
ERIC Projects Completed

Exploring and Identifying the Work Values among Junior High School Students

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Summary : 'Human Capital Theory', proposed in the field of industrial/organisation sciences, views human capabilities, their knowledge, skills, talents, efforts, and work habits as integral part of the capital of an organisation along with financial and physical resources. India, as a nation, is also an organisation. It has projected a vision of an agenda of development for 2020. This agenda can be realised only when the nation develops a human capital of high quality. Here the educationists and social scientists have major role to play. They will have to explore the means and modalities to develop such human capital. For this purpose, educational institutions appear as one of the most important sites for relevant interventions.

The work habits and work values would be an integral part of such human capital. It is unfortunate that despite strong advocacies in favour of dedication and hardwork, there do not seem to be high work values among people in general. Now, if we have to reach the target set by 'Agenda 2020', we have to analyse and investigate the scenario in order to prepare appropriate strategies of interventions to transform the situation. The studies have revealed that the work values formed during childhood and adolescence are found to be relatively stable over time. Based on these findings, it is advocated to work for such a curriculum at elementary education that may inculcate the essential values among the students of this level. The same is true for the inculcation of work values also. The work values determine how one feels (pleased, anxious, punished or stressed) while working. A person develops socialisation process (including the process of imitation, modelling and conformity) or educational processes. Thus, it is apparent that the education system can be used in order to generate positive work values.

With these presumptions, the present research project was planned in order to address the following major objectives:

1. Identification of work values available in curriculum, presently being taught at junior high school level.
2. Study the pattern of preferences and practices of work values prevailing among these students.
3. Examining the views of the stakeholders (e.g. parents, teachers, school administrator).
4. To develop a work value scale for junior high School students.
5. Examination of the variation in work values in relation to contextual variables (gender, rural-urban habitation and classes or grades).

The project was conducted in three phases. In Phase I, the textbooks of hindi, english and social studies of Classes VI to VIII prescribed by CBSE and U.P. Board were analysed for the content to find out the themes related to 'work'. Despite all the efforts and leniencies, only 83 references in total, were found where the work related themes were available in these textbooks. The number of these themes was 39 only. It was really a small number. Hence, it is suggested to include more themes containing references of work values in the syllabi.

In phase II, 30 students, 20 teachers, 30 parents and 20 administrative staff (serving in educational set-up) were interviewed with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule, which consisted of questions about the meaning of work, attitude towards work and work values. The obtained information analysed and some very interesting results were found. For example, 73 per cent of respondents were of the view that the students of classes VI to VIII understand the meaning of work. These respondents also felt that if a student does not understand the meaning of work, he/she cannot be made responsible for the same. It is a lapse on the part of guardians, teachers and society, which are to be blamed for this situation.

Phase III was the major part of the study. In this phase, the first task was to develop a reliable and valid scale to measure work values of students at elementary level. This scale was developed and used at the next stage of this phase. The prime objective of this stage was to examine the variations in work values across some contextual variables. These variables were: gender, rural-urban habitation and grades of the students (Classes VI, VII and VIII). The results indicated that gender played more significant role. The female students were found to have higher work values in comparison to their male classmates. Interestingly, they did not differ with each other on domestic work value and home assignment value. The rural and urban students also did not differ on these two factors, but they showed

patterns of differences on the rest of scores. Rural people had more positive feelings with work, whereas the scores on the knowledge through work were higher in urban students. The grades of the students also were found determining the variations in work values. The scores on the work values obtained in case of Class VII students were higher than that of Class VI, suggesting an improvement in work values at this stage. However, the scores of Class VIII students were not different with the scores of Class VII students. It indicated stagnation in development of work values after Class VII. From the efforts of interaction among these three variables, only one interaction effect (between gender and class) was significant. The female students of Class VI and VII scored higher in comparison to their male counterparts. Such difference was not obtained among Class VIII students. It also suggested above said stagnation after Class VII.

The findings of the study were found to have several policy implications. For example, the groups of students, teachers, parents and administrative staff, when interviewed in this study, expressed the view that the children in general understand the meaning of work. However, the children recognise the instrumental aspect of work only, in which it is believed that the work, when completed, gives some rewards of physical nature, such as money, meal or toy. They have no idea about the intrinsic aspect of work. Therefore, it can be suggested to make children aware about the intrinsic aspects of the work. The possibility of teaching them the 'skill' to work with a sense of non-attachment (*Anasakti*) should also be explored.

The parents, teachers and administrative staff were found to concede that the students cannot be blamed for not having proper work values. It is a failure of our system that has not been able to promote and nurture the work values among them. As a corrective measure, the entire education system should be re-evaluated focusing on its components that might have links with the development or work values. Also, the teachers should be given special training of instilling work values among their students. The parents should be provided suggestions and guidelines, useful in nurturing the work values in their children, at guardians meet.

The results indicated that the development of work values gets stagnated after Class VII. The policy makers should take notice of it. If, it is true the causes should be traced and action should be taken to remove them. The policy implications of other findings also are discussed in final report. This discussion can be of use for our policy makers, parents and teachers in developing the strategies for instilling the adequate work values among children who would shape the fate of the country in future.