

## VALUE ORIENTATION VERSUS BEHAVIOR AT ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Diana ANTOCI**, dr., associate professor

Chair Psychopedagogy and Preschool Education

Tiraspol State University

**Rezumat.** Examinarea variilor poziții teoretico-științifice și exprimarea celor personale cu referire la manifestările comoportamentale și orientărilor de valoare care constituie componentele esențiale de conținut ale personalității și exprimă poziția personalității față de realitate în perioada de adolescență și tinerețe constituie actualitatea studiului întreprins. Comportamentul este modul de exprimare a valorilor prin anumite acțiuni în situații concrete și constituie ansamblul reacțiilor expuse în consecința impactului factorilor interni și cei de mediu. Studiul experimental desfășurat în vederea determinării raportului dintre orientări de valoare și comportamentul în perioada adolescenței și tinereții a permis stabilirea relațiilor bilaterale pozitive semnificative pozitive și negative, care, prin urmare, pot constitui baza în abordarea subiecților și elaborarea programelor pentru soluționarea unor probleme în procesul instructiv-educativ.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** valoare, orientare de valoare, comportament, adolescență, tinerețe.

**Abstract.** The examination of various theoretical scientific positions and the expression of personal ones concerning behavioral manifestations and value orientations that form essential content components of personality and show the current position of personality towards reality during adolescence and youth period constitute the actuality of the study undertaken. Behavior is the way of expressing values through certain actions in concrete situations and represents the set of reactions exposed as a result of the impact of internal and environmental factors. The experimental study conducted to determine the relationship between value orientations and behavior during adolescence and youth has allowed the establishment of significant positive and negative bilateral relations, which, therefore, can be the basis for the subject' approach and programs' elaboration of for solving problems in learning and educational process.

**Key-words:** value, value orientation, behaviour, adolescence, youth.

**Introduction.** Researching the value orientations, in which the 'value' is in the top of construction, through various manifestations of the human being, is a very current and necessary direction for our society. In the last decade we observe multiple and wide transformations produced at political, economic, cultural, social level, including public and private institutions within the educational system. These metamorphoses presuppose the existence of fundamental changes at the quantitative and qualitative level, which is reflected in all areas of social life. The educational ideal nominated in the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova consists in the formation of integral personality in the context of national and universal values. At the same time, the main purpose of education consists in "formation and development of a system of competences that includes knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values that allow active participation of individual in social and economic life" [5]. Observations fulfilled regarding scientists' findings about decisive factors in shaping values during adolescence and youth (such as: the presence or absence of ideology, fixation

or inaccuracy of beliefs, defining or instability of doctrines and theories, observance or refusal of norms, internalization or rejection of values, rules, ethical codes, etc.) through various behavioral manifestations found contradictions, unclears and determined the actuality of the study undertaken.

**Positions regarding value orientation.** Each value occupies a certain stage of a hierarchy: each value has a certain relative significance within a gradual system, and this acquisition constitutes a date of consciousness, before and outside even any comparison. T.Vianu [as cited in 2] notes that the comparison between values is not compulsory for the detection of their higher or lower character, but it is not impossible and it is necessary to establish not only the step of each value, but their relative and the exact sequence of these steps.

C.Torelli & A.Kaikati studied values as predictors of judgment and behavior, and they considered values as motivational constructs that can define a situation (for example, one in which utility is involved), determine goals (for example, improve the well-being of others) and guide actions (e.g. , the help of a friend to move to a certain point) [8].

D. Antoci defines *value orientation* as a process of monitoring by a value or by set of values of the assembly of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors that are in hierarchical interrelation within the personality system. Whole unitary that combines correlation of hierarchically placed values according to the preferences and current situations of personality constitutes a *system of values*, which is in continuously static changing for a certain period (relatively short) of subject's life and dynamic development over a longer period of life with reaching the points of transcendence [3].

The scheme of value formation represents a continuous process, which initiates through insight and manifests itself by externalizing the behaviors, gradually involving the cognitive, affective, volitional-motivational sphere of the subject, therefore, forming attitudes and beliefs through which the corresponding value takes shape. The shaped values are organized in value system, they are developed in perpetuity, they interact with values and condition other values. The succession of these operations produces transformations in the personality system and constitutes the *mechanism of value formation*.

Personality's system of values is formed in the social-cultural-historical environment. It is closely related to the particularities of personality, to the society of which the subject belongs. The formation of values is long term process. The values are gradually outlined by passing the spiral path and are organized hierarchically in the value system establishing certain connections between them and being in a connection of different intensity with other components of the personality which, therefore, form a value or values orientation.

**Scientific researches regarding behaviour.** Any behavior externalized by the human being is the result of expressing a position, visions, opinion, reaction, etc. which occurs during different age periods. The way of manifesting the behaviors is based on several factors, principles, acquisitions and can be interpreted from various perspectives.

Gavreliuc A. examines prosocial behavior and describes it as a species of behavior that has positive social consequences and contributes to promoting the good of the "other", without being explicitly conditioned by remuneration or reward. Therefore, charity, trust, altruism, self-renunciation, helping those in need are forms of positive openness towards those with whom we interact. The author notes the triggering of the generous mechanism of interpersonal reporting from negatively charged events, in which one observes rather the non-involvement in a case-limit in which the life of the other is endangered [6, pp.126-127].

Gavreliuc A. analyzed the research conducted by Latane & Darley (1970), who tried to identify which personality traits are potential predictors of prosocial behavior, and observed that the phenomenon of bystander effect is transversal to personality, with virtually no personality variable predicting a subject more or less responsible in the given anti-normative situation, single decisive element being the particularity of situation (it is alone or there are several witnesses) and cognitive processing (in terms of "it is pointless for me to take care of things"). This psychosocial phenomenon has been studied for a long time from the perspective of behavioral manifestations of personality. Gavreliuc A. based on research by scholars (Manning, Levine & Collins (2007); Vyse, 2016; Fisher et al. (2011); Plotner, Over, Carpenter & Tomasello (2015); Thornas, De, DeScioli & Pinker (2016)) and on meta-analyses conducted by them concludes that "the situation can often play a much stronger role in producing the behaviors of subjects than personality factors, a more influential role than we are willing to accept in common thinking when we try to decode an interaction unfolding, but contextual data neglecting can have tragic consequences" [6, pp.127-129].

Often, complementary to the phenomenon of "responsibility diffusion" occurs, and what social psychologists call pluralistic ignorance: a mechanism of self-evaluation of the situation in which the subject in question lives with the conviction that emotions and cognitions they experience in a private setting are different from the others with whom s/he shares a particular social context, although their behaviors are identical with his/her. In the experimental model of B. Latane and J. Darlev [as cited in 6, pp.129-130], the subjects appreciate subjectively that if "so many others" do not intervene in the created crisis situation, it means that the state of "emergency" does not exist, so they remain mere spectators. This is about "false consensus", as with respective bias [Ross, Green & House (1977), as cited in 6], based on social comparison, but in the version of adopting a behavior that is often anti-normative, with unfortunate consequences, in which the responsible assumption, in agreement a set of non-negotiable personal values, would have produced much more beneficial social effects.

The research carried out indicates on the fact that in the way of manifesting behavior it has importance: personal experience, subject's mentality formed within a socio-cultural environment, culture, and the particularities of social environment.

A. Bandura's position demonstrates that behavioral changes produced by classical conditioning or instrumental conditioning are not only associations of responses to stimuli, but they are cognitively mediated. According to E. Tolman, behavior uses environment as a tool for achieving the purpose, and this aspect also reveals a cognitive dimension of behavior [as cited in 9, pp.43-44]. The theory developed by A. Bandura (Social foundation of thought and action: a social cognitive theory) focuses on social framework where learning takes place and on symbolic and self-regulating processes by which the subject represents events, analyzes them, assigns meanings to them and then regulates one's own behavior [9, pp.45-47].

The modalities of formation and manifestation of behavior are examined by A. Bandura through the prism of mutual determinism, which consists of two constituent parts of a system of interactive influences: external determinants of behavior (rewards and punishments) and internal determinants (beliefs, thoughts, expectations), which has an impact on the behavior as well as on other elements of the whole personality system. In Bandura's vision, the acquisition of new behaviors takes place within an interaction between the environment and the individual characteristics of the personality [as cited in 9]. The behavior is influenced by the person's attitudes, beliefs, history of previous primary reinforcements, approval / disapproval, but also environmental stimuli. At the same time, a behavior once produced can cause changes in the environment, as well as aspects of the personality can be influenced by the action of the environment.

The process of learning and promoting a behavior is a long one from an ontogenetic perspective and can be interpreted through the social-cognitive theory of A. Bandura. The scientist emphasized the importance of the evolution of cognitive psychological processes in the subjects, the individual psychological and bio-constitutional particularities, the motivational sphere. Behavior externalizing is in close relation with the comparative evaluation of the results obtained according to personal expectations and reactions upon the external environment; therefore, it offers the degree of significance to behavioral model realized for its own personality integrating these into the structural components of personality system.

**Value versus behaviour.** The personality value system comprises a varied number of values. Their hierarchical distribution differs from one personality to another. The structuring is carried out according to the preferences and priorities of subject and established external situations. Behavioral manifestations are essential cues that reflect the internal position of subject regarding the current circumstances.

Bardi A. & Schwartz Sh. through the researches they have tried to determine if the whole range of values is in relation to common behaviors, to establish the degree and the meanings of the fixed relationships. Scientists have found that the values of stimulation and tradition are strongly related to the behaviors they express; the values of hedonism, power, universalism and self-direction are moderately correlated; and the values of security,

compliance, achievement and goodwill are only marginally interrelated. The relations established between value-behavior are caused by normative pressures to manifest certain behaviors, which mean that the values motivate the behavior, but the relation between values and behaviors is partially influenced by norms. Bardi A. & Schwartz Sh. concluded that relationships between behaviors, between values and in common between values and behavior have a similar structure [4].

For the research in question, the position of the researchers (Bardi A. & Schwartz Sh.) regarding the excessive behavior, which is a very important potential consequence of the values and in their view, deserves extensive research. The exception is the cases where there is a clear link between values and behavior, and there is no point in establishing and changing values in daily behaviors, such as in education and in media. Schwartz believes that previous research does not indicate the role of values in guiding behavior.

The interpretation offered by Allport, Rokeach focuses on the guiding by values of behaviors [as cited in 2]; Kristiansen & Hotte, McClelland believes that values guide behavior only rarely and not for most people (attach 4); the explanation of the content of values can be through sets of prosocial, religious behaviors, etc. (Bond & Chi, Schwartz & Huisman etc.) [as cited in 4; as cited in 6].

Conducting a broad analysis of multiple researches conducted over the past decade with reference to values, attitudes, behavior Fisher concludes that the causal relationship between values and behavior may change along the developmental trajectory. The scientist considers that, initially, the behaviors observed by the self could be taken as inputs to build a hierarchy of conscious values. This hierarchy will be updated and strengthened with the reflection of daily behavioral choices. Once this hierarchy of values is formed and integrated into a coherent self, values can also begin to influence long-term behavioral choices, either by seeking out social situations that allow for easier introduction of values, in accordance with the hierarchy of personal values, either through deliberate long-term elections. Fisher based on the examination of DeYoung's (2014) investigative data notes that both behaviors and values are related to the same neurophysiological and neurobiological systems [7]. The causal order is related to the differential awareness of values (potentially in extended periods of deliberation and reflection on the decisions that are central to oneself). If behaviors are more automated, values are more secondary. In this case, the post-hoc assessments of values according to behavioral choices reflect either a) the common neurobiological organization of behavioral systems and values or b) the need for individuals to present consistent narratives about themselves (self-representation biases discussed above) [7].

C.Torelli & A.Kaikati support the idea that the power of value-behavior relationship is affected by the accessibility of cognitive operations or mentalities, which facilitate (or affect) the definition of a situation in terms of relevant values (for example, one in which social justice is involved). Scientists believe that the accessibility of cognitive operations

that facilitate the definition or construction of a situation in terms of relevant values leads to judgments and behaviors congruent with value [8].

The personality values orientations include different contents and have various forms of manifestation from one case to another, from one situation to another, resulting from the internal position of the subject.

**Experimental research.** *The purpose of research:* determination of manifestation and relationship particularities of value orientations and behaviors at adolescence and youth ages.

*Methodology:* the following tools were used in the experiment to diagnose behaviours – “Behavior in conflict situations” by Thomas-Kilmann, and value orientations – the technique of identifying value orientations.

The research was undertaken in April-May, 2019, in frame of general and higher education institutions at the north, central, and south part of the Republic of Moldova. In the investigation 374 adolescents and young people between the ages of 14/15-18/19 and 20-35 years were involved. The pupils with the age of 19 years was included in adolescence period because major of subjects (85%) were learning at school at the moment when experiment was carrying out.

**Results and discussions.** In order to achieve the purpose of the research, one of the objectives was to study the behaviors of adolescents and young people. Applying the diagnostic tool elaborated by Thomas-Kilmann allows us to analyze specific of behaviors manifestations in conflict situations at adolescence and youth ages.

Following the application of the test by Thomas-Kilmann, we were able to determine the possible behavioral manifestations in solving various conflict situations. The results are presented in table no.1.

**Table 1. Average indices of behavioral manifestations of adolescents in conflict situations by Thomas-Kilmann (points)**

| Age, years     | Confrontation | Collaboration | Compromise  | Avoidance   | Accommodation |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>15</b>      | 6,28          | 4,91          | 6,02        | 5,98        | 6,81          |
| <b>16</b>      | 6,42          | 5,05          | 6,36        | 5,77        | 6,4           |
| <b>17</b>      | 6,78          | 5,2           | 5,51        | 5,85        | 6,66          |
| <b>18</b>      | 6,09          | 5,25          | 6,66        | 5,74        | 6,26          |
| <b>19</b>      | 5,71          | 5,95          | 6,63        | 5,66        | 6,05          |
| <b>Average</b> | <b>6,26</b>   | <b>5,27</b>   | <b>6,24</b> | <b>5,80</b> | <b>6,44</b>   |

The analysis of the exposed data allows us to highlight the highest average point during adolescence and this is accommodation (6.44p.), which means that for a teenager interpersonal relationships are very important while their own goals are less important. At the age of 15, the adolescent wishes to be accepted by the social environment of which he is a part and tends to be pleasant, in order to achieve harmony he can contradict his personal positions without affecting the relations in the environment of which he belongs, properly, the average of accommodations constitutes 6.81 points.

The following average index of the decreasing order of the data is found in the confrontation (6.26p.), which denotes that adolescents try to dominate their opponents by making them accept their solution in case of conflict. Their personal goals are dominant in relation to interpersonal relationships in the group, being sacrificed easily. The goals are placed at the forefront and achieved at any price. The peak point of confrontation is highlighted at the age of 17 (6.78p.) and gradually decreases to 19 years (5.71p.) towards the beginning of youth.

The lowest average indices are observed in collaboration (5.27p.), which indicates that adolescents do not attach importance to personal goals and relationships with others, conflicts arising need not be resolved and, accordingly, to seek pleasant solutions for personal interests as well as others. The lowest indices (4.91p.) for the examined variable are found at the age of 14-15 years, and the highest indices of collaboration (5.95p.) are reached at the age of 19 years.

The behaviors shown in conflict resolution were also studied at a young age. The data obtained are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Average indices of behavioral manifestations in conflict situations of young people by Thomas-Kilmann (points)**

| Age, years     | Confrontation | Collaboration | Compromise  | Avoidance   | Accommodation |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 20             | 5,48          | 5,31          | 13,14       | 5,9         | 6,62          |
| 21             | 4,94          | 5,38          | 7,25        | 7,25        | 6,06          |
| 22             | 5,31          | 5,69          | 7,69        | 5,85        | 5,46          |
| 23             | 4,4           | 5,6           | 8,8         | 5,8         | 5,4           |
| 24             | 4             | 5,7           | 7,8         | 4,6         | 7,9           |
| 25-35          | 5,53          | 5,13          | 7,6         | 5,07        | 6,53          |
| <b>Average</b> | <b>4,94</b>   | <b>5,47</b>   | <b>8,71</b> | <b>5,75</b> | <b>6,33</b>   |

Careful examination of the results of the young age subjects allows us to highlight the highest average indices for the age studied at the compromise variable (8.71p.) which means that the subjects are inherited not only by their own personality, but also by establishing relationships with others, and this urges them to resort to compromises, convictions so that each party involved wins something. The young people evaluate the crisis situations well, in order to overcome them; they can temporarily give up their personal goals. The highest compromise indices are obtained at the age of 20 (13.14p.). The stability in the manifestations of the compromise behavior is observed from 24 years (7.8p.) To 35 years (7.6p.).

The results almost identical to the average level are found in avoidance (5.75p.) and collaboration (5.47p.), the last one means that conflict situations are interpreted as problems that need to be resolved, for this purpose young people are trying to find winning solutions for both sides. The solution found can improve relationships by reducing the tension between two people or groups. Behavioral manifestations of collaboration in conflict situations will not cease for young people until there is a solution that both parties are satisfied with. The highest collaboration rate is at the age of 22 (5.69p.).

Avoidance behavior indicates that young people sometimes resort to conflict zones and avoid people who create or maintain conflict states, which can be explained by insufficient experience and helplessness and consequently consider that it is better to retire than to enter conflict. The highest avoidance rate is at the age of 21 (7.25p.).

Figure 1 shows the average indices of behavioral manifestations in conflict situations of adolescents and young people.

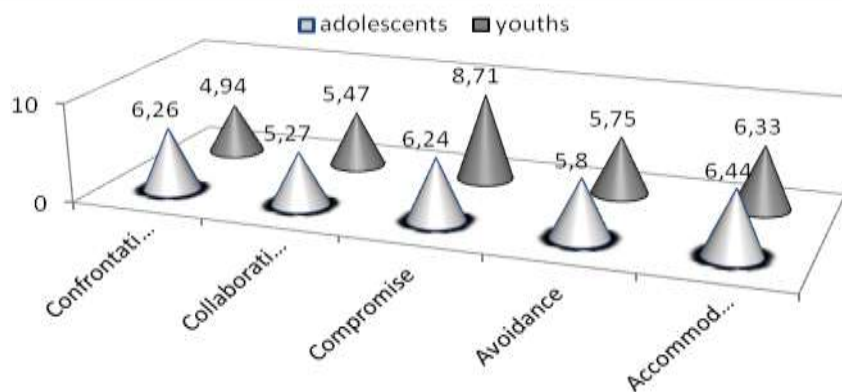


Figure 1. Average comparative indices regarding adolescents and youth behavior by Thomas-Kilmann (points)

The comparative analysis of the data allows us to find the decrease of the behavioral manifestations of confrontation towards the age of the youth (4.94p.) and increasing of the behaviors of copromis in the youth (8.71p.). At the same time, there is a stability in maintaining the avoidance behavior in adolescence and youth (5.8p and 5.75p). Average level indices are established for collaboration (5.47p.) and avoidance (5.75p.) behaviors.

One of the tools applied was the technique of identifying the value orientations. From the 37 values offered, the subjects determined the significant hierarchical order of their values and contents existing in reality in frame of their personality. The results are shown in figure 2.

Examining the data obtained from the study of the value orientations in adolescents and young people allows us to carry out the comparative analysis of the results and to highlight the values that are in relative stability throughout the studied age period. Of the highlights are: *achievement* (0.87p and 0.88p), *harmony* (0.8p and 0.81p), *free time* (0.78p), *learning* (0.78p and 0.79p), *creativity* (0.72p.), *advancing* (0.76p. and 0.75p.), *prosperity* (0.65p. and 0.64p.).

At the same time, we observe positive changes with an increasing tendency of some values towards the age of youth, such as the significance of *health* (from 0.76p. to 0.93p.), *family happiness* (from 0.83p. to 0.88p. .), *respect* (from 0.75p to 0.81p), *autonomy* (from 0.69p to 0.74p).



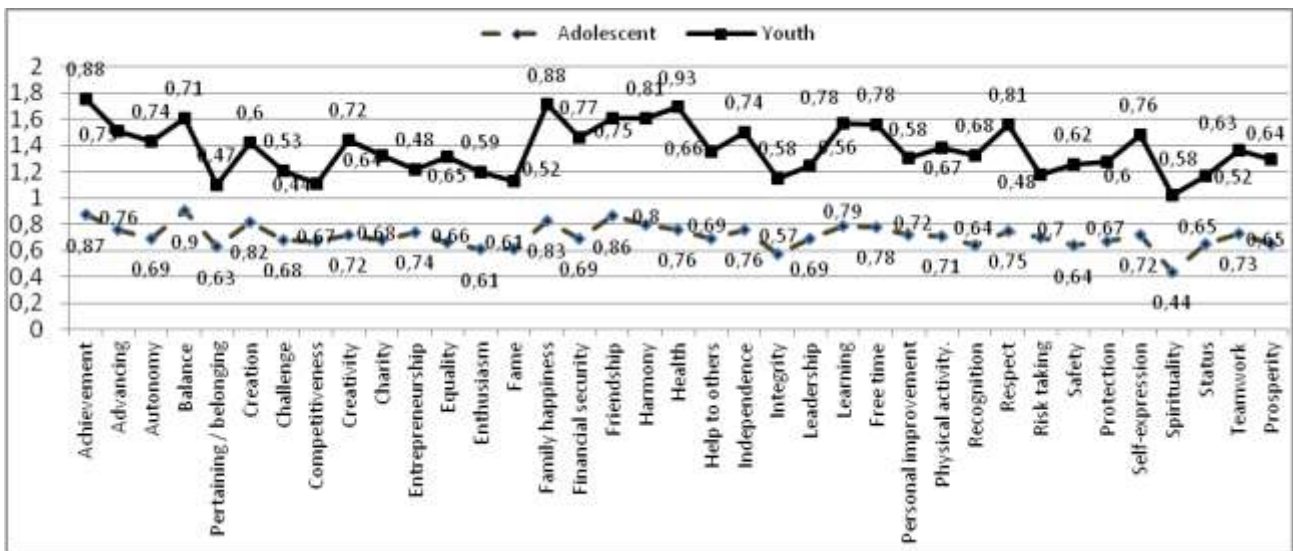


Figure 2. Average indices of value orientations of adolescents and young people according to Identification of Value Orientation Instrument

As with the increase of some values, we also found the decrease of others towards the age of young people, for example, the *belonging* decreased from 0.63p. up to 0.47p., *competitiveness* (from 0.67p. to 0.44p.), *personal improvement* decreases from 0.72p. to 0.58p., *teamwork* is also less priced (decreases from 0.73p to 0.52p).

According to the purpose of the present research, besides determining the particularities of the manifestation of behaviors in conflict situations and values, we intend to establish the specificity of relationship between studied variables. For determining the specific of relationship we applied the Bravais-Pearson statistical test using the statistical program SPSS.

Table 3 presents the significant relationships of strong and average intensity established between behavioral manifestations in conflict situations and value orientations for adolescents and young people throughout the sample.

The analysis of the correlation coefficients obtained allows us to highlight the multiple significant relationship between such behavioral manifestations as confrontation and compromise. The significant positive relationship of average and high intensity was established between confrontation and competitiveness, entrepreneurship, leadership, recognition, teamwork. Equally significant positive correlation was obtained between avoidance and health.

**Table 3. Correlation coefficients between behavioral manifestations in conflict situations and value orientations in adolescents and young people (by Pearson)**

| Behaviors \ Values      | Confrontation    | Collaboration | Compromise        | Avoidance | Accommodation |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|
| <b>Challenge</b>        | -                | -             | ** -,134, p=0,010 | -         | -             |
| <b>Competitiveness</b>  | ** ,170, p=0,001 | -             | ** -,152, p=0,003 | -         | -             |
| <b>Entrepreneurship</b> | * ,122, p=0,019  | -             | ** -,175, p=0,001 | -         | -             |

|                             |                     |                     |                      |                    |                    |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Fame</b>                 | -                   | -                   | ** -,142,<br>p=0,006 | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Health</b>               | -                   | * -,117,<br>p=0,025 | -                    | * ,115,<br>p=0,027 | -                  |
| <b>Leadership</b>           | ** ,141,<br>p=0,007 | -                   | *-,127,<br>p=0,014   | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Personal improvement</b> | -                   | -                   | *-,115,<br>p=0,028   | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Recognition</b>          | * ,119,<br>p=0,022  | -                   | -                    | -                  | *-,113,<br>p=0,029 |
| <b>Risk taking</b>          | -                   | -                   | *-,113,<br>p=0,030   | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Teamwork</b>             | * ,126,<br>p=0,015  | -                   | *-,127,<br>p=0,015   | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Prosperity</b>           | -                   | -                   | -                    | -                  | *-,109,<br>p=0,036 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Significant negative correlation of medium and high intensity was determined between collaboration and health; between compromise and: challenge of competitiveness, entrepreneurship, fame, leadership, personal improvement, risk taking, teamwork. Accommodation is significantly negatively correlated with recognition and prosperity.

For the other variables of the behavior and the value orientations, the insignificant correlation coefficients were obtained, which were not presented in the table above and they are not so important to be examined.

**Conclusions.** The study of values within the becoming personality is one of the primary objectives for the educational system stipulated also in the educational policy documents. The analysis of the scientific literature, observations, discussions and research carried out, allow us to state: the confusion and incorrect use of the concepts ‘value’, ‘value orientation’, ‘value system’; lack / insufficiency of knowledge necessary in the educational process for developing values in frame of subjects of different ages.

In recent decades, little attention has been paid to researching the value orientations and behavioral manifestations of the becoming personality, in particular, determining the causal relationship between value and behavior..

The adolescence period cannot be characterized by the sustainable stability of the behavioral manifestations in conflict situations, changing from one age to another (compromise, avoidance and collaboration behaviors). In the youth, the behavioral manifestations in conflict situations are balanced based on the progress of the psychic processes, accumulated experiences, and personal determination of persons, such components can be highlighted as accommodation and compromise.

Results obtained in the report “value orientations – behavior” in adolescent subjects and young people allow us to explain a significant inverse correlation of average intensity between collaboration and health: the indexes for collaboration being higher after points awarded in adolescence and lower for young people, health being less estimated in

adolescence compared to youth. Significant positive correlation of average intensity between avoidance and health is explained by the fact that avoiding the conflicting situations ensures health. Similarly, based on the results obtained in values orientation and behaviors, the behaviors of adolescents and young people can be correspondingly interpreted. Thus, behavioral manifestations are totally related to values and are an essential part of the value orientation.

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