

# Value and Demographic Characteristics of the Czech Population Engaged in Humanities-Oriented Leisure Activities: A Challenge for Values Education and Social Security

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## Abstract

In the context of current global crises (migratory, and military) as well as the growing phenomenon of child brutality (manifesting, for example, in violent incidents in schools), it is becoming increasingly evident that education has diverged from one of its fundamental purposes: the cultivation of humanity. This article contributes to the ongoing debate by analysing the relationship between participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities and individual value preferences, based on data from a 2024 survey conducted on a representative sample of 1,873 respondents in the Czech Republic. The analysis showed no statistically significant gender or age differences in participation when using a narrow definition of humanities-related leisure activities, whereas a broader definition revealed a strong gender imbalance favouring women. Significant differences were also found by educational attainment, with higher education levels associated with greater participation in both core and expanded humanities activities. The study also identified marked differences in value preferences between respondents who engage in humanities-oriented leisure activities (in both narrow and broad definitions) and those who do not. The findings suggest that engagement in such activities can meaningfully support the development of personal values and, in doing so, foster a renewed pedagogical humanisation with the potential to shape individuals toward humanity, peace, justice, and responsibility within a democratic society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** humanities-oriented activities, values formation, pedagogical humanisation, personal values, leisure, human development, civic responsibility, security

## Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed a growing incidence of aggression and violence among children and adolescents, including extreme cases such as school attacks.<sup>1</sup> These alarming phenomena point

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1 Traci L. Wike and Mark W. Fraser, 'School Shootings: Making Sense of the Senseless,' *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 14, no. 3

to deeper changes in the ways contemporary society educates and shapes the younger generation.<sup>2</sup> The brutalisation of children—once considered a marginal issue—has become a serious societal challenge, raising urgent questions about its underlying causes: is it a failure of families, schools, or the broader value framework that shapes young people's identities and moral compasses? In this context, it is also necessary to critically reflect on how society interprets the behavioural expressions of youth, particularly in relation to alternative cultures and identity formation. Some youth subcultures are frequently viewed through a lens of risk and deviance, often being associated with delinquency, extremism, or violence.<sup>3</sup> Such interpretations may oversimplify complex social dynamics and obscure opportunities for constructive engagement and value development. In light of these challenges, it is essential to reconceptualise the role of education not merely as the transmission of knowledge, but as a means of cultivating humanity, inner stability, and the capacity to live peacefully with oneself and others.<sup>4</sup> The question of how to foster the development of personal values and humanity through educational processes has thus become more pressing than ever.

More than ever before, the significance of leisure time is increasing as a spatiotemporal context in which the aforementioned cultivation can take place freely and in a highly natural manner. As demonstrated in our previous research, leisure activities are closely intertwined with personal values, and conversely, value preferences significantly influence the ways in which leisure time is spent.<sup>5</sup> Within the realm of the humanities, this interconnection is particularly pronounced in relation to values often associated with the ideals of humanity (e.g., national welfare, world peace, mature love, wisdom, salvation, inner harmony, honesty and truthfulness, self-discipline, faith, moral integrity, and so forth). This linkage proved to be stable between 2009 and 2021, and in the present study, we aim to demonstrate the enduring nature of this relationship.<sup>6</sup>

Humanities-oriented leisure activities represent a distinct category, primarily due to their transcendent character. Our previously conducted research indicates that the values associated with humanities-oriented leisure activities suggest a certain detachment of their practitioners from the realities of the everyday world.<sup>7</sup> This is rooted in the very nature of their content: in the narrower sense, such activities are directed toward philosophical or historical reflection, care for the soul or society, or religious theory and practice. In a broader sense, this category may also include the study and teaching of languages, reading and literary creation, and the wide domain of the arts.

From a philosophical point of view, the category of humanities-oriented leisure is very close to the understanding of leisure in classical philosophy,<sup>8</sup> as found in Plato or Aristotle, and hence to the

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(2009): 162–69, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2009.01.005>; Joseph Bellal et al., 'Defining the Problem: 53 Years of Firearm Violence Afflicting America's Schools,' *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* 238, no. 4 (April 2024): 671–78, <https://doi.org/10.1097/xcs.0000000000000955>; Josef Smolík and Tomáš Šmíd, *Vybrané bezpečnostní hrozby a rizika 21. století*, 1st ed. (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, 2010).

2 Lisa Hellström, 'Definitions of Bullying,' in *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Bullying*, by Robert Thornberg and Dorothy L. Espelage, 1st ed. (Wiley, 2021), 2–21, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118482650.ch1>.

3 Ivana Olecká, Jiří Pospíšil, and Josef Smolík, 'Subkultury Mládeže: Analýza Způsobů Identifikace Adolescentů a Mladých Dospělých s Vybranými Hudebními Subkulturami,' *Sociológia - Slovak Sociological Review* 57, no. 3 (16 June 2025): 211–40, <https://doi.org/10.31577/sociologia.2025.57.3.8>.

4 S.R. Healy et al., 'Worldwide School-Based Psychosocial Interventions and Their Effect on Aggression among Elementary School Children: A Systematic Review 2010–2019,' *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 55 (2020): 101486, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101486>; Conrad Hughes, 'Addressing Violence in Education: From Policy to Practice,' *Prospects* 48, no. 1–2 (2020): 23–38, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-019-09445-1>.

5 Jiří Pospíšil, *Hodnoty a volný čas: Nové výzvy pro sociální pedagogiku a pedagogiku volného času*, 1st ed. (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2023).

6 Ibid., 133–53.

7 Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* (Baltimore, London: JHU Press, 2003).

8 Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* 1962 Reprint (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Alexander Sager, 'Philosophy of Leisure,' in *Routledge Handbook of Leisure Studies*, ed. Tony Blackshaw (London: Routledge, 2013), 5–14.

original Greek concept of leisure — σχολή. In his *Laws*, Plato refers to leisure as a time suitable for contemplating matters of the state,<sup>9</sup> while in *Critias* he presents it as both an opportunity and a necessary condition for reflecting on history and myths—an activity that becomes possible only when one is distanced from the demands of labour.<sup>10</sup> In its most elevated sense, Plato conceives of leisure as the foundation of the philosophical life — as a means of liberation from the pressure of duties, tasks, and haste.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, humanities-based leisure activities truly belong to the very core of what was originally understood as the purpose of leisure: reflection upon noble matters made possible by freedom from daily routine and any form of servitude. Although leisure has undergone significant transformations throughout history and has gradually become an increasingly important aspect of human life—culminating in its prominent role within modern society—the activities through which people engage in leisure have likewise evolved and expanded. Despite these changes, leisure filled with humanities-oriented activities appears to remain closely aligned with the Greek ideal of leisure, which has always aimed at the realisation of free choice in the pursuit of higher and nobler ends.<sup>12</sup>

A humanities orientation is important not only for the study of the experience of leisure, but the broader humanistic context is equally essential for understanding the very identity and meaning of leisure itself. There will always exist a polarity between leisure as a product of culture<sup>13</sup> and leisure as a foundation from which culture is created.<sup>14</sup> Both poles represent the boundaries of a space within which the relationship between leisure and culture is realised, as the embeddedness of leisure in culture cannot be separated.<sup>15</sup> Humanities-oriented activities thus serve as a kind of bridge between the cultural foundation and the broader, more complex domain of leisure. Over time, it has become evident that without the humanities, even the study of leisure itself would not be possible. In a review marking the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Sebastian De Grazia's *Of Time, Work and Leisure*—a seminal work in humanistically oriented leisure studies—Charles Sylvester expressed the essence of the issue unequivocally: 'Sadly, without the humanities, leisure studies, consisting as it does of human beings, will be unable to hear its collective soul talking to itself, or assist other individuals to listen their own. It would be ironic, as well, because that was one of the purposes of classical leisure.'<sup>16</sup>

In our previous work,<sup>17</sup> we have already explored, in the context of leisure studies, the role that values play in relation to culture—values which crucially shape our attitudes towards ourselves, others, and the world around us.<sup>18</sup> A central question is whether these values are part of culture—

9 Plato, *Plato Laws* (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), paras 763d, 828d, 832d.

10 Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, Rev. translation and new introd. (London: Penguin, 2008), para. 110a.

11 Plato, *Theaetetus* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987), para. 172; Plato, *The Republic*, Second edition (London, England: Penguin Books, 2007), paras 500c, 619c; Plato, *Plato Laws*, paras 813c, 820c, 961b.

12 John L. Hemingway, 'Leisure and Civility: Reflections on a Greek Ideal,' *Leisure Sciences* 10, no. 3 (January 1988): 179–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490408809512188>; Kostas Kalimtzis, *An Inquiry into the Philosophical Concept of Scholê: Leisure as a Political End* (London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2017).

13 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Chatto & Windus, 1971).

14 Josef Pieper, *Muße und Kult* (München: Kösel, 2007).

15 John R. Kelly, *Freedom to Be: A New Sociology of Leisure* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1987).

16 Charles Sylvester, 'Fiftieth Anniversary Of Time, Work, and Leisure,' *Journal of Leisure Research* 45, no. 2 (April 2013): 253–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2013.11950285>.

17 Pospíšil, *Hodnoty a volný čas*, 57.

18 In this paper we follow the definition of value and value orientation by Clyde Kluckhohn: 'A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action. ... A value orientation may be defined as a generalized and organized conception, influencing behavior, of nature, of man's place in it, of man's relation to man, and of the desirable and nondesirable as they may relate to man-environment and interhuman relations' Clyde Kluckhohn, 'Values and Value Orientations in the Theory of Action,' in *Toward a General Theory of Action*, ed. Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 395, 411.

if we understand culture in line with Pierre Bourdieu's conception<sup>19</sup>—or whether they, in some way, transcend it. We are inclined to support the latter assumption: that values, in a specific way, go beyond the boundaries of any particular culture.

This view was philosophically upheld by Max Scheler<sup>20</sup> and similarly endorsed by cultural anthropologist and sociologist Clyde Kluckhohn.<sup>21</sup> Empirical support for this claim was provided by the research on universal value types conducted by Shalom Schwartz and Wolfgang Bilsky,<sup>22</sup> which demonstrated the existence of such universal value structures. It is clear that not all values transcend culture; however, the universal value types—though emphasised differently across cultures—undoubtedly represent convincing evidence that values, and their organisation within a hierarchy (value orientation), are related to the very essence of the human being and of humanity itself.

The specific form of transcendence exhibited by these universal values in relation to culture becomes particularly apparent in situations where culture plays a mediating role in the process of personal identification with particular values. If culture acts as a mediator in the sharing of values, and if the experience of leisure likewise takes place within a cultural framework, then it is reasonable to assume that deeper connections exist between values and leisure.<sup>23</sup> Specific forms of leisure experience may thus serve as a means for the sharing and internalisation of values. Therefore, we argue that leisure can be conceived as a sphere of values—one in which leisure is not only culturally or habitually conditioned, but also, through its link to values that often transcend culture, becomes a shaping force of culture itself.

If we accept the thesis that certain values transcend the boundaries of culture, and acknowledge their significant connection to leisure, its experience, and the choice of activities, while also recognising humanities-oriented activities as bearers of the original meaning of leisure in the history of European culture, then we must also concede that such activities occupy an exclusive position among other forms of leisure. Their link to value preferences may serve as an indicator of the current shape of European cultural identity.

For this reason, our research focused not only on the demographic characteristics of individuals who engage in humanities-oriented leisure activities, but above all on their value preferences. For the purposes of the research presented in this article, two research questions were formulated:

Q1 – Is the choice of humanities-oriented leisure activities influenced by the demographic factors of generation, gender, and education?

Q2 – What is the specific value profile of respondents who engage in humanities-oriented leisure activities?

19 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* Dotisk 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

20 Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, 2nd ed. (Halle: Verlag von M. Niemeyer, 1921).

21 Kluckhohn, 'Values and Value Orientations in the Theory of Action'.

22 Shalom H. Schwartz and Wolfgang Bilsky, 'Toward a Universal Psychological Structure of Human Values,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, no. 3 (1987): 550–62, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.3.550>; Shalom H. Schwartz and Wolfgang Bilsky, 'Toward a Theory of the Universal Content and Structure of Values: Extensions and Cross-Cultural Replications,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58, no. 5 (1990): 878–91, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.5.878>; Shalom H. Schwartz, 'Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries,' in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. Mark P. Zanna, vol. 25 (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1992), 1–65, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60281-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6).

23 This theoretical assumption was first put forward by Max Kaplan in his remarkable work *Leisure: Theory and Policy*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).



## Methodology

The research, partial results of which are presented in this article, was designed as a cross-sectional ex post facto study<sup>24</sup> and was representative in terms of age and gender for the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and above. Sampling was conducted using proportional stratified random selection, resulting in a final representative sample of 1,873 respondents. The data were collected between March and June 2024 using an online questionnaire, with the predominant data collection method being CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing). In cases where respondents were unable to complete the questionnaire independently, the CAPI method (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) was employed, with completion assisted by a trained field researcher.

The variable of gender was measured on a binary scale: male (907; 48.4%) and female (966; 51.6%). Due to the extremely low validity and frequency of self-reported identification with other genders in previous research, we were compelled to exclude the measurement of other gender identities from this study.

The variable age generation groups was created by categorising the originally measured metric variable age, which respondents provided as a numeric value. Stratification by generation was employed based on the theoretical assumption that different generational cohorts would exhibit distinct reflections on humanities-oriented leisure activities. For the purpose of analysis and interpretation, a derived variable was constructed, grouping respondents according to their generational affiliation: Generation Y, Z, and Alpha (15–35 years), Generation X (36–55 years), and the War Generation together with the so-called Baby Boomers (56+ years). The final respondent sample was distributed as follows: 397 individuals from Generations Y, Z, and Alpha (born between 1989 and 2009; aged 15–35 at the time of data collection; 21.2%), 1,049 individuals from Generation X (born between 1969 and 1988; aged 36–55; 56%), and 427 individuals from the War and Baby Boomer generations (born between 1927 and 1968; aged 56 and above; 22.8%).

The last of the measured independent demographic variables was the respondents' level of education, which was categorised into four groups: individuals with elementary education (129; 6.9%), individuals with vocational/apprenticeship training (302; 16.1%), individuals with secondary education (784; 41.9%), and individuals with higher (tertiary) education (658; 35.1%).

The leisure activities of the respondents were measured using the Catalogue of Leisure Activities, version 4.3.0.<sup>25</sup> The core principle of the catalogue lies in its hierarchical structure: activities are organised into categories (coded by values divisible by 100), further subdivided into subcategories (divisible by 10), and finally into individual activities. This structure enables both the identification of cumulative frequencies within broader categories or subcategories and the retention of detailed information regarding the specific structure of respondents' leisure activities.

The current version of the catalogue includes 304 activities grouped into 89 subcategories and 9 main categories. A detailed description of the catalogue is available in its published version and methodological manual,<sup>26</sup> the specifics of its development and revisions are outlined in the validation study.<sup>27</sup>

24 Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 5th ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

25 Jiří Pospíšil, Helena Pospíšilová, and Ludmila Siarda Trochtová, 'Catalogue of Leisure Activities,' 19 January 2021, <https://www.leisureresearch.eu/>.

26 Jiří Pospíšil, Helena Pospíšilová, and Ludmila Trochtová, *Katalog volnočasových aktivit verze 4.0.0: nástroj pro výzkum volného času* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2018).

27 Jiří Pospíšil, Helena Pospíšilová, and Ludmila Trochtová, 'The Catalogue of Leisure Activities: A New Structured Values and Content Based Instrument for Leisure Research Usable for Social Development and Community Planning,' *Sustainability* 14, no. 5, #2657 (24 February 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052657>.

The Catalogue of Leisure Activities includes a specific category titled Humanities (code 200), from which at least one activity was selected by 154 respondents (8.2%).

This category encompasses humanities-related activities in the narrower sense, including, for example: Western philosophy, psychology and social sciences, history, general religion and sacred texts, Christianity and Christian social and religious practices, Judaism (e.g., visiting synagogues, prayer, and spiritual life), Islam (e.g., visiting mosques, praying, and spiritual life), other world religions, mythology, Eastern philosophy, religious studies and comparative religion, public worship and related practices, as well as magic, parapsychology and occultism, and astrology. For the purposes of this study, these activities will be referred to as *core humanities*.

If we were to define humanities-based activities according to the classical conception of the humanities,<sup>28</sup> we would have to extend their scope beyond the traditional focus on understanding the human being and society, to also include the study of human self-expression through language, literature, and the arts — including visual, musical, and dramatic forms. This broader conceptualisation of humanities-related activities is referred to as *expanded humanities*. In addition to the catalogue category Humanities, it also includes the categories Literature and Languages and Arts. A total of 538 (28.7%) out of 1,873 respondents reported engagement in activities within the expanded humanities category. Given the broader scope and greater representation, it is reasonable to expect both distinct value preferences among those who engage in these activities, as well as differences in their demographic structure.

To measure values, an extended version of Rokeach's inventories<sup>29</sup> of terminal and instrumental values was employed. According to Rokeach's framework, terminal values are further divided into intrapersonal and prosocial categories, while instrumental values are classified as either moral or competence-based. Attitudes towards values were measured in the form of self-reported value preferences, using a continuous visual analogue scale ranging from 1 to 10, with a sensitivity of 0.1 points. Respondents indicated the degree of personal importance they attributed to each value, allowing for fine-grained differentiation in individual preferences. This method enables the capture of nuanced attitudes and supports the use of parametric statistical analyses in subsequent data interpretation. Our approach to measuring value preferences differs from Rokeach's original methodology, in which respondents were required to rank values in order of personal importance. Instead, we adopted a scale-based measurement technique, allowing respondents to evaluate each value independently on a continuous scale. This method was also employed in the aforementioned studies on value preferences conducted by S. Schwartz and W. Bilsky, and it is particularly suitable for capturing the relative strength of value orientations without forcing a strict hierarchical ranking.

For the purposes of this research, a set of hypotheses was established, assuming a dependence of both core humanities-oriented leisure activities and extended humanities-oriented leisure activities on the factors of gender ( $H1_{\text{CORE}}$ ,  $H1_{\text{EXTENDED}}$ ), generation ( $H2_{\text{CORE}}$ ,  $H2_{\text{EXTENDED}}$ ), and education ( $H3_{\text{CORE}}$ ,  $H3_{\text{EXTENDED}}$ ). Hypotheses H1–H3 were tested using Pearson's chi-squared test of independence for contingency tables, supplemented by the calculation of adjusted residuals (z-score),<sup>30</sup> which enabled a more detailed analysis of the results in cases where the null hypothesis

28 Willem B. Drees, 'What Are the Humanities?', in *What Are the Humanities For?*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 7–120, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108974615.002>.

29 Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1973); Milton Rokeach, *The Rokeach Value Survey* (Sunnyvale, CA: Halgren Tests, 1967).

30 David Sheskin, *Handbook of Parametric and Nonparametric Statistical Procedures*, 5th ed. (Boca Raton: Chapman & Hall/CRC, 2011); Razia Azen and Cindy M. Walker, *Categorical Data Analysis for the Behavioral and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2021).

was rejected. The statistical significance of the z-scores was evaluated using a z-test, with critical values of  $\pm 1.96$  indicating significance at the 0.05 level (marked \*),  $\pm 2.52$  indicating significance at the 0.01 level (marked \*\*), and  $\pm 3.3$  indicating significance at the 0.001 level (marked \*\*\*).

For the purpose of testing differences in value preferences between those engaged in core humanities-oriented leisure activities and those involved in extended humanities-oriented leisure activities, we do not formulate hypotheses individually for each specific value. Instead, we establish general hypothesis patterns as follows:

$H4_{CORE} V_n$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the preference for the value  $V_n$  between those who engage in core humanities-oriented leisure activities and those who do not.

$H4_{EXTENDED} V_n$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the preference for the value  $V_n$  between those who engage in extended humanities-oriented leisure activities and those who do not.

The testing of the set of hypotheses for individual values was conducted using a One-Way ANOVA test.<sup>31</sup> All statistically significant results are marked using the conventional asterisk notation (\* = significant at the 0.05 level, \*\* = significant at the 0.01 level, \*\*\* = significant at the 0.001 level).

## Results

An analysis of the relationship between gender and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities (Table 1) yielded divergent results depending on the definition of such activities. When applying the narrower concept of core humanities-related activities no statistically significant difference was found between men and women ( $H1_{CORE}$  is rejected). The chi-square test results ( $\chi^2_{(df=1)} = 0.3324$ ,  $p = 0.564$ ,  $n = 1873$ ) suggest that gender does not play a significant role in this context. This interpretation is supported by the adjusted residuals (z-scores), all of which fall within the range of statistical insignificance (e.g., among men:  $z = -0.58$  for ‘no activity’ and  $z = 0.58$  for ‘at least one activity’; similarly for women:  $z = 0.58$  and  $z = -0.58$ ).

A markedly different pattern emerged when applying the broader definition of expanded humanities-related activities ( $H1_{EXTENDED}$  is confirmed). In this case, a highly statistically significant difference was observed ( $\chi^2_{(df=1)} = 27.7220$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $n = 1873$ ), indicating a strong association between gender and participation. Men were substantially more likely to report no participation in these activities—698 out of 907 men fell into this category ( $z = 5.27^{***}$ ), while only 209 reported engaging in at least one activity ( $z = -5.27^{***}$ ). In contrast, women were more likely to report participation—329 out of 966 women engaged in at least one activity ( $z = 5.27^{***}$ ), while 637 reported none ( $z = -5.27^{***}$ ).

31 Sheskin, *Handbook of Parametric and Nonparametric Statistical Procedures*.

Table 1. The relationship between gender and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities

		No core humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the core humanities	No expanded humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the expanded humanities	Total
Gender	Men	829 z: -0,58	78 z: 0,58	698 z: 5,27***	209 z: -5,27***	907
	Women	890 z: 0,58	76 z: -0,58	637 z: -5,27***	329 z: 5,27***	966
	Total	1719	154	1335	538	1873

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2_{(df=1)} = 0,3324$ ,  $p = 0,564241$ ,  $n = 1873$

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2(df=1) = 27,7220$ ,  $p = 0,000000$ ,  $n = 1873$

The analysis of the relationship between age generational groups and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities (Table 2) yielded no statistically significant results. For the narrower category of core humanities-related activities, the chi-square test value was  $\chi^2_{(df=2)} = 0.1005$  with a p-value of 0.951, clearly indicating the absence of a significant association between age generation and engagement in these activities ( $H2_{CORE}$  is rejected). Similarly, for the broader category of expanded humanities-related activities—which includes activities related to literature, languages, and the arts—the test yielded  $\chi^2_{(df=2)} = 2.7497$  with a p-value of 0.253, also indicating no statistically significant relationship ( $H2_{EXTENDED}$  is rejected).

Table 2. The relationship between age generational groups and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities

		No core humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the core humanities	No expanded humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the expanded humanities	Total
Age generation groups	1 Generations Z and Alfa (15-25)	363 z: -0,28	34 z: 0,28	293 z: 1,25	104 z: -1,25	397
	2 Generations X a Y (26-55)	963 z: 0,04	86 z: -0,04	732 z: -1,61	317 z: 1,61	1049
	3 War and baby boomers generations (56+)	393 z: 0,22	34 z: -0,22	310 z: 0,69	117 z: -0,69	427
	Total	1719	154	1335	538	1873

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2_{(df=2)} = 0,1005$ ,  $p = 0,950995$ ,  $n = 1873$

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2(df=2) = 2,7497$ ,  $p = 0,252878$ ,  $n = 1873$

The analysis of the relationship between highest educational attainment and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities revealed (Table 3) statistically significant differences for both the narrower category of core humanities-related activities and the broader category of expanded humanities-related activities. For core humanities activities, the chi-square test yielded  $\chi^2_{(df=3)} = 9.4515$ ,  $p = 0.024$ , indicating a statistically significant ( $H3_{CORE}$  is confirmed), though moderate,



association between education level and participation. The association was stronger for expanded humanities activities, with  $\chi^2_{(df=3)} = 31.0691$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , demonstrating a more robust and reliable relationship ( $H3_{\text{EXTENDED}}$  is rejected).

A detailed examination of the adjusted residuals (z-scores) shows that respondents with only elementary education were more likely to participate in core humanities activities ( $z = 1.79$ ), but underrepresented in expanded humanities activities ( $z = -1.02$ ). Apprenticeship holders were significantly less likely to engage in expanded humanities activities ( $z = -3.85^{***}$ ) and overrepresented in the 'no expanded activity' category ( $z = 3.85^{***}$ ). Individuals with a high school education were more frequently involved in core humanities activities ( $z = 2.64^{**}$ ) and less likely to report no participation in these activities ( $z = -2.64^{**}$ ), while their participation in expanded humanities activities did not differ significantly. The most pronounced effect was observed among respondents with tertiary (university-level) education, who were substantially more likely to participate in both core humanities activities ( $z = 1.92$ ) and especially expanded humanities activities ( $z = 5.03^{***}$ ), while being significantly underrepresented in the 'no expanded activity' group ( $z = -5.03^{***}$ ).

Table 3. The relationship between highest educational attainment and participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities

		No core humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the core humanities	No expanded humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the expanded humanities	Total
Highest achieved education	Elementary	113 $z: -1,79$	16 $z: 1,79$	97 $z: 1,02$	32 $z: -1,02$	129
	Apprenticeship	278 $z: 0,19$	24 $z: -0,19$	243 $z: 3,85^{***}$	59 $z: -3,85^{***}$	302
	High school	735 $z: 2,64^{**}$	49 $z: -2,64^{**}$	573 $z: 1,47$	211 $z: -1,47$	784
	Tertiary education (university level)	593 $z: -1,92$	65 $z: 1,92$	422 $z: -5,03^{***}$	236 $z: 5,03^{***}$	658
	Total	1719	154	1335	538	1873

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2_{(df=3)} = 9,4515$ ,  $p = 0,023853$ ,  $n = 1873$

Chi Square test results:  $\chi^2(df=3) = 31,0691$ ,  $p = 0,000001$ ,  $n = 1873$

The Table 4 presents a comparison of mean preferences for various terminal values between two groups of respondents: those not engaged in core humanities-related leisure activities and those participating in at least one such activity. The overall mean includes data from both groups. The results indicate statistically significant differences for several values, suggesting that engagement in humanities activities is associated with distinct value preferences. Among intrapersonal values, respondents involved in humanities activities place significantly greater emphasis on **salvation (eternal life)** (mean 6.77 vs. 4.27;  $p < 0.001$ ), **self-respect** (8.62 vs. 7.93;  $p < 0.001$ ), and **wisdom** (8.62 vs. 8.12;  $p = 0.0016$ ). They also show higher preference for **inner harmony** (8.41 vs. 8.04;  $p = 0.0349$ ). Conversely, values such as a **comfortable life** and an **exciting active life** are significantly more preferred by those not engaged in humanities activities (6.53 vs. 5.71;  $p < 0.001$  and 6.44 vs. 5.99;  $p = 0.0283$ , respectively).

Within prosocial values, significant differences were found for **economic prosperity**, which was more highly valued by respondents not participating in humanities activities (8.18 vs. 7.70;  $p = 0.0015$ ), whereas **mature love** was more highly valued by those engaged in humanities activities (8.76 vs. 8.27;  $p = 0.0061$ ). The preference for a **world of beauty (natural and artificial)** was markedly higher among participants in humanities activities (8.27 vs. 7.35;  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, **solidarity** was significantly more valued by those engaged in humanities activities (7.77 vs. 7.25;  $p = 0.0052$ ). Some values, such as **happiness**, **equal opportunity for all**, **family security**, **freedom**, **national security**, and **true friendship**, did not show significant differences between the two groups.

Table 4. Comparison of Mean Terminal Value Preferences by Participation in Core Humanities-Oriented Leisure Activities

Terminal values	Mean of value preference (μ)			F	p
	No core huma- nities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the core humanities	Overall mean		
Intrapersonal values					
A comfortable life	6,53	5,71	6,46	15,2733	0,0001***
Exciting active life	6,44	5,99	6,41	4,8201	0,0283*
Happiness	7,89	7,63	7,87	2,1972	0,1384
Inner harmony	8,04	8,41	8,07	4,4581	0,0349*
Pleasure	8,23	8,06	8,21	1,1305	0,2878
Salvation (eternal life)	4,27	6,77	4,48	90,178	0,0000***
Self-respect, self-esteem	7,93	8,62	7,99	16,7182	0,0000***
Wisdom	8,12	8,62	8,16	9,9671	0,0016**
Acceptance	7,24	7,45	7,26	1,3483	0,2457
Health	9,24	9,02	9,22	2,9287	0,0872
Prosocial values					
Economic prosperity	8,18	7,7	8,14	10,0524	0,0015**
Equal opportunity of all	7,03	7,14	7,04	0,352	0,5531
Family security	9,16	9,26	9,17	0,6545	0,4186
Freedom	8,8	8,88	8,81	0,3044	0,5812
Mature love	8,27	8,76	8,31	7,5444	0,0061**
National security	8,13	7,92	8,11	1,3591	0,2438
Social recognition	6,49	6,14	6,46	3,1545	0,0759
True friendship	8,67	8,77	8,68	0,4388	0,5078
World of beauty (natural, artificial)	7,35	8,27	7,43	21,1439	0,0000***
Respect for parents and the elderly	8,57	8,72	8,58	0,9088	0,3405
Solidarity	7,25	7,77	7,29	7,8129	0,0052**

Next table (Table 5) compares the mean preferences for various terminal values between respondents who do not participate in any expanded humanities-related leisure activities and those who engage in at least one such activity. The expanded category includes not only core humanities activities but also those related to literature, languages, and the arts. The results reveal several statistically significant differences, indicating that participation in expanded humanities activities correlates with distinct value orientations. Among intrapersonal values, participants in expanded humanities activities show significantly higher preferences for **inner harmony** (mean 8.39 vs. 7.94;  $p < 0.001$ ), **salvation (eternal life)** (4.87 vs. 4.32;  $p = 0.0008$ ), **self-respect** (8.43 vs. 7.81;  $p < 0.001$ ), **wisdom** (8.45 vs. 8.05;  $p < 0.001$ ), **acceptance** (7.42 vs. 7.20;  $p = 0.0396$ ), and **health** (9.35 vs. 9.16;  $p = 0.0111$ ).

In the domain of prosocial values, participants display significantly greater preference for **equal opportunity for all** (7.22 vs. 6.97;  $p = 0.0317$ ), **family security** (9.27 vs. 9.12;  $p = 0.0496$ ), **freedom** (8.98 vs. 8.74;  $p = 0.0068$ ), **mature love** (8.59 vs. 8.20;  $p = 0.0003$ ), and a **world of beauty** (natural and artificial) (7.85 vs. 7.26;  $p < 0.001$ ). Values such as a comfortable life, exciting active life, happiness, economic prosperity, national security, social recognition, true friendship, respect for parents and the elderly, and solidarity did not show statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Table 5. Comparison of Mean Terminal Value Preferences by Participation in Expanded Humanities-Oriented Leisure Activities

Terminal values	Mean of value preference (μ)			F	p
	No expanded humanitie- s-related leisu- re activities	At least one leisure activity related to the expanded huma- nities	Overall mean		
Intrapersonal values					
A comfortable life	6,46	6,47	6,46	0,0029	0,9570
Exciting active life	6,42	6,36	6,41	0,2738	0,6008
Happiness	7,89	7,83	7,87	0,3032	0,5820
Inner harmony	7,94	8,39	8,07	16,9298	0,0000***
Pleasure	8,17	8,33	8,21	3,1169	0,0776
Salvation (eternal life)	4,32	4,87	4,48	11,3003	0,0008***
Self-respect, self-esteem	7,81	8,43	7,99	36,9862	0,0000***
Wisdom	8,05	8,45	8,16	17,1998	0,0000***
Acceptance	7,2	7,42	7,26	4,2398	0,0396*
Health	9,16	9,35	9,22	6,464	0,0111*
Prosocial values					
Economic prosperity	8,14	8,16	8,14	0,0668	0,7961
Equal opportunity of all	6,97	7,22	7,04	4,6197	0,0317*
Family security	9,12	9,27	9,17	3,8602	0,0496*
Freedom	8,74	8,98	8,81	7,3323	0,0068**

Mature love	8,2	8,59	8,31	13,4299	0,0003***
National security	8,1	8,15	8,11	0,2482	0,6184
Social recognition	6,48	6,39	6,46	0,5673	0,4514
True friendship	8,64	8,77	8,68	2,2298	0,1355
World of beauty (natural, artificial)	7,26	7,85	7,43	23,9024	0,0000***
Respect for parents and the elderly	8,57	8,63	8,58	0,4087	0,5227
Solidarity	7,23	7,42	7,29	2,7568	0,0970

The Table 6 compares the mean preferences for instrumental values (personal characteristics) between two groups of respondents: those not engaged in core humanities-related leisure activities and those participating in at least one such activity.

The results show statistically significant differences primarily in the domain of moral values. Respondents involved in humanities activities have higher preferences for being **broad, open minded** (mean 8.29 vs. 7.81;  $p = 0.0035$ ), **clean (in moral sense)** (8.23 vs. 7.66;  $p = 0.0013$ ), **forgiving** (8.02 vs. 7.37;  $p = 0.0002$ ), **empathic** (8.48 vs. 8.10;  $p = 0.0212$ ), and **faithful, trusty** (7.87 vs. 6.62;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Other moral values such as **helpful, polite, responsible, loving, and obedient** did not differ significantly between groups, although **helpful** showed a marginal trend towards higher preference among participants ( $p = 0.053$ ).

Regarding competency values, the only significant difference was found for **cooperative**, which was more preferred by participants in humanities activities (8.01 vs. 7.62;  $p = 0.0112$ ). Other competency-related values, including **capable, competent, ambitious, assertive, courageous, imaginative, independent, intellectual, and self-controlled**, showed no significant differences. The value **authoritative, socially powered** was generally rated lower by both groups without significant difference.

Table 6. Comparison of Mean Preferences for Instrumental Personal Values by Participation in Core Humanities-Oriented Leisure Activities

Instrumental values (personal characteristics)	Mean of value preference (μ)			F	p
	No core hu- manities-re- lated leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the core humanities	Overall mean		
Moral					
Broad, open minded	7,81	8,29	7,85	8,534	0,0035**
Clean (in moral sense)	7,66	8,23	7,71	10,3465	0,0013**
Forgiving	7,37	8,02	7,43	13,6217	0,0002***
Helpful	8,12	8,42	8,15	3,7471	0,0531
Polite	7,73	7,86	7,74	0,6548	0,4185



Empathic	8,1	8,48	8,13	5,3171	0,0212*
Responsible	8,42	8,57	8,44	0,9653	0,3260
Loving	8,35	8,54	8,36	1,5657	0,2110
Obedient	6,29	6,44	6,3	0,4909	0,4836
Faithful, Trusty	6,62	7,87	6,72	38,5036	0,0000***
Competency					
Capable, Competent	7,8	7,95	7,81	0,9683	0,3252
Ambitious	6,9	6,54	6,87	3,4335	0,0640
Assertive	6,98	6,88	6,98	0,2848	0,5936
Courageous	7,07	7,41	7,09	3,6516	0,0562
Imaginative	6,78	6,99	6,8	1,0406	0,3078
Independent	7,74	7,67	7,74	0,2024	0,6528
Intellectual	7,4	7,43	7,4	0,0259	0,8721
Cooperative	7,62	8,01	7,65	6,4459	0,0112*
Self-controlled	7,4	7,31	7,39	0,2427	0,6223
Authoritative, Socially Powered	4,86	4,52	4,83	2,5661	0,1093

Table 7 compares the mean preferences for instrumental values, focusing on personal characteristics, between respondents who do not participate in any expanded humanities-related leisure activities and those who engage in at least one such activity. The expanded category encompasses a broader range of humanities activities, including literature, languages, and the arts.

The results reveal multiple statistically significant differences, particularly among moral values. Respondents participating in expanded humanities activities show significantly higher preferences for being **broad, open minded** (mean 8.14 vs. 7.73;  $p < 0.001$ ), **forgiving** (7.60 vs. 7.36;  $p = 0.0236$ ), **helpful** (8.28 vs. 8.09;  $p = 0.0450$ ), **empathic** (8.47 vs. 8.00;  $p < 0.001$ ), **responsible** (8.64 vs. 8.35;  $p = 0.0009$ ), **loving** (8.53 vs. 8.30;  $p = 0.0111$ ), and **faithful, trusty** (7.06 vs. 6.59;  $p = 0.0001$ ). Values such as **clean (in moral sense)**, **polite**, and **obedient** do not differ significantly between groups.

Regarding competency-related values, significant differences were observed for **imaginative** (6.99 vs. 6.72;  $p = 0.0303$ ), **intellectual** (7.69 vs. 7.28;  $p = 0.0001$ ), and **cooperative** (7.85 vs. 7.57;  $p = 0.0030$ ), with higher preferences among those engaged in expanded humanities activities. No significant differences were found for **capable, competent, ambitious, assertive, courageous, independent**, or **self-controlled**. The value **authoritative, socially powered** was significantly less preferred by participants in expanded humanities activities (4.49 vs. 4.97;  $p = 0.0002$ ).

Table 7. Comparison of Mean Preferences for Instrumental Personal Values by Participation in Expanded Humanities-Oriented Leisure Activities

Instrumental values (personal characteristics)	Mean of value preference (μ)			F	p
	No expanded humanities-related leisure activities	At least one leisure activity related to the expanded humanities	Overall mean		
Moral					
Broad, open minded	7,73	8,14	7,85	16,842	0,0000***
Clean (in moral sense)	7,66	7,82	7,71	2,1264	0,1449
Forgiving	7,36	7,6	7,43	5,1334	0,0236*
Helpful	8,09	8,28	8,15	4,0258	0,0450*
Polite	7,72	7,79	7,74	0,5679	0,4512
Empathic	8	8,47	8,13	22,7724	0,0000***
Responsible	8,35	8,64	8,44	11,0435	0,0009***
Loving	8,3	8,53	8,36	6,4677	0,0111*
Obedient	6,34	6,23	6,3	0,8056	0,3696
Faithful, Trusty	6,59	7,06	6,72	14,5189	0,0001***
Competency					
Capable, Competent	7,78	7,89	7,81	1,5776	0,2093
Ambitious	6,93	6,73	6,87	2,9038	0,0885
Assertive	6,92	7,1	6,98	2,3725	0,1237
Courageous	7,11	7,05	7,09	0,3309	0,5652
Imaginative	6,72	6,99	6,8	4,6985	0,0303*
Independent	7,73	7,76	7,74	0,0892	0,7653
Intellectual	7,28	7,69	7,4	14,7434	0,0001***
Cooperative	7,57	7,85	7,65	8,8537	0,0030**
Self-controlled	7,4	7,36	7,39	0,221	0,6383
Authoritative, Socially Powered	4,97	4,49	4,83	14,016	0,0002***

## Discussion

The research presented in this study demonstrates that core humanities-oriented leisure activities represent a rather exclusive group of activities. They are engaged in by only 8.2% of respondents, and in terms of their share among all reported leisure activities, they account for merely 4.64%. However, their exclusivity does not lie solely in their low prevalence. It stems primarily from the intellectual and personal demands inherently associated with these activities. A critical question

for further discussion is whether it is even possible for them to become more widely represented. It seems more plausible that their broader prevalence is unlikely. Nevertheless, this does not mean that core humanities-oriented leisure activities should be excluded from pedagogical interest or concern. This also means that renewed attention must be given to research and publishing in this area. A study by Paul Heintzman (2018) demonstrated that, in the ten years preceding the publication of his article, there had been a marked decline in humanities-oriented topics within the journal *Leisure Sciences*.<sup>32</sup>

While core humanities activities are not gender-selective, expanded humanities activities tend to attract significantly more women than men. In the case of core humanities, this represents a long-term trend that has been observable since 2009.<sup>33</sup> This suggests that broader cultural and artistic engagement is currently gendered, potentially reflecting differences in value orientations, socialisation, or availability of leisure time. The causes of this discrepancy may lie in gendered cultural patterns, differing value orientations, or unequal perceptions of and access to leisure.<sup>34</sup> From an educational perspective, these results raise important questions about how to effectively encourage greater male engagement in cultural and humanities-related activities, which—as the research indicates—can play a key role in the development of personal values and attitudes essential for life in a democratic, peaceful, and humane society. From the perspective of core humanities, gender balance is a positive finding. It shows that key questions of humanistic formation in leisure time are pursued equally by both men and women.

No statistically significant differences were observed across age cohorts in relation to participation in either core or expanded humanities-oriented activities. This indicates a transgenerational potential of humanities engagement, underscoring its relevance and accessibility across the life course. This finding implies that interest in humanities activities is not constrained by age or generational affiliation, which may be a positive indication of the enduring value of these activities across generations. From an educational policy perspective, this suggests that support programmes and initiatives aimed at fostering humanistic values should be accessible to all age groups, as their appeal and relevance span the entire population spectrum.<sup>35</sup>

Educational attainment is a key factor influencing engagement in humanities-oriented leisure activities, with higher education levels associated with greater likelihood of participation, particularly in the broader range of activities involving literature, arts, and languages. Conversely, individuals with lower educational qualifications tend to participate less, which may reflect differences in cultural capital, access, or interests.<sup>36</sup> From a policy and practice perspective, it is therefore important to consider interventions aimed at expanding access to and motivation for humanities activities among lower-educated groups, to foster broader cultural and value integration within society.<sup>37</sup>

32 Paul Heintzman, 'Leisure Sciences and the Humanities,' *Leisure Sciences* 40, no. 1–2 (9 February 2018): 36–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2017.1376018>.

33 Pospíšil, *Hodnoty a volný čas*, 137.

34 Susan Lagaert and Henk Roose, 'Gender and Highbrow Cultural Participation in Europe: The Effect of Societal Gender Equality and Development,' *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 59, no. 1 (February 2018): 44–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715217753271>; Angèle Christin, 'Gender and Highbrow Cultural Participation in the United States,' *Poetics* 40, no. 5 (2012): 423–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2012.07.003>.

35 M. Ardel, 'The Benefits of the Humanities and Arts for Older Adults,' *Innovation in Aging* 1, no. suppl\_1 (2017): 72–72, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geron/igx004.297>.

36 Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

37 Lisse Van Nieuwenhove and Bram De Wever, 'Why Are Low-Educated Adults Underrepresented in Adult Education? Studying the Role of Educational Background in Expressing Learning Needs and Barriers,' *Studies in Continuing Education* 44, no. 1 (2022): 189–206, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2020.1865299>.

It is evident that, in addition to educational attainment, individual differences—such as personality traits, affective style, and motivational orientation—significantly influence leisure preferences, suggesting that efforts to broaden participation in humanities-oriented activities must consider both structural and psychological factors affecting engagement.<sup>38</sup> Our findings suggest that participation in humanities-oriented leisure activities is associated with a deeper orientation toward values related to personal growth, transcendence, and social solidarity, whereas those not engaged tend to prioritise more materialistic and active life values. This profile supports the notion that humanities activities may play a meaningful role in value socialisation and in shaping personal values that promote a more complex and less materialistic worldview.<sup>39</sup> Engagement in expanded humanities-related leisure activities is associated with a stronger orientation toward values related to inner development, transcendence, social equality, and aesthetic appreciation. This pattern reinforces the role of humanities engagement in fostering a richer, more socially conscious and introspective value system, which may contribute to personal growth and a broader societal awareness.<sup>40</sup>

Involvement in expanded humanities-related leisure activities is associated with a greater emphasis on moral personal characteristics such as openness, empathy, responsibility, and loyalty, as well as cognitive and social competencies including imagination, intellect, and cooperation. Conversely, those engaged in these activities tend to de-emphasise authority and social power. This suggests that expanded humanities engagement promotes a value orientation centred on ethical interpersonal qualities and intellectual openness, which may support the development of socially aware and reflective individuals.

By fostering empathy, critical thinking, and emotional literacy, such engagement can serve as a protective factor against the rise of aggression, desensitisation, and behavioural brutalisation among children and adolescents.<sup>41</sup> Cultivating humanistic sensibilities from an early age thus contributes not only to individual moral development but also to the prevention of socially harmful behaviours and the reinforcement of peaceful and cooperative social norms.

Educational and pedagogical interventions play a crucial role in mitigating radicalisation by fostering critical thinking, open dialogue, and informed understanding of extremist movements. A coordinated approach involving schools, families, and peer groups, alongside targeted prevention strategies, supports the development of tolerant and socially responsible individuals. Such comprehensive efforts address the underlying social and psychological factors driving youth toward extremism, promoting inclusion and resilience against radical ideologies.<sup>42</sup>

The findings of this study call for a renewed understanding of education's civic and humanising mission in a time of social fragmentation and value erosion. Beyond the policy focus on innovation or digital skills, education must also cultivate ethical and emotional capacities that foster peaceful coexistence and moral responsibility. Engagement in humanities-oriented activities appears to support this goal by reinforcing personal values and connecting individuals to enduring cultural and moral traditions. As Nussbaum<sup>43</sup> explains, the humanities have historically played a key role

38 Miroslav Mareš and Josef Smolík, 'Školní výuka a politický extremismus,' *Pedagogická orientace* 20, no. 2 (2010): 40–54–40–54.

39 Pospíšil, *Hodnoty a volný čas*.

40 Don Habibi, 'The Indispensability of the Humanities for the 21st Century,' *Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2016): 11, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h5010011>.

41 Ruth Castillo-Gualda et al., 'A Three-Year Emotional Intelligence Intervention to Reduce Adolescent Aggression: The Mediating Role of Unpleasant Affectivity,' *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 28, no. 1 (2018): 186–98, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12325>.

42 Mareš and Smolík, 'Školní výuka a politický extremismus'.

43 Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Online-Ausg., The Public Square Book Series (Princeton, N.J. Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2012).



in education by preparing individuals to be thoughtful and engaged democratic citizens. However, she warns that recent trends emphasise economic productivity over critical thinking and empathy, which weakens our ability to question authority and understand diverse perspectives. Similarly, Biesta<sup>44</sup> argues that education should be world-centred rather than child-centred or curriculum-centred. He emphasises that teaching should not be seen merely as the transfer of knowledge and skills, but as the process of guiding students' attention towards the demands of the world, encouraging them to respond responsibly as moral agents. Maxine Greene<sup>45</sup> emphasises that engagement with the arts and humanities expands individuals' sensitivity and moral awareness, advocating for schools to become spaces where students actively seek meaning and where marginalised voices are heard; she calls for educational practices that cultivate imagination as a means to develop personal visions and deeper understanding. Elliot Eisner<sup>46</sup> argues that the arts play a crucial role in education by cultivating complex cognitive and moral capacities that enable individuals to navigate ambiguity, nuance, and the uncertainties of everyday life—capacities often overlooked in standardised, outcome-driven curricula. We could name many others; nevertheless, it is evident that together, these perspectives highlight the need for education that goes beyond performance metrics and embraces human development in its full ethical and cultural depth.

## Conclusions

The data presented in this study invite a broader reflection on the civic and humanising mission of education in an era marked by fragmentation, insecurity, and the erosion of shared value foundations. While policy debates often prioritise innovation, competitiveness, or digital competencies, the findings suggest that educational strategies must also respond to a more fundamental challenge: how to nurture the ethical and emotional capacities that enable individuals to coexist peacefully and act with responsibility towards others. Engagement in humanities-related activities appears to support this capacity—not only by reinforcing personal values but also by connecting individuals to deeper cultural and moral traditions that transcend the immediacy of crisis. Re-imagining education in this light means shifting the focus from performance-driven models to those that regard the human being as a complex, value-forming subject, requiring cultivation in a holistic, interdisciplinary sense.

Cultivating humanity as a fundamental value in education represents a key interdisciplinary approach to understanding the 21<sup>st</sup> century individual as a bio-psycho-social-transcendent whole striving for a responsible and meaningful life. Educational processes should aim to orient individuals around the constitutive values of humanity, fostering their existence in the sense of 'being human' and co-shaping their development towards justice, reason, kindness, and truth. In doing so, education can ensure the functioning of societies grounded in humaneness and service to others, which is essential for social stability and security.

Our research data confirm that engagement in humanities-oriented leisure activities is associated with the development of moral values and personal characteristics such as openness, empathy, responsibility, and loyalty, as well as cognitive and social competencies. This humanistic orientation also correlates with lower preferences for authoritarianism and social dominance. These value profiles are crucial in the context of contemporary societal challenges, particularly the rising

44 Gert Biesta, *World-Centred Education: A View for the Present* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022).

45 Maxine Greene, *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change* (San Francisco: Wiley [u.a.], 2011).

46 Elliot W. Eisner, 'The Arts and the Creation of Mind,' *Language Arts* 80, no. 5 (1 May 2003): 340–44, <https://doi.org/10.58680/la2003322>; Elliot W. Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (Yale University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300133578>.

brutalisation of children and youth, which poses a serious threat to security and social cohesion. Overall, the findings support the concept of pedagogical humanisation as a means of shaping individuals who embody values of inner development, social equality, and aesthetic appreciation. Such an approach can significantly contribute to building democratic and secure societies capable of addressing current global crises and social challenges.

Motivating individuals who have never shown interest especially in core humanities-oriented activities and whose perception has not been sensitised to them represents a significant pedagogical challenge. Modern leisure time is often conceptualised primarily in contrast to paid work, leading to a detachment from academic discourse and intellectual engagement.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, we maintain that within the wide spectrum of available activities—some of which are thematically broad, ranging from philosophy (e.g., philosophy for children<sup>48</sup>), psychology,<sup>49</sup> and the social sciences,<sup>50</sup> to active participation in religious communities and congregations<sup>51</sup> – it is possible to identify topics that may spark interest and capture the attention of such individuals.

In this way, it would be possible, at least in part, to cultivate an environment that approximates the ideal of leisure as a time for the free choice of better and nobler pursuits<sup>52</sup> – an ideal contemplated by the ancient Greeks, whose legacy continues to serve as a lasting source of inspiration.

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48 Matthew Lipman, 'Teaching Students to Think Reasonably: Some Findings of the Philosophy for Children Program', *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 71, no. 5 (May 1998): 277–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098659809602723>.

49 Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe, eds., *Educational Research: The Attraction of Psychology* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013).

50 Toby Huff, 'Popularizing the Social Sciences', *AmeriQuests* 3, no. 2 (15 May 2006), <https://doi.org/10.15695/amqst.v3i2.71>.

51 Pamela Ebstyne King and James L. Furrow, 'Religion as a Resource for Positive Youth Development: Religion, Social Capital, and Moral Outcomes', *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 5, no. 1 (August 2008): 34–49, <https://doi.org/10.1037/1941-1022.S.1.34>.

52 Hemingway, 'Lesiure and Civility'.