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THE HIERARCHY OF VALUES AMONG CHILDREN AT YOUNGER SCHOOL AGE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF ABERDEEN)

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ABSTRACT: *The issue of values in the process of bringing up children is still valid in the literature connected with pedagogy. The main purpose of this article is to show the hierarchy of values among children at younger school age. The problem of importance of the values in the young children's lives will be presented on the basis of the own research conducted among primary school pupils from Aberdeen.*

KEY WORDS: *children, value, hierarchy of values*

Introduction

The contemporary pedagogical thought should be strongly based on axiological assumptions. Undoubtedly, one of the most important tasks is the axiological education of early school children. The concept of "axiological education" should be understood as teaching the ways of treating values, the valuation, and the ways of justifying them (Mazur, 2009).

One of the prominent German educators – Wolfgang Brezinka – stated that "who educates, evaluates"(Brezinka, 1978, p. 92). Therefore, in pedagogical theory and practice, the focus should be put on issues related to values, goals and sense of life.

In contemporary pedagogy the problem is not only a question of values in the process of education, but also how to achieve and realise them. The priority tasks in the field of axiological education include, among others: emphasizing the dignity of the human being, the primacy of the person over society, deep attachment to justice and freedom, respect for cultural goods and national traditions, shaping love for homeland, care for the level of our knowledge and service to other people (Lisnik, Grenova, 2014).

Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski is also an advocate of axiological basics of pedagogy. In his opinion, "values are the source of basic goals and tasks that should be realised within a complex educational reality. At their head there are tasks such as: mutual search by the teacher with the students for the truth in the area of knowledge of the world to which they belong and which they co-create; mutual openness to the surrounding reality and social life through simultaneous participation and anticipation of it; constant seeking for co-motivation of moral attitudes, which are subject to objective ethical values, appearing in the field of consciousness of all subjects of the process of education" (Tchorzewski, 1994, p. 7).

What are the values?

The term "value" (lat. valor) derives from the verb "to be valuable" (lat. valere) (Kowalczyk 2005, p. 54). This term originally came from economics – value of things, value of commodity, value in use, exchange value (Darowski 1996, p. 100). In ancient Greece the core values were: truth, goodness and beauty. The evangelical values, such as: faith, hope and love are the foreground in axiology

of the Christianity. French Revolution emphasized the triad: equality, liberty and brotherhood. Today such values as human dignity, pluralism and solidarity are often emphasized (Dyczewski 2001b, p. 312).

What are the values? A great number of philosophers believe that the term "value" cannot be properly defined. Defining the value is difficult, because its meaning is very range-wide and contains an element of subjective feeling and evaluation. It will be formulated in a different way by an idealist, a materialist or a spiritualist and among them differently by a sociologist, a psychologist or a historian. While characterising the value, one should take into account its relationship to the good (Mazur 2011, p. 214-223).

Hierarchy of values

Bogusław Żurakowski points out that achieving the maturity of the axiological structure is achieved by the constant choice between the "higher" and the "lower". In the process of education, it is important to take care of shaping the consciousness of transcendentals and values as such. A pupil should be aware of what the value is. Żurakowski believes that "didactics of values should first of all, objectify the world of values. This is done by introducing the 'logic of values', perceptible in the hierarchy of the world of values and in the systemic approach towards values" (Żurakowski, 1999, p. 150).

Among many concepts of the value system we can also speak of christian values or christian understanding of values. By the notion of "christian values" we can understand:
- purely supernatural content - the truths of faith, rationally unverifiable;
- revealed truths of an anthropological and ethical character;
- the role of the christian content in human life, in the culture and the history of mankind (Zwoliński, 1999, p. 83-84).

In the hierarchy of values at the lowest level there are hedonistic values. Material values are higher than the sociocentric ones. Vital, cultural (aesthetic, cognitive), ethical and religious values are placed at the very top of this hierarchy (Żurakowski, 1999, p. 150).

Methodology of Research

The aim of this study was to identify and compare the opinions of pupils at younger school age from Aberdeen (Scotland) on their personal hierarchy of values.
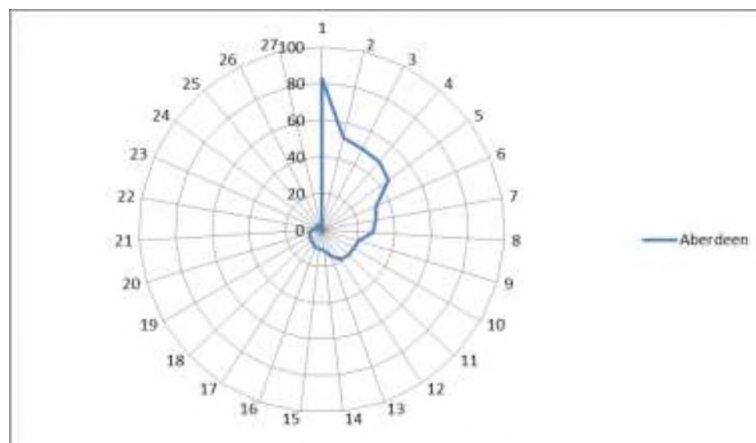
The main problem of the research was to determine what is the value system recognized by children, which values are dominant and which ones are peripheral. In order to obtain research material, the method of diagnostic survey has been used. The research technique that has been used was a survey. The primary research tool was The *scale of assessment of the preferred values* based on the technique developed by P. Oleś (1989), consisting of a catalogue that included the names of 27 different values. The participation in the survey was anonymous. The questionnaires were addressed to the students at younger school age. The survey was conducted in March and April 2017 in randomly selected schools from Aberdeen. Selection of the research sample was random. There were 147 surveys collected from the students. The statistical analyses have been conducted on the basis of data obtained from the surveys.

Thanks to the analysis of the results, the hierarchy of values preferred by students was obtained. Table 1 presents the answers given by the young inhabitants of Aberdeen.The results were arranged in a descending manner, taking into consideration the answers chosen by the students. This is how the hierarchy of values plan was created.

Tab. 1 Personal assessment of the values

No.	Value	Preference indicator (%)
1.	family	82,82
2.	health	51,88
3.	friendship	49,23
4.	love	48,71
5.	education	45,29
6.	freedom	32,13
7.	respect	29,91
8.	peace	28,03
9.	truth	20,76

No.	Value	Preference indicator (%)
10.	helping others	20,17
11.	social life	19,74
12.	faith in God	19,05
13.	justice	15,04
14.	nature	11,62
15.	job	10,34
16.	knowledge	10,25
17.	wisdom	8,63
18.	good	7,86
19.	power (authority)	7,26
20.	beauty	6,92
21.	dignity	6,41
22.	comfortable life	3,76
23.	personal development	3,67
24.	culture	3,50
25.	patriotism	3,33
26.	spiritual development	2,13
27.	material goods	0,51

Graph 1. Hierarchy of values preferred by children

Conclusions

By analysing the above data, we can come to the following conclusions:

1. the highest preference was given to the "family", showing that this is the most important value for children at the younger school age,

2. for the young inhabitants of Aberdeen the following values are also dominant: health, friendship, love, education (over 45%),

3. at the very bottom of the hierarchy of values the "material goods" were placed.

Summing up the results of the research, we can say that in the value system of examined pupils, the spiritual, vital and religious values are strongly predominant. The data shows that hedonistic values were the least popular among respondents.

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