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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire was developed to obtain the expressed values of a sample of 469 fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students toward eight societal components: self; home; neighborhood; school; religion; voluntary membership organizations; state; and country. Five positive statements for each component were followed by a scale that rated the level of agreement. The data were analyzed to show differences between students in economically depressed and non-economically depressed schools, between rural and urban students, and between different age groups. The results are discussed and presented in tables. Findings are (1) The values of school-aged youth are higher than many have believed; (2) The affluence of a rural school district is not associated with the values of its young people over a long period of time; (3) The stereotypes attributed to rural students in regard to citizenship and values are not well taken; and (4) There were quantitative differences in values between the age groups tested. It is recommended that teachers' efforts should be directed toward better citizenship on the part of all students regardless of community or economic background. (FG)

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EXPRESSED VALUES OF RURAL AND URBAN YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Values education is a topic of considerable concern to many educators today. To determine what the values of young people toward self, home, neighborhood, school, religion, voluntary membership organizations, state, and country were, a values questionnaire was designed for use in obtaining the expressed values of a sample of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students in Southeast Texas. The values of the young people in the sample were found to be higher than that which might have been expected, and it was also found that there were few differences in the value of urban and rural youth.

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The values which individuals hold toward societal components make themselves evident in many different forms of behavior. Values held toward self, home, neighborhood, religion, school, voluntary membership organizations, state, and country were those focused upon in the present study. The Committee for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1977), conducted a special survey of five-thousand 13 year-old and 17 year-old students throughout the United States to determine what they knew and felt about our system of government. The study indicated that there was great similarity in the values of the two age groups, but that there was a substantial difference in their knowledge levels. Henderson (1973) in a National Assessment of Educational Progress found that nine, thirteen, seventeen year-olds, and adult respondents from rural areas were consistently several percentage points lower in knowledge of current events than their counterparts who attended city schools. Brown (1977) make a case for civic education, and Kohlberg (1975, 1976) and Rest (1973) describe the emergence of commitment to country as part of the moral-maturing self.

More research on values toward the previously mentioned societal components is needed. The affective makeup of a student is as much a part of himself as the cognitive makeup. It is important for those who teach to understand students and their characteristics, cognitive and affective. This study, then, was conducted to answer the following questions: (1) What were the levels of commitment to values which the young people in the sample held toward the eight previously named

societal components? (2) Were there significant differences in the values of students from economically depressed and non-economically depressed schools? (3) Were there differences in the values of rural and urban students toward the eight societal components? (4) Were there differences in values toward societal components between age groups?

PROCEDURES

A questionnaire was developed for the collection of data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of five questions in Likert format for each of the eight societal components. The eight societal components under study were values toward self, home, neighborhood, religious organizations, school, volunteer membership organizations, state and country. Three of the forty items included in the questionnaire are cited for illustration purposes as follows:

"I like what I see when I look in the mirror."

"I am proud to tell people where I go to school."

"I cherish my citizenship and would never want to give it up."

Each item was followed by a Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Each response was given a numerical value of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). All items were stated in a positive direction.

Other items also solicited demographic information about the respondents age, ordinal position in the family, parents' level of education, and other data. The questionnaire was field tested with 78 fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students before use with the sample.

The reliability of the total questionnaire and of the individual subscales is shown in Table 1.

 Insert Table 1 about here.

A stratified random sample of six school districts, using a geographical area within a 100-mile radius of College Station, Texas, was drawn. Four rural school districts were drawn: two economically depressed, as defined by the Federal Register (1977), and two that were not economically depressed. Two urban non-economically depressed school districts were drawn, and it was attempted to draw two urban economically depressed school districts, but no urban economically depressed school districts were available to take part in the study. School campuses within each randomly drawn district were selected at random, and six(6) fifth, six(6) eighth, and six(6) eleventh grade American History classes within those campuses were randomly selected to complete the values questionnaire. Four hundred-sixty nine students completed the values questionnaire. All students were told at the time they completed the questionnaire that the answers they reported would never be traced back to them.

RESULTS

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using a numerical value of one point for the least favorable response to a questionnaire item to five points for the most favorable response. Since there were five items in each subscale (for each component), the possible scores for an individual for his expressed value toward a societal component ranged from five to twenty-five, with neutral affect toward that component being fifteen.

Table 2 reveals the results of the analysis of data completed to answer research questions 1 and 2. It shows rural data only. In response to concern 1, it appears that the average values of school-age respondents were above neutrality (15) and into the area of considerable concern. The highest values expressed were those of fifth grade students in non-economically depressed rural schools toward home, state, and country. Significant differences in values toward home, religion, state, and country occurred between fifth grade students attending economically and non-economically depressed schools. At the fifth grade level, students from non-economically depressed schools scored higher than students from economically depressed schools in every instance of significant difference. At the eighth grade level, there were no significant differences. Eleventh grade students from economically depressed rural schools reported significantly higher values toward school than students from non-economically depressed rural schools.

 Insert Table 2 here.

Differences in values between rural and urban students of non-economically depressed schools were explored next. The responses of the 327 students from those schools (that is, excluding data from the 141 economically depressed rural students) were used in this analysis. The results are reported in Table 3.

 Insert Table 3 here.

No significant differences in values between students of rural and urban schools were found.

The values of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students were also examined to verify or differ with the findings of Kohlberg. Table 4 illustrates the analysis of variance, means, and Duncan's procedure for three age groups on values toward eight societal components. As Table 4 illustrates, values toward country and the other societal components did not progress in linear fashion with age; if the writings of Kohlberg are to be taken in an "older is better" quantitative interpretation, then the results of this study are in direct conflict with some other studies. It could be said, however, that older students value societal components to the extent that they do for qualitatively different reasons. Qualitative differences in moral reasoning are not addressed directly by this study. Also noticeable is a values "slump" of the eighth grade level in the cases of values toward self, religious organizations, voluntary membership organizations, state, and country.

 Insert Table 4 here.

CONCLUSIONS

First of all, the reported values of school-age young people are higher than may have been believed by some. Secondly, the evident affluence of a rural school district apparently is not associated with the values of its young people over a long period of time. By the eleventh grade, students from less affluent rural schools expressed a higher value toward school than their more affluent neighbors. Thirdly, the

stereotypes sometimes attributed to rural students in regard to citizenship and values are not well taken. In a fairly sizeable sample, with overall school district affluence held constant, rural students scored just as high values as their counterparts in them. Fourthly, there were quantitative differences in values toward societal components between age groups.

The overall recommendation to teachers, then, is this: Any student may be helped to become a better citizen. Efforts of teachers should be directed toward better citizenship on the part of all students regardless of community or economic background.

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TABLE 1
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Correlation
Coefficients for the Field Testing of the Questionnaire

Subscale	Split-half Reliability (N=78)
Self	.8302
Family	.8729
Neighborhood	.8769
Religious Organization	.9011
Voluntary Membership Group	.9119
State	.8453
Country	.8789
Total Questionnaire	.9594

TABLE 2

Means and F-values Resulting from the Analysis of Variance Calculated for Economically Depressed and Noneconomically Depressed Rural Groups for Eight Societal Components for Fifth, Eighth, Eleventh Grade Students

Societal Components	Self Value	Home Value	Nbrhd. Value	Religion Value	School Value	V.M.O. Value	State Value	Country Value
<u>Fifth Grade</u>								
Econom. Depressed N=48	17.65	19.56	18.50	17.90	18.49	17.33	19.56	20.28
Nonecon. Depressed N=120	18.13	21.73	18.92	21.89	17.35	16.32	21.13	21.88
F-value	.48	8.54*	.27	20.59*	1.69	1.09	3.91*	4.69
W-square	.00	.05	.00	.11	.01	.01	.02	.03
<u>Eighth Grade</u>								
Econom. Depressed N=46	17.15	21.13	18.43	19.22	18.13	17.28	19.93	20.20
Nonecon. Depressed N=133	16.99	19.95	17.99	18.51	17.39	15.59	19.04	19.95
F-value	.07	2.23	.31	.60	.88	3.09	.92	.09
W-square	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.02	.01	.00
<u>Eleventh Grade</u>								
Econom. Depressed N=47	18.32	19.79	17.77	19.53	18.83	18.21	20.95	21.59
Nonecon. Depressed N=94	18.47	20.55	17.99	18.66	16.74	17.37	20.22	20.22
F-value	.05	.98	.07	.81	5.98*	.68	.62	2.81
W-square	.00	.01	.00	.01	.04	.00	.00	.02

*significant at or beyond .05 level

TABLE 3

Means and F-values of Rural and Urban
Students on Values Toward Societal Components

Societal Components	Self Value	Home Value	Nbrhd. Value	Religion Value	School Value	V.M.O. Value	State Value	Country Value
Rural N=198	17.98	20.88	18.31	19.73	17.50	16.87	20.46	20.77
Urban N=129	17.60	20.70	18.36	19.88	16.70	16.51	19.66	20.70
F-value	.78	.14	.01	.07	2.15	.31	2.22	.02
W-square	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

*Significant at or beyond .05 level.

TABLE 4

Means and F-values Resulting From the Analysis of Variance Calculated for Three Age Groups for Eight Societal Components and Duncan's Multiple Range Test of Homogeneity

Societal Components	Self Value	Home Value	Nbrhd. Value	Rel. Org. Value	School Value	V.M.O. Value	State Value	Country Value
Grade								
Fifth N=169	18.01(A)+	21.10(A)	18.78(A)	20.76(A)	17.70(A)	17.07(AB)	20.70(A)	21.42(A)
Eighth N=159	17.01(B)	20.20(A)	18.13(A)	18.95(B)	17.75(A)	16.04(B)	19.27(B)	20.03(B)
Eleventh N=141	18.42(A)	20.30(A)	17.92(A)	18.96(B)	17.43(A)	17.63(A)	20.45(A)	20.67(AB)
F-value	5.58*	1.76	1.51	7.30*	0.12	3.03*	3.70*	3.88*
U-Square	.02	.01	.01	.03	.01	.01	.02	.02

*Significant at or beyond .05 level.

Alphabetical characters illustrate groupings. For self value, fifth and eleventh grade students' scores were not significantly different from each other, but eighth grade students scored significantly (p .05) lower than either the fifth grade students or the eleventh grade students.