

The Individual Values of the Public Administration Employees From Southwest Macedonia

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For a long time it has been talked about a crisis. Among others, about a value crisis, which surely, if not the most important, it is among the most important, because the function of the values is inspiring, because they are standards and criteria for assessment, because they are cognitive representation of the connotative, as well as because, according to many, they are the most important force for the success or failure of the individuals in societies. In this paper the issue about values and their structure is stated, from the perspective of their individual preferentiality, in a broad category of persons "public administration employee". In that matter, the results obtained using the scale of individual values of Vid Pogachnik are presented, applied on 370 employees in the administration (public, state, local, judicial administrations, and other public institutions) in Southwest Macedonia, including the municipalities of Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Resen, Kavadarci, Kichevo, Makedonski Brod, Krushevo, Demir Hisar, Novaci, Mogila, Krivogashtani, and Dolneni.

Keywords: changes, individual values, public administration

Theoretical Framework of the Research

The values are referred to as behavior and goals toward whose achievement that behavior is directed, as something that is inside us, as subjective phenomena, dispositions, and intentions toward something that the individual intensely and constantly wants to achieve, to get to a conclusion that the basic features of the value concept are: "They are dispositions toward achieving desirable goals, dispositions that are central in the structure of the human personality, which strongly and permanently raise a particular activity" (Roth, 1987, p. 297).

The values are the essence of each individual, something without which the person cannot objectively and fully understand the behavior. However, according to the theorists, it represents a huge effort in each attempt to detect everything that is valuable to someone. Hence, it is useful the attempt to explain all types of values, to group them, and to reduce them to a certain number of so-called common values, each of which could appear in

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many individuals.

In this matter, according to Allport, the total number of common values is not bigger than six, naming them value orientations: theoretical, economic, esthetic, social, political, and religious orientation, and according to Morris, the number of value orientations is something bigger (Roth, 1987, p. 298).

On the other hand, the professor Bora Kuzmanovic, although in his theoretical research addressed the work of other authors who have dealt with study of the values and value orientations, yet he very directly opined that for him these phenomena were best considered if they were related with the idea of something that is desired, preferred, and something to which a person aspired: “values mean value attitude of the individual towards certain classes of phenomena, i.e., dispositions of behavior towards these phenomena” (Kuzmanovic, 1990, p. 278).

However, from all this, the most important is to emphasize the fact that probably if the value orientation of any individual is known, then with high percentage of confidence and completely relevant, conclusions related to his behavior can be made.

Through the literature some other issues related to values are opened and reviewed, but given the nature of this paper, only the issue of their classification is briefly mentioned. Regarding this, it can be noticed that the authors make the classification through some common hierarchical structures, which may not always correspond with everyone’s individual hierarchy, which of course, is certainly determined by and depends on the levels of personal development of the individuals.

Usually, in most literature sources that address this issue, it is the author Rokeach. Namely, his so-called differentiation on terminal and instrumental values is widely accepted, as well his definition that the values are “cognitive representations of the motives” (Kolevski & Kotevska, 1992, p. 331).

Methodological Approach and Variables

From the methodological point of view, it is about descriptive analysis directed toward determining the outgoing conclusions regarding the research phenomenon, which later would enable establishing criteria for use of the scale—separately or together with other similar instruments intended to benefit researchers and practitioners in various stages of the process treatment of human resources in organizations.

Also, the intention is this paper to reach certain issues related with some other concepts in the field of the organizational behavior and organizational change, which are put in proportion with the respective concept that is researched in this paper, in order to develop more extensive research project related to the determination of the organizational culture of change.

From the research procedures, a scalar questionnaire is used: the scale for measuring individual values of the author Vid Pogacnik. The questionnaire, according to the remarks of the authors who have used it in Republic of Macedonia (Kolevski & Kotevska, 1992, p. 330), is based on the principles upon which some other scales for the same purpose are constructed, with a remark that the author tried and successfully overcame some of the methodological shortcomings of previous instruments. Namely, in the previous scales of similar type the individual values were mixed with the traits of temperament, with social and other values, while in the scale of Vid Pogacnik, after two broad processes of modification, exclusively individual values are placed (Kolevski & Kotevska, 1992, p. 332). The scale consists of 22 values and can be applied individually and in groups. In the original version, the values with their explanation are written on cards that are easier to manipulate with in terms of alignment in range—from the most preferred to the least preferred, on the paper map, after which the

choice made is recorded. Due to some objective, technical, and organizational reasons related with implementation of the field research, only written value lists accompanied by clear working instructions with designated place for ranking were used.

The population of the research embraces the territory of Southwest Macedonia, i.e., the municipalities that belong to the two from the eight statistical regions in Republic of Macedonia: (1) the Southwest statistical region comprising 13 municipalities; and (2) the Pelagonia statistical region comprising nine municipalities. The determination for this geographical location of the field research is due to the demographic and ethnic structure of the population, as well as, the presence of the two dominant subcultures in Republic of Macedonia (ethnic Macedonians, mainly Christians and the ethnic Albanians, mostly Muslims). This reason, according to the subject of the research, is surely indicative and relevant.

The research sample is comprised of 370 randomly chosen employees in administration (public, state, local, judicial, and other public institutions) in Southwest Macedonia, i.e., the municipalities of Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Resen, Kavadarci, Kichevo, Makedonski Brod, Krushevo, Demir Hisar, Novaci, Mogila, Krivogastani, and Dolneni. Thus, the sample belongs into the category random sample.

The obtained results, following the example of previous studies of the same author and of the researchers in the Republic of Macedonia, primarily were analyzed in terms of several variables: gender, age, education, and job position, in order to examine the relationship of each of the values with the mentioned variables. Thus, the values of the group of 136 men were compared to 234 women; group of 80 employees with high school education, were compared with 39 with higher and 250 with university/postgraduate education. Then, 85 respondents from the age group "up to 35 years old", were compared with 108 respondents from the group aged "36-45", 122 respondents from the group aged "46-55", and 55 respondents of the group aged "over 55 years", and at the end the three groups according to the job position: 35 managers, 78 advisors, and 257 referents and others were compared.

From the procedures for statistical analysis and in order to determine the significance of the differences of the groups and relationship of the variables, the median test was used which actually represented a non-parametric procedure that reduced to the chi-square test, which examined whether two or more samples belong to populations with the same median or not.

Results and Discussion

In general, taking into consideration the obtained data, summarized in Table 1, it can be concluded that there are a number of significant differences regarding the preference and range of certain values, considered individually by the specified variables. But, the differences are obvious if a comparative analysis with results from similar studies done in Republic of Macedonia is made (Kolevski & Kotevska, 1992).

Namely, although the so-called family-oriented values (children, understanding with the partner, and understanding with the parents) are still at the top of the value scale, but unlike the results in the mentioned paper 20 years ago, there is significant offset especially in the value "understanding with the partner" whose medians, in the various groups of participants, are from the usual values 4-5, now they are mostly in the levels of 7-9. Also, generally speaking, the value "religion" even now, is still ranked low, but what is important is that here also exists a visible shift in the range from the usual $Me = 21-22$ to come down even on the 10th place in some respondents.

From the other values which in the mentioned research are being pointed as particularly significant, the

value “occupation” is separated, in order to conclude that in terms of its rank and place, there are no perceptible changes among different groups of respondents (rank around 10).

Table 1

Medians of the Results of the Administration Employees on a Scale of Values and Obtained Values on Chi-square Test, According to the Variables: Gender, Education, Age, and Working Position

Value	Variable															
	Gender			Education				Age					Job position			
	Male N = 136	Female N = 234	X ²	High school N = 80	Higher N = 39	University N = 250	X ²	To 35 N = 85	36-45 N = 108	46-55 N = 122	Over 55 N = 55	X ²	Managers N = 35	Advisors N = 78	References N = 257	X ²
Children	4	3	1.79	4	4	3	2.16	4	3	3	4	1.68	2	3	4	8.40*
Love	7	7	0.29	8	10	6	9.91**	6	7	8	7	3.85	7	8.5	7	1.16
Understanding with the partner	7	7	0.06	6.5	8	7	0.49	7	7	6	8	2.22	9	6	7	2.17
Freedom	8	8	0.11	8	9	7	3.67	8	8	8	8	0.67	7	7	8	0.23
Understanding with the parents	9	8	0.19	10	8	8	1.77	8	9	9	8	2.30	7	9	9	0.31
Personal fulfillment	11	8	6.36*	11	10	9	4.93	9	9	9.5	7	2.34	10	8	9	1.50
Personal confidence	9	7.5	1.26	9	10	8	1.84	8	9	9	6	3.98	11	6.5	8	6.12*
Wisdom	9.5	10	0.31	10.5	13	9	2.56	11	11	9	8	5.25	12	7	10	5.47
Occupation	10.5	10	0.63	10	11	10	0.27	12	10	9	10	7.73	9	8	11	9.27**
True friendship	11	10	1.14	11.5	11	10	1.22	10	10	11	10	1.11	10	10	11	4.89
Respect of social rules	12	13	0.12	12.5	12	12.5	0.02	13	12	13	11	6.04	12	12	13	0.07
Comfortable life	12	13	0.19	11	12	13	5.88	12	13	13	12	0.48	12	13	12	5.29
Social reputation	12	13	0.48	14	12	12	2.42	12	12	13.5	14	9.79*	12	12	13	1.09
Social affiliation	13.5	13	0.16	15	12	13	7.96*	14	12	13	14	3.43	14	13	13	0.64
Supply of food and drink	13	13	0.06	13	14	13	0.15	12	14	12.5	14	1.14	13	14	13	1.11
Creative experiences	13	13	0.08	13	11	12	0.92	13	13	13	10	1.13	13	11	13	0.23
Property	13	14	1.55	11	11	14	1.80	13	14	12	15	3.07	11	14	14	0.01
Rest	14	15	0.05	12.5	15	15	6.25*	13	14	15	16	4.27	16	15	14	1.55
New experiences	13	15	1.81	13	12	15	6.94*	14	15	15	14	1.46	16	15	14	1.92
Power	16	15	0.01	15	15	16	2.16	16	16	15	17	1.60	16	15	16	0.99
World of beauty	16	16	0.01	15	12	16	7.49*	18	16	16	15	2.38	16	16.5	16	1.64
Religion	17.5	14	2.78	12.5	19	17	6.19*	10	14.5	19.5	19	12.82**	14	18	16	1.35

Notes. * Significant at level 0.05; ** Significant at level 0.01; † High—to significant level.

In this part, it is worthy to point out the existence of differences in the positions with statistically significant differences—before and now, analyzed through the specified variables. The comparison starts with the variable Gender. The comparative analysis clearly indicates that if 20 years ago women more than men preferred the values “children” and “power”, while men preferred the value “true friendship”, today that situation is completely changed. Namely, the only statistically significant difference between the genders is noticed in the position of “personal fulfillment”, which as a value is more preferred by women ($X^2 = 6.36$), significant at level 0.05. How these changes could be explained? Certainly when it comes to the lost significant difference in terms of the value “children” for which it is stated that both genders still appreciate the highest, it

can be concluded that surely the “care for children” rightly became a shared value of both genders, as that “true friendship” is not something that nowadays is typical and as a lifestyle is cherished more by the men. In fact, for the both statements, there are daily evidences that are easily seen in the practice of the modern life. But what about the value of “personal fulfillment” toward which women tend more nowadays? It may be included in so-called personal values. But can it be claimed that it refers to some kind of “deprivation”? Probably yes! Because the comparative analysis does not point out any change, or existence of a trend of increasing preference toward personal, at the expense of other groups of values—family and material that are within the previous rankings.

Regarding the variable Education, the situation is the following. Namely, from Table 1 it can be clearly distinguished the positions of statistically significant differences related to the values: love, social affiliation, rest, new experiences, world of beauty, and religion. The values “religion” ($X^2 = 6.19^*$), “world of beauty” ($X^2 = 7.49^*$), “rest” ($X^2 = 6.25^*$), and “new experiences” ($X^2 = 6.94^*$), as values for which there is greater preference, generally from people with lower education level, as opposed to “love” ($X^2 = 9.91^{**}$) and “social affiliation” ($X^2 = 7.96^*$) for which, as values, it is obvious that are more preferred by people with higher university education than those with secondary and college. Certainly, the data obtained in large measure are expected and easy to predict by the fact that the level of education is in certain proportional relationship with some other variables, which confirms the already established statements and attitudes related to education, social affiliation, and workplace.

The variable Age seems to give very indicative, although not unexpected results. Here those positions are mentioned where there is a statistically significant difference, but it is interesting to emphasize the positions where there is high-close to a significant difference. Certainly, in this section as the most important value seems to be the “religion” ($X^2 = 12.82^{**}$) for which there is almost rectilinear movement in the ranks, through the specified age periods, starting from the youngest age group to 35 years old, where the range-median is $Me = 10$, until the oldest age group—over 55 years old, where the range-median is $Me = 19$. Understandably, this is fully in accordance with the social changes and trends related to the attitude toward religion, tradition, etc. The fact stated by many individuals, but which is visible that is happening in the temples, validates this data. Furthermore, statistically significant difference is noticed at the position “social reputation” ($X^2 = 9.79^*$) with the same straightforward movement of the range, starting with the youngest age group where $Me = 12$ to $Me = 14$ in the older age group. Of course, given the core of the value “reputation”, it is understandable the tendency to be more preferred by the respondents from the younger age group, because this value is actually built and acquired in the youth. Regarding this variable, those values are pointed out in which are noticed high-close to significant differences. These are the positions with the values “occupation” ($X^2 = 7.73$) and “respect for social rules” ($X^2 = 6.04$) where in the first case the difference is in favor of the age group 46-55 years, where the range $Me = 9$, unlike the others, especially the youngest age group to 35 years, where the range is $Me = 12$. Of course, this can be easily related with the existing theoretical periods of professional development, which largely overlap with the age groups and speak about specific characteristics in terms of occupation-profession, which are different for different age groups, from inconsistency, toward maintenance and stabilization. Regarding the value of “respect for social rules”, it can be said that it is more preferred by the adults.

Finally, the variable Job Position gave statistically significant differences in the positions—values

“children” ($X^2 = 8.40^*$) and “occupation” ($X^2 = 9.27^{**}$) in favor of the group with a higher job position in the hierarchy. In the value of “personal confidence” ($X^2 = 6.12^*$), it can be noticed that the individuals from the middle hierarchical level prefer it more—the median value $Me = 6.5$.

Conclusions

Certainly, keeping in mind the data and what is notable from them, it can be said that the situation with the individual preferentiality toward specified values, generally speaking, reflects many of the conditions and trends which in the transitional society are clearly visible or felt.

This analysis of the system of individual values among the employees in public administration largely confirms that it is almost completely in accordance with what means a social trend and condition and as such is equally characteristic and present in members of all strata, commercial and non-commercial sectors in Republic of Macedonia and at least here—in terms of individual values, there is not a specific and significant difference in the employees in this system, which would indicate certain separateness and uniqueness. Probably, the fact of already the established multiparty system, wandering in the search for the lost ideology and the distorted positions inside the parties, and politicization of all strata of society and multiple changes of government, largely have led to it.

Certainly, from the special analysis of the positioning of certain values more detailed observations are possible, in terms what are the values of the leaders-managers, of the youth, of those who are more educated and the question is: Can this knowledge be used toward pointing out some determinants that affect the success in the work, especially when conducting the changes?

However, achieving that goal: “detection of the key factors of some organizational culture of change” and the intention of this paper seems to imply and necessarily requires introduction of some other variables in the research (attitude towards change, attitude towards risk taking, attitude towards entrepreneurship, quality of leadership, etc.). What was assumed is related with the values of “creative accomplishments”, “new experiences”, and “personal achievements” (all related with a tendency towards change, desire for the new, delight from the different, etc.) which may be distinctive and significantly distinguish the younger, the more educated, or the managers. Unfortunately, such indicators were not obtained. Except, of course, the fact that was highlighted and discussed regarding the variable “gender”, where women showed significantly more tendency toward “personal fulfillment” than men, which essentially means a tendency toward self-actualization and personal development and as such, quite certainly could be named as more adequate and more useful leaders, i.e., main determinants of the eventual nuclei of teams for changes.

Finally, it can be concluded that there are different ideologies and value systems, and it is quite normal and real. But, once more it can be emphasized that what broadly represents and creates problems are the inadequate value orientations of individuals in specific social systems whose presence can be testified. The feelings of lost, outdated, inappropriateness, incoherence, and inadequacy as an expression of a general mishandling with the situation which can be routinely named as discontinuity of the living, or transitional crisis, need to be taken more seriously. The values of the past system represent certain brake in terms of the actual living. Hence, it is logical to pursue new values which should be established systematically and forced in the system of the overall social life. The processes of socialization should breathe fully in accordance with the new era. Guidelines and models exist and they represent the real targets which should be consistently monitored and walked.

Given the ethnocentricity of the organizational culture theories in Republic of Macedonia is present the

fact that the prescriptive managerial literature should be taken with certain reserve, and the research practice should focus more on the descriptive, rather than the prescriptive researches, which emphasize the explanation of what managers are working, why they are working, and which are the consequences from each of the possible actions, but with a point that the managers themselves are the responsible subjects who should made the conclusions for what they should do.

In that context, this research had an aim to represent a real picture of the delicate area of the individual values in the population—employed in the public sector. In that attempt, the identified values and shifts from the 1990s till nowadays can be interpreted in different ways, where the neutral authorial notes are only one of the possible ones.

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