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ON THE NEED TO FORM MORAL CONVICTIONS

O POTRZEBIE KSZTAŁTOWANIA PRZEKONAŃ MORALNYCH

Streszczenie: Autor poszukuje w teoriach wychowania odpowiedzi na pytanie, w jakim stopniu są aktualne i potrzebne badania kształtowania przekonań moralnych dzieci i młodzieży w toku edukacji szkolnej? Zdaniem badacza transformacja ustroju społeczno-politycznego w 1989 roku sprzyjała pominięciu tak kluczowego fenomenu dla jakości wychowania, jakim są przekonania moralna. Trudność sprawia odróżnianie przekonań moralnych od światopoglądu i opinii moralnych. Przyjętą przez autora metodą badań jest analiza treści rozpraw z nauk społecznych, których autorzy podejmowali problem wychowania moralnego. Uzasadnia zarazem potrzebę powrotu pedagogów do powyższych kwestii, by edukujący dzieci w świecie narastających kryzysów moralnych odnaleźli w sobie odwagę do ich wychowywania.

Słowa kluczowe: przekonania moralne, światopogląd, opinie moralne, edukacja, wychowanie, transformacja

Abstract: The author seeks an answer in theories of upbringing to the question: To what extent is there a valid and necessary study of the formation of moral convictions in children and adolescents throughout the course of childhood education? According to the researcher, the transformation of the sociopolitical system in 1989 fostered the omission of such a key phenomenon for the quality of upbringing as moral convictions. It is difficult to distinguish moral beliefs from worldviews and moral opinions. The author's method of research is to analyze

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the content of dissertations in the social sciences whose authors addressed the problem of moral upbringing. At the same time, he justifies the need for educators to return to these issues so that those who assist with raising children in a world of growing moral crises will find the courage to educate them.

Surely only historians of educational thought will reach back to the treatises of Zygmunt Szulc, who addressed the issues of moral upbringing of children and young people. His monograph on the formation of moral convictions, published in the late 1960s, cannot be treated in its ideological, axiological layer after so many years of Poland's political transformation as still valid and up to date, as it was set in the socialist pedagogy of the time for his scientific activity. Such dissertations, however, can be reread not to revive the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, but to see in their content the transmission of knowledge about the regularities of the educational process and the ineffectiveness of educational reforms that were introduced by the state authorities in accordance with the top-down strategy. For we learn not only about those pedagogical solutions that were implemented in state education several decades ago with a sense of certainty on the part of the authorities about the anticipated success, but we also find in the text conclusions that contradict this.

Thus, we can compare them with the educational policies of today's education ministry authorities, which apply the same principles, procedures, and mechanisms of reform, although the conditions of the political system have fundamentally changed, and thus their axio-normative justification and focus. This shows that, although *we are not stepping into the same river*, certain factors and the extent of their influence are similar and lead to similar results. I will cite after the Wrocław scholar the conclusions of his studies, observations, and scientific reflection, paraphrasing the original narrative to free it from ideological contexts. For these, as it turns out, are only the content of the then-desired changes, which did not occur against invested financial resources, coercion, or moral anomie of power.

As Szulc wrote, the educational activity of schools and educational institutions is seen as an important factor in the development of society due to the formation of the personality of children and young people for "strengthening and intensifying the pace of realization of the intentions of building a new and better life" (Szulc, 1969, p. 6).[2] However, the effects of moral upbringing

> are disproportionate to the outlays and efforts and are the object of often repeated criticism. In spite of the multifaceted action of the authorities, who direct educational activities in a planned, purposeful manner and in accordance

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2 Translated from the original Polish, which reads: „umocnienia i wzmożenia tempa realizacji zamierzeń związanych z budową nowego, lepszego życia."

with the system's guidelines, educational deficiencies and shortcomings occur more often and more clearly than objective conditions would indicate (ibid.).[3]

It follows from this conclusion that regardless of the above efforts of the state authorities, including, among other things, that

the extension of compulsory education and the spread of education and culture, the educational difficulties do not diminish, the number of difficult children and youth, such as those who come into collision with the law, does not decrease. On the contrary, it seems that the progress of civilization and technology intensifies and multiplies educational difficulties. The development of education and the spread of schooling, regardless of the reforms undertaken, are invariably accompanied by educational difficulties and delinquency among children and adolescents (ibid.).[4]

Szulc formulates already in the introduction to his dissertation the reasons for the discrepancies between the involvement of state authorities and financial outlays for education. Of course, he does not locate them on the side of the authorities, because both in the past and today they are not, according to those in power, the source of failure. The pathology is blamed on the progress of civilization and technology, as well as the lack of scientific treatises explaining the reasons for the (in)effectiveness of educational interactions. Inflation, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and the energy crisis in Europe have a significant impact on the above situation. The Lower Silesian pedagogue was convinced that the failure of the educational process is also contributed to by the theorists of upbringing, who pay more attention to the teleology and tasks of upbringing, instead of describing methods for effectively achieving the postulated goals. "The lack of theoretical premises for educational activity is a serious obstacle to making moral education

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3 „Jednak efekty wychowania moralnego (…) są niewspółmierne nakładów i wysiłków i stanowią obiekt często powtarzającej się krytyki. Pomimo wielostronnego działania władz, które planowo, celowo i zgodnie z założeniami ustroju kierują działalnością wychowawczą, braki i niedociągnięcia wychowawcze występują częściej i wyraźniej, niżby to z obiektywnych warunków wynikać musiało."

4 „Przedłużenia obowiązkowego nauczania i upowszechnienia oświaty i kultury nie maleją trudności wychowawcze, nie maleje liczba dzieci i młodzieży trudnej takiej, która wchodzi w kolizję z prawem. Wręcz przeciwnie, wydaje się, że postęp cywilizacji i techniki potęguje i mnoży trudności wychowawcze. Rozwojowi szkolnictwa i upowszechnieniu szkoły, niezależnie od podejmowanych reform, niezmiennie towarzyszą trudności wychowawcze i przestępczość dzieci i młodzieży."

sufficiently effective" (ibid., p. 9).[5] These, in turn, should be provided to pedagogues by researchers of sciences that interact with pedagogy, namely psychologists and sociologists.

The author pointed out the need to clarify motivational processes as an important factor regulating human behavior and to pay attention to the subjective factors modifying them. He, in turn, decided to clarify one of them, namely, the essence, determinants, and extent of the influence on a person of his moral beliefs, since they are the ones that direct human behavior in various life situations. It is interesting to note that although the concept of beliefs is present in the study of human attitudes, it is rarely diagnosed. It has not taken root in pedagogy as that regulatory factor of human behavior that should be considered in the process of upbringing and teaching. Perhaps it has been supplanted by the concept of motivation, the formation of attitudes, or worldview as the personality determinants of a person's activity.

The term "beliefs" has been supplanted in social research by the term "opinions." For the most part, sociologists, economists, political scientists, and psychologists study people's opinions rather than their beliefs. Meanwhile, there is a fundamental difference not only between these terms, but also in their meaning. It is easier to study opinions than beliefs, because having or expressing an opinion does not require having beliefs on an issue.

Beliefs vs. Worldview

The authors of the Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Concepts for Students of Christian Philosophy (*Słownika terminów i pojęć filozoficznych dla studiujących filozofię chrześcijańską*) defined a belief as a "state of mind of someone who believes that something is true or right" (Podsiad, Więckowski, 1983, p. 304).[6] Their approach was therefore logical and psychological at the same time, leaving aside the subject's reaction to normative reasons, which are norms that lead to moral beliefs. In general psychology, Ernest R. Hilgard believed that there is a correspondence between attitudes and the feelings, beliefs and external actions evoked by the objects of those attitudes. This means that if the object of an attitude "evokes favorable feelings, presumably it will also evoke beliefs about the efficacy of various actions in favor of a certain value (e.g., world peace) and induce actions consistent with that belief" (Hilgard, 1972, p. 838).[7]

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5 „Brak teoretycznych przesłanek działalności wychowawczej stanowi poważną przeszkodę w uczynieniu wychowania moralnego wystarczająco skutecznym."

6 „Stan umysłu kogoś, kto uważa, że coś jest prawdziwe lub słuszne."

7 „…wywołuje przychylne uczucia, przypuszczalnie będzie on również wzbudzał przekonania o skuteczności różnych działań na rzecz pewnej wartości (np. pokoju światowego) i skłaniał do czynów zgodnych z tym przekonaniem."

Thus, beliefs are not objectless and neither are attitudes, but what distinguishes them from attitudes is to make values their core, to turn to them as a point of reference, so that one's own action stems from a sense of the legitimacy of taking it. The psychological approach to worldview points to its subjective sense. On the other hand, the social sciences still point to the objective sense of worldview, which concerns the attitude a person has toward axiological problems and ethical and social norms that determine and justify the conduct of people (Kowalczyk, 1986, p.8).

Immanuel Kant had distinguished between cognitive, apodictic judgments with a high degree of belief in their truthfulness—that is, assertoric judgments—and problematic, value judgments that are accompanied by a low degree of belief in their truthfulness. The latter are not subject to adjudication in terms of truth or falsity, but only as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate, to a certain system of moral norms and values. It is not enough to think that something is true or false, right or wrong, since we also make judgments about certain facts and human behavior in terms of right or wrong. Thus, when solving life's problems, we make various kinds of judgments about the reality around us, while knowledge of moral norms provides a criterion for evaluating human actions through a subjective sense of certainty (Kotlowski, 1960).

It is very difficult to distinguish the possession of socio-moral beliefs from a person's worldview, since they have been formed through content and emotional relationships with other elements of the world and the world occurring in it, as well as experienced (lived) and internalized values. "A person is generally convinced that he or she makes good use of the information he or she acquires about the world while living in it; at the same time, however, he or she is aware that there are differences in the perception of the world, in its representation, in relation to the perceptions of other people" (Gurycka, p. 21).[8] Since in the average person, who does not need to know and use a philosophical view of the world, it is possible to study the strength and scope of his beliefs on the essence of God, the essence of good and evil, the nature of man, and so on, it is difficult to distinguish any part of the worldview from moral beliefs. However, the latter, as a part of it relating to social relations and the social world, as well as to values and the action-directing belief in the legitimacy of personally recognized values, allow for their diagnosis and formation.

A person's socio-moral activity has a dimension of conscious, reflective activity, because a person refers to an internalized world of values that he or she has recognized as his or her own. Internalized moral norms play a decisive role

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8 „Człowiek na ogół jest przekonany, że dobrze wykorzystuje informacje, które zdobywa o świecie, żyjąc w nim; równocześnie jest jednak świadom, iż istnieją różnice w spostrzeganiu świata, w jego reprezentacji, w stosunku do spostrzeżeń innych ludzi."

in decision-making. A person's moral convictions are therefore at the interface or part of his worldview, which, according to educational psychologist Antonina Gurycka, is his own image of the real world, of everyday life. In it, he clashes with strong ideological, national, and religious movements that also shape people's destinies and beliefs. Thus, it has a global character, as opposed to beliefs, which are characterized by a parsimonious character that is oriented, for example, to social and moral values.

Socio-moral beliefs are a crystallized deep, individual (unitary) structure concerning social and moral behavior, as opposed to opinions. This is because opinions are latent, declared beliefs. Thus, they are closer to a person's worldview, ideological or political orientation or socio-moral attitudes toward others. As the concept of worldview was explained in pedagogy in 1960 by Karol Kotłowski, it is one of the mental structures of a person, which includes cognitive elements concerning the essence of the world, value (axiological) elements concerning the meaning of the existence of the world and man, and his striving to realize the recognized values. This is, as Jean Piaget's research shows, the emerging image of the world in the child's mind around the age of ten, which changes with each passing year because of his education and individual psychological development. It is "a dynamic structure that manifests itself in judgments, beliefs and convictions regarding the essence and genesis of the universe and man, the meaning of their existence, and in the resulting ideals that guide the line of our conduct" (Kotlowski, 1960, p. 114).[9]

Each historical epoch is the carrier of a dominant worldview exerting influence on the individual's mindset, which may include religious elements, scientific knowledge and magical elements based on observation of the surrounding world, personal sensations, revelation, and beliefs. The process of socialization and upbringing, education, and interests, as well as self-activity, is also not without significance for the formation of a certain worldview in individuals. "It is a truism to say that the modern era is a period of worldview pluralism. The worldviews that exist in the world can be classified from different points of view. When we have in mind the genesis and method of doctrinal justification, too, one can speak of a worldview with religious (Revelation), philosophical and natural-empirical inspiration. Most often there are intermediate forms" (Kowalczyk, 1986, p. 9).[10] A worldview as

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9 „Struktura dynamiczna przejawiająca się w sądach, przekonaniach i mniemaniach dotyczących istoty i genezy wszechświata i człowieka, sensu ich istnienia, oraz w powstałych w związku z tym ideałach wytyczających linię naszego postępowania."

10 „Truizmem jest stwierdzenie, iż epoka współczesna to okres światopoglądowego pluralizmu. Istniejące w świecie światopoglądy można klasyfikować z różnych punktów widzenia. Kiedy mamy na uwadze genezę i sposób uzasadniania doktrynalnych też, to można mówić o światopoglądzie o inspiracji religijnej (Objawienie), filozoficznej i przyrodniczo-empirycznej. Najczęściej występują formy pośrednie."

a tangle of multiple judgments and beliefs can include doctrinal, rational, as well as and/or irrational elements, the role of which is subject to evolution and relatively dynamic changes.

In the 19th century sociologist Émile Durkheim wrote about the fact that there is no society with only one value system, and thus one educational system. "There are many. Indeed, in a sense, it can be said that there are as many different types of education as there are different environments in a society" (Durkheim, 2021, p. 26).[11] Societies are worldview heterogeneous, so its politicization by those in power in their attempts to impose a single worldview in order to subject everyone to homogeneous socio-moral beliefs means that "science has begun to turn away from related issues. To be interested in the worldview meant to join the ideological struggle, to take a side. The disappearance of this issue from the field of scientific interest and, as a result, the lack of serious scientific literature can be explained in this way" (Gurycka, n.d.).[12]

Szulc avoided the worldview category, dedicating his study of the theory of upbringing primarily to how to shape moral convictions so that their internalization would be an indicator of the effectiveness of educational activity, in which the methods of upbringing by action and participation in social life showed the greatest usefulness (ibid., p. 314). He did not connect the essence and conditions of the educational process with the duty to form a certain worldview of students despite their functioning in a society whose authorities were concerned with forming secular citizens. He believed that children and adolescents should be taught a detailed moral code, and that educators should not be content with merely fostering general virtues. "In light of the research, it seems *that teaching a code of moral norms is a prerequisite in the process of developing and forming moral beliefs* (Szulc, 1969, p. 313).[13]

So how do we treat the relationship between moral beliefs and worldview today? Psychologist Katarzyna Skrzypińska sees beliefs as a content component of a worldview, part of which are beliefs related to the rationality and honesty of people as conditioning trust in them. "Thanks to the feedback between worldview and lifestyle, an individual arrives at a belief in the rightness of his actions and, consequently, the rightness of the views that motivate them. In the case of negative

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11 „Jest ich wiele. W rzeczy samej, w pewnym sensie, można powiedzieć, że jest tyle różnych rodzajów wychowania, ile różnych środowisk w społeczeństwie."

12 „Nauka zaczęła odwracać się od związanych z nim zagadnień. Interesować się światopoglądem znaczyło włączyć się w walkę ideologiczną, opowiedzieć się po jakiejś stronie. W ten sposób można wytłumaczyć zniknięcie tej problematyki z pola zainteresowań nauki i w efekcie brak poważnej naukowej literatury."

13 „W świetle przeprowadzonych badań wydaje się, że nauczanie kodeksu norm moralnych jest warunkiem koniecznym w procesie rozwoju i kształtowania przekonań moralnych."

feedback, actions are modified due to the involvement of the learning process. This type of fixation will determine the rigidity of the view, and in the lifestyle it will manifest itself in the form of actions that promote failure and lack of effectiveness" (Skrzypińska, 2002, p. 10).[14]

The special role of beliefs is highlighted in modern political psychology by studying the absolutism of beliefs, which are formed within the framework of a system of political and ideological values recognized by individuals and treated as only right.

> Extreme ideology does not allow deviations from the stated rule, hesitations and doubts, resulting from a variety of possible interpretations of reality. It captures this reality in a one-sided, black-and-white manner. Only one's own ideology and the world built according to its principles are true and valuable, while competing ideologies and their adherents are seen in terms of enemies who should (…) be uncompromisingly fought (…) Thus, the overriding values of centrist ideologies become integration—as far as possible—of different beliefs, cooperation and compromise in the sphere of ideological divergence, and toleration of political opponents" (Jakubowska, 2005, p. 15).[15]

From psychological research and pedagogical observations, Szulc concluded that the beliefs possessed by individuals direct their actions, have their structure and content, as exemplified, for example, by moral beliefs. "Attaching great importance to moral beliefs, however, we do not reduce the entire process of upbringing solely and only to the formation of beliefs, there is no doubt that its scope is much broader and includes not only the formation of moral knowledge and moral beliefs, but also habits and customs, the formation of character and the entire personality

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14 „Dzięki sprzężeniu zwrotnemu między poglądem na świat a stylem życia, jednostka dochodzi do przekonania o słuszności swoich działań, a co za tym idzie – słuszności motywujących je poglądów. W przypadku negatywnych sprzężeń następuje modyfikacja działań dzięki zaangażowaniu procesu uczenia się. Tego typu fiksacja zadecyduje o usztywnieniu się poglądu, a w stylu życia będzie się przejawiać w postaci działań sprzyjających niepowodzeniom oraz brakowi skuteczności."

15 „Skrajna ideologia nie dopuszcza odstępstw od podanej reguły, wahań i wątpliwości, wynikających z różnorodnych możliwych interpretacji rzeczywistości. Ujmuje tę rzeczywistość w sposób jednostronny, czarno-biały. Prawdziwa i wartościowa jest wyłącznie własna ideologia i świat zbudowany według jej zasad, podczas gdy ideologie konkurencyjne oraz ich zwolennicy postrzegani są w kategoriach wrogów, których należy (…) bezkompromisowo zwalczać (…) Tym samym nadrzędnymi wartościami ideologii centrowych stają się integracja—na tyle, na ile jest to możliwe—odmiennych przekonań, kooperacja i kompromis w sferze ideologicznych rozbieżności oraz tolerowanie przeciwników politycznych."

of the upbringing" (ibid, p. 11).[16] Szulc admitted that the formation of moral beliefs is only a part of the entire educational process, which is very complex and requires continuity, consistency, and therefore consistency of all the subjects involved. "The beliefs held affect the individual at the time of decision-making, in the course of resolving moral conflicts and in the process of putting into action the intentions made. It is clear that beliefs do not function in isolation and independently of character and personality, but because of their role, it is not difficult to separate and treat them separately" (ibid., p. 13).[17]

The formation of moral beliefs takes place spontaneously, independently of the intentionally organized process of upbringing and education, but also as a result of school education and modifying their formation, crystallization of socio-historical, psychological factors, including through the personal experience of the person. In the process of formation of moral beliefs Szulc distinguish two stages: "the acquisition of moral knowledge and the transformation of this knowledge into beliefs by coloring it with certain experiences of an emotional nature" (Szulc, p. 119).[18] Interestingly, at the time, the Wrocław pedagogue criticized the classroom system as inadequate for social-moral education and the formation of moral convictions of young people. The classroom system "negatively affects the course of educational work primarily because it does not create conditions for cooperation between students, which is an indispensable element in the formation of morality. This is because then, instead of rules imposed authoritatively, students begin to value more and more the rules resulting from cooperation" (Szulc, p. 182).[19] The school is ineffective in shaping students' moral convictions, because it does not create opportunities for them to experience in life these norms not only intellectually, but also emotionally.

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16   „Posiadane przekonania wpływają na jednostkę w czasie podejmowania decyzji, w toku rozwią-
     zywania konfliktów moralnych i w procesie wprowadzania w czyn podjętych zamierzeń. Rzecz
     jasna, że przekonania nie funkcjonują w oderwaniu i niezależnie od charakteru i osobowości,
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18   „Przyswajanie wiedzy moralnej oraz przekształcanie się tej wiedzy w przekonania poprzez
     zabarwienie jej określonymi przeżyciami o charakterze uczuciowym."

19   „System klasowo-lekcyjny rzutuje w sposób niekorzystny na przebieg pracy wychowawczej
     przede wszystkim dlatego, że nie stwarza warunków do współpracy między uczniami, która jest
     nieodzownym elementem kształtowania moralności. Wtedy bowiem zamiast reguł narzuconych
     autorytatywnie uczniowie zaczynają coraz bardziej cenić reguły wynikające ze współpracy."

Pedagogical research on the effectiveness of forming moral beliefs

Thus, the study of moral beliefs during the People's Republic of Poland was, in the circles of educational theorists, an emerging subdiscipline of pedagogical sciences, an important attempt to inquire into the possibility of forming moral beliefs among students in grades 4–7 of three elementary schools in Wrocław. It also had to be preceded by theoretical premises that formed the basis for the methodological assumptions of the study of the ways in which students' moral convictions were formed, which consisted of the moral knowledge they had at a certain age, their views and moral feelings. Szulc critically analyzed the philosophical and psychological literature on inquiries into the essence of human beliefs—what they are, what types they are, how they are formed, the relationships that occur between beliefs and other personality variables, and so on. He drew on domestic and Western scientific literature in general psychology, ethics, and sociology, which was probably possible because at the time there was a brief "thaw" in Poland's restrictive political censorship measures after the events of 1968.

The scientist's concern was "to study the effectiveness of the formation of these beliefs, to detect the ways of the most effective educational activity in this regard, and therefore how, in the average conditions of our school, the tasks of moral education should be carried out in the formation of subjective factors that direct, in accordance with social requirements, the conduct of children and adolescents— the future citizens of socialist society" (ibid, p. 14).[20] It must be admitted that the sheer scope of the problem of interest to the researcher was extremely broad, since it carries with it factors impossible to take into account, which impinge on the formation of beliefs in the school environment, since its influence cannot be isolated from the other socialization and upbringing, institutional and social, systemic, and organizational environments. In the past totalitarian regime, whose authorities cared about the ideological and moral reorientation of young generations in confrontation with the independence and democratic culture of their parents, in order to prepare them for life in a state subordinated to the monist Marxist-Leninist ideology and the interests of pro-Soviet power, undertaking research on the effectiveness of carrying out the educational tasks of a school also subordinated to the above ideology and policies of the state authorities, carried a certain risk of unveiling the ineffectiveness of teachers' educational efforts.

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20 „...o zbadanie skuteczności urabiania tych przekonań, o wykrycie sposobów jak najskutecz- niejszej działalności wychowawczej w tym zakresie, a więc o to, w jaki sposób w przeciętnych warunkach naszej szkoły należy realizować zadania wychowania moralnego w zakresie kształ- towania subiektywnych czynników ukierunkowujących zgodnie z wymaganiami społecznymi postępowanie dzieci i młodzieży—przyszłych obywateli społeczeństwa socjalistycznego."

Thus, it was possible to look at the meaning of this research not only in regard to the interest which the totalitarian state's political and educational authorities had in it, but also to see in the project a hidden program for possibly identifying educational effects—the indicators of which were taken to be the way in which students behaved to objectively testify to their possession of certain beliefs, views, and attitudes (ibid., p. 14). Szulc was aware of how difficult it is to record the subjective experiences of students and motives of their behavior, which, after all, ultimately determine the moral value of an act. However, the subjective determinants of moral behavior of children and adolescents could not be ignored in the research project. He also realized that the classifications of moral education methods presented by educational theorists do not answer the practical question, including the research question: "how to persuade in order to achieve a positive effect, what to do so that a good example will be imitated, etc." (ibid., pp. 16–17).[21]

Thus, the purpose of his research was not only to diagnose this effectiveness, but also to propose methods whose application in school practice would increase the likelihood of achieving changes in students' moral beliefs in a direction consistent with the intentions of their teachers. He assumed in his assumptions that a student's good (moral) acts are those that are socially approved. Their research must be pedagogical in nature, that is, it must be used to establish methods and conditions for the effective formation of moral beliefs in pupils with content deemed important and worthy of implementation by educators.

The effectiveness of moral upbringing was decided by Z. Szulc to study by observing educational lessons, which are aimed precisely at the realization of educational goals at school, taking into account first of all the needs of students and the expectations of their class teachers. As he aptly stated:

> The lack of a program and guidelines, felt keenly by some teachers, leaves the teacher with complete freedom in both the choice of issues and ways of working. This creates a broad framework for independent and diverse activities. The educational hours are dedicated to education, and the systematic nature of the occurrence, guaranteed by the timetable, facilitates planned and well-thought-out activity, sometimes even calculated for a longer period of time. On the other hand, all the methods and methods of educational activities applied in the educational hours can be used in any educational activity (ibid., p. 20).[22]

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21 „W jaki sposób przekonywać, aby osiągnąć pozytywny skutek, co robić, by dobry przykład był naśladowany itp."

22 „Brak programu i wytycznych, odczuwany przykro przez niektórych nauczycieli, zostawia nauczycielowi całkowitą swobodę tak w doborze problematyki, jak i sposobów pracy. Stwarza to szerokie ramy do samodzielnej i różnorodnej działalności. Godziny wychowawcze są przeznaczone na wychowywanie, a zagwarantowana rozkładem lekcji systematyczność występowania

How did Szulc study this effectiveness of education in the above lessons? First of all, he applied observation to the course of the lessons and, with respect to the students, used the projective technique of the test of unfinished sentences or short, free statements on a topic he had specified. Teachers who conducted homeroom class discussions were also asked to write reports on their classes. However, this was not an examination under relatively objective, natural conditions, since he required the teachers to specially prepare for the classes he was observing before they began. The researcher believed that this would enable him to compare observations from different classes whose teachers had to implement the same content, goals, and objectives, and even the same working methods. The idea was also to identify at least the more important of these factors, subjective and objective, which occur independently of educational influence and have a significant impact on the course of the process of belief formation, and on its end result. The clear identification of the positive or negative of at least some factors should facilitate the selection of methods that are effective in a given situation (ibid., p. 23).[23]

Obviously, it is not possible to record all factors, even the less subjective ones, as they elude an observer external to them. It is not only impossible for an educator to consider all possible independent variables—which include school and extracurricular educational situations—and their deliberate triggering and modification by various educators. However, a critical reflection can be given as to whether Szulc really succeeded in studying even a very narrow slice of the totality of the diverse issues concerning the process and methods of moral upbringing of students, so that its effect would be their moral beliefs. Importantly, he saw from the results of numerous educational studies that the school in the classroom-lecture system does not create conditions for introducing students to experience real, social activities that verify the state and scope of their moral beliefs and the acquisition of convictions about their legitimacy. "All this does not facilitate educational activities in the formation of moral beliefs, which should involve processes that are as internal and subjective as possible and affect in a specific way the formation of feelings that are an important component of moral beliefs" (Szulc, p. 188).[24]

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ułatwia planowe i dobrze przemyślane działanie, obliczone niekiedy nawet na czas dłuższy. Z drugiej strony, wszelkie metody i sposoby działań wychowawczych zastosowane na godzinach wychowawczych mogą być spożytkowane w dowolnej działalności wychowawczej."

23 „Chodziło także o to, by wskazać przynajmniej ważniejsze spośród tych czynników, subiektywnych i obiektywnych, które występują niezależnie od wychowawczego oddziaływania, a mają istotny wpływ na przebieg procesu powstawania przekonań i na jego rezultat końcowy. Wyraźne określenie dodatniej lub ujemnej chociażby niektórych czynników powinno ułatwić dobór skutecznych w danej sytuacji metod."

24 „Wszystko to nie ułatwia działalności wychowawczej w zakresie kształtowania przekonań moralnych, która powinna obejmować procesy jak najbardziej wewnętrzne, subiektywne

Almost a decade earlier, Karol Kotłowski pointed out the general regularities that should be taken into account in the education of students' socio-moral attitudes, namely:

1. Develop in the student restraint from making all kinds of apodictic judgments.
2. Develop an inclination to make assertive judgments only on matters on which science has already stated its opinion.
3. Get used to operating suppositional and problematic judgments in all matters of human concern on which science has not yet pronounced its opinion or evades giving an answer, leaving the student completely free to choose his judgment.

The generation of these attributes of thinking in students, which requires the development of an entire methodology, must lead, on the one hand, to restraint in making any judgments, and, on the other hand, to respect for the views of other people, that is, to tolerance, without which human coexistence and cultural development are impossible (Kotłowski, 1960, p. 129).[25]

This is the reason why it is worth returning after so many years to the study of this phenomenon.

Applications

Therefore, we should not completely disregard the treatises of past times even if they were burdened with political (self-)censorship, dehumanization by those in power and their acolytes of social relations, violation of human and civil rights, and the destruction of Polish tradition, culture, and even language. Particularly today we are experiencing what insincere beliefs (Witwicki's term) are in someone, that is, judgments (e.g. moral) expressed by a person that are not internalized by him or her. "What is meant here is simply that someone only pretends to be convinced,

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i wpływać w określony sposób na kształtowanie uczuć stanowiących istotny składnik przekonań moralnych."

25 „1. Wyrabiać w niej powściągliwość w wydawaniu wszelkiego rodzaju sądów apodyktycznych. 2. Wyrabiać skłonność do wydawania sądów asertorycznych tylko w sprawach, co do których nauka wypowiedziała już swoją opinię. 3. Przyzwyczajać do operowania sądami supozycyjnymi i problematycznymi we wszystkich sprawach obchodzących człowieka, co do których nauka nie wypowiedziała jeszcze swojej opinii lub też uchyla się od dania na nie odpowiedzi, pozostawiając uczniowi zupełną wolność w wyborze sądu. Wytworzenie tych atrybutów myślenia u uczniów, które wymaga opracowania całej metodyki, musi doprowadzić z jednej strony do powściągliwości w wydawaniu wszelkich sądów, zaś z drugiej strony do poszanowania poglądów innych ludzi, czyli do tolerancji, bez której niemożliwe jest współżycie ludzi i rozwój kultury."

creates external appearances, or, as is often said, is hypocritical" (p. 42).[26] Since politics has ceased to be a rational concern for the common good, and has become a struggle for power, in which cynicism, hypocrisy is the means to successfully obtain it, then perhaps as educators we should be all the more interested in whether and to what extent it is possible to form moral convictions in this rogue world (Kwieciński, 2000, p. 159).

First, after more than thirty years of political transformation, the return to centralist and subservient to the ruling party's ideology of educational practices and laws is increasingly acute. Second, despite the retention of tutoring hours and the role of the teacher-educator in managing the classroom unit in the organization and plans of general education, there has been no scientific research to diagnose not only the pedagogical sense of their retention and implementation in education, but also the effectiveness of these classes. Third, we do not have research on the formation of moral beliefs of children and adolescents, regardless of the environment or institution in which they would be subjected to intentional educational interactions.

> Unlike many facts and circumstances that the educator has to deal with in the process of education and in the course of carrying out any educational procedure, the technique of work is as dependent as possible precisely on him, most susceptible to modifications deliberately undertaken—dependent on the educator" (Szulc, p. 312).[27] Thus, the question arises of such technically possible sharing of teachers with students not only scientific, subject knowledge, but also the possible experience of the educator's socio-moral beliefs. This will be particularly difficult "under the conditions of complex and changing situations of social life. In practice, it boils down to the question: should a detailed moral code be taught, or should educational activities focus on the formation of general virtues? In light of the research, it seems that teaching a code of moral norms is a necessary condition in the process of developing and forming moral convictions (ibid., p. 313).[28]

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26 „Chodzi tu po prostu o to, że ktoś tylko udaje przekonanego, stwarza zewnętrzne pozory, czyli – jak się często mówi – jest obłudny."

27 „W przeciwieństwie do wielu faktów i okoliczności, z którymi wychowawca ma do czynienia w procesie wychowania i w toku przeprowadzania dowolnego zabiegu wychowawczego, technika pracy jest jak najbardziej zależna właśnie od niego, najbardziej podatna na modyfikacje celowo podejmowane – zależna od wychowawcy."

28 „...w warunkach skomplikowanych i zmiennych sytuacji życia społecznego. W praktyce sprowadza się to do pytania: czy należy uczyć szczegółowego kodeksu moralnego, czy działalność wychowawczą koncentrować na urabianiu cnót ogólnych? W świetle przeprowadzonych badań wydaje się, że nauczanie kodeksu norm moralnych jest warunkiem koniecznym w procesie rozwoju i kształtowania przekonań moralnych."

The dissertation of Z. Szulc can be a good basis for reactivating diagnoses that would concern the effectiveness of the educational practice of young generations in confrontation with their development in the two worlds of everyday life—real and virtual. This is because the sphere of interactions has expanded, among which cyberspace is already beyond the ability of professional educators to master it— including appropriating or even using it to achieve their own goals. Sociological studies of the moral attitudes of schoolchildren and young people entering adulthood, which have been conducted for years by, among others, Father Janusz Marinski (2018, 2021) as well as lay educators and sociologists (Cybal-Michalska, 2013; Szafraniec, Domalewski, Wasielewski, Szymborski, Wernerowicz, 2017) confirm that younger generations living in a pluralistic world of values probably have a greater problem with the acquisition of moral beliefs, which are the result of the internalization of moral values. The state of psychological knowledge about the cognitive component of beliefs has not changed. It has been known since antiquity that knowledge of norms is not enough to act in accordance with them. As Szulc wrote:

> Moral knowledge consists of many elements and its acquisition goes through several stages. From simple norms: this is what you must not do and this is what you must do, norms that apply in the daily life of a young child, to the ability to resolve situations in which several solutions are possible and where there are several—sometimes opposing—norms, such as collegial solidarity and student duty (ibid., p. 45).[29]

There still has to be an emotional binding of the person to a given norm, which he will accept and recognize as his own identifying with its meaning against judgments or moral values opposed to it, temptations to deviate from it in favor of adopting a norm opposed to it. Mere knowledge of how to act is not enough. It is still necessary for knowledge to be transformed into conviction by linking the moral norm to experiences of an affective nature, directing the will to act in accordance with it.

> Aiming at the proper formation of moral feelings in the child, one should strive to ensure that each act of the child is met with an appropriate reaction from the environment; a good act with approval, an unworthy act with dislike.

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29 „Wiedza moralna składa się z wieli elementów i jej przyswajanie przebiega przez kilka etapów. Od prostych norm: tego nie wolno i tak trzeba postępować, norm, które obowiązują w codziennym życiu małego dziecka, do umiejętności rozstrzygania sytuacji, w których możliwe jest kilka rozwiązań i gdzie występuje kilka – niekiedy przeciwstawnych – norm, np. koleżeńska solidarność i obowiązek ucznia.”

> This would make it easier for the child, before he is mentally mature enough to judge for himself, to orient and evaluate his actions, and at the same time influence the consolidation of correct reactions, combined with a positive experience (ibid, pp. 54–55).[30]

Therefore, it is necessary to organize such situations for children, in which they will experience the value of the moral norms they learn, while experiencing them, they assimilate them in a permanent way.

An important question, then, is whether modern teachers are still at all interested in forming these beliefs, or have they abandoned this by focusing only on students' cognitive development, their intellectual competence, due to the digitization of life and the requirements of external exams? Can a school in the third decade of the 21st century—a time of rampant media manipulation, social engineering by power politicians, differentiation of values, subordinated to the interests of politics, juridicisation of human attitudes, and so on—still have any influence on the formation of moral beliefs of children and adolescents? "In short, in order to effectively shape moral convictions, it is necessary to strive first and foremost to ensure that alumni know where we as a society and state are headed, what needs to be done to achieve the intended goal quickly" (ibid., p. 31).[31]

Does the younger generation know where we as a society and a state are heading, if, as sociologist Giza-Poleszczuk argues, we do not have a society in Poland and the state is in a culture war that is already many years old (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2022)? How are students supposed to adapt or not be willing to be nonconformist and actively participate in a struggle for the moral values they or their reference groups prefer, when they encounter a dynamically changing reality? Zygmunt Szulc wondered: Will immunization against stimuli with conformist tendencies not also immunize against educational influences, since acting on the emotional sphere, conflicts in the world of values and over-adaptation of individuals to life in existing conditions are socially and personally disadvantageous (Szulc, 1969, p. 34)? Is it possible today to form strong moral convictions in education, since there are changes in the center, regions, and educational institutions of pedagogical supervision representatives with different moral convictions? For the purposes

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30 „Dążąc do prawidłowego uksztaltowania uczuć moralnych u dziecka, należy zabiegać o to, by każdy czyn dziecka spotykał się z właściwą reakcją otoczenia; czyn dobry z aprobatą, czyn niegodny z niechęcią. Ułatwiłoby to dziecku, zanim dojrzeje umysłowo do samodzielnej oceny, orientację i ocenę swych czynów, a zarazem wpływałoby na utrwalenie reakcji prawidłowych, połączonych z przeżyciem dodatnim."

31 „Krótko mówiąc, aby skutecznie kształtować przekonania moralne, trzeba zabiegać przede wszystkim o to, by wychowankowie wiedzieli, dokąd jako społeczeństwo i państwo zmierzamy, co trzeba robić, by zamierzony cel szybko osiągnąć."

of moral education, is it not made immune by immoral external pressures and conformist tendencies of some of the politicians of the party in power and opposition to it, in a situation where the scope and content of these beliefs depends on the introception of values by the educators themselves anyway?

It is worthwhile in times of axiological opacity—moral blindness as a result of violations of socio-moral norms in almost all socialization environments—to consider the need to strengthen in school education the formation of moral convictions of children and adolescents. After all, education is a process that does not tolerate instability, superficiality, or ad hoc interactions for political reasons. The world of values requires daily concern for the development of children and young people; concern for one's own homeland; the memory of its history, traditions, successes, and failures; the promotion of cultural, religious, economic, and political heritage. The category of moral convictions is one of the most important elements of real and symbolic pedagogical reality, constituting a certain whole in it. At the same time, it testifies to the effectiveness of the process of raising and educating young generations.

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