



Axiological measurements of the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines in higher education

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Abstract. The study addressed the educational potential of value-oriented academic disciplines (VOAD) in the context of higher education institutions with religious founders. The study aimed to substantiate the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines in higher education institutions and to determine their role in shaping the moral and civic values of young students. The study revealed the essence of the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines as an integral characteristic of the educational process, which ensures not only the transmission of knowledge, but also the transformation of the student's worldview based on Christian anthropology and the principle of "human as the image of God". The study analysed two key dimensions of the realisation of this potential, namely, worldview, which involved the formation of a holistic Christian view of the world in which science and faith were seen as complementary ways of cognition, and professional activity, focused on education through the concept of servant leadership and the principles of professional ethics. The study emphasised the practical significance of such disciplines for improving the quality of life of students, their therapeutic function, and the development of soft skills and emotional intelligence. The study also critically examined the potential risks of implementing this system, in particular the danger of indoctrination and the problem of the so-called greenhouse effect when graduates encounter the realities of secular society. The necessity of balancing value formation and the development of autonomous critical thinking as a condition for the mature personal and professional identity of graduates was substantiated. The proposed approach addressed VOAD as a tool not only for education but also for preparing students for responsible public service in a pluralistic environment. The results of the study can be used in the development and improvement of educational programmes in higher education institutions focused on the integration of the value and academic dimensions of education

Keywords: Christian anthropology; integration of faith and learning; servant leadership; worldview; professional ethics; soft skills

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Introduction

Modern higher education is undergoing fundamental paradigm shifts, where the priority is not only the transfer of professional knowledge, but also the formation of a well-rounded personality capable of responding to complex challenges. In global uncertainty, rapid technological transformation and socio-cultural crises, the university must restore its role as a centre for the formation of human values. The relevance of researching the axiological dimensions of the educational potential of academic disciplines is determined by the need to bridge the gap between professional competence and moral maturity of specialists. This is particularly relevant in the context of society's demand for leaders who possess not only technical skills, but also a strong ethical core, developed emotional intelligence and the ability to serve society. Therefore, reconsideration of the content and methodology of teaching value-oriented disciplines is a critical task for ensuring the quality of education that meets high standards of humanism and professional responsibility.

An analysis of studies shows that the issue of axiologisation of education was substantially addressed. Researchers concur that the value component is no longer an additional element but has become a strategic vector for the development of pedagogy. In particular, scholar U. Khodjamkulov (2024) emphasised that axiologisation of education is a necessary response to contemporary challenges. The study concluded that values determine the intrinsic meaning of education and serve as a reliable guide for shaping the worldview of future professionals, retaining stability in conditions of social turbulence. A significant body of research is devoted to the relationship between value-based education and the development of soft skills. For instance, S. Hamid (2025) proved that the integration of emotional intelligence components into educational programmes acts as a catalyst for effective learning. Developing this idea, D. Garner *et al.* (2025) highlighted that there is a direct correlation between the level of emotional competence formed

by value-oriented disciplines and the academic performance of students. This confirms the thesis that the educational potential of disciplines has a measurable impact on the quality of training. The pragmatic aspect of the problem, viewed through the prism of labour market requirements, is also relevant. A. Hachkevych & M. Vesolovska (2023) analysed employer expectations and noted that emotional competence and value maturity are considered by businesses to be critical factors in professional suitability, often outweighing even purely technical skills. Digitalisation has become a separate challenge for the higher education sector. M. Ghosh (2025) addressed the ethical risks of artificial intelligence use. The study justified the need to establish a clear ethical framework by introducing specialised disciplines such as academic integrity into the curriculum, enabling students to interact critically and responsibly with the latest technologies.

In the context of higher education institutions with religious identity, the axiological dimension takes on a specific meaning. A. González (2024) emphasised that the Christian identity of a university should not be manifested declaratively, but through the integration of faith into scientific research and the content of educational programmes, forming a unique corporate culture. A practical embodiment of this approach is the strategy of "service learning". As N. Kaliappen (2025) noted, involving students in volunteer and social work within the framework of educational courses significantly increases the level of civil awareness and social responsibility. Christian anthropology is the fundamental basis for implementing this approach. H. Liessi & L. da Silva Liessi (2022) argued that the educational process in a Christian institution should be based on the principle of "human as the image of God", which implies the comprehensive development of the personality. This idea was further developed by J. Taylor (2022), noting that the goal of education is not simply professionalisation, but the restoration of the spiritual and moral integrity

of the student, where the educational potential of disciplines is achieved through the methodology of integrating faith and learning.

The study aimed to provide a theoretical justification and empirical analysis of the axiological dimensions of the educational potential of a block of value-oriented academic disciplines in a higher education institution with a Christian identity (using the example of the Ukrainian Humanitarian Institute (UHI), a private higher education institution). To achieve this goal, the following research tasks were accomplished: to reveal the essence and structure of the educational potential of selected disciplines in the humanities and theology in the context of the modern paradigm of higher education; to analyse the content and thematic diversity of value-oriented disciplines at the UHI (from bioethics and Christian philosophy to academic integrity with AI) as a tool for shaping the worldview of students; to identify the peculiarities of perception and criteria for the selection of value-oriented disciplines by students of different forms of education (full-time vs. part-time); and to reveal the correlation between the content of courses and the demands of young people for the formation of soft skills and emotional intelligence.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted within the framework of a qualitative case study strategy, which was used for an in-depth analysis of the unique educational environment of a higher education institution with a religious identity. The study was descriptive and analytical in nature, combining a theoretical determination of axiological principles with an empirical analysis of educational practice. The chronological scope of the study covered the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years, which made it possible to trace the dynamics of subject selection and the adaptation of course content to current challenges (in particular, the ethical aspects of artificial intelligence). The empirical basis for the study was the educational space of the Ukrainian Humanitarian Institute (n.d.).

The study was based on a comprehensive combination of general scientific and specific approaches. The axiological approach served as the basis for considering education as a process of transmitting values, defining value orientations as the core of professional training. The anthropological approach, applied through the prism of Christian anthropology, was used to interpret the educational potential of disciplines as a tool for restoring personal integrity (integration of the spiritual, intellectual and emotional). The systemic approach ensured that the block of elective disciplines was considered not as a set of disparate subjects, but as a holistic ecosystem influencing the worldview of the applicant. The object of empirical analysis was a block of free-choice disciplines provided by the Department of Theology for students of all specialities.

The units of analysis were normative documents: curricula, syllabi (a total of 15 syllabi were analysed) and statistical data. These included reports on the choice of disciplines by full-time and part-time students. The principle of material selection was based on a comprehensive sample of value-oriented disciplines that had an explicitly expressed value orientation (worldview, ethical, biblical studies courses, etc.). To solve the tasks set, a set of complementary methods was used, namely: the content analysis method was used to process the content of syllabi (in particular, the courses "Theology of Love", "Academic Integrity with AI", "Christian Ethics", etc.). The method was used to identify key semantic units (values, competencies, learning outcomes), which made it possible to determine the content focus and axiological load of the courses; the categorisation and classification method was used to structure the array of selected disciplines. This made it possible to group courses into thematic blocks (biblical-textual, worldview-philosophical, ethical-applied) and identify the structural logic of the formation of the value block; the hermeneutic method was used to interpret the theological and philosophical concepts embedded in the courses. Its task was to analyse how traditional Christian

meanings are adapted to the perception of modern students ("Generation Z") and transformed into the language of professional competencies. Comparative analysis was used to compare the priorities of discipline selection by different groups of respondents. This identified significant differences in the motivation and value demands of full-time students (focus on communication, emotional intelligence) and part-time students (focus on pragmatics and existential issues). The results were processed by summarising qualitative data, which concluded on the effectiveness of the existing model of value-oriented education at the university.

Results and Discussion

One of the priority tasks of value-oriented disciplines is the formation of a stable axiological sphere of personality. In the context of the modern socio-cultural environment, which is often characterised by moral relativism, J. Kaplan (1989) emphasises the focus of the educational potential of these disciplines on establishing a system of absolute moral coordinates. Developing this idea, L. Biryuk & S. Pishun (2022) argue that the implementation of the axiological dimension primarily involves the internalisation of universal virtues, when the educational content becomes part of the student's personal beliefs. It is advisable to define the essence of the educational potential of value-oriented educational disciplines (VOAD). VOAD is considered an integral characteristic of a training course, reflecting the totality of the objective possibilities of its content, methodological tools and the personality of the teacher. The realisation of this potential ensures not only the transfer of cognitive information but also the purposeful transformation of the student's worldview. The process involves the assimilation of such basic values as truth, justice, mercy, dignity and freedom of choice. At the same time, as U. Khodjamkulov (2024) emphasises, a substantial aspect is the formation of moral resilience – the ability of an individual to resist negative social influences. The development of emotional intelligence is

substantial in this process. D. Kaltved (2021) and S. Hamid (2025) highlighted that the determination of the humanistic aspects of disciplines fosters a "culture of the heart" and the capacity for empathy. At the same time, the implementation of the educational potential of value-oriented academic disciplines is not an automatic consequence of the presence of axiologically rich content, but requires targeted methodological support for the educational process. This involves the use of pedagogical approaches such as dialogic learning, reflective and narrative practices, problem-value analysis, and learning through socially meaningful activities, which create conditions for the internalisation of values rather than their formal assimilation.

A substantial theoretical basis for the determination of the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines is the concept of the educational potential of higher education institutions in general. For instance, I. Krasnoshchok (2019) defined educational potential as a multidimensional system that includes value-semantic, organisational-pedagogical and personal components, and emphasises the need for its purposeful development and scientifically based criteria for implementation. The study noted that the effectiveness of educational influence depends not only on declared values, but also on the consistency between the content of education, institutional culture and real practices of interaction in higher education. In this context, the VOAD appears as a partial but conceptually significant manifestation of the general institutional educational potential, which requires systematic management and constant reflection. In this context, the problem of operationalising the VOAD and defining the criteria for its implementation, which can ensure transition from declarative level to analytically verified results, becomes relevant. Such criteria may include the formation of students' value-semantic orientations, the ability to engage in moral reflection, manifestations of responsible behaviour in educational and social activities, as well as readiness to make independent ethical choices in professional situations.

Analysing the components of VOAD, the worldview dimension should be highlighted first. It is implemented through the formation of a holistic Christian worldview, within which scientific knowledge and faith are understood as complementary ways of interpreting reality. J. Greene & S. Yu (2015) emphasise the need to ensure epistemological breadth, which involves engaging students in analysing problems through the prism of different paradigms. According to H. Siegel (2017), such a multidimensional perspective stimulates the development of critical thinking. The educational effect of this approach, according to A. Tamayo (2025) involves overcoming dogmatism and fostering respect for alternative interpretations. A substantial component of the worldview dimension is the orientation of the educational process towards an existential search for meaning. S. Billett (2011) and V. Klotz *et al.* (2014), as well as M. Kryger & A. Qvortrup (2025), view academic disciplines as a platform for personal reflection on fundamental anthropological questions. In this context, education takes on a transformative character. The formation of historical and cultural identity is notable. As noted by B. Paridinova *et al.* (2023), this is achieved through awareness of spiritual origins of culture. In this vein, S. Bryan (2023), reviewing works on biblical theology, notes that awareness of cultural identity through biblical goals provides a broader determination of the nature of ethnicity. The study noted that involvement in the Bible-based civilisational tradition contributes to the formation of civic responsibility. Another component of VOAD is the professional-activity dimension. Yu. Kolisnyk-Humeniuk (2014) and UNODC experts (2016) are convinced that true professionalism is impossible without adherence to high moral standards. In turn, K. Blanchard & P. Hodges (2006) insist that professional competence must be organically combined with ethical responsibility. In this context, the system of educational influence addresses the formation of the concept of servant leadership, which is studied by J. Andersen (2018) and A. Canavesi & E. Minelli (2022). This requires a redefinition of

career strategies. K. Patterson (2003) suggests viewing a career as a tool for responsible service to society, while R. Banks *et al.* (2016) support the view that such an approach fosters professionals capable of acting from a position of ethical maturity.

A substantial component is the formation of professional ethics in the digital age. M. Ghosh (2025) emphasises the importance of awareness of the moral limits of technology use and the affirmation of the priority of human dignity. In addition, the professional-activity dimension involves engagement in social practice. N. Kaliappen (2025) confirms that volunteering contributes to the formation of active citizenship, while M. Prentice (2007) argues for the importance of integrating theoretical knowledge with real-life experience. In the context of higher education institutions with a religious founder, A. González (2024) defines this potential as the ability to translate transcendent values into practical life. As evidenced by the list of courses at the Ukrainian Humanitarian Institute (n.d.), these subjects are applied in nature. For example, alongside G. Ashley & M. Cort (2007), C. Connernton & S. Theuri (2023) demonstrate the effectiveness of the NEWSTART model in the course "Healthy Lifestyle".

The therapeutic function of disciplines deserves special attention. Assessing the positive aspects of VOAD, A. Hachkevych & M. Vesolovska (2023) noted a significant contribution to the development of soft skills. According to F. Mendoza-Urbina *et al.* (2024), this compensates for the limitations of professional training focused on technical skills. N. Basnet *et al.* (2024) add that such disciplines perform a meaning-making function, providing a worldview foundation. However, there are critical aspects. J. Gross (1988) warns of the risk of double standards if the teacher is perceived as a role model but does not meet the expectations. W. Martino (2009) emphasises that the effectiveness of disciplines critically depends on the personality of the mentor. A. Lenton *et al.* (2013) also describe the problem of subjectivity in the choice of a teacher based on

sympathy, which can create an imbalance of competencies. In addition, N. Noddings (2012) and C. Mariskind (2014) noted the risk of indoctrination when teachers ignore the realities of secular society, which can cause cognitive dissonance in students. In this regard, the issue of preservation value autonomy of students requires consideration, since the effectiveness of educational influence directly depends on voluntary acceptance of values, rather than external regulatory control. In the absence of space for personal choice and critical reflection, there is a risk of forming superficial conformity, which does not ensure the stability of moral attitudes outside the educational environment. At the same time, it is advisable to consider the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines in a broader comparative context of contemporary higher education, where the axiological dimension is present in both confessional and secular educational models, although it is implemented through different pedagogical and worldview strategies. This approach avoids the reduction of the problem to the opposition between “religious” and “scientific” and defines VOAD as one of the possible forms of value integration in education.

The implementation of this approach is associated with a range of additional significant limitations. Firstly, there is the problem of scientific verification due to a direct conflict with the current consensus in the fields of biology and geology. This is due to the risk of excessive confessionalism, in particular the imposition of a narrow view of young Earth creationism, which may be perceived as a departure from scientific standards. This specificity creates a staffing problem – an acute shortage of teachers who combine the necessary worldview with a relevant natural science degree. As a result, this creates barriers to academic mobility, jeopardising the recognition of graduates’ qualifications in secular educational and scientific institutions. These factors can lead to a phenomenon that S. Veenman (1984) characterises as the “greenhouse bubble” effect and “reality shock”, when

graduates are unprepared for harsh competition or ethical compromises in the labour market.

In the context of the Ukrainian Institute of Arts and Sciences, the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines is realised through a compulsory block of courses (“Biblical Theology”, “Christian Ethics”, “Healthy Lifestyle”, “Leadership-Service”), which combine worldview, professional-ethical, and socio-practical dimensions of student training. The implementation of the axiological component is ensured using dialogical and reflective teaching methods, which promote the internalisation of basic moral values rather than their formal assimilation. The formation of moral resilience and civic responsibility is enhanced through the integration of the educational process with volunteer and socially significant activities, which can be used to correlate normative ethical models with real professional and social challenges. The educational potential of the disciplines is also manifested in the development of emotional intelligence, empathy, and responsible decision-making. At the same time, analysis of UHI’s educational practice reveals several limitations in the implementation of VOAD related to the need to maintain a balance between confessional worldviews and modern academic standards, which highlights the need for constant epistemological reflection and methodological updating of the educational process.

Therefore, summarising the analysis, the educational potential of value-oriented academic disciplines appears to be a complex, multidimensional and, at the same time, vulnerable pedagogical phenomenon. Their significance is determined by their ability not only to convey a system of universal moral guidelines, but also to ensure the deep internalisation of values, forming a holistic worldview, moral stability, emotional maturity and professional responsibility of the individual. VOAD integrates worldview, professional-activity, therapeutic and socio-practical dimensions, acting as a conceptually relevant fragment of the general institutional educational potential of a higher education institution. At the same

time, the effectiveness of its implementation critically depends on the consistency between the declared values, the methodological culture of teaching, and the personal integrity of the teacher, which determines both significant educational opportunities and the risks of indoctrination, subjectivism, and loss of academic legitimacy. The tension between confessional worldviews and modern scientific standards requires consideration, as in the absence of proper epistemological reflection, it can cause isolationism, restrictions on academic mobility, and the phenomenon of the “greenhouse bubble”. Thus, the further development of VOAD requires not a simplification or radicalisation of value emphases, but a scientifically balanced approach between axiological certainty, critical thinking, and openness to dialogue with the secular academic community, which will transform value-oriented disciplines into a transformative resource for modern higher education.

Conclusions

The analysis gives grounds to assert that the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines at the Ukrainian Humanitarian Institute is systematic in nature and is a substantial factor in ensuring the unity of teaching and education in higher education. This potential is not limited to the transmission of knowledge, but functions as a source of meaning, contributing to the formation of a holistic worldview and the self-determination of students. The implementation of the educational potential of value-oriented disciplines is based on the principles of Christian anthropology and is aimed at restoring the spiritual, moral and personal integrity of the individual. In this context, education appears not only as a mechanism for professional training, but also as a space for the formation of a mature personality capable of responsible choice, ethical thinking and conscious service to society.

A substantial characteristic of the system under study is the multidimensionality of its educational influence. The potential of disciplines was revealed, on the one hand, through a worldview

search for meaning and the integration of faith and scientific knowledge, and on the other hand, through the professional and activity-based projection of values, in particular within the concept of servant leadership. This approach creates the conditions for training a new type of specialist who combines professional competence with a high level of ethical responsibility. The practical significance of value-oriented disciplines is evident in their applied nature and direct impact on the quality of life of students. Courses aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, financial literacy and psychological self-regulation have a positive impact on the physical, financial and psycho-emotional well-being of students, which significantly distinguishes them from purely theoretical educational components. At the same time, a key condition for the effectiveness of the entire system is the personal factor of the teacher as a mentor and bearer of declared values. The consistency between the proclaimed ethical principles and the personal example of the teacher determines the level of students’ trust in the educational process; on the other hand, the gap between the declared values and actual practice, as well as problems of scientific verification and staffing, can lead to the discrediting of the content of education.

Prospects for further research can be seen in several key areas. First, it is necessary to conduct longitudinal monitoring of the impact of value-oriented disciplines on the professional careers and ethical behaviour of graduates in the long term. Second, the methodology for training teachers for such courses needs to be studied in detail, in particular, the development of mechanisms to overcome cognitive dissonance between religious worldviews and the modern scientific consensus in the natural sciences. Thirdly, a substantial area is the comparative analysis of the effectiveness of introducing an axiological component into the educational programmes of confessional and secular universities to identify universal strategies for shaping the moral resilience of young people.

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Conflict of Interest

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Аксіологічні виміри виховного потенціалу ціннісно орієнтованих дисциплін у вищій освіті

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Анотація. Стаття присвячена дослідженню виховного потенціалу ціннісно орієнтованих навчальних дисциплін (ВПЦНД) у контексті закладу вищої освіти з релігійним засновником. Метою статті було обґрунтування виховного потенціалу ціннісно орієнтованих дисциплін у закладах вищої освіти та визначення їх ролі у формуванні моральних і громадянських цінностей студентської молоді. У роботі розкрито сутність виховного потенціалу ціннісно орієнтованих дисциплін як інтегральної характеристики освітнього процесу, що забезпечує не лише трансляцію знань, але й світоглядну трансформацію особистості студента на основі християнської антропології та принципу «людина як образ Божий». В дослідженні здійснено аналіз двох ключових вимірів реалізації цього потенціалу, а саме світоглядного, що передбачало формування цілісного християнського бачення світу, у якому наука і віра розглядалися як взаємодоповнювальні способи пізнання, та професійно-діяльнісного, орієнтованого на виховання через концепцію лідерства-служіння і засади професійної етики. Особливу увагу приділено практичній значущості таких дисциплін для підвищення якості життя студентів, їх терапевтичній функції, а також розвитку soft skills й емоційного інтелекту. У статті також критично осмислювались потенційні ризики реалізації зазначеної системи, зокрема небезпека індоктринації та проблема так званого тепличного ефекту під час зіткнення випускників із реаліями секулярного суспільства. Обґрунтовано необхідність балансу між ціннісною формацією та розвитком автономного критичного мислення як умови зрілої особистісної і професійної ідентичності випускника. Запропонований підхід дозволив розглядати ВПЦНД як інструмент не лише виховання, а й підготовки студентів до відповідального суспільного служіння в умовах плюралістичного середовища. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані при розробці та вдосконаленні освітніх програм у закладах вищої освіти, орієнтованих на інтеграцію ціннісного та академічного вимірів освіти

Ключові слова: християнська антропологія; інтеграція віри й навчання; лідерство-служіння; світогляд; професійна етика; soft skills