

Scale-making for assessing the youth value system in the globalization era

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Abstract

The process and project of "globalization", which appeared after the 2nd World War in the most industrialized Western countries, have spread into the other industrialized countries and it is rapidly expanding across all over the world. This process and plan has shown itself as one of the most challenging issues of the past and present decade for all human cultures and is deeply influencing the value system and the identity of adolescents and youths in Iran and elsewhere.

The value system, or the desired and internal qualities within ones psychological structure, is the main layers of a person's personality and identity which forms the basis of his/her attitude system and behavior. Modern studies on the individuals' value systems are mostly conducted by the social and educational psychologists of the west countries and based by and large on the Anglo-American understanding of human life. These studies on value system have considered neither eastern philosophy of life nor the Islamic or Iranian culture into account and,

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therefore, we may not necessarily recognize them as a legitimate global value system. It is necessary, consequently, to investigate the quality of value system of Iranians (specifically high-school students) and inquire the influence of their attitudes toward "globalization" on their value system.

The theoretical basis of studying the value system of our adolescents and youths is to face the main values of Islamic-Iranian culture in opposition to their counter values to discover how much their value systems are in close proximity to their classical culture. On this basis, in the first part of our study entitled "Investigating the status of Iranian high-school & pre-university students' attitude toward globalization and its effect on their value system and their religious and national identity", we have applied psycho-educational assessment techniques and created an indigenous scale for assessing value system. The validation of our scale has been conducted by means of two procedures: investigating content validity of the scale by asking professionals to value the relevance of each and all 135 items; and conducting a pilot study on a sample of 568 high-school students of grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 and applying factor analysis to investigate the construct validity of the scale. Our validity justification studies showed that ten categories of individual values, family values, economic values, political values, social values, artistic values, scientific and theoretical values, religious identity values, national identity values, and worldviews (or globalization) values might be distinguished in our value system assessment scale.

Keywords: Value system, assessment of values, globalization, value-system profile, adolescents and youths

Introduction

The process of globalization, which has speeded up and expanded in domain, appeared from the late World War II period with various titles in the western industrial countries. This is such

that the issue has become one of the main human challenges from the 1990s, which has deeply influenced the people's identity and value system in non-western countries especially that of the adolescents and the youths. (Hall, 1999)

Scientific researches also confirm this fact. One of these researches is the one conducted in four rounds in years 1981, 1990, 1995, and 1999-2000 titled "World Values Surveys" that focused on investigating the peoples' values and beliefs in all residential world continents (which included 60 countries and consisted of 75 percent of the world population from different rich and poor societies, with different races, cultures, and civilizations). This research shows the great changes in the world population values. What is stated by such researches is that there exists a systematic revolution in the world population's values and beliefs and that the economical changes and industrial technologies have global impact, not to mention the role of dominant global media in distributing western economical, and cultural values in the world. (Inglehart, Ronald, 2000)

As Markoff (1998) says, globalization has not only caused revolutions in the meaning of national government and the method of management of countries, but it has also been dragged to revolution in the goals and plans and the method of management of structures such as that of the family and school. Henry, et. al. (2001), have spent time on reviewing the position of the Organization for Educational and Cultural Development (OECD) in "globalization" and international education policies. According to their researches, the advanced industrial countries and post/beyond nationalities organizations, whose full attention is on "globalization" and have an important role in the establishment of the main policies for management of the world issues believe that the countries' education system is of the most important rank. They pay attention to it and consider it the most important tool for aiding the carrying-out of international projects, and they speak of "globalized education" (Marginson, 1999; Fass, 2003). In other countries as well, there is generally an all-sided attention given to this issue and everyone is in quest of finding their suitable position in the modern world. (Gerle, et. al., 2000; and Ainger, 2001)

The fact is that in the current era, as the researches (Sweeting , 1996; Carnoy & Rhoten , 2002; Daun, 2002) show, many of the books and educational equipment in the world schools, libraries, mass media, and hundreds of millions of Internet sites are also distributing the post-national viewpoints among the children, youths, adolescents, youths, and other people of the world. In the same way, our students are seriously exposed to these viewpoints and enter and *have* entered the globalization process. In such conditions we should show enough sensitivity and concern about the Iranian adolescents' and youths' attitude toward the globalization phenomenon. We should prepare our education system and other cultural structures in our country for properly responding to this great global challenge.

Another fact is that the value-system has not stayed constant or equal through history, nor societies and different cultures, nor at individuals' view. The value system is also different from ideological points of view (Thomas, 2001). In the current age we are also faced with considerable differences in people's value system in different countries in the world (Hall, 1999; and Witte, 2000). These differences are studied based on assessment standards of value system in diverse cultures.

In their studies Chaney and Martin (2000) showed that peoples' values in different cultures are in some aspects equal, in some aspects contradicting, and generally different from each other. In these studies the common values among people in Germany, USA, UK, Japan, Arabic countries, France, Canada, and Mexico have been investigated. The studies show that the peoples' value system in these countries is in various forms facing the global impacts.

It is, therefore, essential to investigate the attitude of the Iranian adolescent and youth students toward the "globalization" phenomenon and its impact on their value-system and national identity. We should realize that each group of students has a different background in the fields of age, gender, education, and economical, social, cultural, and psychological situation as well.

We have different options for responding to the issue of globalization. One of these options is to leave ourselves to hands of

the roaring river of “globalization” with a passive manner (passive attitude or, in other words, surrendering). Our other option is to detach ourselves from the world and our worldwide relationships and turn to uselessly fighting (quarrelling attitude). The third option is both to position ourselves in a suitable and active manner in global relationships as well as to go the distance in the current age in playing our positive and effective role in worldwide relationships, while keeping our full integrity and independence in cultural and national characteristics (active and pluralist attitude).

In the related research to this article, we have tried to clarify this globalization and value attitudes of the youths and followed a certain goals. The main goal was to see the extent of impact resulted from such attitudes on Iranian adolescents’ and youths’ value system and their national identity. We have as well aimed to distinguish the variables and background elements among the different groups of adolescents and youth students in high schools that are the basis for such differences.

The Value-System Content for Scale-making

We consider the value system as the group of satisfactory and internal qualities in the individuals’ psychological structure. This value system can be considered the collection of most internal layers of personality and identity, which is the shaper of the foundations of the attitude and behavior system. Each of the values, which is consisted of different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, can be considered the shaper of a lifestyle, which has the most impact on the individual’s actions and reactions. In the psychological aspect, these values are the most important source of motivation and power for giving orientation and perception and recognition of self. In the social aspect it is a collection of beliefs, goals, and attitudes that the person gains in the process of development and acceptance of society. The individual adjusts himself/herself with the society's regulations and norms and finds adjustment (or satisfaction) in this way. (Lotfabadi, 2005)

Each of the values can be considered the individual's stable beliefs toward a special method for behaving or final goal in life, which in an individual or social viewpoint are preferable against another way of behavior or other goals in life. We can divide these values into three categories: Basic general values, Values that are aimed at a certain goal, and Instrumental values. The first type of values have more stability, can be relied on more, and have a collection of abstract characteristics (such as quest-for-knowledge, beauty, and friendship), which can be placed in the center of the value-system. These values are also effective on the other two types of values. Values that are aimed at a certain goal are the values that show the objective life desires (such as possessing a certain social position). The values of the third kind, or instrumental values, are values that are used for reaching those desired goals and positions (such as an educational degree). When we talk of value-system in this article, we are generally referring to values of the first type, meaning the structured and integrated basic general values.

Some sociologists such as Max Weber have identified a six-value of economical, political, scientific and theoretic, religious, artistic, and family system, which gives structure to life. These values are established based on attention priority into six fundamental values of wealth, organization and power, truth, holistic matters, beauty, and sincerity. This value classification is also introduced by the German philosopher named Edward Spranger in an article titled "Individual Types". Spranger believed that individuals' character should be identified through their value-system before anything else. (Zetterberg, 1997)

Psychologists such as Allport, Wernon, and Lindsey used Spranger's value classification later on in order to prepare the study of values. The test by Allport, et. al., which is used for evaluating the six motives or basic interests of individuals of 15 years of age and older, evaluates the relative power of each of the six individual's motives or main interests (theoretical, economical, artistic, social, political, and religious). There are also other tests such as Rokeach's Scale for Value Assessment (1976), McGowen's Value Scale (1998), and Inglehart's (1995) Scale for Value Assessment.

Through-out designing the “value system assessment scale” the main focus in our research has been to find out whether the value-system includes the same six values that Max Weber (and Spranger and Allport) offered or if a more complete value system can be offered that introduces the basic values available in the center of all beliefs, attitudes, and behavior system of youths and other individuals living the Iranian culture in the current age and globalization conditions. We have used this last viewpoint for discovering the value system. Our main assumption in setting the central values is that these values should include the main elements of beliefs and attitudes, be more stable and reliable, and have a collection of abstract characteristics that have a role in the emergence of various values both aiming at a certain goal as well as instrumental values.

In order to design the scale for assessment of value system, we have first investigated about the previous literature and research backgrounds in the works of philosophy and psychology as well as in the most important works of national classic and modern literature. This was, in order to have a more general relatively correct understanding of the subject. We have then summarized our understandings of concepts of psychology and sociology through specialized consulting with the experts and authorities in the mentioned fields. After conducting a pilot study we came to this conclusion that the youths and the people of Iran in general have a value system, which consists of a collection of ten values. These values are: individual values, family values, economical values, political values, social values, artistic values, scientific and theoretical values, religious values, national values, and global values.

These bipolar value topics (with either strength or weakness in value), which are the ones considered in our scale, are organized in specific activities in certain places. These places include the individual himself, the family, economy agencies, political institutions, museums and art centers, scientific and university centers, religious organizations, national rulership, and international media and organizations and firms. It is with attention to these extreme poles and broad range of motivational, cognitive,

emotional, and behavioral content within the two poles that we can identify the value position of each individual or group and also predict the behavior of each individual or group in response to the goals and specific circumstances. Each of the mentioned values is consisted of content as follows:

1. Individual Values (which state the amount of individualism, personal profit seeking, personal welfare and comfort, happiness, enthusiasm for life, mental balance, and...).
2. Family Values (which state the sense of belonging, loyalty, care, family safety, and...).
3. Economical Values (importance of wealth, ownership, economical achievement profitability, and...).
4. Political values (including issues related to power and control, freedom, equality, political parties, citizenship responsibilities, and...).
5. Social Values (sincerity in human relations, participation, lawfulness, social order, taking responsibility, social attitudes, and...).
6. Artistic Values (aesthetics, giving attention to artistic impressions, art creation, admiring natural beauties, eternity of beauty, and...).
7. Scientific and theoretical values (search for truth, experimentalism and rationalism, being wise, structuring and organizing knowledge, criticizing, and...).
8. Religious Values (holistic beliefs, religious experience and function, abstinence, search for unity, crave for mysticism, and...)
9. National Values (patriotism for Iran, belonging to the national culture, national security, defending the motherland, and...)
10. Globalization/Globalizing Values (human rights, freedom, democracy, peace, anti-violation, anti-discrimination, and...).

Understanding the mentioned aspects in the value system of groups of age, sex, education level, economical status, and others

will demonstrate the recognition of differences among people. Various hypotheses can be tested in each case. For example we can hypothesize that the value content and the system of preferred value among adolescent students is different than the rest of the age groups. Or it can be hypothesized that men are different from women, or that young people face the globalizing attack more than the old. We can then check these theories. The using of the scale we have prepared for the assessment of value system, beside the other data that is gathered in the research, will provide us with the necessary information for testing the hypothesis of the mentioned type.

The scale for value system assessment

We have run a national research for “investigating the influence of globalization on the Iranian adolescent and young students’ value-system”. In addition and after that, we have made theories and scales for assessing the value-system. For this purpose we prepared a test, which had 90+45 questions for assessment of ten fundamental categories in the personal value system. These categories included the various fields of individual, family, economical, political, social, artistic, scientific and theoretical, religious, national, and global values.

This scale was performed on a statistical sample consisting of 568 individuals from high school and pre-university students in Tehran. In this study, content validity, construct validity, and factorial validity of the scale have been approved. As well, the scale reliability has been calculated and approved by the use of three recognized reliability methods of Cronbach's, split-half, and strict parallel. This scale allows us to determine the value system, the value preferences, the orientation intensity of each value, and the value-system profile.

In other words, by using this scale, we reach three areas of information. The first is value-preference in the ten categories of study. The second is the value-orientation in each of the subjects, and the third, is the value system profile. As can be seen in the 45

main questions on the questionnaire, each of the questions (each including two complimentary questions) has a dual opposite value) (for more information, see: Lotfabadi & Nowroozi, 2005, pp. 143-160).

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