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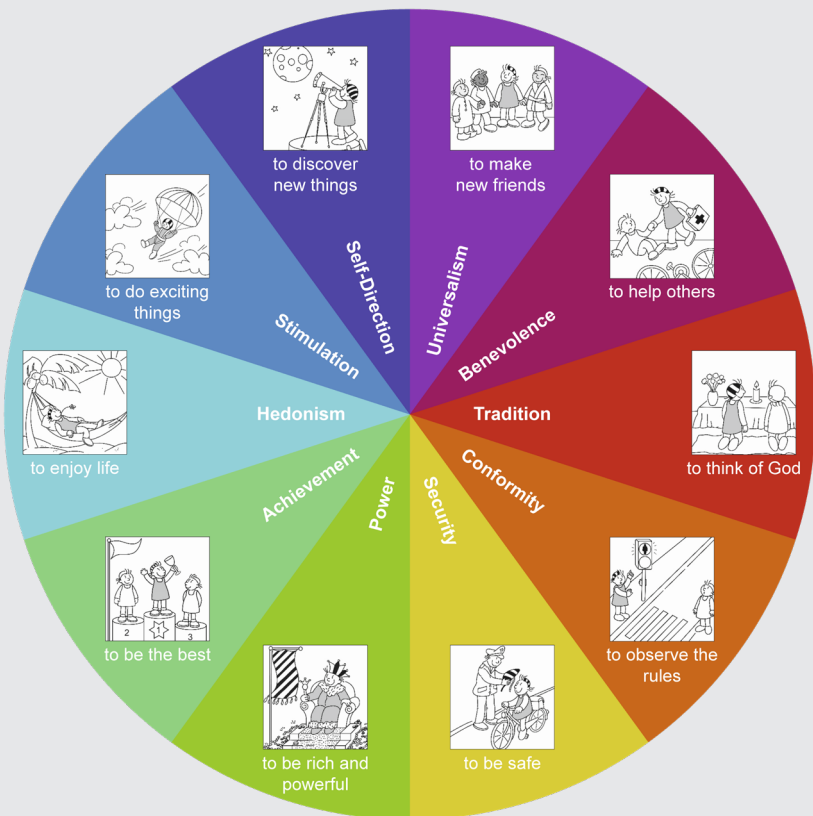
University
of Basel

Institute for
Educational Sciences

Values in School

Preliminary Results of the VALISE Project

Data From the United Kingdom



SNF-Research Project VALISE

VALISE
Values in School Education
Wertebildung in der Schule



Title (original): The Formation of Children's Values in School: A Study on Value Development among Primary School Children in Switzerland and the United Kingdom

German Title: Eine Studie der Werteentwicklung von Primarschulkindern in der Schweiz und in Grossbritannien

Project number: 100019M_189365

Period of Study: 2020-2024



Project team

i3w

Eine Kooperation
der Universität Basel und
der Fachhochschule
Nordwestschweiz FHNW

**UNIVERSITY OF
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May 2023

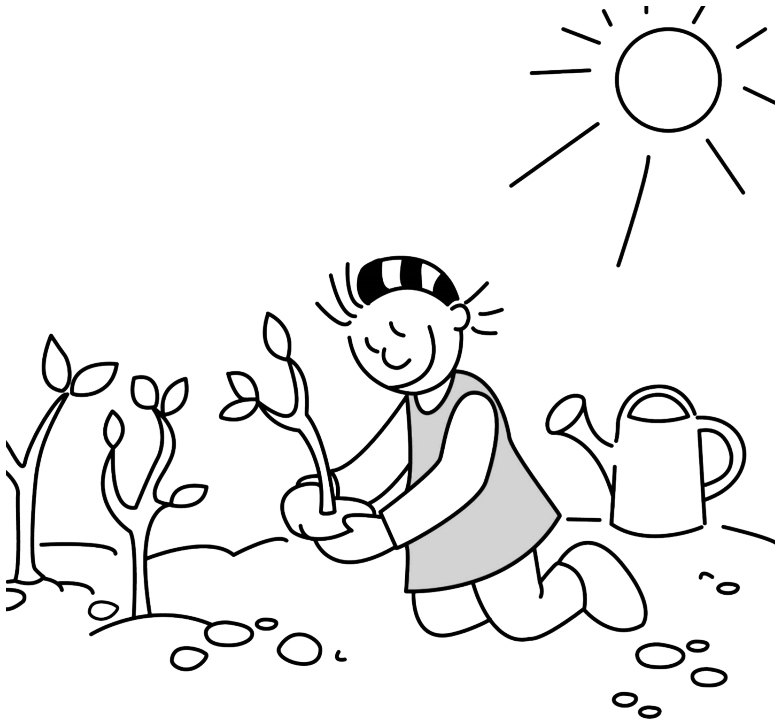
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Part 1:
Values

What is important to me?
How do I want to live my life?
What are my goals?

What Values are

Values are at the heart of all of the above questions.

They help us form goals and give our life direction and meaning.

Everyone has some highly important values and some less important ones.

Values are:

- Abstract desirable goals which people strive to achieve
- They affect social relationships, the development across the life span, happiness and well-being and most importantly our daily actions
- Values are of high social importance¹
- Examples: to be kind, to be independent, to follow my traditions



What Values are not

Values can be distinguished from other psychological personality constructs or sociological constructs such as norms.

Values are often mistaken for:

- **Attitudes:** judgements of certain behaviours or events based on emotions
- **Character Traits:** consistent patterns of behaviours, thoughts and emotions
- **Virtues:** qualities or characteristics that are considered to be morally positive or good
- **Needs:** basic requirement that must be fulfilled, in order to survive

Schwartz's Values Model

One influential model of human values was developed by Prof. Shalom H. Schwartz.² This model assigns the variety of human values to one of the ten value types *Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, Security, Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation and Self-direction*.

Each value type represents a central motivational goal – a basic value. These basic values form a **value circle** which is based on a circular motivational continuum. That means that neighbouring values in the circle share similar motivations, while opposing values share conflicting moti-

ations. To help a friend (basic value: *Benevolence*) and to show acceptance and tolerance (basic value: *Universalisms*) are easy to pursue at the same time and hence are very compatible. On the contrary, it is more difficult to help and strive for power at the same time.

Accordingly, the ten basic values are arranged in a circle (see Figure 1). Neighbouring values that are adjoining often co-occur (e.g. Benevolence, Universalism). Basic values that are opposed to each other have little in common and are typically not occurring together (e.g. Benevolence and Power).

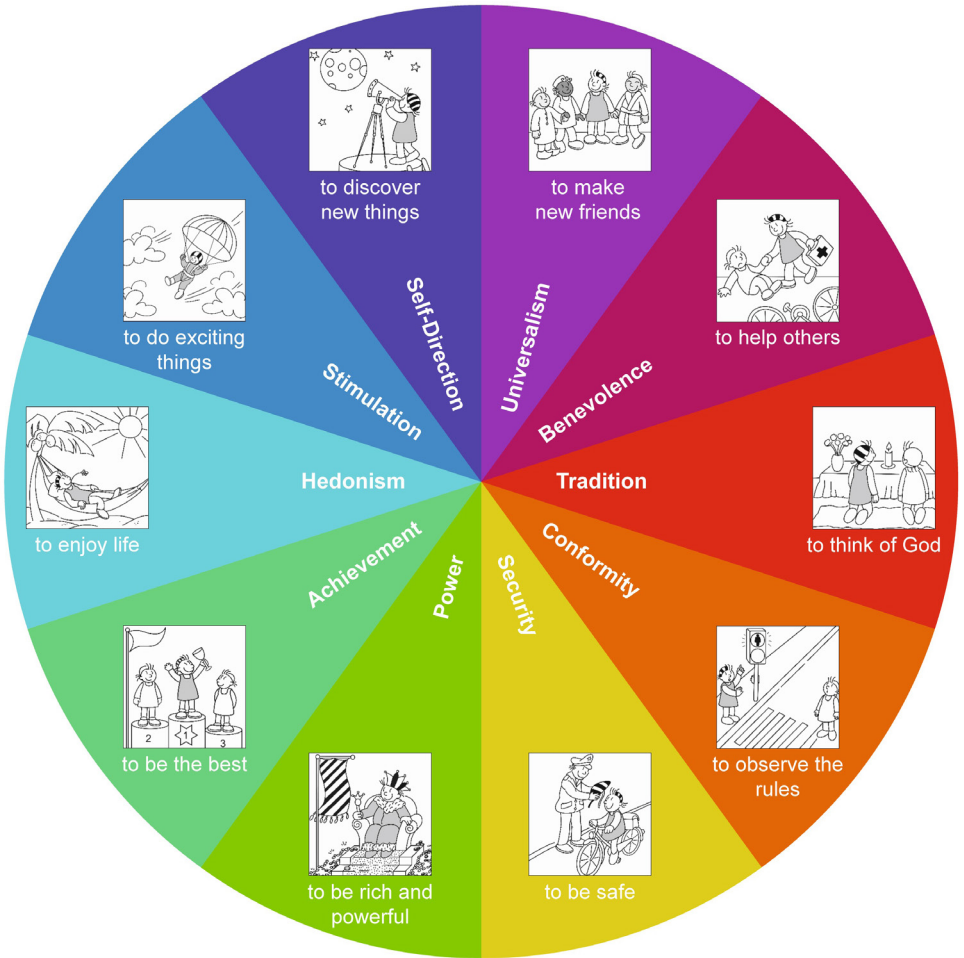


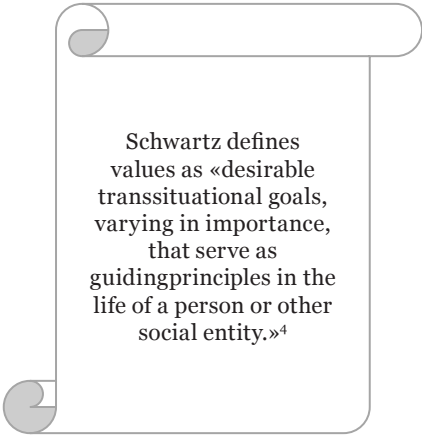
Figure 1: Value model according to Schwartz (own representation)

Value Type	Motivational Goal
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self
Conformity	To comply with social expectations and norms, follow rules
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self
Power	Social status and prestige, authority and leadership
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence, ambitions
Hedonism	Enjoy life, having a good time
Stimulation	Looking for an exciting life with adventures and risks, novelty, and challenge in life
Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring, freedom

Table 1: Schwartz's basic values (1992)

How are Values Transmitted?

Children grow up in a social and cultural environment, in which specific values prevail. A key role in the transmission of values to the next generation – e.g. value transmission – falls to the family as well as the school environment. Within the family, important attachment figures, e.g. parents, pass down their values to their children. According to recent research, children play an active part in this process and show a surprisingly differentiated understanding of their goals and wishes even at an early age. Therefore, children are able to provide information about their values themselves.³



Schwartz defines values as «desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity.»⁴

What Role Does the School Play in Value Transmission?

Together with the family,³ schools play a vital part in value transmission. In the context of the school, value transmission is embedded in the relevant corresponding educational goals that are represented in the respective national curriculum.⁵ Furthermore, the school as an educational and socialisational entity shapes children's

and adolescents' behaviours and attitudes. Thus, schools play a key role in the development of personal value orientation, for example through transmitting values and norms that underlie the democratic foundation of a country.⁶



Value Transmission in School

There are two processes of value transmission happening in the school context:

1. the «translation» of values from the macro level (society, school, national curriculum) onto the micro level (classroom, peers) is a vertical process of value transmission⁷
2. the value transmission within the classroom (micro level) between the teacher and the pupils is a horizontal process

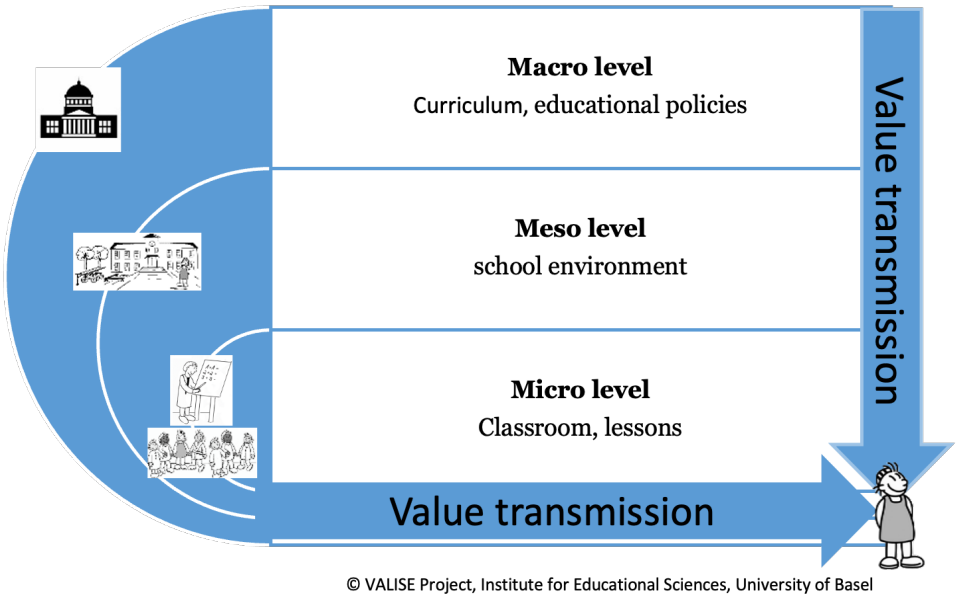
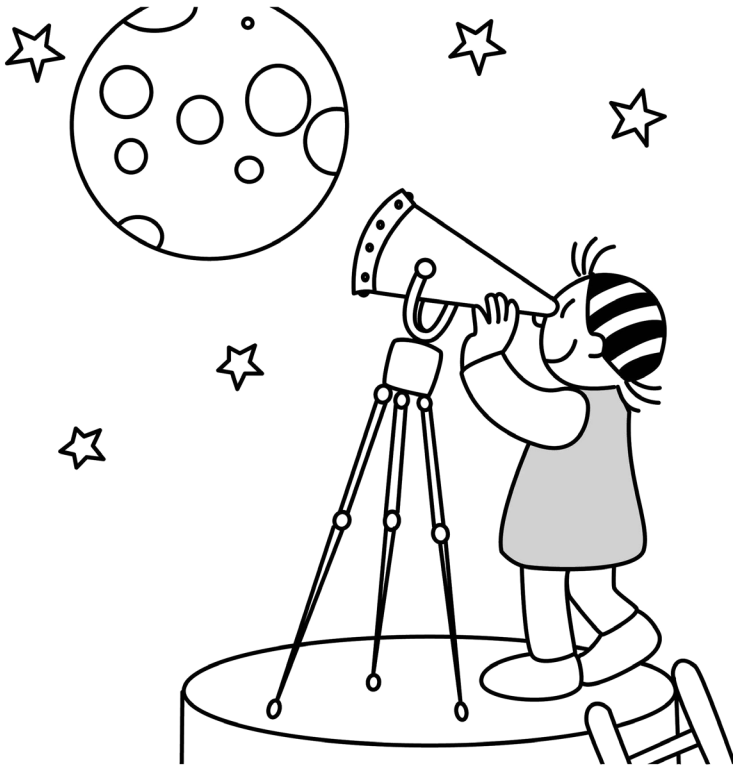


Figure 2: Value transmission in the school context; levels of analysis in the VALISE project



Part 2:
The VALISE Study

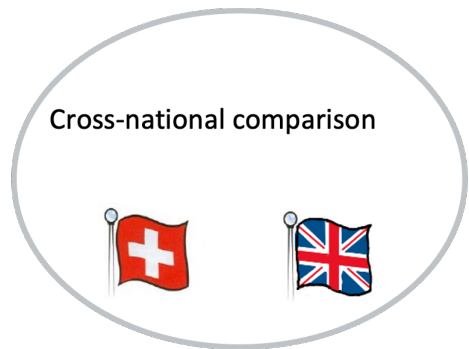
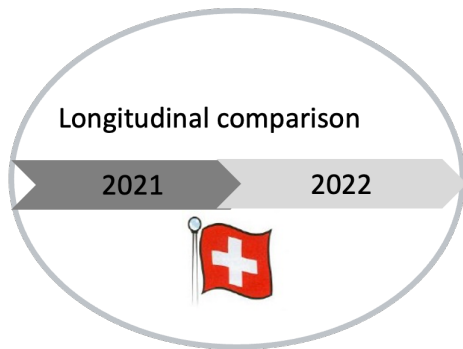
VALISE

Values in School Education
Wertebildung in der Schule

What is the VALISE Study?

The VALues In School Education (VALISE) study investigates the value development of primary school children in Switzerland and the United Kingdom in relation to value-related educational goals in the school curricula in both countries. The project focuses on value priorities, value structures and the developmental trajec-

tories of value priorities in primary school children as well as the identification of key factors affecting value development in the school (national curriculum, school climate, teachers). The project data is longitudinal in Switzerland and cross-sectional (one time only) in the UK.



The study is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and is a joint project between the University of Basel

(Switzerland), the University of Westminster (UK) and Royal Holloway University of London (UK).

Meet the Team

The VALISE (VALues In School Education) team:

(from left to right) Dr. Anna K. Döring (University of Westminster, UK), Ricarda Scholz-Kuhn (Universität Basel, CH), Prof. Anat Bardi (Royal Holloway University of London, UK), Dr. Stefanie Habermann (Royal Holloway University of London, UK), Dr. Beatrice Hayes (Royal Holloway University of London, UK), Prof. Elena Makarova (Universität Basel, CH), Thomas Oeschger (Universität Basel, CH)

not in the picture: Emma Jones, Daisy Loveland, Jasneev Gill, Emily Maclennan, Hajra Bashir, Lisa Kibathi and Prerna Patel (UK team).



Figure 3: VALISE-Projectteam

The Study's Focus and Goals

- 1. Analysis of developmental trends** in value structures and value priorities in children's over a two-year period (Swiss sample only)
- 2. Identification of key factors** affecting the development of children's personal values in the school context
- 3. Depicting processes** of value transmission in the school context
- 4. Develop evidence-based guidelines** for value education in school

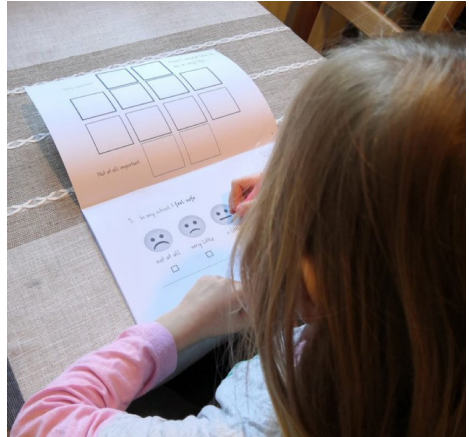


Figure 4: The Picture-Based Value Survey for Children used in the VALISE study

How was the Study Conducted in the UK?

Eleven schools from South England (Berkshire, Surrey, Greater London and Essex) took part in the UK in the VALISE project, totalling 37 classes (22 Year 2 classes and 15 Year 3 classes). 538 pupils and their 43 teachers were assessed on various aspects of value orientation and values in the school environment in their schools during the summer term in 2022.

Children's value priorities were assessed using the **Picture-based Value Survey**

for Children.⁸ Out of 20 pictures (two pictures per value), children choose the stickers with the pictures that depict the values that are important to them, and that are not important, and stick them onto a template (see picture above). Additionally, children were asked about the **school environment** and how **close they are to their teacher** and the **autonomy** given to them by their teacher, using a comprehensive questionnaire.

We asked teachers about their **value-related educational goals** as well as the **school climate** in their school.

Running concurrently with the VALISE project, a qualitative study was undertaken involving ten UK primary school teachers with between 7 and 28 years of teaching experience, across a range of schools in the Southeast of England.

During semi-structured interviews lasting between 50-90 minutes, primary school teachers shared the values that are important to them in their everyday lives and answered questions about how they instil values to their pupils within the classroom and across the school setting.

Data were analysed using a thematic analysis, and seven core themes emerged:

1. Mechanisms of value transmission;
2. Implicit vs explicit instruction of values;
3. Values which are most difficult to teach;
4. Value transmission through taught lessons;
5. Opportunities for value transmission in the wider school environment;
6. The role of collective worship and cultural days;
7. School ethos and the impact of the head teacher.



Part 3:

Results of the VALISE Study

I. The Teachers

How Teachers Instil Values in Primary School: a Qualitative Study

The following results are part of a qualitative study conducted by one of the research assistants as part of her Master's degrees.⁹ This study run concurrent with the VALISE project but was not the main objective of the project.

The primary school teachers in this study explained how they share values through a range of mechanisms, like bringing to mind and modelling, discussion, social stories and questioning:

“I think that it's really important to role model those skills with the children and how you treat the other adults and members of staff within the school setting as well.”

Teachers admit that their own values drive their goals and desirable behaviours but that their responsibility is to share an alternative point of view. For instance,

achievement values can be shown in terms of how teachers encourage pupils to work hard for what they want; self-direction can be shown by encouraging pupils to fulfil their potential by being the best person they can be; universalism by helping pupils to show tolerance to people who may not appear or behave the same as them. While teachers cannot be value-free, by sharing a range of perspectives, they can instil a wide range of values which leads to mutual respect in the classroom, helps foster positive relationships, and provides a secure base to pass on to the next generation.

“If we're saying we value perseverance and those kind of values, teachers are encouraged to explicitly say that if you see it in a piece of work...say it out loud rather than saying, great piece of work, I liked your handwriting...talk about the values that you see.”

Sometimes, these values are instilled explicitly, particularly in Early Years and Key Stage 1, where children learn to share, follow instructions and to become more responsible. However, values need to be embedded in everyday behaviours so that children can apply what they have learnt. Values linked to resilience, being reflective and developing independence may need to be explicitly shared and practiced regularly. More mature and/or abstract values linked to power, thinking of others, and those linked to self-direction and independence are often perceived to be the more challenging concepts. Participants gave examples of values being taught across the curriculum, whether in standalone PSHCE lessons, through collaborative and exploratory problem solving in Maths, and by learning about democracy and tradition, power and hierarchy, hedonism and independence in History.

“Hot-seating where we were Mrs Sloth and she wrote a letter to the loggers saying you’re killing my home and this is the impact it’s having on my family ...but then also thinking about these loggers and their families who need money...I asked the question, How do you weigh up what’s more important?”

Outside of the classroom, values are instilled through play and in sports, where pupils learn the values of teamwork and compromise; at lunch, by sharing a meal together and showing respect and politeness to the catering staff.

“[Forest School is an opportunity for children to] step outside of their comfort zone...having that self-awareness of what they can do, that awareness that they’ve managed to achieve something, the determination to have a go and get stuck in rather than just watching or sitting there.”

Collective worship and cultural days also help teachers to instil values linked to conformity and behaviour, appreciating people's talents and showing respect for performers. Assemblies can be used to teach democracy and citizenship values when voting for a Head Boy or Head Girl, and certificates and awards are increasingly being awarded for adherence to school values. In most schools, teachers themselves believe in their school values and have had a role in shaping these. For instance, under guidance from the head teacher, school rules and mottos are formed which the whole school buys into:

“I absolutely love our school motto which has been part of the school forever. I use it at home as well and it is that everyone works to their personal best. And that looks different for everyone and that is absolutely fine. We're not looking for perfection, but we are looking for your personal best at all times, whether that is in a drawing, a maths calculation, a performance to the parents, being a friend.”

This study supports the important role that values play in the school curriculum and the wider school environment. Teachers showed how the linking of values to broader curriculum subjects and real-life examples helps children to see what the value looks like in different settings, stimulating the sharing of skills between different subject areas.¹⁰ Day to day interactions with teachers help children to internalise the values taught, helping to direct students' learning goals and increasing their achievement motivation which has an impact on student outcomes.¹¹ By raising awareness of community issues, from raising money for charity to supporting the Black Lives Matter movement or World Mental Health Day, teachers help children to feel satisfied about doing good work for others and helping them to understand that they have a shared responsibility in something larger than themselves.

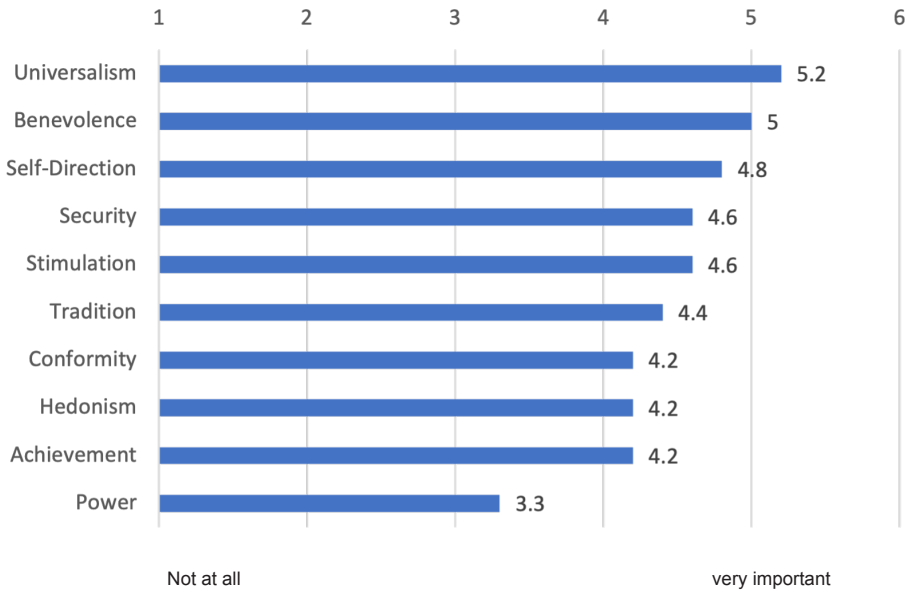
Teachers' Educational Goals in VALISE Study

Teachers' value priorities were assessed with measuring value-related education goals. Value-related educational goals express the values which teachers would like to promote in their pupils in class.

Universalism, **benevolence** and **self-direction** were ranked the most important value-related educational goals to UK teachers in the VALISE study. On

the other hand, **hedonism** and **achievement** appear to be less important to teachers. Clearly, **power** was the least favoured value-related educational goal for UK primary teachers.

The preference of educational goals that primary school teachers had in the Valise study are not only in line with value preference in the UK in general¹², and in the world.¹³





Part 3:

Results of the VALISE Study

II. Children

Children's Value Priorities in the VALISE Study

Even at the early age of primary school, most children show a value structure as characterised in Schwartz's value model (1992).

The results of children's value priorities shed light on which values are important to children and which values are not important.

The value priorities of the UK sample showed that both girls and boys as well as the total of the sample held the value **benevolence** as the most important value. Enhancing the welfare of those with whom they feel close and have a close relationship was at the top of the children's

value priorities.

At the bottom of the value hierarchy was the value **power**. Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources and authority seemed to be least important to children similar to adults in the UK¹² and to the world¹³.

Although the top and the bottom of the value hierarchy was the same for girls and boys, there were some gender differences even at this early age.

The value **security** was more important to girls at this age, whereas **stimulation** was more important to boys.

Achievement
Tradition
Self-Direction
Security
Benevolence
Power
Universalism
Hedonism
Conformity
Stimulation

How do Children's Value Priorities Match With Teachers' Value-Related Educational Goals?

The values **benevolence** and **universalism** were very important to both children and teacher, whereas **power** was the least important value to children and teachers alike. Likewise, the values **tradition**, **conformity** and **achievement** were almost equally ranked by children and teachers.

A discrepancy in value priorities can be found in the values **security**, **self-direction**, **stimulation** and **hedonism**. Children attached more importance to pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself as well as to safety, harmony, and

stability. The higher priority children gave to **security** may be related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The high priority of **self-direction** and **stimulation** of teachers' value-related educational goals showed that they would like to strengthen their students' independent thinking and action taking as well as creativity and curiosity.

The teachers would like to further encourage their students to pursue exciting, novel and challenging activities and stimulations.

	Value priorities of children	Value-related educational goals of teachers
Benevolence	3	1
Universalism	1	2
Tradition	5	6
Conformity	7	7
Security	2	4
Self-Direction	6	3
Stimulation	8	5
Hedonism	4	7
Achievement	9	9
Power	10	10

Table 2: Rank order of the 10 basic values of children and teachers
(1 is the highest value rank/priority and 10 is the least value rank/priority)

How do Children and Teachers Rate the School Climate?

Children and teachers rated the four dimensions of their school's climate - **support, stability, innovation** and **performance**.

For the dimension **support** children were asked to rate how much they think that children help each other in their school, whereas the teachers were asked to rate how supportive the atmosphere in their school was.

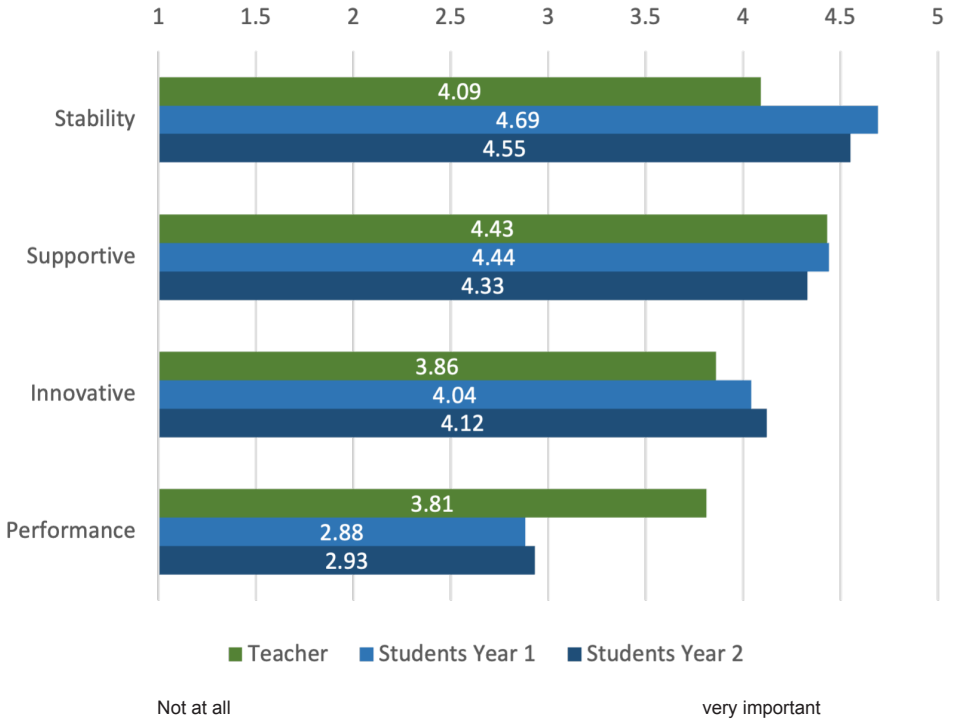
The results showed that children percei-

ve their school climate to be favouring **stability** most (reflecting the values *Tradition, Conformity* and *Security*).

Teachers on the other hand perceived their school climate as mostly **support** oriented (reflecting the values *Universalism* and *Benevolence*).

Children as well as teachers perceived their school climate to be less **performance** oriented (reflecting values *Power* and *Achievement*).

Perception of school climate



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