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UPBRINGING FOR PEACE IN THE CONTEXT OF VALUES PREFERRED BY CANDIDATES FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TEACHERS

WYCHOWANIE DO POKOJU W KONTEKŚCIE WARTOŚCI PREFEROWANYCH PRZEZ KANDYDATÓW NA NAUCZYCIELI EDUKACJI ELEMENTARNEJ

Streszczenie: Poszukiwanie trwałych wartości o uniwersalnym charakterze, na których budowany będzie porządek tego świata stanowi ważne zadanie współczesnego człowieka. Wydaje się, że edukacja aksjologiczna nie przynosi oczekiwanych efektów i dużej części społeczeństwa brakuje refleksji na temat wartości własnych jako podstaw i kryteriów postępowania. Różnorodność w postrzeganiu i rozumieniu wartości stanowi istotny aspekt ponowoczesnych działań edukacyjnych w kontekście wychowania do pokoju. Niniejszy tekst, odwołując się do uzyskanych wyników badań przeprowadzonych wśród studentów pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej, ma na celu próbę włączenia się do dyskusji w obszarze edukacyjnych aspektów przygotowania nauczyciela do realizacji procesu wychowania dziecka do pokoju.

Słowa kluczowe: wartości, pokój, wychowanie do pokoju, nauczyciel

Abstract: The search for lasting universal values upon which to build world order is a crucial task for modern humanity. It appears that axiological education has not yielded the anticipated results, as much of society lacks reflection on its own values as a foundation and criterion for behaviour. The diversity in the perception and understanding of values is a key aspect of post-modern educational efforts, particularly in the context of upbringing for peace. This text, referencing the results of research conducted among students studying preschool and elementary education pedagogy, aims to contribute to the discussion on the educational aspects of preparing teachers to engage in the process of raising children for peace.

Keywords: values, peace, upbringing for peace, teacher

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Introduction

In the modern world, the space of human action is a space of constant transformation, necessitating a renewed consideration of values (Miczka-Pajestka 2016). The world continues to experience a cultural crisis, largely reflected in axiological disorientation and a diminished capacity to value. The concept of post-modernism, often used to describe today's world, highlights the fact that the process of modernisation of the world results not only in positive values, but also in dangers. According to Pavel Mühlachr (2004), the post-modern society we live in is: 1. permissive, 2. ludic, 3. secularised, 4. post-moralist, 5. post-heroic, 6. alibistic, 7. post-educational, 8. the society of globalisation. "The traditional vertical structure of values referring to basic hierarchies and justifications is countered by a horizontal structure passing all value judgements and evaluations. We are particularly witnessing an intensification of ethical controversies with dangerous consequences in public life and in the lives of individuals" (Wojnar 2001, p. 16). One of the root causes of all conflicts and crises in the modern world is the differentiation of values associated with the relationship between social, national or civilisational groups. This is why accountability and education for peace as a fundamental value of the community are so important. Such an approach could mitigate conflicts and allow us to look toward the future of the world with hope (Mydłowska 2021).

The consensus on fundamental values becomes an indispensable foundation for the survival of society and the harmonious coexistence of people with different value systems within a single community (Filipiak 2000). It is also essential for axiological education, especially of children at preschool or elementary school levels.

As Mirosław Szymański (2012) writes, the sense of uncertainty, ambiguity, decentralisation, along with a sense of anxiety that accompanies it, collides with a vast pool of information available, practically unlimited by time and space, enabling choices in all areas of life. These conditions provide the basis for creating original projects and opportunities to consolidate a sense of freedom and individualism, expressed in broad opportunities to make choices and decisions.

In the search for values, post-modernity requires individuals to be reflexive, which is defined as a kind of competence, ability and skill to mentally programme their own relations with the environment through constant, ongoing monitoring (self-observation) of their intentions, motives and reasons. This involves striving to critically understand the sources of one's goals, aspirations, and intentions, as well as one's position in the environment, one's possibilities and limitations. Ubiquitous feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness trigger the need to search for new axiological references (Leek 2002).

In search of the essence of the value of peace

An important aspect of post-modern educational actions is the diversity in the perception of values. On theoretical grounds, three fundamental approaches to the world of values are often cited: 1. the *objectivism* in the view of values, or the so-called “objective theory of values”, which considers values “independent of whether or how they are perceived”; 2. the *subjectivism*, referred to as the “subjective theory of values”, which claims that values are what one perceives them to be”; 3. the *extremes* in seeing values, perspective that holds values exist only when they are perceived, if they are perceived at all (Homplewicz 1996, p. 18). In the context of upbringing for values, it is also worth recalling two movements of thinking about values, namely universalism and relativism. One author whose reflection is part of the universalist trend is Wolfgang Brezinka. According to Brzezinka, the values important in upbringing are expressed in the following attitudes: 1. openness to the world and life, stemming from the recognition that the world and life have their own meaning and value; 2. activity, understood as the readiness to sustain oneself through one’s own work and effort; 3. realism regarding the understanding of oneself as well as the surrounding reality; 4. a culture of the heart, focused on the formation of feelings and the education of the emotional sphere as a relation to goods, as well as sensitivity to goodness and beauty (after: Nowak 2012, pp. 371-373). This approach seems to align with the modern human’s search for value.

Due to the tool used in my own research, I will highlight Shalom Schwartz’s perspective on value. S. Schwartz views values as a cognitive representation of needs, universal requirements that humans face and must address. In his view, values are beliefs (after: Ciecuch & Zaleski 2011, p. 252). Shalom Schwartz characterises values beliefs through six properties: 1. they are beliefs linked to emotions; 2. they relate to desirable goals that provide motivation for action; 3. they transcend individual actions and situations, differing from norms and attitudes, which are usually limited to specific situations; 4. they function as standards for judgements and action choices, although they are not necessarily realised in everyday life; 5. they are hierarchically ordered in a relatively fixed system of preferences; 6. action is guided not by individual preferences but by a collective weigh of values (after: Ciecuch & Zaleski 2011, p. 252).

From a social and especially an educational point of view, it is worth emphasising, following Władysław Piwowarski (1993), that it becomes important to distinguish the so-called core values, defined as a range of values realised and accepted at least by most community members. These core values provide a basis for conducting constructive dialogue and reaching agreements for the common good. When seeking a place for the value of peace in the human value system, it is useful to consider the criterion of the object division of values as proposed by Lubański (1986), who distinguishes between cognitive, moral, emotional, prestige, pleasure, material and social values. Similarly Hanna Świda’s classification identifies

intellectual, social, aesthetic, allocentric, prestige, consumer-material, emotional, or perfectionist values (Świda 1975). Referring to these classifications, the value of peace can be located in the area of social or allocentric moral values, as well as within the area of cognitive values, which include not only specific knowledge, but also the capacity for reflection or reflexivity, which I have already mentioned.

Halina Gajdamowicz (1994) considers the value of peace as an autotelic value, analogous to the value of life. According to the author, a threat to the value of peace causes a shaky sense of security and prevents the realisation of goals related to the development of the human person. She argues that “upbringing for peace” is essentially the same as upbringing for value. A similar position is taken by Józef Pólturzycki, who emphasises that the value of peace is not adequately captured in axiological systems, and that the Platonic triad: truth – goodness – beauty does not clearly emphasise the value of peace. According to the author, peace is linked to a group of moral and social values, as well as transcendental, prestige, pragmatic and cognitive values (Pólturzycki 2003).

Upbringing towards values

As Mirosława Czerniawska (2018) writes, the construction of one’s own axiology and the process of arranging values into an appropriate hierarchy are conditioned by cultural contexts and the adoption of individual criteria for evaluating values. In axiological education, the multifaceted and multicontextual nature of thinking and acting becomes crucial, as well as the awareness of living in a multicultural and changing world in which values, despite their universality, are perceived differently and thus function more as assimilators of meaning or significance rather than moral signposts. Such an attitude is not developed through the spontaneous taming of the world of values but is shaped through educational actions united with the inner strength of the pupil (Gołaszewska 1994).

Nowadays, the formation of educational actions is complex and requires the consideration of numerous factors, including interpersonal relations, learned criteria, norms, principles of moral rules, as well as the adopted value system. Both teachers and pupils are confronted with these moral criteria as they navigate the socio-cultural-educational space. Essential in the education process and teacher-pupil interactions is the conscious and collaborative discovery of values, the stimulation of axiological awareness and the formation of ethical subjectivity (Miczka-Pajestka 2016). Wanda Dróżka (2006) emphasises that in a world undergoing profound changes involving knowledge, reflexivity becomes a necessary and indispensable tool for a new rationality of thinking and acting, which is also pertinent to the search for and positioning of values of peace in educational work.

In the literature, there is a well-known proposal for education on values by Katarzyna Olbrycht, who emphasises that education should primarily aim “to consciously choose values and define their hierarchy as the basis for constructing

one's own life philosophy" (Olbrycht 1994, p. 72). Another noteworthy method in the field of axiological education on values is the method of clarification, which is promoted and justified in Poland by Kazimierz Denek. This method is based on the interaction between pupils and educators with all participants respecting certain norms. These norms include: 1. focusing on one's own life, this reflection is aimed at becoming aware of what the individual considers important and what they want to pursue; 2. accepting values; 3. seeking and using information related to choices, exploring what brings joy, satisfaction and is associated with positive experiences, expectations, hope; 4. reinforcing personal role models. (Denek et al., 2003, p. 30).

Katarzyna Wereszczyńska (2019) emphasises that parents, but also teachers and the broader social environment, are an important pillar for the inclusion of children and young people in social and political life. According to Wereszczyńska, the achievement of the goals in the upbringing process – such as the development of personal and social identity – depends on the quality of the process in which individuals engage in constructing their own axiology, nurturing social values, assuming social roles, the building interpersonal relations.

Thus, we can assume that the role of the value system of future teachers in the context of education towards values is indisputable and that it is worth continuing to conduct research in this area.

Assumptions of own research

The aim of the research conducted was to determine the prominence of the value of peace within the catalogue of values preferred by female students of preschool and elementary school pedagogy. By assessing the place of peace in the value system of these future teachers, it is possible to anticipate their potential involvement in the process of educating children for peace. This assessment also allows for reflection on how to approach working with students in this field of study within the context of fostering interest in peace education.

The research problem formulated in this study was: What position does the value of peace occupy in the catalogue of values preferred by preschool and elementary school pedagogy female students?

Description of the research tool

The research used two types of exploratory and explanatory research (Pilch & Bauman 2001) and employed a questionnaire for the study of values, specifically Shalom Schwartz's Portraits Value Questionnaire (PVQ), which measures preference for the 10 types of values shown in Table 1.

A basic version of the 40-item PVQ was adopted for the Polish population. The scales are constructed with varying numbers of items – from 3 to 6, depending on the comprehensiveness of the content for each type under study. The Portrait

Value Questionnaire items describe individuals in terms of their goals, aspirations and beliefs about what is important in life. Each item always consists of two sentences: one that broadly states the objective and another that provides additional clarification and detailing, often in more concrete terms (Cieciuch & Zaleski 2011). The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) was translated into Polish in 2004 by Zbigniew Zaleski, using a reverse translation procedure in close collaboration with Shalom Schwartz (Cieciuch & Zaleski 2011).

Table 1. Types of values based on Schwartz's PVQ

	Type of value	Characteristics
1.	Security	harmony, social order, personal, family and national security
2.	Power	social status and prestige, control and domination over other people and resources
3.	Achievement	personal success, achieved through the demonstration of competence, in accordance with social norms
4.	Hedonism	the pursuit of pleasure, satisfying one's own – above all organic – needs
5.	Stimulation	seeking novelty, striving for an exciting and varied life
6.	Self-direction	independence of thought and action, creativity, freedom, autonomous choice of own objectives
7.	Universalism	concern for the well-being of all people, care for the environment, justice, wisdom, peace
8.	Benevolence	concern for the welfare of loved ones, family, friends, acquaintances, friendship, love
9.	Tradition	acceptance of and respect for the rituals and ideas of one's own culture or religion
10.	Conformity	limiting one's own pursuits and actions that could harm others or violate social norms, obedience, self-discipline, respect for elders

Source: Jan Cieciuch, Zbigniew Zaleski. 2011. Polska adaptacja Portretowego Kwestionariusza Wartości Shaloma Schwartz, *Czasopismo Psychologiczne*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 252.

Considering the possibility of different division within the value continuum and the principle of conflict, S. Schwartz proposes to analyse the value system also in terms of four metatypes, structured by two dimensions:

1. openness to change versus conservation;
2. self-enhancement versus self-transcendence.

The first dimension describes the conflict between the values that emphasise independence of thought and action and readiness for change, such as the values of *self-direction and stimulation*, and those values associated with maintaining the existing order, aversion to change and self-limitation, such as the values of *security, conformity and tradition*.

The second dimension describes the conflict between the emphasis on satisfying one's own needs and pursuing personal interests, represented by the values of *achievement and power*, and the values associated with the welfare and interests

of others, such as *universalism* and *benevolence*. In this classification *Hedonism* is associated with both openness to change and self-enhancement (Cieciuch & Zaleski 2011). The questionnaire and information on how to use it are available in the Polish literature (Cieciuch & Schwartz 2018).

1. Description of the research group

In this research, a purposeful selection of the research group was employed, consisting of female students of preschool and elementary school pedagogy at the Mazovian Academy in Płock. The study included 175 women (N = 175), with ages ranging from 18 and 35 years, and a mean (M) age of 22 years (median: 22; SD = 2.6). The participants came from both rural and urban backgrounds: 103 women (59%) lived in the city, while 68 respondents (39%) were rural residents. Four respondents (2%) did not specify their place of residence.

2. Descriptive and correlative statistics

The following tabular overview (Table 2) shows the results obtained on the essential variables.

In the surveys conducted, the highest scores were given to the values of *universalism* (27.29%), *security* (23.63%), followed by slightly lower scores for *benevolence* (19.43%), *self-direction* (18.96%), *adaptation* (16.79%), *achievement* (16.77%), *tradition* (14.97%), *hedonism* (13.81%), *stimulation* (12.33%), and the lowest scores to the value of *power* (9.55%).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables studied (N = 175)

No.	Variable	M	SD	Min – max	Skewness
1.	Self-direction	18.96	2.98	10.00 – 24.00	- 0.37
2.	Power	9.55	3.34	3.00 – 18.00	0.11
3.	Universalism	27.29	4.37	14.00 – 36.00	- 0.45
4.	Achievement	16.77	3.82	5.00 – 24.00	- 0.16
5.	Security	23.63	3.50	11.00 – 30.00	- 0.74
6.	Stimulation	12.33	3.04	3.00 – 18.00	- 0.53
7.	Conformity	16.79	2.71	9.00 – 23.00	- 0.35
8.	Tradition	14.97	3.45	7.00 – 24.00	- 0.27
9.	Hedonism	13.81	3.13	4.00 – 18.00	- 0.94
10.	Benevolence	19.43	2.82	9.00 – 24.00	- 0.69

Source: own research.

In the research, no significant differences are observed between the preference for values in the dimension of openness to change (*self-direction* and *stimulation*) and those in the dimension of conservatism (*security*, *adaptation* and *tradition*),

which are described as conflicting in S. Schwartz's concept. However, greater differences were found between the preference for values in the dimension of self-enhancing (*achievement* and *power*) and the dimension of self-transcendence (*universalism*, *benevolence*), particularly regarding the value of power in comparison to the values of *universalism* and *benevolence*. The results indicate that the surveyed group prefers the value of *universalism*. *Universalisms* motivates individuals to be tolerant, to understand and strive for the well-being of all people, as well as to care for nature. *It* contrasts with *benevolence*, which is limited to one's surroundings immediate surroundings. The category of *universalism* includes values such as, broad-mindedness, social justice, equality, peace, the world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, and environmental protection (Brzozowski 2002).

Thus, the group surveyed prefers a value that includes the value of peace in its content. This preference can provide a good internal basis for effectively organised education for peace.

From the point of view of the author of the text, it seems justified to highlight to the relationships that exist between the different values preferred by teacher candidates and those identified through the questionnaire used.

Table 3. r-Pearson correlations between individual values (subscales of the Values Questionnaire)

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Self-direction	×									
2. Power	0.29***	×								
3. Universalism	0.40***	- 0.07	×							
4. Achievement	0.39***	0.54***	0.16*	×						
5. Security	0.36***	- 0.02	0.43***	0.17*	×					
6. Stimulation	0.44***	0.39***	0.18*	0.40***	0.02	×				
7. Conformity	0.30***	0.04	0.41***	0.23**	0.46***	0.04	×			
8. Tradition	- 0.01	- 0.20**	0.14	- 0.07	0.23**	- 0.22**	0.33***	×		
9. Hedonism	0.38***	0.35***	0.21**	0.39***	0.05	0.60***	0.07	- 0.06	×	
10. Benevolence	0.39***	- 0.17*	0.51***	0.03	0.30***	0.12	0.30***	0.15*	0.25**	×

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Source: own research.

The research notes a distinctly high correlation between *universalism* and *benevolence*. *Benevolence* a more narrowly defined category of prosociality, involves concern for the daily well-being of loved ones. This category includes values such as helping, loyalty, forgiveness, honesty, responsibility, true friendship, mature love and others (cf. Brzozowski 2002).

It seems promising, particularly in the context of upbringing for peace, that the research group scored relatively high in terms of the ascendancy of the value described as *self-direction*. The value of *self-direction* emphasises independence in thought and action, which is evident in decision-making, creative and exploratory activities. The need for autonomy and independence also plays a significant role here (cf. Brzozowski, 2002).

In my opinion, it may be assumed that the group studied is characterised by sufficient internal predisposition to exhibit the necessary reflexivity and, at times, the courage required when choosing values, including defining the value of peace.

The opposite value to universalism, according to S. Schwartz, is *power*, which scored rather low in the survey (almost three times lower than the value of universalism). The exercise of power by individuals is aimed at achieving social standing and prestige, as well as controlling the people and resources that constitute wealth. The values associated with power include authority, wealth, social power, and social recognition. While the value of achievement focuses on demonstrating one's own competence in specific interactions, the values of power emphasise achieving a dominant position within larger social systems (Brzozowski 2002). In the research, there is a negative correlation between the value of power and *universalism*, *security*, *benevolence*, but also *tradition*.

It is noteworthy that while *achievement* scores were quite significant, there is only a very low positive correlation between *universalism* and *achievement*. In contrast there is definite a strong correlation between *power* and *achievement*.

In the survey the value of *security* scored quite high, ranking just after the value of universalism. According to S. Schwartz, *security* is generally positioned the opposite pole to *universalism*. While *Universalism* is categorised as a group of values that imply transcending the Self, *security* is associated with more conservative nature. The motivation behind values such as *security* is the assurance of safety, harmony, and stability in social relationships, as well as a personal sense of security, health. Additionally, security encompasses values like social order, family security, a sense of belonging, cleanliness (cf. Brzozowski 2002).

I suppose that the fairly high score for the value of *universalism*, along with the high score for the value of *security*, may have been influenced by the homogeneous gender of the research group (the research sample comprised women only). Furthermore, given the specific context of the times in which we live, it is possible that the presence of both universalism and security values among young people is not mutually exclusive. Perhaps the openness to self-transcendence is accompanied

by a desire for a sense of security, although it is most likely associated with certain psychological consequences.

Discussion of results and conclusion

The results of our own research differ somewhat from the findings of Wanda Dróżka (2016), who based on her research on teachers' life and professional values and goals, describes axiological shift from ethos values (such as fulfilling an intelligentsia and community mission, responsibility for the young generation, for the future of the country) to values more related to everyday life (such as working and living conditions, jobs, qualifications, promotion grades). According to W. Dróżka, there has been a significant decline in the prioritization of community-wide values among young teachers. In this context, it is worth noting that the research by Cecylia Langier and Martyna Siembida (2018) on the preferred values of elementary school education students, which indicates a high importance of moral and truth values, while vitality and aesthetic values were found to be the least valued.

In a study similar to the one described in this text, conducted by Mariola Wojciechowska (2022) on the value system among teacher candidates, the values of world peace and courage, which M. Wojciechowska suggests are more suited to festive occasions than to everyday life, were ranked on the borderline between central and peripheral values. Wojciechowska reached a similar conclusion regarding civic values. Moreover, her research points to the individualistic attitudes of elementary education candidates, as values such as freedom, pleasure, ambition, courage, and intellectualism were placed in the area of central values. However, the young respondents did not neglect values related to protection of others' welfare; values like respect for traditions, family security, equality, responsibility, honesty, mature love, and true friendship were ranked highly (Wojciechowska 2022). Mariola Wojciechowska's study revealed, that the values of stability –health, family, love, friendship – dominate among elementary school education candidates for teachers over the values related to development, progress and transformation. Slightly earlier findings by Edward Jeziorski (1997) indicate a high ranking of values such as family security, education, freedom, friendship, respect, among others, with low approval for social activity.

There is no doubt that the elementary education teacher is a source of values for the pupils, and that the effectiveness of the teacher's activities depends on his or her competence. Lidia A. Dakowicz and Agnieszka D. Laskowska (2021), based on their research, emphasise the importance of teachers' attitudes in interpreting and prioritising the values. The students surveyed indicated their intention to impart cognitive values (acquiring knowledge) and moral values (being a good person) to pupils at the elementary school level. Far less emphasis was placed on the pursuit of prosperity, pleasure and a comfortable life.

The axiological condition of the educator, the world of preferred values, is an important element of the educational work that ensures the understanding and adoption of values (Langier & Siembida 2019). Central to axiological education and upbringing towards values, including the value of peace, are teachers' efforts to introspect on the values that connect the person to their actions. The teacher plays the role of both animator and authority in realising values and bearing witness to them (Chałas & Winiarczyk 2018).

The foundation of upbringing for peace is pedagogical activity aimed at motivating socially active attitudes that facilitate the realization of basic civic rights and foster a sense of community with the immediate social environment (Mydłowska 2021). The value system exhibited by future elementary education teachers plays a crucial role in the development of pupils' moral sphere, their beliefs and value sphere.

Given the changing contexts of today's world, reinforcing the continuous improvement of candidates and teachers, particularly in the area of their own axiology, becomes a separate and important issue. In conclusion, it is crucial to emphasise, in the context of preparing teacher candidates for the tasks of upbringing for values, including upbringing for peace, that the foundation lies in the teacher's reflexivity regarding their value system both as a human being and as an educator. This reflexivity extends to understanding the world and its development, as well as readiness to take on the responsibility of children's axiological education. Preparing teachers for this task involves fostering their ability to reflect on their own values and the values they aim to impart. Teachers must be equipped not only with knowledge but also with the skills to model peaceful behaviours, encourage dialogue, and promote empathy and understanding among students. The emphasis should be on developing a teacher's competence in nurturing a classroom environment where values of peace, cooperation, and mutual respect are actively practised and valued. Therefore, the preparation of future teachers should include specific training in conflict resolution, social-emotional learning, and community-building activities that support a culture of peace within educational settings.

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