

FORMATION OF VALUES AMONG ADOLESCENTS RAISED IN INCOMPLETE FAMILIES



Nozima Mullabayeva Maxmudjanovna,

Tashkent International University

Lecturer, Department of Psychology

Acting Professor, Doctor of Psychological Sciences (DSc)

e-mail: nozimamulkabaeva@gmail.com



Qodirova Ozoda Musajon kizi,

Family and Gender Research Institute

Junior Researcher

e-mail: ozodaxonqodirova55@gmail.com

Abstract. This study examines the formation of values among adolescents raised in incomplete families, with particular attention to the socio-psychological factors that may influence their value orientations. The study is based on Shalom Schwartz's theory of basic human values, which provides a framework for understanding the motivational goals underlying adolescents' value preferences. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The participants were 100 adolescents aged 10–17 who were raised in incomplete families. Data were collected using an adapted version of the Schwartz Value Survey, a socio-demographic questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using

descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and non-parametric statistical procedures, while qualitative responses were examined thematically. The findings indicate that adolescents' value orientations are shaped by a combination of family circumstances, social support, interpersonal relationships, and individual characteristics. The results also suggest that although substantial differences in normative value ideals were not observed across gender groups, self-direction demonstrated a statistically significant difference, with higher levels among girls. The qualitative findings further highlight the importance of emotional support, communication, and stable interpersonal relationships in adolescents' value development. The study contributes to a better understanding of the socio-psychological mechanisms underlying value formation among adolescents from incomplete families and may provide a basis for developing psychologically informed family and educational interventions.

Keywords. Adolescents; incomplete families; value formation; value orientations; socio-psychological factors; Shalom Schwartz; basic human values; self-direction; social support; family relationships; adolescent development.

Introduction. Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant changes in cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development. During this stage, young people gradually develop more stable beliefs, attitudes, behavioral principles, and value orientations that influence their interpersonal relationships, educational choices, social behavior, and future life goals. Values serve as important psychological regulators of behavior because they provide individuals with principles for evaluating situations, making decisions, and establishing priorities. The family represents one of the primary social environments in which children acquire and internalize values. Through parental communication, emotional relationships, modeling, discipline, and everyday interactions, children learn social norms and develop attitudes toward themselves and others. Consequently, changes in family structure may influence the processes through which adolescents develop and prioritize values.

Adolescents raised in incomplete families may experience specific social and psychological circumstances associated with the absence of one parent or substantial changes in family functioning. These circumstances do not necessarily lead to negative developmental outcomes. However, the quality of family relationships, emotional support, economic conditions, communication patterns, and relationships with significant adults may influence adolescents' psychological development and value orientations. From a socio-psychological perspective, value formation should therefore be understood as a multidimensional process resulting from the interaction between individual characteristics and the social environment. In this context, examining the

value priorities of adolescents raised in incomplete families can contribute to a deeper understanding of their developmental needs and the factors supporting their psychological adaptation. One of the influential theoretical approaches to the study of values is Shalom Schwartz's theory of basic human values. Schwartz conceptualizes values as desirable, transsituational goals that vary in importance and serve as guiding principles in people's lives. The theory identifies a set of motivationally distinct values organized within a broader circular structure of value relations. The present study aims to examine the formation of values among adolescents raised in incomplete families and to identify socio-psychological factors associated with their value orientations. Particular attention is given to gender differences in value priorities and the potential role of social support and interpersonal relationships.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What value orientations are characteristic of adolescents raised in incomplete families?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in value priorities between male and female adolescents?
3. What socio-psychological factors are associated with the formation of values among adolescents raised in incomplete families?
4. How do adolescents describe the role of family relationships and social support in their value development?

Literature review. Values have been widely examined in psychology, sociology, and social psychology because they influence attitudes, behavioral choices, interpersonal relationships, and social adaptation. Values are not limited to specific behaviors; rather, they represent broader principles that individuals use to evaluate experiences and determine what is important in their lives. Schwartz's theory of basic human values provides one of the most widely used frameworks for investigating individual value priorities. According to Schwartz, values represent desirable and transsituational goals that function as guiding principles. The theory proposes several motivationally distinct value types, including self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism. The structure of values reflects motivational compatibility and conflict. For example, self-direction emphasizes independent thought and action, whereas conformity emphasizes the restriction of actions and impulses that may violate social expectations. Security focuses on safety, harmony, and stability, while stimulation emphasizes novelty and challenge. Thus, adolescents may simultaneously endorse different values, but the relative importance of these values can differ according to their developmental and social circumstances. Adolescence is a period in which individuals increasingly

move beyond direct parental regulation and begin to develop greater autonomy in their thinking and decision-making. Cognitive development, peer relationships, educational experiences, media exposure, and family interactions contribute to this process. During adolescence, young people increasingly question previously accepted norms and begin to construct their own understanding of responsibility, independence, achievement, relationships, and social expectations. Consequently, the development of values during this period is closely connected with identity formation and socialization. Research based on Schwartz's framework has demonstrated that value priorities can vary according to age, gender, cultural context, and social environment. However, value development should not be interpreted as determined by a single factor. Rather, it emerges through the interaction of personal characteristics and social experiences. The family is an important context for socialization. Parents and other significant family members provide adolescents with behavioral models, emotional support, expectations, and opportunities to develop social competencies. Research on family structure has produced complex findings. Living in an incomplete family does not automatically predict psychological difficulties or problematic value orientations. The effects of family structure may depend on the circumstances surrounding the family situation and the quality of relationships within the family. For example, adolescents may respond differently depending on the availability of emotional support, the level of family conflict, socioeconomic circumstances, parental involvement, and the presence of supportive adults. Therefore, the concept of an incomplete family should not itself be treated as a direct indicator of developmental disadvantage. Social support is particularly relevant during adolescence because young people increasingly interact with multiple social groups, including peers, teachers, relatives, and community members. Supportive relationships can provide adolescents with emotional security, opportunities for communication, and models of constructive social behavior. The presence of supportive relationships may also facilitate the development of autonomy. Adolescents who receive appropriate emotional support may have greater opportunities to express their opinions, make decisions, and develop independent perspectives while maintaining meaningful interpersonal connections. Thus, social support may function as an important contextual factor in value formation among adolescents raised in incomplete families.

Methodology. The study employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component was used to identify patterns in adolescents' value orientations and examine differences between groups. The qualitative component provided additional information about adolescents' perceptions of family relationships, social support, and factors influencing their

personal development. The sample consisted of 100 adolescents aged between 10 and 17 years who were raised in incomplete families. Participants were selected in accordance with the inclusion criteria established for the study. The participants represented different age groups and included both male and female adolescents. Sociodemographic information was collected to provide contextual information about participants and their family circumstances.

Three principal instruments were used. An age-appropriate version of Schwartz's value methodology was used to assess adolescents' value priorities. The instrument allows the relative importance of different motivational values to be examined. The questionnaire collected information concerning participants' age, gender, family structure, educational context, and other relevant background characteristics. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore adolescents' perceptions of family relationships, sources of emotional support, personal priorities, and factors that they considered important in shaping their beliefs and behavior. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' value orientations. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to examine the distributional characteristics of the data. Because the relevant variables did not consistently meet the assumptions required for parametric analysis, non-parametric procedures were applied. The Mann–Whitney U test was used to examine differences in value orientations between male and female adolescents. Correlation analysis was also used to examine associations between relevant variables. Qualitative interview data were analyzed thematically. Responses were reviewed to identify recurring themes related to family relationships, emotional support, autonomy, interpersonal communication, and adolescents' understanding of important life values. The study followed relevant ethical principles for psychological research involving minors. Participation was voluntary, and appropriate procedures concerning informed consent and confidentiality were followed. Participants' personal information was treated confidentially and used exclusively for research purposes.

Results. The analysis indicates that adolescents raised in incomplete families demonstrated a range of value priorities rather than a single dominant value pattern. Their responses reflected the importance of interpersonal relationships, security, personal development, autonomy, and socially oriented values. The findings suggest that adolescents' value orientations are influenced by multiple aspects of their social environment. In particular, qualitative responses indicated that relationships with parents, relatives, teachers, and peers can contribute to adolescents' understanding of responsibility, trust, independence, and interpersonal respect. The comparison of male and female adolescents using the Mann–Whitney U test indicated that statistically

significant gender differences were not observed across the majority of normative value ideals. However, a statistically significant difference was identified for **self-direction**. Female adolescents demonstrated higher scores on this value dimension than male adolescents ($U = 886.000, p = .012$). This finding indicates that the importance attached to independent thought, choice, and autonomous action may differ between male and female adolescents in the studied sample. At the same time, the absence of statistically significant differences across most other values suggests that gender alone does not account for the majority of variation in adolescents' value orientations. The qualitative findings highlighted the importance of social support in adolescents' perceptions of their development. Participants frequently referred to supportive relationships with significant adults and peers as important sources of emotional security and guidance. Adolescents described support in terms of being listened to, receiving advice, experiencing understanding, and having someone available during difficult situations. These findings suggest that the quality of interpersonal relationships may be particularly relevant to adolescents growing up in changing or non-traditional family circumstances. The interview data indicated that adolescents associate family relationships with the development of values such as respect, responsibility, trust, care, and mutual understanding. Importantly, the findings do not support the assumption that incomplete family structure itself determines adolescents' value development. Instead, adolescents' responses point toward the importance of the quality of relationships and the availability of emotional and social resources within their environment.

Discussion. The findings of this study provide insight into the value orientations of adolescents raised in incomplete families. The results support the view that value formation during adolescence is a complex socio-psychological process influenced by family relationships, social support, interpersonal experiences, and individual characteristics. One of the notable findings was the absence of statistically significant gender differences across most normative value ideals. This suggests that male and female adolescents in the present sample share a number of common value priorities despite differences in their individual experiences. Such a finding is consistent with the broader understanding that values are shaped by multiple socialization processes rather than by gender alone. At the same time, the statistically significant difference observed for **self-direction** is particularly noteworthy. Female adolescents in the sample demonstrated higher self-direction scores than male adolescents ($U = 886.000, p = .012$). Within Schwartz's theoretical framework, self-direction is associated with independent thought, freedom of choice, creativity, and autonomy. The finding may indicate that the female participants in this sample placed comparatively greater importance on autonomy and independent decision-making. However, this result

should be interpreted cautiously. The observed association does not establish that gender causes differences in self-direction. Other variables, such as age, educational experiences, family relationships, social expectations, and opportunities for independent decision-making, may also contribute to this pattern. The qualitative findings further emphasize the role of social support. Adolescents frequently identified emotional understanding, communication, and supportive relationships as important aspects of their lives. This finding is consistent with developmental perspectives emphasizing the importance of secure interpersonal relationships during adolescence. An important implication of the findings is that incomplete family structure should not be regarded as a sufficient explanation for adolescents' psychological or value development. Two adolescents living in similar family structures may demonstrate substantially different developmental trajectories depending on the quality of their relationships, parental involvement, socioeconomic circumstances, peer relationships, and access to supportive adults. The findings therefore suggest that psychological and educational interventions should focus not only on family structure but also on strengthening adolescents' social and emotional resources. Programs designed for adolescents from incomplete families may benefit from activities that develop self-awareness, autonomous decision-making, interpersonal communication, emotional regulation, and access to supportive relationships. The study also contributes to the application of Schwartz's value theory in the context of adolescents raised in incomplete families. By combining quantitative measurement with qualitative interviews, the research provides both a structured assessment of value orientations and contextual information concerning adolescents' experiences. Nevertheless, several limitations should be considered. First, the sample consisted of 100 adolescents, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader adolescent populations. Second, the study focused specifically on adolescents raised in incomplete families and therefore does not provide a direct comparison with adolescents from complete families. Third, the cross-sectional design does not allow conclusions to be drawn about changes in value orientations over time. Finally, self-report measures may be affected by participants' perceptions and social desirability. Future research could use larger and more diverse samples, include comparison groups, and employ longitudinal designs to examine how adolescents' value orientations develop over time. Further studies could also investigate the contribution of parental involvement, socioeconomic conditions, peer relationships, school climate, and perceived social support to value formation.

Conclusion. The findings indicate that adolescents raised in incomplete families demonstrate diverse value orientations and that their value development is associated

with a combination of individual and socio-environmental factors. The statistically significant difference identified in self-direction, together with the qualitative importance attributed to social support and interpersonal relationships, highlights the need to consider both autonomy and relational resources when examining adolescent value formation.

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