover ... nature, society and cosmos (Tapia, 2009). However, “The next attitude will gain new dignity a bit forgotten: devotion, testimony, respect, compassion, love, justice. Maybe this renovated communion with cosmos and with others, will display a new dimension of the Sacred, not the sacred known to men as an instrument of the positive religions, masks of the oppressions, but the interior Sacred in each man and each thing, that reveals in the splendor and unity of all” (Luis 1992, p. 118). Although different values are enunciated it is difficult, if not improper for anyone to provide a hierarchical order. As man we must regain the value in ourselves ... with the focal point for the education of man (Tapia, 2009): this is the true objective of education. Could we tell ourselves: 'Human capital is the most important source of wealth' 'If skills are lost little are lost; if values is lost, everything is lost'?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper establishes a valid connection between human values and education along with studying human values in education. As per the study in the paper education suffused with human values shall lead human beings to a better tomorrow.

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NOTES

1 Man is the only animal... Geertz remarks that “man is the most emotional as well as the most rational animal (Scwell, 1997, p. 35 – 55). He (with emphasis ‘man’) might have added the most emotional because he is the most rational. In another remarkable writing Pugh, 1978, p. 30 – 31 says, despite the strong evidence that man is fundamentally a social animal, there has been a surprising tendency, both in psychology and formal philosophy, to overlook the importance of such innate social drives on human behavior. Social animals are designed by evolution so that as individuals they “enjoy” the social activities that are required by their intended role in the society, even when these activities contribute nothing to the physical survival of the individuals. Humans are no exception to this rule.”

2 Milton Rokeach created the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) (Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values*, p. 6). The RVS consists of two sets of values viz. terminal values and instrumental values, each set containing 18 individual value items.

Terminal Values: Desirable end-states of existence; the goals that a person would like to achieve during her or his lifetime.

Instrumental Values: Preferable modes of behavior or means of achieving one’s terminal values.

Example of these sets

Terminal Values And Instrument Values in Rokeach Values Survey

Terminal Values	Instrumental Values
A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	Ambitious (hardworking ,aspiring)
An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	Broad-minded (open-minded)
A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	Capable (competent ,effective)
A word at peace (beauty of nature and the arts)	Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
Equality (brotherhood ,equal opportunity for all)	clean (neat, tidy)
	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
Family security (taking care of loved ones)	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
Family security (taking care of loved ones)	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
Freedom (independence, free choice)	Honest (sincere, truthful)
Happiness (Contentedness)	Imaginative (daring, creative)
Mature Love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
National security (protection from attack)	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	Logical (consistent ,rational)
Equality (brotherhood ,equal opportunity for all)	Loving (affectionate, tender)
Salvation (saved, eternal life)	Obedient (dutiful, respect)
Self-respect (self-esteem)	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)
Social recognition (respect ,admiration)	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
True friends (close companionship)	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	

Source: M. Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973)

RVS values vary among groups (Munson, J. M. and Posner, B. Z., 1980; Frederick, W. C. and Weber, J and again Frederick, W.C. and Preston, L. E. 1990). People in the same occupation tend to hold similar values. One study compared corporate executives, members of steel workers’ union, and members of a community activist group. Although a great deal of overlap was found among the three groups, there was also some very significant difference (Frederick and Weber).