

The aim of our study was to ascertain what values adolescents placed in institutional care hold dear.

Our main tasks were to explore the life values held by the adolescents and their attitudes toward their future family life. We also wanted to analyse the development of their interests, necessities and inclinations that could help the children to choose a career.

The research of these problems was conducted in a children's home in Minsk. The adolescents concerned were aged 11-15. The research methods used were surveys, observations and the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) (Rokeach, 1973).

The children's responses on the Rokeach Value Survey

The RVS is a 36-item questionnaire that is used to measure a person's specific beliefs or value orientation which then forms the basis for his or her attitudes toward the surrounding world, to other people and to the self. It is the basis for the individual's outlook on life and philosophy of life. Rokeach's survey distinguishes between two classes of values:

- terminal – desired and idealised end states of existence such as health, freedom and true friendship
- instrumental – the values needed to achieve these end states such as being ambitious, helpful and self-controlled

After first making a hierarchy of values based on our modified version of the RVS, the respondents then tried to define the relative importance to them of the range of needs. In terms of frequency of response, the hierarchy of terminal values had the following rankings:

1. health (physical and mental)
2. freedom (independence in judgments and acts)
3. mature love (spiritual and physical affinity with a favourite person)
3. inner harmony and self-confidence (no inner contradictions or doubts)
4. true friendship (presence of good and true friends)
4. social recognition
5. financial security (absence of material difficulties)
6. a world of beauty (appreciation of nature and the arts; knowledge opportunities to enhance one's knowledge, formation of an outlook on life, a cultural view)
7. an exciting life (an emotionally satisfying life)
8. wisdom (mature judgment and commonsense obtained through life experience)