

# Personality Dominant Values in Graphic Design Students in Their Educational Practice

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study the personality dominant values in Graphic Design students from the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. A scale developed by Allport, Vernon and Lindsey called: *Study of values. A scale for the measuring of personality dominant interests* was used. The sample was applied to 124 students, men and women, from the different semesters in the current term 2015 A. It was proven that the prevailing dominant values are the economical and the aesthetic. An outstanding finding is the fact that less importance is paid to values associated with the religious, the social and the political.

**Keywords:** Allport, values, design, personality, practice

## 1. Introduction

The study of value has increased over the last few years. There was a research carried out in Mexico on the State of Knowledge in the field of education and values where the findings included professional ethics, moral, human rights, citizenship rights, school values and gender equity. The investigation led by Hirsch (2013) was for the period 2002-2011. The identified production was of 892 products on account of books, book chapters, articles, seminars and thesis, which speaks of the importance of the study of values.

During this boom of scientific and academic production, the study of values within university students has not been set aside. There has been some research centered in the educational profile of students and the academic evolution contrasting with the values pointed out in the *curriculum*, and the actually acquired during the school terms (Kepowics, 2003; Elexpuru, 2013; Morales, 2013). Another group of investigations of a quantitative type and that apply some kind of instrument have worked with the hierarchy of values. For example, Angelucci (2008) worked with a hierarchy of 55 values, being the most appreciated by university students family and the least considered laziness; Rodríguez (2008) covers the study of the value family, using the Casares value test where he found a hierarchy of values in which the affective, the moral and the ecological values were dominant; Arango (2014) applied the Schwartz questionnaire and the “biggest blunder” test in order to measure the relationship between the academic education and the socially responsible behavior in university students, where ecological self-care and environmental values were an appreciated value; another study that comprises the hierarchy of values in university students is the one by Barbella (2008), where life and love were found as the most appreciated values. All of these studies have been found peculiar in the use of a different hierarchy of values, making it hard to arrive to a general conclusion. They have contributed in the knowledge that there is a certain preference of values according to the educational process.

Most of the studies have been aimed at identifying the values profile related to the acquired competences by students throughout their education, a few consider the relationship between values and personality due to the fact that in the same way personality has been studied separately from values (Aragón, 2010; Rosas, 2001; Coppar, 2011; Flores, 2013). The personality profiles have also been studied in order to acknowledge students evolution throughout their professional training. The studies that have considered the relationship between values and personality carry them out as comparative variables explaining how they impact each other (Gómez, 1985; Torres, 2009). Values are taken as something external to personality in the mentioned studies, although values provide an account of the person on its way of being and on its thinking, they are considered as something internal manifested in actions, conducts and behavior. As far as it concerns us, and considering Spranger who

points out that we are what we do and not the opposite (as others believe), it is a different way of understanding values. That is where the importance of this article lays upon, to consider values as part of personality, as the person cannot be separated from the values that make their personality throughout its dominant interests manifested before different life situations; that is, values in personality are forms of life. Under this thought, an empty space that has been studied since Allport, who proposed to study values from a historical structure of ideal types of beings taken from Spranger, has been filled in.

Under the previous reasoning, our objective is to study values from their dominant interests in university students from the graphic design career and that are manifested in their educational practice, where he acquires and develops an ideal type of ethical training that shapes his personality as future professionals. We consider Rogers and Allport's foundations. From the first, we regard the conception of values and from the second the concept of personality along with a scale that measures values. We found a relationship between both from the idea that values and personality are understood as flexible and dynamic as part of the uniqueness of the person and its different ways and forms according to the life moment.

Roger (2012) points out that the word value is used under several scopes, and quotes three: in order to demonstrate a preference in acts towards an object or objective, there are the values called operational based in an election not necessarily cognitive; in order to show the preference of a conduct before a symbolized object, there are the devised values, based upon the symbolization of ethics and moral; in order to show the objectively preferred, there are the objective values, desired or not. Rogers can be placed in two of these meanings: the operational and the devised values, due to the fact that a person constantly throughout its own development has the freedom to decide over an object or objective; and because the guide to the acts of a person is based upon *good and evil* on the basis of its conception of life. These values are neither static nor rigid; they change continuously according to the evolution of a person. A child may be set up upon some values and in adulthood according to his development, desires and conceptions. For example, a child whose father is a doctor may influence on the child for him to be a doctor as well, as the inculcated values may help to the welfare of people; nevertheless, once the youngster enrolls into the career of medicine, he may be failing some basic career subjects as he discovers it is not his call, that he would rather do something else; he has his own values. It is throughout experience that values may be feedback.

Rogers considers that the feedback of values is made throughout an assessment process that includes different aspects: an organismic basis that a person possesses in order to make decisions, because the body receives different information on which to adjust its behavior and actions; an improvement is achieved as the person allows some inner introspection; the person opens itself to experiences on revealing its singularity and to self-recognize as an independent person; there is a community that shares with the person the organismic basis that guides values, they are universal values *existing in there*; the guidelines of value contribute to the development of the person itself, to the development of other members of the community and to the species survival. Value as a singular experience guarantees freedom to the person.

Allport defines personality with similar features to Rogers' value meaning, as it includes the idea of dynamics and of psychophysical system that is equal to the ideas of flexible and organismic. The literal meaning reads: "Personality is the dynamic organization in the individual's inner self of the psychophysical systems that determine its conduct and thoughts" (Allport, 1970).

By dividing the definition we may see that personality is dynamic because it is motivational and self regulates affects, feelings, habits, attitudes, cognition and body which are in mutual interaction; thus personality *is something and performs something* within the uniqueness of the individual adapting to the environment on relation to its conduct and thought on an active creative and spontaneous way. Allport (1979) arrives to this conclusion after analyzing fifty personality definitions and identifying 52 methods of study of personality which comprises 14 subdivisions: of cultural context, physical data, social data, personal data, expressive movement, evaluations, standardized tests, statistical analysis, miniature vital situations, lab experiments, prediction, deep analysis, ideal types and synthetic methods.

Within these subdivisions Allport is placed in the ideal types as it takes after Spranger (1966) works, particularly studying personality from the ideal types: theoretical being, economical being, aesthetical being, social being, political being and religious being. This typology is made up from values that the being prefers according to its personality traits. The ideal types represent bonding ultimate value types of human personality.

A way of recognizing these types of bonding values in a person is throughout the formative processes in higher education, as that is where dominant interests start to build up in educational practice in students in the process of professional development. Allport designed on the grounds of the ideal types, a scale to recognize the

hierarchy of values in university students, which has been used as an empirical referent of great help in order to reorganize the formative processes and educational practice. A supposition emerging from the objective of this article is that students in the career of graphic design shows preference over economical and aesthetical values, and in a lower level the social and religious type.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants

For this project a total of 124 students from the different semesters that make up the career of graphic design of the School of Architecture and Design of the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, of which 88 were women (71%) and 36 were men (29%). The average age of men and women was of 21 on an age range between 18 and 25 years.

### 2.2 Instrument

Allport, Vernon and Lindzey's Study of *Values, A scale for the measuring of personality dominant interests* was applied, using the second edition in Spanish which corresponds to the third one in English.

It is a complex *test* with an initial philosophical scope that evolved into an empirical scale which explores six common revealing characteristics of the dominant values in the human personality. The notion of value that it implies is comprehensive of the singularity of the individual as a group of cognitive, motor and deep dispositions of the *proprium* (person). The ideal values are grouped in six types of directions: theoretical (truth), utilitarian (usefulness), aesthetic (harmony), social (love), political (power) and religious (unity). These directions are revealed in a person in a mixed form, there is not a single person who may only take one direction. We show in the following table, the characteristics of these directions that shape the ideal types (Table 1):

Table 1. Spranger's ideal types

Ideal types	Characteristics
Theoretical	<p>Its main interest is the <b>discovering of the truth.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cognitive attitude.</li> <li>-Investigates similarities and differences.</li> <li>-Tries to only <b>observe and reason.</b></li> <li>-Its interests are <b>empirical, of reasoning and rational.</b></li> <li>-Frequently it is a <b>scientific or philosophical</b> intellectual.</li> <li>-Its main goal is to <b>organize and systematize its knowledge.</b></li> </ul>
Economical	<p>Its main interest is that which is <b>useful.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interest on <b>satisfaction of body needs</b> (self-preservation).</li> <li>-Interest in the practical matters of <b>business (production, commercialization and goods consumption, credit development and accumulation of tangible wealth).</b></li> <li>-A totally <b>practical and negotiating</b> subject.</li> </ul>
Aesthetical	<p>Its main value is <b>form and harmony.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Each individual experience is judged from the perspective of <b>elegance, symmetry or good form.</b></li> <li>-It considers life as a sequence of events.</li> <li>-It is aesthetical if it finds its main interest in the <b>artistic chapters of life.</b></li> </ul>
Social	<p>Its main value is <b>love for people.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What is measured in the study of values is the <b>altruist or philanthropic aspect of love.</b></li> <li>-The social being considers other people as an end that is why it is <b>kind, compassionate and generous.</b></li> </ul>
Political	<p>Its main interest is <b>power.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>It is decided and strong, they are leaders.</b></li> </ul>
Religious	<p>The main value of a religious being is <b>unity.</b></p>

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-It is mystical and seeks to **understand the cosmos as a whole**.

-Some beings of this type are “**mystical immanent**”, that is, they find their religious experience throughout an **affirmation to life and an active participation on it**.

-“The **transcendental mystical**” seeks to unite with a superior reality by **retreating from life; it is ascetic and finds the experience of unity throughout the negation of themselves and in meditation**.

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The scale is made up of several questions that recover a variety of familiar situations; it is divided into two parts, the first provides two alternative answers and the second, four. There are a total of 120 answers, 20 for each one of the six values. The scale has an average trust coefficient, with the transformation of  $z$  of .89 and there is a positive co relationship between each question and the final score of its value.

### 2.3 Procedure

It is an exploratory study performed throughout the application of a descriptive scale of the personality dominant values. The scale application was made at the end of the semester during class hours, in the morning and afternoon periods. Before the application of the scale, students were informed of the objective in order to know of the importance of the project. Then instructions were given and in the end they were told that the information was confidential and for research means.

Those applying the scale were trained in theory and methodology. They were given an approximation of the conceptual and technical foundations of the scale with the purpose of a better understanding of the sense of the questions and that they were in conditions to guide the students at the moment of application. The explanation consisted on providing a warning on the difference between part I and part II of the scale. Part I was made of 30 questions with four value answers that were transcribed in the scale: If you agree with the alternative (a) and disagree with (b), write 3 in the first space and 0 in the second one; if you agree with (b) and disagree with (a), write 0 in the first space and 3 in the second; if you have a slight preference for (a) instead of (b), write 2 in the first space and 1 in the second space; and if you have a slight preference for (b) instead of (a), write 1 in the first space and 2 in the second space. Part II was made of 15 questions with four values of answers: 4 in the space, if this affirmation seems the less appalling; 3 in the space, if this affirmation is of some interest in second place; 2 in the space, is this affirmation is appalling in third place; and 1 in the space, if the affirmation is the one that represents the least favorite or preferred one.

### 2.4 Analysis

The punctuation sheet was firstly worked with for each one of the students that answered the scale. The data compilation was performed as shown in the following table (Table 2):

Table 2. Punctuation sheet

Total in each page	Theoretical	Economical	Aesthetic	Social	Political	Religious	The sum of these three punctuations for each row must be equal to the number provided in this column
<b>Part I</b>	(R)	(S)	(T)	(X)	(Y)	(Z)	24
Page 2							
Page 3	(Z)	(Y)	(X)	(T)	(S)	(R)	24
Page 4	(X)	(R)	(Z)	(S)	(T)	(Y)	21
Page 5	(S)	(X)	(Y)	(R)	(Z)	(T)	21
<b>Part II</b>	(Y)	(T)	(S)	(Z)	(R)	(X)	60
Page 8							
Page 9	(T)	(Z)	(R)	(Y)	(X)	(S)	50
Page 10	(R)	(S)	(T)	(X)	(Y)	(Z)	40

<b>Total</b>							240
<b>Number corrections</b>	+2*	-1	+4	-2*	+2	-5	
<b>Final Total</b>							240

For the interpretation Allport's values should be used, for women as well as for men as shown in the following table (Table 3):

Table 3. Score divided per value and per sex

VALUES	SEX	OUTSTANDING HIGHER	HIGH	LOW	OUTSTANDING LOW
Theoretical	M	>54	54-49	39-34	<34
	F	>45	45-41	31-26	<26
Economical	M	>53	53-48	37-32	<32
	F	>48	48-43	33-28	<28
Aesthetic	M	>47	47-41	29-24	<24
	F	>54	54-48	37-31	<31
Social	M	>47	47-42	32-28	<28
	F	>51	51-47	37-33	<33
Political	M	>52	52-47	38-34	<34
	F	>46	46-42	34-29	<29
Religious	M	>51	51-44	32-26	<26
	F	>56	56-50	37-31	<31

At last, a statistical processing was performed with the aim of establishing the hierarchy of values in men and women.

### 3. Results

We begin by presenting the results in a general way in men and women to then compare both sexes. Men are higher in the economical and aesthetic values as can be seen in the graph (Figure 1):

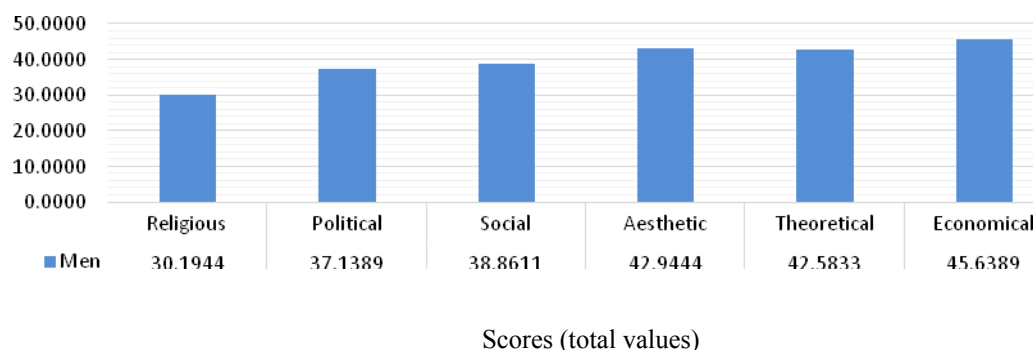
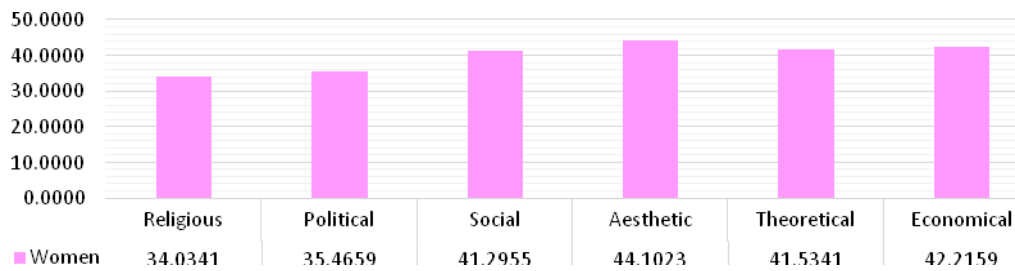


Figure 1. Average values: men

Men are more interested in the useful as it assures them self-preservation; that is why they are practical and negotiating people oriented towards interests linked to production, commercialization and goods and services consumption. The aesthetic value is preferred as long as beauty may be translated into luxury, as art to them satisfies commercial ends of their training as graphic designers. The ethical value is appreciated in a technical

sense because it provides them with pragmatic knowledge that may be summarized into something useful. The least appreciated values are the religious, the political and the social, as it worships money, they are not interested in power over power, and they focus on the economic power provided by the accumulation of wealth, and are away from the idealism of love so characteristic of the social value; the social is of interest to them as an economical mechanism.

In women there is an inverse situation, as they prefer the aesthetic and then the economical, as can be seen in the following graph (Figure 2):

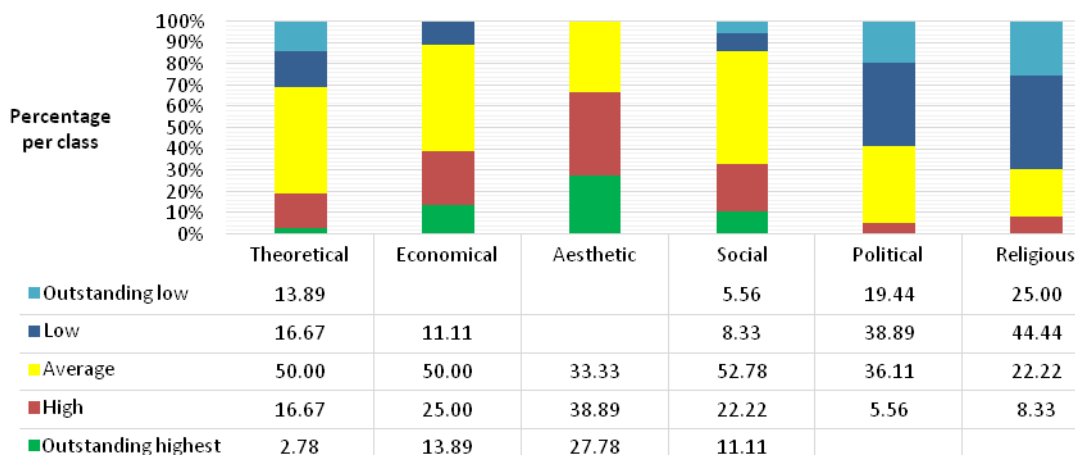


Scores (total values)

Figure 2. Average values: women

Women have as main value form and harmony, their particular experiences are submitted to the search of elegance, symmetry and good form. They are interested the artistic chapters of life, the economical is something that endangers the aesthetic because of its sense of usefulness, and the theoretical part is important to them if it contributes to their artistic works from a technical conception. The preferred values in a minor scale are the religious, the political and the social; people are of interest to them but not their wellness, they tend to be self-absorbed and self-sufficient, against the power that limits individuality, and concerning the religious experience, they appreciate it from its beauty rather than from its transcendence.

Now let's take a look to the results per class in men and women. In men we registered that 66.67% is placed in the highest scores and in the outstanding high of the aesthetic value as can be seen in the following graph (Figure 3):

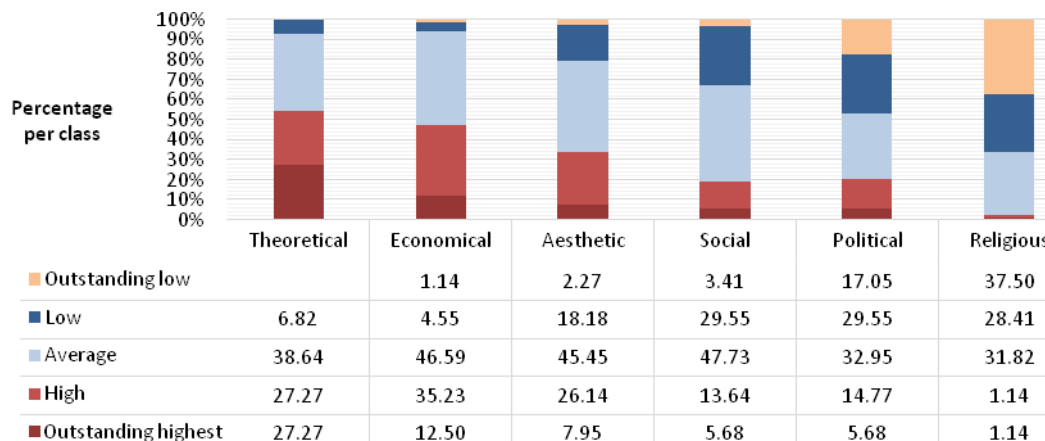


Values According to Allport's Scale

Figure 3. Scores per class: men

Per class, the religious value is again in the end with 69.44% of low and outstanding low. It is neither peculiar that the aesthetic value does not present low nor outstanding low, and that the economic value does not present outstanding lows as well. In average, men register the highest values in the social, the theoretical and the economical. This explains why there is a difference between semesters by men, when they are closer to finishing university their scale of values is predominantly economical, and the more they are in the first semesters, the closer they are to the social values.

We find a different behavior between men and women. Women's punctuation per class prefer the theoretical value where there is a register of 54% of the high scores and of the outstanding high, followed by the economic value with a 47.73 of the same type of scores. This can be seen in the following graph (Figure 4):



Values According to Allport's Scale

Figure 4. Scores per class: women

The religious value is again in the last place with a preference of a 65.91% of lows and outstanding lows, followed by the political value with 46.60% of lows and outstanding lows. In the case of women, the theoretical value does not show lows, or outstanding lows. During the first semester women opt for the theoretical value and as they go further in their educational practice, they move towards the economic value. There is a low appreciation for the religious value from beginning to end.

#### 4. Conclusions

The profile of dominant values in men and women from the career of graphic design are the economical and aesthetic values according to their profile in their educational performance, as their profession orientation is towards the market of images that sell products. Colors, shapes, textures are in harmony with the expectation of the consumer desires who seek for a variety from their uniqueness. Graphic designers professionally contribute to the selling of the imaginary, that is why their tendency towards the economical and the aesthetic values.

Graphic designers are interested in the useful; in the pragmatic from this logic they tend to go for the aesthetic. The beautiful is valued from the production and commercialization of goods and services. Beauty is judged from its usefulness, from the shape that wins the heart of consumers of beauty as a luxury or social status, or of economic or political power.

A graphic designer who is well placed in the market is someone who provides creativity that sells their designs; this is learnt throughout their educational practice. At the beginning of their studies and due to the fact of a lack of theoretical, methodological and technical knowledge, women show as dominant values the aesthetic and the economical, they assume a cognitive attitude due to their interest in the intellectual, they crave to understand, reason, observe and develop their scientific and philosophical abilities. The relationship with the economical values is different at the beginning of the career, there is no preference over the usefulness of objects, they lack of utilitarian judgments over objects, the economic area is considered as a result of the theoretical; that is, their thought is that a female graphic designer who is well prepared in the theoretical area, will have economic success.

Men at the beginning of their educational practice have a preference for the aesthetic and economical values.

Their experience moves towards the elegant, symmetry and the good form; its conduct is manifested by artistic chapters of life. The economical is seen as something that destroys the aesthetic, usefulness is something important as long as it is represented in aesthetic objects, with some form and harmony. As they move to more advanced semesters, the dominant values change in men and women. Men move towards the economical and women to the aesthetic. Men acquire a pragmatic vision that seeks for the material benefit and women acquire a more observing vision that seeks for creativity and legacy. Personality dominant interests are divided.

It is of special attention to notice that for men and for women, the values associated with the community and wellness appears in the last place in the hierarchy. Religion is placed in the last place, the unity of the sacred, the spiritual and the cosmic does not show any impact on students neither at the beginning nor at the end. Something similar happens with the social, which is associated with love, solidarity of recognition of another being. A selfishness spirit prevails. Power is not a priority as well among graphic design students, they prefer individuality where for men it is in order to gain economic power and for women it is to the development of their creativity and the artistic performance.

Within post modernity, our current social status, there is a prevailing individualist, narcissist and hedonist vision that creates distant values from the community, which seems to explain why the change in students in the last semesters. Our social system is destroying the freshness of students as they arrived to their career, that participation in the solution of social problems spirit and of creating new objects and processes that help the needs are a dream compared to the aimed economical satisfaction. It seems that higher education influences a few on the value formation; values are acquired from the same context. That is why we could say that students finish their professional education as individualist, narcissist and hedonist people.

In a competitive world, the least important is other people, as own needs come before, the search for satisfaction which becomes something unreachable due to the fact that once they are obtained their need to it is lost, the desire for it vanishes in the air. It is part of the predominant hedonism where the work of the graphic designer is placed in a privileged place where objects and services are sold depending on the form and harmony of the designs. The world of a graphic designer is paradoxical; it becomes spellbound in its own work.

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