

## PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### **The role of motivation and system of values in the development of upper secondary school pupils' personalities**

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The motivation system in adolescent high school pupils/students of was studied (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students) on the basis of a complex approach and a comparative analysis of emotional attitudes and a deliberate preference of values (general and educational). It was shown that the significance and accessibility of analyzed groups of values are, to a considerable extent, determined by a dominant motivation. Also, a tendency was found towards the contra-positioning of conscious and emotional attitudes with values — values which are highly attractive on the motivation-and-emotional level, but on the level of conscience, are underestimated compared with other ones. This also determines the further trend of development of a personality in the direction of acceptance of socially-approved general and educational values, and leads to the convergence of personality development of schoolchildren at that stage of their life. Also revealed were certain gender-related features of value orientations, which were related to the more advanced development of girls when compared to boys of the same age.

**Keywords:** motivation, values, personality, upper secondary school children

### **Introduction**

Among key psychological notions, the notion of “motive” occupies a special place, and has an important explanatory function. The difficulty of systematizing any motivation relations which regulate human behavior is caused by the fact that it is a multilevel system. The determination of a motive as a subject of necessity (Leontiev, 1959) allows for the revelation of the special character, strictly speaking, of human motivation and represents it as the regulator of behavior at a certain level, which is reflected in the conscience in various ways — the realization of emotional relations through a system of verbal designations (a symbolic

indirect form of psyche, through personal meaning, and through a secondary appropriation of social norms and values. The motive, as a subject of necessity, presupposes the availability of two dialectically common poles, — subjectivity as the motive power of activity, and partiality, which determines the process of the formation of a meaning. It brings forward special requirements for the construction of diagnostic methods with which motives can be analyzed (Vartanova, 1998, 2000).

The motivational system used by young people and teenagers not only determines the content of their educational activities, but also sets up personal development. The period when teens are in high school is connected to an intensive development of their entire personal structure, and in particular, to the motivation necessity sphere. In that transitional moment, new value orientations arise, as well as new necessities and interests, and on that basis, new personal qualities materialize. A stable hierarchical structure of the motivation sphere appears, which in its developed form, presupposes an assimilation of certain moral values (Bozhovich, 1995). As B. Ananiev (1980) aptly put it, psychological research of the motives which underlie human behavior is impossible without a social and psychological study of the values themselves, since various human psychological characteristics coincide in them alone. The system of value orientations determines the pithy side of a life perspective as a system of adaptations and the means of assimilating the interior world, which assures a higher type of behavioral regulation. The basic process of moral development among adolescents and young people is the construction and reevaluation of the value system (Kraig, 2000).

Unlike the motive, which is always individual and isolates the life world of a subject, values are what, on the contrary, accustom the individual to a particular super-individual common character and instill integrity (Vasiliuk, 1984). Three versions of comprehension of the psychological nature of individual values are known (Leontiev, 1996). According to the first version, the values are examined alongside such notions as meaning and ideation. In such cases they do not possess, as they are, an incentive energy and power. In the second case, individual values or value orientations are examined as a variation or a likeness of social aims (relations) or interests. According to this interpretation, they are attributed a leading or structuring function, where the effect of value regulation is being reduced. The third approach draws together the notion of a value with those of necessity and motivation, underlining their real incentive power. The role of values in such an interpretation and their correlation with motivation can be described in a two-level pattern of motivation, suggested by E. Patiaeva (1983). On one level, we have concrete situational motivation formations which are relevant to a single activity and the creation of motives at another level, are extra-situational, stable and generalized. They prompt an activity indirectly, participating in the generation of concrete situational motives. As noted by D.A. Leontiev (1996), regarding their functional place and role in the motivation structure, the personal values refer in a sufficiently obvious way to either the establishment of stable motivation or to the sources of motivation, as described by E. Patiaeva.

With the development of a personality, both values and motives undergo a certain interdependent evolution (Vartanova, 2010). The value orientations of a person which connect his or her interior world to the surrounding reality form

a complex, multilevel hierarchical system. Such a system, as one of the most important personal components, occupies a border position between its motivation necessity sphere and the system of personal meanings. These perform in a way that corresponds to a double function (Janitsky, 2000). It is just the values, as in the basic “primary” features of a personality, that result in various psychological and personal characteristics coming together (Ananiev, 1980). These determine its trend and motivation (Vartanova, 2006); they are the system formation factor of a personality (Bubnova, 2012).

Thus, according to F.E.Vasiliuk (1984), although a value as a certain factor of one’s conscience does not possess any energy from its perception, as the person develops himself or herself, he or she can borrow it from genuine, existing motives, so at the end, the factor is used to establish the content of life and obtains, itself, the power of a real motive. The value is not a known factor which is capable of becoming a motive, but only such a thing, which, when becoming a real motive, leads to the growth and perfection of the personality. At the boundary of development in the transitional period, the value orientations of schoolchildren often come into conflict with their established system of motives and necessities, which lead to their qualitative reconstruction (Psychology..., 1987). During the course of development, the values also undergo a certain evolution, changing not only in their nature, but also in their motivation status in their place and their role in the structure of vital activity (Vasiliuk, 1984). With all that, the main indicator of personal development can be considered the grade of transition of originally-comprehended values from the category of ‘just known’ to regulators of behavior, and the grade of their integration to the common motivation system. The personal development trend, as a certain kind of “trend vector”, can be diagnosed through a comparative analysis of emotional (mainly an unconscious attitude to values) and deliberately assimilated social norms and rules of relationship (Vartanova, 2008a). In this connection, the correlation between already existing motives and assimilated value orientations (which determine how motives will continue to develop) can be examined as one of the mechanisms of personal growth and development (Vartanova, 2010).

It results in the fact that the personal development trends of high school students are determined by two interconnected sets of motives. On one hand, they are affected by a previously-formed individual system of motives (an individual profile, which is also determined by the predominant motives that reflect educational activity, which are specific to each student) on which they depend, the values of which will constitute the leading trend in terms of their personal development. On the other hand, they are affected by socially preset norms, requirements and rules, which determine their system of basic values, which are common to all mankind. A high level of socially significant motives is an indispensable hallmark of a strong-willed person and an indication of his or her maturity, when ideals that reflect potentially preset cultural notions become the driving motives of a well-developed individual (Gippentreiter, 2005). From the point of view of socially-driven education and training, such values should be adopted to an equal extent by all schoolchildren during their normal maturation, and should form a corresponding system of motivation during the remainder of their years studying and during their subsequent adult life. In such a way, the first set of motives should

intensify the individual peculiarities of the student's system of motivation and values and lead to a divergence in the development of secondary school students, while the second set, on the contrary, promotes a unification of systems of motivation and values and should lead to convergence in terms of personal development. However, it is not clear how the development of high school students takes place from the point of view of a correlation between existing motivation and accepted values; which of these motives affect the formation of a personality more strongly? In light of that, the task of practical research requires a complex approach and a comparative analysis of an emotional attitude and a deliberate preference of values, the exposure of their significance and their accessibility in the future. The purpose of this research was to discover the specific features of value orientations (one of the systems of basic human and educational values, the personal growth aspect, from the point of view of these values' significance and accessibility in the future) among high school students, depending on their educational motivation (as per types of a dominant motive).

## **Methods**

The research was conducted with students between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade in Moscow from 2009 through 2011. A total of 196 reports were obtained (40% from 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys and 37.7% from 11<sup>th</sup> grade boys ; 60% were obtained from 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls and 62.3% from 11<sup>th</sup> grade girls).

A student first performed a rating of 22 values by means of one on one comparisons from the point of view of their significance to him/her (parameter "value"), in conformity with the methods used by E.Fantalova (1992). Then he arranged the same values, realizing the choice in the pair of the value, which, in his opinion, can be more easily achieved in the future (parameter "accessibility") (Mukhamatulina, Obidnaya, 1997). A set of 22 values were used: 10 values from school life and 12 values that are common to all mankind (the set partially included the terminal values of M.Rokeach's methods).

Additionally, every student was supposed to evaluate on a scale of -3 to +3 each of 10 values associated with school life (self-perfection in studies, interesting conversations, acknowledgement in the student body, deep and solid knowledge, his/her authority, loyal and good friends, successful studies, the approval of his or her peers, being better than the others, overcoming of obstacles) according to the scale system, preset by a pair of adjectives (25 pairs of adjectives were used), in accordance with the semantic differential methods of Ch. Osgud which were adapted by V.Petrenko (1983). The procedure of analysis was the same, as described in previous research (Vartanova, 2008b, Vartanova, 2008c). As an auxiliary method, the method of using unfinished sentences, developed by A. Andreeva (1989), was used.

## **Results**

The entire set of received evaluations for the semantic differential of values with respect to school life (in total, 250 evaluations per student) was processed using a factor analysis (a method of main components with a subsequent "Varimax" rotation).

As a result, the four most significant factors were singled out which were common among students in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. An interpretation of the received factors was conducted with due regard for the meaningful analysis of the written material obtained which was using the unfinished sentence method, as well as other materials and observations, which allowed for independent verification of the singled out motivation types.

Factor 1 may be characterized as an emotional attitude, which was defined by the affiliation motivation (the necessity of acceptance and self-assertion through communication). The greatest loads on it had the values: “interesting conversation” (cheerful, beloved, good, bright, pleasant), “loyal and good friends” (carefree, strong, good, bright, pleasant, cheerful), “my authority” (bright, kind, strong), “acknowledgement in the student body” (cheerful, good, bright, kind). The students who referred to that type noted that they try to obtain good grades in order to satisfy their parents and teachers, that it is important for them to have “many friends” in school, to participate during their lessons in “discussions”, to go to school not only for studies, but also “to associate with other people”; they suffer in school usually because of “bad attitudes among their peers”.

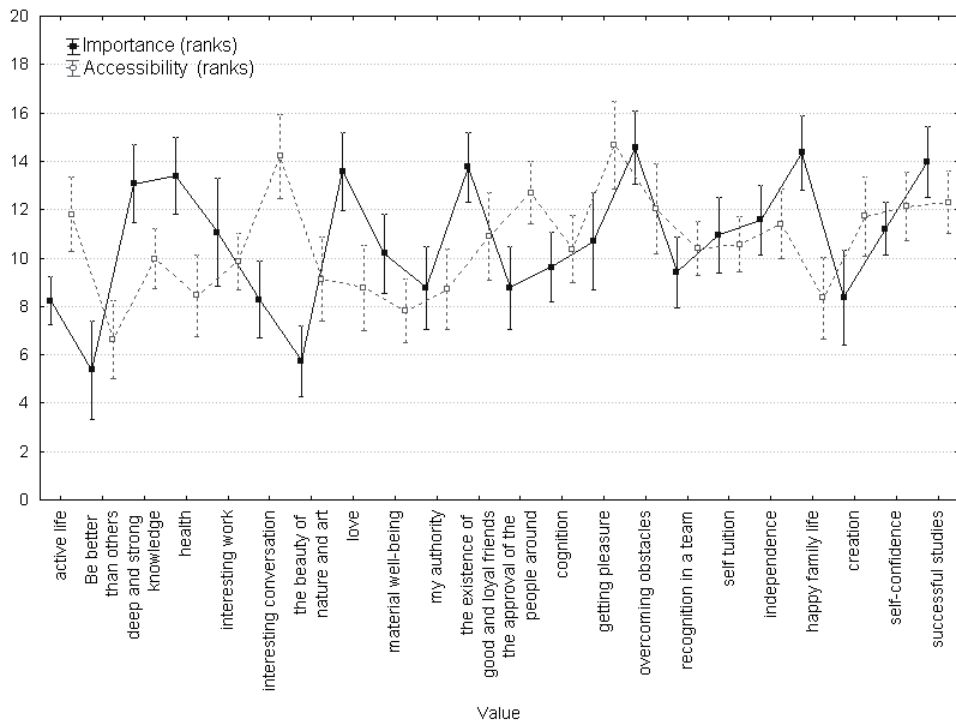
Factor 2 describes an emotional attitude which reflects self-affirmation as a motivation for education. It includes the following values: “self-perfection in studies” (complicated, strenuous, hard), “acknowledgement in the student body” (hard, complicated, strenuous), “overcoming difficulties” (complicated, strenuous, hard), “deep and solid knowledge” (hard, complicated, strenuous, slow), “successful studies” (hard, complicated, strenuous), “to be better than the others” (hard, complicated, strenuous), “approval of peers” (hard, complicated, strenuous). Pupils of that type often noted, that they spent too much time completing their homework, but that they still try to perform it carefully. They noted that the “introduction of education without grades is a bad idea, that the most difficult, but important task for them in their studies was to achieve good grades, to pass exams, and that good marks show the student’s effort”.

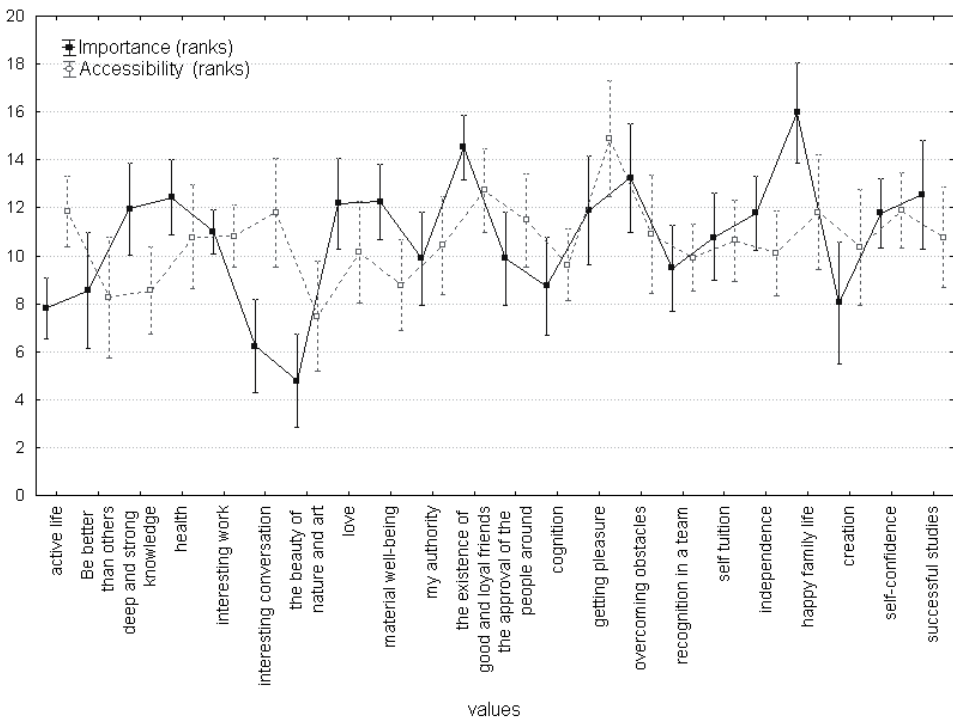
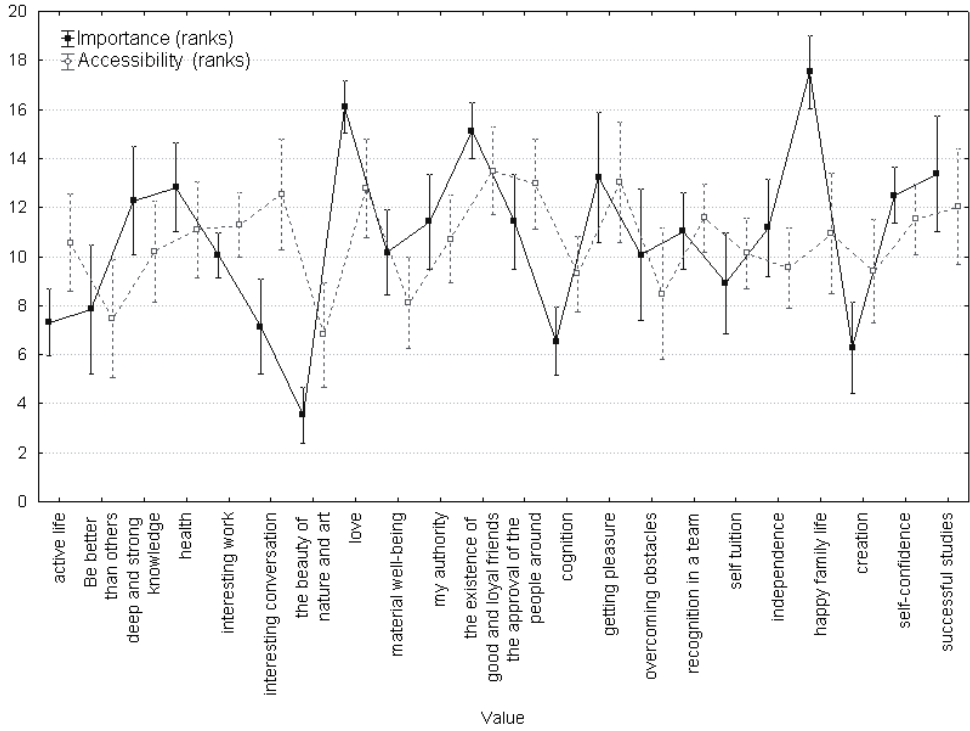
Factor 3 describes an orientation which prioritizes knowledge and successful studies (educational and cognitive motivation). Here the values “successful studies” (happy, strong, good, active, pleasant, hot, cheerful, beloved, clever), “deep and solid knowledge” (happy, strong, good, big, bright, pleasant, cheerful), “self-perfection in studies” (active, beloved, acute, clever, kind) are included. Students of that type noted that they studied in order to “learn new things”, “to get new knowledge”, “to develop and understand the environment”, “to be educated”, “to be a clever and a worthy person”, and “to develop as a person”.

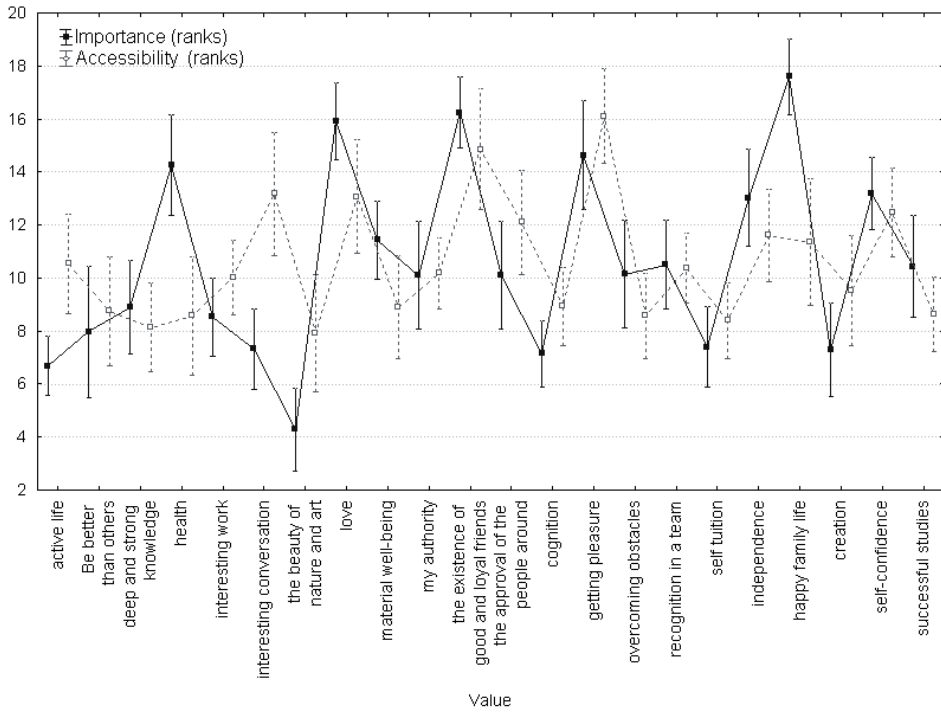
Factor 4 describes an emotional attitude which is determined by prestige and status (status competitive). It includes the values: “my authority” (happy, bright, fresh, beloved, strong, big), “to be better than the others” (cheerful, beloved, independence, acute), “acknowledgement in the student body” (active, hot, dear, fresh, acute). Pupils of that type (prestige motivated) have supplied the following motivations for their studies: “to enter a prestigious university”, “to find a prestigious job in the future”, “to provide a brilliant future for myself”, “to have a happy future” etc., they mainly suffer from ‘school failures’ and “bad grades”. They study to “be successful”, “to be first-rate workers”, “to receive an education and to forge ahead to university”, and “to become an excellent student and to gain the most knowledge”.

As a result of measurement of the significance of the singled out factors, every student obtained a quantitative evaluation of the expressiveness of his or her emotional attitude towards corresponding values, i.e. he was characterized with a corresponding four-factor profile. Thus, it allowed the researchers to determine the leading type of motivation attitude for each student (according to the dominant factor) and to arrange the whole excerpt in 4 groups, to facilitate a future comparison of the results of the revealed semantic content of values (emotional attitude towards them) with the results of a deliberate preference (rating) of values.

For every single value, average intervals and 95% confidence intervals were calculated and the values were rated (in terms of their significance and accessibility in the future), in every singled-out motivation group. The intervals allowed researchers to reveal differences in evaluations, which were conditioned by the types of motivation. Picture 1-4 shows the distribution of evaluations for all values for each singled out motivation group of students. Additionally, it is important to note that in cases when the rate of significance of a certain value considerably exceeds the rate of its accessibility in the future, a psychological conflict takes place which is indicative of interior dissatisfaction. However, at the same time, it indicates an incentive semantic-generating power of that value and the direction of motivation development. In cases where the rate of accessibility of a value exceeds its significance, one may speak of a presence of an interior vacuum, which shows “satiety”: the dying off of an incentive in that sphere. When the rates of significance and availability coincide, they are indicative of a co-ordination of personal orientations.







The obtained data show that the significance of general values (such as “a happy family life”, “love”, “friends” and “health”) for students of that age exceeds the significance of concrete educational and status-based values for all motivation types. However, the value rating reveals certain specifics. Students who are motivated by education and cognition, who are as a whole emotionally mostly attracted by the values “deep and stable knowledge” and “successful studies” when deliberately rating things do not consider these values to be the most significant (as with students of other motivation types), and for the value “self-perfection in studies” demonstrate an even vacuum. For them, first place is occupied (apart from the basic values common for all mankind) by “freedom” and “confidence in oneself” with a small conflict. For them, becoming an adult is determined by that kind of motivational development. However, for boys the values of the acceptance and association sphere are more important than for girls. However, with both sexes in that area, some vacuums are observed: with boys cognitive values and development-oriented values are more correlated than with girls, who value them higher and demonstrate a conflict in that area.

For a student from the group that is motivated by competition, we observe good coordination in the most motivation-oriented spheres, - “my authority”, “to be better than the others”, and “confidence in oneself”, though such values are placed at the bottom part of the rating scale (lower than in the other motivation groups). It is just for status that the values are to the same extent for both boys and girls. Conflicts are revealed with the values “deep and stable knowledge”, “successful studies”, “overcoming difficulties”, and the “presence of good and loyal friends”, which are more significant for them, but less accessible. Evidently, it is indicative of the fact



that for them, the status values are no longer a problem, since they already have had a certain status in the group for a long time and confidence in themselves. Additionally, the presence of a conflict in the ingvalues of maintaining friendly relations with students of their age and the values of receiving knowledge have now become the most important for them. In such situations, the process of becoming an adult is connected with an achievement of results in studies and self-development, as well as with the perfection of inter-personal relations. As a whole, for the sphere of knowledge and self-development, conflicts are more visible among girls, whereas for boys they emerge only in the sphere of acceptance and association (for girls in that area we already observe a vacuum, since, evidently, girls tend to mature faster than boys in that respect).

For students who are driven by education and personal accomplishment (who on the emotional level consider studying to be hard, strenuous and complicated labor) a conflict area is revealed in the values: “deep and stable knowledge”, “my authority”, “successful studies”, and “confidence in oneself”. However, they reveal vacuums in such values as “cognition”, “creation”, as well as “association”, “to be better than the others”, and “approval of peers”. For them, becoming an adult is connected with a growth of proper status and authority, and also through obtaining knowledge through strenuous labor, which leads to successes in studies. However, it is characteristic, that a conflict in the spheres of knowledge and self-development only exists for boys, while for girls such values are well-coordinated. On the other hand, for students that value status, the opposite is true: conflicts emerge among girls who are motivated by status.

Students with the affiliation motivation (who emotionally are oriented to interaction, acknowledgement and authority) deliberately choose, nevertheless, to value rather highly such things as “deep and stable knowledge” and “a well-to-do life”, and experience deep internal conflict. However, on the emotional level, those values are more characteristic of students with another motivation type: — self-affirmative educational motivation. Additionally, with respect to the emotionally significant value “the approval of peers”, those that value interaction and acknowledgement find themselves already on a low level with an expressed vacuum, because they are not more timely for them. This is indicative of the trend of development of the personality of students with such motivation, of their aspiration for realizing themselves already with new, adult qualities (based on their understanding that their future well-to-do life is conditioned by the knowledge they receive). As a whole, for students who are thusly motivated, the specifics of preference of values by boys and girls are not pronounced, though in the status sphere’s values the girls have a more pronounced motivational conflict than boys.

## **Discussion**

The achieved results allow for a return to the initial problem: to clarify how the development of the personality of high school students takes place from the point of view of a connection between motivation and accepted values, which somehow exerts an influence on how their personalities develop. The convergence of personality development was found in comparing deliberately-rated values with types of existing motivation. This is manifested in the fact that, notwithstanding the initially

different types of emotional preference of values, the area of conflicts and vacuums for the analyzed groups of values appeared to be practically the same, while an absolute preference of values in numerous cases appeared to be contrary to the expected one on the basis of emotional preferences. Such a picture, in particular, is characteristic for the values of knowledge and development; - their significance for all types of motivation is higher, than for the educational and cognitive motivation. The significance of values of the sphere of acceptance and association for students with motivation of affiliation appeared not to be higher, than in other motivation groups. The significance of status values appeared for the status-competitive motivation were also not higher, than for students with other forms of motivation. On the other hand, as was previously shown (Vartanova, 2008), the pragmatic motivation is not alien to all schoolchildren either: for instance, out of the values of school life even students with the affiliation motivation chose, in the first run, only those subjects, which will be useful to them in future.

Thus, there was manifested an identical domination of conflicts for all motivation types (and, correspondingly, the areas of the nearest development of personality) in the field of knowledge and self-development (and desire wish to study, which is not surprising for 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students). Besides, for all schoolchildren of such age, the values of acceptance and association already appear in the area of vacuums. As a whole, those results can be accounted for by the fact that the socially preset norms, requirements and rules, must be accepted to an equal extent by everybody by adulthood, as well as forming a corresponding system of motivation related to real studies and a future adult life. As pointed out by D.A. Leontiev (2007), the regulating action of values is expressed in the presetting of an activity vector, which is directed to infinity. Values are experienced as ideals, — the final references of a desirable state of affairs, and not only as a realization of an individual wish, but as an “objectively” desirable state of affairs, well-grounded from the point of view of social standards. Thus, it favors a unification of systems of motivation and values, which also leads to the convergence of development of personality at this stage of students’ homes.

Corresponding results also have been obtained before (Vartanova, 2010) during a protracted analysis of the development of motivation. It was shown, that dynamics of changes in rating of values are not occasional, but are correlated with variation of motivation, and that the system of choice of a value determines a subsequent change of motivation, as if it “led” it, determining the area of the nearest development. Thus, it is clear that: given the availability of socially approved general values and that the criterion “desirability of the desired” (Leontiev, 2007) is compatible with the strategic aims and the trend of development of social groups and social-and-cultural systems, a convergence of development of the students’ personalities should occur.

## **Conclusion**

The obtained data allowed us to conclude that the significance and accessibility of the analyzed groups of values are, to a considerable extent, determined by genuine, extant (dominant) motivation. Additionally, a tendency has been revealed toward the contraposition of deliberate and emotional attitudes to values with a value,

which is highly attractive in the motivation-and-emotional plane, and that this is underestimated at the conscious level. There are also specific gender differences that suggest that girls tend to develop faster than boys. Thus, the research we conducted permits us to conclude, that from the point of view of the interdependence between high school students' motivation and accepted social values, that these values more strongly influence the direction of development of students' personalities during high school. This promotes the unification of their motivation and value system, which leads to the convergence of personal development at this phase of the student's life.

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