

Defining Utopic Value Based on Orientation Types in Different Contexts

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Abstract. This study aims to find the principal factors involved in decision-making. It is evident that the choice should be optimal whatever it is according to the given situation. This optimal point is the supreme value, so-called the utopic value, which decision-making groups pursue. However, each group or society does not always have the same indicators for its utopic value. This paper suggests an approach how this value varies depending on the contexts based on the two types of orientation: object orientation and value orientation. These orientations cause value shifting to the indicators classified with default value under the consumption values.

Keywords: orientation types, consumption values, utopic value indicators, value shifting, contextual difference

1 Introduction

We do not spend a day without making decisions. From trifles to crucial matters, decision making processes occur every moment in life. It is naturally expected that every decision would be optimal. But we meet frequently the decisions that are not logical or optimal in the sense of profit and loss. Here we come to pose a question about the driving forces that enable us to choose an illogical option in the light of profits. The possible answer that comes to first in our mind is “seeking values”. Everybody has his own values to pursue. For the values in question, we will use the model of Consumption Value of Floch(1990). He proposed four types of values with relevant features: critic, practical, ludic and utopic value. Under the assumption that we, human beings, do always pursue one of those four values more or less, we will limit ourselves to outline the factors that tip the balance in favor of one side when the weight is the same in profit and loss aspect.

2 Consumption values and preferences

In the beginning, primitive men acted on instinct just for their survival. But as time goes by, humans have turned their eyes to more than survival seeking abstract values. For the possible kind of these values, we adopt the idea of Floch(1990). He proposed four distinct values under the name of *consumption values*: critic, practical, ludic and utopic value. He conceptualized these values with differential features like [\pm utility value, \pm existential value] proposing following semiotic square.

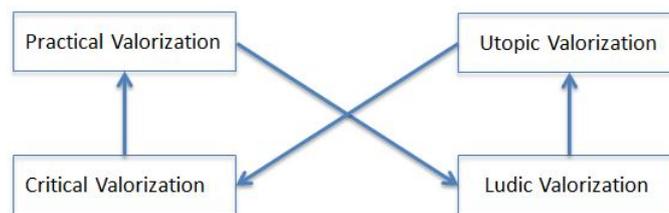


Fig. 1. Valorization of Consumption Value, Floch (1990)

The utopic and practical values can be represented as [-utility value, +existential value] and [+utility value, -existential value] respectively. However, the critic and ludic values are difficult to be conceptualized with combinations of these features. The critical value puts weight on object itself without consideration of other conditions. And the ludic value seems to be located somewhere on the proportional scale of the existential value. One another problem here is that this model cannot explain why features (indicators) classified under a certain value receive different interpretation vis-à-vis the consumption values. A same indicator can designate different values according to construal domains. Although these values properly show human desires in some respect, this approach still lacks an explanatory power for the question we posed above.

3 Orientation types

As it is said above, for the proper interpretation of the features determining value types, it is indispensable to identify the orientation type of the construal domain. It's because the interpretations are very sensitive to the contextual environments. For example, making money itself is a feature belongs to the practical value. However it can represent not only the critical value if the construal domain is of minimum wage but also show the utopic value if the domain is charity. But one another thing that we have to take into considerations is not only those features determining values but also construal domains can have or receive different values instead of a default one. Following diagram summarize intuitively these phenomena.

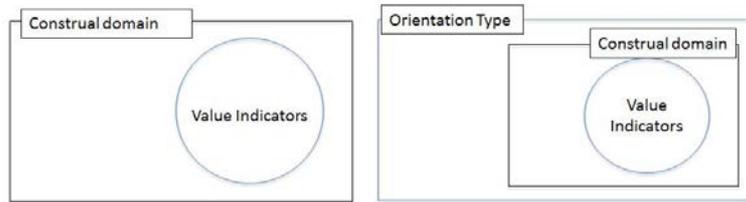


Fig. 2. Interpretation of Value Indicators

Take, for example, a construal domain of “business”. In this domain, productivity is the most concerned and collectivism and goal achievement are considered as most demanded values in general. In some countries like Korea, this general interpretation is respected but in some other countries like Brazil, this is not considered as an indicator for the utopic value. This difference presents empirical evidence to support that there exist some underlying operators that affect the interpretation apart from the construal domain.

The operators in question are biologically and socially innate personal properties. Optimism, industry, laziness and belligerence are some of them among many others. We suggest that these properties can be generalized in terms of orientations: object orientation and value orientation. The combinations of two types of orientation allow us to describe the consumption values more intuitively like following schema.

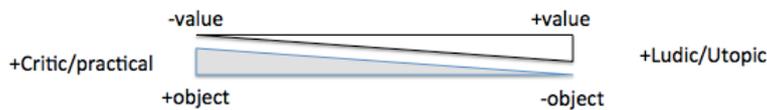


Fig. 3. Orientation scale and value positioning

Roughly, object orientation is much relevant to the phenomenal world in the sense of Plato. In case of putting weight on the object orientation, more prominent values will be the critical value and the practical value. If the value is highly oriented, then, the ludic and utopic values lead general tendency of the group or person in question.

Table 1. Values of orientations

[L, M]	[L, H]
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[M, L]	[M, M]	[M, H]
[H, L]	[H, M]	

[(Object orientation), (Value orientation)] L: Low, M: Medium, H: High

[H, L] means high tendency of pursuing critic value while [L, H] represents great tendency of pursuing utopic value. Optimal point of pursuing practical value is [M, M]. Theory internally, two extreme combinations of [L, L] and [H, H] are beyond discussion.

Under the normal context, two types of orientation can be captured by interaction of following features and sub-features.

Table 2. Orientation types and value indicators

Object Orientation		Value Orientation	
Critical/ Practical Value		Ludic/ Utopic Value	
Collectivism	Hierarchical Social Structure High Power Distance Uniformity Authoritarianism	Individualism	Free life style Diversity Freedom from constraints Low Power Distance
Goal Achievement	Materialism Aspiration Education Future Oriented Patience Sacrifice	Introspection	Life quality Religious Morality Education Identity
Face	Upward mobile lifestyle Ostentation	Ontologism	Reality Self-satisfaction

4 Value shifting

The classification presented at above table is context free and orientation neutral. In case where any preferential operators are not involved prior to interpretations of relevant features, this classification will be applied with default values in terms of the model of Consumption Value. But if it is under circumstance affected by preferential properties, all interpretations of relevant features should follow different directions according to the pre-defined preferential type, whether it is object-oriented or value-oriented.

In object-oriented construal domains, features classified under object orientation at Table 2 can be regarded as utopic indicators. Inversely, value-oriented features will be ludic value indicators instead of the utopic value. The orientation type is generally formed and pre-determined along with history, tradition and social ideology. Apart from innate preferential specific construal domains such as wars, disasters or emergency states can affect interpretation of value indicators causing value shifting.

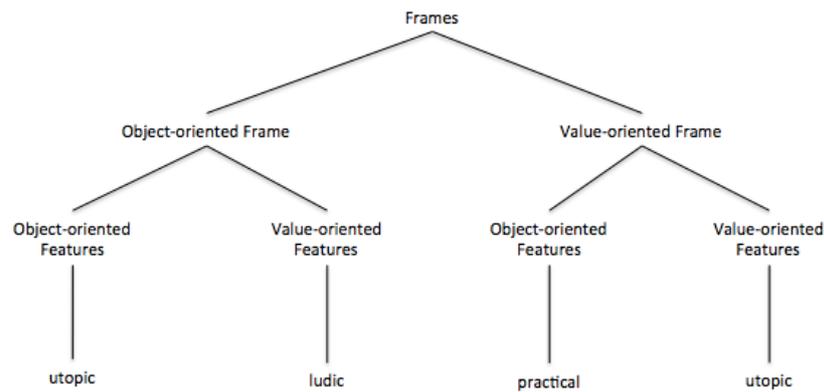


Fig. 4. Orientation and value shifting

We come to the conclusion that the orientation type should be defined before evaluating relevant features in order to correct characterization of consumption values of given group. Value shifting occurs in the context where the social universal values put weight on object-oriented features. Social universal values are diachronic operators because they are formed for long time. These long-term operators affect general properties of entire members of cultural communities and nations. But it must also be noted that there are synchronic operators that cause value shifting too. These are short-term operators and highly sensitive to the context. These short-term operators are relevant to change of construal domains' default value.

6 Conclusion

This article has attempted to sketch out what are the characteristic determiners of non-profit and loss type decision-making. The conclusion to be drawn here is that it is the orientation types that play crucial role in choosing one option for another when the result of the choice gives no difference in profit and loss aspect. All decisions are made for the optimal result. But the notion of optimal is different depending on the construal domains, namely, contexts. And a same domain does not guarantee same interpretation of the relevant value indicators. An indicator may have different interpretation vis-à-vis the consumption values. This is the value-shifting caused by the orientation type. If our idea is not much mistaken, everyone makes a decision to fulfill the utopic value whatever the indicators may be. And it is the orientation types that change any value indicators into those for the utopic value.

References

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