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The axiological image of contemporary teachers

Introduction

There is no doubt that the teacher's actions exist in the axiological sphere. Therefore, the teacher should be aware of the enormous influence his/her image exerts on each of his/her students, and how important are the values he/she presents in the process of shaping attitudes.

It should be noted, however, that the teacher himself/herself often struggles with the problem of choosing certain values and there is not always consistency between his/her words and deeds. In addition, he/she often has to oppose the prevailing fashions and opinions and find the strength and courage to protect not only himself/herself, but also implant certain moral principles in his/her students.

Reflection on the axiological context of the teacher's work was an inspiration to search in this area. Therefore, the area of considerations undertaken in this study was determined by the value category. In turn, the aim of this text is to present the hierarchy of values – life and professional - declared by contemporary teachers.

What are values and why are they important?

Usually, values are assumed to be an undefined concept. They are marked with what is valuable, worth realizing, what we want, what satisfies the needs, what gives satisfaction, pleasure, what demands realization.

The term value did not appear in the philosophical dictionary until the end of the 19th century. It was then that a separate philosophical discipline was established - an axiology in which value means "everything that is considered important and valuable for the individual and society and is desirable, which is associated with positive experiences and is at the same time the goal of human aspirations" (Chałas, 2003).

In everyday life we repeatedly refer to values in various activities and our behavior. We recognize some things and reject others precisely because of their value and not another. In fact, values shape a person's life and give a deeper meaning to his/her existence. The concept of "value" accompanies us in our existence consciously or unconsciously. When we think about something, we express our opinion on something, when we adopt specific attitudes towards problems, when we face choices and decisions - we evaluate. Values and evaluation are inscribed in our existence, giving it shape, making it fuller and more expressive (Zimny, 2012).

The criteria for describing the concept of value are varied. Value is sometimes an end, sometimes a criterion for choosing goals or motives for action. It is also identified with the norm, sometimes it is assigned to an object, and sometimes it is a subjective reflection of human beliefs. It is therefore impossible to define the term "value" that would satisfy everyone's requirements.

However, this issue translates into specific attitudes and actions of each person. It is worth noting that values exist regardless of the views adopted by a person. In a subjective sense, they are properties constituted by man in relation to his/her desires, needs or aspirations. In the objectivist concept, they are identified with objects, things, phenomena or behaviors (Kapis, 2009, p. 3).

M. Misztal (1980, pp. 13–47) divides all known definitions of value into three groups:

- psychological definitions - defining values through the internal goals, aspirations and experiences of an individual, which constitute an internalized component of the human personality;
- sociological definitions - recognizing values as objects or beliefs that determine the behavior of individuals towards social groups;
- cultural definitions - treating values as objects of symbolic or non-symbolic meaning commonly desirable in a given society, commonly accepted judgments and beliefs regarding the system of values and norms considered desirable for a particular society.

On the other hand, Gerhard Kloska (1982, pp. 42–58) indicates five types of designating values, distinguishing such definitions:

- relativistic (depending on features or a set of features),
- subjectivist (these are the characteristics of the subject that satisfy his/her needs),
- relationalistic (interactions between the characteristics of an individual and groups or objects),
- instrumental (depending on what they are for),
- cultural (not person-related).

However, the above considerations lack moral values that appear in human consciousness as "given" and not "created", and thus independent of themselves. Moreover, these values are standards, ideas of human behavior. Hence, "moral values are peculiar only to man and are important only in the sphere of rational, or free acts, undertaken by him/her, in order to give them a figure worthy of a human being" (Ślipko, 1997, p. 12).

The term "moral values" is often used by Janusz Mariański and includes general evaluative orientations, everyday and ultimate values, pro-social and selfish, existential values, values of marriage and family life, dignity and basic values, at the same time pointing to the re-evaluation of values as a result of rapidly changing socio-cultural conditions (1995, pp. 70–71).

Undoubtedly, moral values should be a part of all educational processes. Therefore, there is a need for the teacher to use them constantly. However, it should be remembered that the actions taken by him/her cannot be apparent. The teacher cannot use morality in an instrumental way. This type of attitude is easily exposed, and the image of such a person is radically losing importance and can be difficult to rebuild.

As in the case of the definition of values, it is difficult to create a uniform classification. In the literature one can encounter their various divisions.

Stanisław Ossowski (2000, pp. 73–74) distinguishes between recognized and felt values. The first ones are the property of the social environment and, at the same time, an element of their standards of conduct. On the other hand, felt values belong to particular individuals. Andrea Folkierska (1979, pp. 94–97) distinguishes the following values: intellectual, aesthetic, sociocentric, allocentric, prestigious, consumption-material, pleasure, emotional and perfectionist. In turn, Ryszard Jedliński (1998) distinguishes as many as ten types of values: transcendent, universal, aesthetic, cognitive, moral, social, vital, pragmatic, prestigious and hedonistic (Błasiak, 2009, p. 72).

Milton Rokeach divides values into ultimate (these are states of affairs that people strive for) and instrumental ones (these are the behaviors and states of affairs that serve to achieve the former). The final values include: a comfortable (prosperous) and passionate life, a sense of achievement, participation in some work, peace in the world, beauty of the world, equality, family safety, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, mature love, national security, joy, salvation, respect for oneself, social recognition, true friendship, wisdom. In turn, he classified: ambition, broad horizons of thought, competence, courage, forgiveness, helping others, honesty, boldness and creativity, independence, intelligence, logic, honesty and tenderness, duty and full respect, politeness, responsibility and self-control as instrumental values (Denek, Moszczyńska et al., p. 26).

Values play a great role in human life. First of all, they specify human needs and the way of their implementation, enable the individual to make important decisions and the order in which they are to be satisfied. The value system also influences the choice of life goals and a person's self-esteem. They influence the perception of other people, various social groups and institutions. They help to maintain a sense of meaning, being and self-realization in human consciousness and shape his/her mature personality. They strengthen respect for nature and one's own health, and humanize human contacts with other people. The value system is also a valuable source of emotions, it activates a person's ability to create and experience symbols, things, phenomena and experiences (Jankowska, 2017).

Teacher as a carrier of values

Contemporary times make teachers face new challenges and particularly high demands. It is sometimes said that it is teachers who have the power to deal with the greatest educational crisis experienced worldwide today. A contemporary teacher should, therefore, concentrate in his/her personality all the highest and greatest ethical, mental and aesthetic qualities, about which outstanding thinkers and educators used to say in the past and today (Szyszko-Bohusz, 1982).

The teaching profession is special because the teacher's own style of being and behavior in generally educational and upbringing situations, intentionally or unintentionally, conveys his/her system of values, which is learned and assessed by students. Nowadays, a teacher is not only a person imparting knowledge. Apart from the task of transmitting knowledge, the teacher must implement the basic socio-moral and aesthetic norms, and

must embody the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty in his/her life. A teacher who wants to teach others must first be well educated, and to make others good, he must first be good himself/herself. The example of moral behavior is of great educational importance (Łobocki, 2006, pp. 21–23). Leading by example is still one of the most reliable parenting methods. The values adopted by the teacher and his/her morality are also an important factor in recognizing him/her as a moral authority (Kotłowski, 1993, p. 37).

M. Michalik (1996, pp. 15–17) writes about the axiological activity of the teacher-educator aimed at realizing value by students, who describes axiological activity as an authentic and effective transfer of values through subjective internal activity, experience and commitment. There is no real cognition, understanding and acceptance of values without the activity expressed in openness, concentration and purposeful pursuit of this knowledge and understanding, and thus experiencing values, including them into the personality. In the case of contacts with students, the compatibility between what the teacher approves, what he/she accepts and treats as his/her own and the social axiological system is particularly important. The unity of the values declared by the teacher and the values respected by him/her is equally important; what he/she considers valuable and what he/she practically embodies in his/her action. According to this author an indispensable element in the interpersonal, universal transmission of values is also axiological openness, i.e. readiness to accept new values. Openness to values requires getting to know oneself and entails a change of oneself, one's axiological image in any case. Axiological activity is also the ability and constant readiness for self-assessment.

Purpose, method and the research group

Being aware of the important role teachers play in the process of human education and taking into account the fact that the effectiveness of their work depends on the personality of each teacher, and therefore on the features, attitudes and values that he or she reveals both in everyday life and professional work, a question was asked about the values professed by the teacher as a significant person in the life and education of students. This issue became the subject of the research carried out in 2020 as part of my master's seminar.

The article is of a theoretical and research nature and its aim is to attempt to characterize the value system of contemporary teachers. This goal was achieved through a statistical presentation of the values indicated by respondents that are valuable to them in life, and are based on subjective criteria such as: gender, age, type of school, seniority and the degree of professional promotion.

The research work was based on the diagnostic survey method and the survey technique. A questionnaire was developed that included open, semi-open and closed questions – 31 questions in total. Due to the pandemic situation¹, the study was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire placed on social networks for teachers. This study describes the results of teachers' choices in terms of their preferred values from among the five proposed groups: moral, prestigious, social, vital and hedonistic, and professional. In consequence the results of this part of the

1 In 2020 school education was online.

research allowed for the gradation of the values declared by teachers, establishing the relationship between subjective factors and preferred values, and formulating conclusions resulting from this state of affairs.

200 teachers participated in the research. 188 women (94%) and only 12 (6%) men completed the questionnaire. Due to the small group of men, this factor was not included in the analysis of the research material. There were 34 teachers under the age of 29 (17%). The groups of teachers between 30 and 39 and over 50 were equal - 54 people each (27%). The most numerous group was the group of teachers aged 40 to 49 - 58 people (29%). The vast majority of respondents worked in primary school - 166 people (80%). 20 people (10%) worked in a high school, 18 teachers (9%) in a technical school, and only two teachers (1%) in a vocational school. As for the degree of professional promotion of the respondents, the most numerous group were certified teachers - 94 people (47%), 44 (22%) contract teachers and 40 nominated teachers (20%). The least numerous group were trainee teachers - 22 people (11%).

Research results

The presentation of teachers' preferred values begins with the selected teachers' statements about the sources, understanding and role of values.

The values professed by teachers were shaped primarily in the family. Family upbringing had an impact on the values held by 136 respondents (68%). Parents were the main determinant in shaping their value system for 120 people (60%). Faith / religion was an important element for the group of 106 respondents (53%). For the surveyed teachers, values are of paramount importance and play a key role in their lives.

- "Everyone should have values and be guided by them, because then life is better" (A_12)²;
- "They are a reference point in everyday life" (A_61);
- "Values are very important because they allow to be found in life and show how to treat other people" (A_48);
- "They are a road, a signpost, they set the direction of action, they are a compass and also a life path" (A_122);
- "Our values are a key element in making choices in life" (A_186);
- "They influence the whole life, attitudes, choices, attitudes towards other people, self-esteem" (A_29);
- "They regulate my morality, are the goals I pursue" (A_7).
- "Values are the driving force for me to act" (A_80);
- "They perform a reflective function - they distract us from" bad "and encourage us to" good "(depending on what" bad "and" good "are in a given culture / community / moral system) (A_35);

The above statements allow us to say that values help teachers make choices, introduce order into their lives. They determine the methods of conduct, help them both in their personal and professional life, influence development and shape their character.

2 Survey questionnaire number

The presentation of the catalog of values preferred by teachers begins with the analysis of moral values.

The most numerous group of teachers - 150 people (75%) declared that honesty is their most important moral value. Responsibility is also important for 138 respondents (69%). The youngest teachers indicated that justice and faithfulness are the most important values for them. Justice and love are particularly important for people aged 30-39 and 40-49, while also dignity is as important as the values mentioned above for the oldest group.

Table 1. Moral values preferred by teachers by age

Answers	Total	Age								
		Below 29		30-39		40-49		Over 50		
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Honor	58	29%	8	4%	8	4%	16	8%	26	13%
Modesty	30	15%	2	1%	2	1%	16	8%	10	5%
Reliability	72	36%	14	7%	8	4%	20	10%	30	15%
Love	126	63%	16	8%	32	16%	40	20%	38	19%
Dignity	102	51%	16	8%	20	10%	32	16%	34	17%
Friendship	94	47%	16	8%	24	12%	34	17%	20	10%
Heroism	4	2%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Justice	122	61%	20	10%	30	15%	38	19%	34	17%
Responsibility	138	69%	24	12%	36	18%	40	20%	38	19%
Honesty	150	75%	24	12%	36	18%	46	23%	44	22%
Faithfulness	84	42%	18	9%	18	9%	22	11%	26	13%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

It is worth noting that in all age groups, honesty is at the top of the hierarchy of moral values. Among teachers over the age of 30, fairness is an important value, and faithfulness for the youngest teachers.

Table 1a. Hierarchy of declared moral values by the age of teachers

Total	Below 29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
1. Honesty	1. Honesty, responsibility	1. Honesty and Responsibility	1. Honesty	1. Honesty
2. Responsibility	2. Justice	2. Love	2. Responsibility, love	2. Responsibility, love
3. Love	3. Faithfulness	3. Justice	3. Justice	3. Justice, dignity

Total	Below 29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
4. Justice	4. Love, dignity, friendship	4. Friendship	4. Friendship	4. Reliability,
5. Dignity	5. Honor	5. Dignity	5. Dignity	5. Honor, loyalty
6. Friendship	6. Modesty	6. Fidelity	6. Fidelity	6. Friendship
7. Fidelity		7. Reliability, honor	7. Reliability	7. Modesty
8. Reliability		8. Modesty	8. Modesty, honor	8. Heroes
9. Honor				
10. Modesty				
11. Heroism				

Teachers, asked about the moral values they follow in their family life stated that they were driven by love (71%) as well as respect and responsibility (66%). Trust is the leading value in the family for 118 (59%) and security for 102 teachers (51%).

Another group of analyzed values are social values. Among the social values, 144 teachers (71%) indicated family as the most important. Peace and tolerance were especially important for 122 people (61%). Tolerance and freedom also turned out to be special social values for the youngest teachers. Peace, solidarity and patriotism turned out to be important for respondents aged 30-39. Teachers aged 40 to 49 found democracy, tolerance and consent to be important to them as well. Teachers over 50 have values such as peace, freedom and humanitarianism in their personal and professional lives.

Table 2. Social values preferred by teachers by age

Answers	Total	Age								
	Below 29		30-39		40-49		Over 50			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Democracy	74	37%	10	5%	20	10%	24	12%	20	10%
Peace	122	61%	22	11%	28	14%	32	16%	40	20%
Family	142	71%	28	14%	30	15%	42	21%	42	21%
Tolerance	122	61%	18	9%	30	15%	48	24%	26	13%
Solidarity	56	28%	6	3%	22	11%	14	7%	14	7%
Freedom	104	52%	14	7%	18	9%	34	17%	38	19%
Patriotism	62	31%	12	6%	20	10%	14	7%	16	8%
Consent	32	16%	4	2%	6	3%	16	8%	6	3%
Humanitarianism	72	36%	12	6%	14	7%	18	9%	28	14%
The prosperity of the motherland	28	14%	4	2%	8	4%	4	2%	12	6%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 2a. Hierarchy of declared social values by the age of teachers

Total	Below 29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
1. Family	1. Family	1. Family, tolerance	1. Tolerance	1. Family
2. Peace, tolerance	2. Peace	2. Peace	2. Family	2. Peace
3. Freedom	3. Tolerance	3. Solidarity	3. Freedom	3. Freedom
4. Democracy	4. Freedom	4. Patriotism, democracy	4. Peace	4. Humanitarianism
5. Humanitarianism	5. Patriotism, humanitarianism	5. Freedom	5. Democracy	5. Tolerance
6. Patriotism	6. Democracy	6. Humanitarianism	6. Humanitarianism	6. Democracy
7. Solidarity	7. Solidarity	7. The prosperity of the motherland	7. Harmony	7. Patriotism
8. Harmony	8. Harmony, the prosperity of the motherland	8. Harmony	8. Patriotism, solidarity	8. Solidarity
9. The prosperity of the motherland			9. The prosperity of the motherland	9. The prosperity of the motherland
				10. Harmony

The gradation of prestigious values declared by the surveyed teachers is presented in Table 3. There were two values at the top: respect of others and professional work. In turn, values such as: fortune, fame, power were at the bottom of this hierarchy.

Table 3. Hierarchy of declared prestigious values by teachers' work experience

	Total	0-3 years	3-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	Over 30
1.	Respect of other people	Professional work	Respect of other people	Respect of other people	Professional work	Respect of other people
2.	Professional work	Respect of other people	Professional work	Professional work	Respect of other people	Social recognition
3.	Social recognition	Success	Social recognition,	Social recognition	Social recognition	Professional work
4.	Education	Career	Education	Education		
5.	Success	Social recognition	Success	Success		
6.	Money	Money	Career	Money		
7.	Career	Position	Money	Career		
8.	Prosperity, wealth	Prosperity, wealth	Prosperity, wealth,	Prosperity, wealth,		
9.	Position	Wealth		Wealth		

	Total	0-3 years	3-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	Over 30
10.	Wealth	Fame		Fame, power		
11.	Fame					
12.	Power					

Among the vital values, 172 (86%) teachers indicated health and 124 (62%) life as the most important. The preferences of teachers in this area, taking into account their age, are presented in Table 4. In the case of young teachers joy is also a priority except for life. Physical fitness, in turn, is important for teachers over 50. It is an interesting relationship because this value is commonly believed to be fundamental to young people. The hierarchy of vital and hedonistic values preferred by teachers is presented in Table 4a.

Table 4. Vital and hedonistic values preferred by teachers by age

Answers	Total	Age								
		Below 29		30-39		40-49		Over 50		
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Health	172	86%	28	14%	40	20%	54	27%	50	25%
Life	124	62%	22	11%	28	14%	36	18%	38	19%
Strength	30	15%	10	5%	4	2%	12	6%	4	2%
Life full of adventures	24	12%	8	4%	6	3%	4	2%	6	3%
Physical fitness	68	34%	10	5%	18	9%	18	9%	22	11%
Appearance	26	13%	6	3%	6	3%	6	3%	8	4%
Joy	120	60%	24	12%	30	15%	34	17%	32	16%
Fun	16	8%	6	3%	4	2%	2	1%	4	2%
Pleasure	54	27%	16	8%	14	7%	10	5%	14	7%
Sex	32	16%	8	4%	14	7%	4	2%	6	3%
Other	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 4a. Hierarchy of declared vital and hedonistic values by the age of teachers

Total	Below 29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
1.Health	1.Health	1.Health	1. Health	1.Health
2. Life	2. Joy	2. Joy	2. Life	2. Life
3. Joy	3. Life	3. Life	3. Joy	3. Joy
4. Physical fitness	4. Pleasure	4. Physical fitness	4. Physical fitness, strenght	4. Physical fitness

Total	Below 29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
5. Pleasure	5. Physical fitness, strenght	5. Pleasure, sex	5. Pleasure	5. Pleasure
6. Sex	6. Life full of adventures, sex	6. Life full of adventures, appearance	6. Appearance	6. Appearance
7. Strength	7. Appearance	7. Strength, fun	7. Life full of adventures	7. Life full of adventures, sex
8. Appearance	8. Fun		8. Fun	8. Strenght
9. Life full of adventures				9. Fun
10. Fun				

It should be emphasized that the age of the respondents did not determine the basic preferences of teachers in the group of vital and hedonistic values. It turned out that the most important values are: health, joy and life for all teachers. In the group of the youngest teachers, apart from health, joy and life, there were also pleasures. However, for the other age groups, also physical fitness is important. A life full of adventures for both the youngest respondents and those aged 30 to 39 is of little importance. Teachers over 40 also pointed to the appearance. Fun turned out to be the least important value in all age groups of the surveyed teachers.

Table 5. Hierarchy of declared professional values by the degree of professional promotion of teachers

Total	Trainee teacher	Contract teacher	Nominated teacher	Certified teacher
1. Development	1. Development	1. Development; creativity; security and stabilization	1. Creativity	1. Development
2. Creativity	2. Creativity	2. Autonomy and independence	2. Development	2. Creativity
3. Security and stabilization	3. Security and stabilization	3. Impact on others	3. Autonomy and independence	3. Security and stabilization
4. Autonomy and independence	4. Autonomy and independence	4. Leadership	4. Security and stabilization	4. Autonomy and independence
5. Leadership	5. Leadership and impact on others		6. Impact on others	5. Impact on others
6. Impact on others				

The most important is development for 134 people (67%) and creativity in the profession for 128 respondents (64%). Security and stabilization in the profession plays a significant role for 102 (51%) of the surveyed teachers. Contract teachers and nominated teachers indicated the following values highest in the hierarchy: development, creativity, security and stabilization, as well as autonomy and independence. The same values turned out to be important also for trainee, and certified teachers. Values such as impact on others and leadership are at the lowest level of this hierarchy. A significant proportion of the respondents - 128 people (64%) indicated that their values definitely influenced their professional work. This opinion was expressed mainly by primary school teachers (52%). Responsibility (91%) and honesty (87%) turned out to be priorities in the educational work. Teachers working in the secondary school also try to convey tolerance, conscientiousness in the technical school, and patriotism in the vocational school.

Table 7 summarizes the analysis of the research results, which presents the hierarchies of moral, social, vital and hedonistic, prestigious and professional values declared by the surveyed teachers.

Table 7. Hierarchies of values declared by the surveyed teachers

Moral values	Social values	Vital and hedonistic values	Prestigious values	Professional values
1. Honesty 2. Responsibility 3. Love 4. Justice 5. Dignity 6. Friendship 7. Fidelity 8. Reliability 9. Honor 10. Modesty 11. Heroism	1. Family 2. Peace; Tolerance 3. Freedom 4. Democracy 5. Humanitarianism 6. Patriotism 7. Solidarity 8. Agreed 9. The prosperity of the motherland	1. Health 2. Life 3. Joy 4. Physical fitness 5. Pleasure 6. Sex 7. Strength 8. Appearance 9. Life full of adventures 10. Fun	1. Respect of others 2. Professional work 3. Social recognition 4. Education 5. Success 6. Money 7. Career 8. Prosperity; Wealth 9. Position 10. Property 11. Fame 12. Power	1. Development 2. Creativity 3. Security and stabilization 4. Autonomy 5. Leadership 6. Impact on others

Discussion of results and conclusions

The empirical research undertaken was used to discover the catalog of values preferred by modern teachers based on the following criteria: gender, age, type of school, seniority and the degree of professional promotion. An image of a contemporary teacher has emerged from the above, embodying such values as: honesty, responsibility, love, justice, solidarity, sensitivity to the harm of others, freedom, tolerance, joy, creativity, and personal dignity. It should be remembered, however, that this image, although optimistic, is nevertheless declarative.

The family is at the forefront of the hierarchy of social values (in the first or second place) for all respondents. It is by far the most important value for teachers aged 30-39 and over 50. Teachers over 50 also placed tolerance in parallel with the family, while 40-49-year-olds put it in front of the family. The youngest teachers indicated peace behind the family and tolerance, people over 40 indicated freedom, and teachers aged 30-39 years indicated solidarity.

Health, life and joy are also values that determine the lives of teachers. Pleasure was highly assessed primarily by the youngest, although pleasure and sex turned out to be important elements in the lives of teachers aged 30-39. In turn, among the respondents over 40, physical fitness is a factor of high self-esteem as well.

The moral values that play a special role in the lives of all teachers are: honesty, responsibility, love and justice. Apart from those indicated, the following turned out to be important: friendship, dignity and faithfulness for teachers aged 40-49, and also reliability and honor for teachers over 50.

Teachers, in particular certified teachers, believe that their values significantly affect their professional work. In the opinion of trainee teachers, honesty, authority and qualifications are particularly important in the teacher's work. Contract teachers believe that personal dignity and sensitivity to harm are paramount. In turn, nominated teachers indicated tolerance and responsibility.

Development and creativity characterize all teachers. Security and stability are at the forefront of the professional value hierarchy of contract teachers. No teacher identified himself/herself with values such as influence on others and leadership. For all teachers, student safety and respect for him/her are key values. Teachers declare that the professional values they embody are: responsibility, commitment, helping, creativity, professionalism, independence and team work. The trainee teacher indicates professionalism, independence, teamwork and commitment at the top of this hierarchy. Professionalism and helping others are embodied in particular by certified teachers, and independence by contract teachers.

In conclusion, the values significantly influence both the personal life and the performance of the profession by teachers. By determining their professional attitudes and behavior towards students, they are an indispensable element in building the hierarchy of values of the young generation. Living in accordance with one's values, as well as treating own work as a passion, both professional and personal fulfillment, is also a confirmation of one's vocation as a teacher.

Summary

The reflection made is part of the area of pedagogical research concerning the teacher's person and mission. It is not the only factor that determines the educational mission of the school, however, it is one of the most important ones. This truth is confirmed by W. Okoń, who states: "many conditions make up good education, but one is special: perfect education can only be the work of a perfect educator" (Okoń, 2009). Students need good and wise teachers who communicate and bear witness to values. Values and their choice depend on society, culture and institutions, and are the

result of human development at the same time, which, in turn, depends on individual differences. The factors may include: gender, human roles in life, professional roles, religion, personality traits, living conditions.

The study showed that values are key in making life and professional decisions by teachers. The awareness of their own value system enables them to fulfill their roles. Teachers are convinced that the values they present have a large impact on students.

The presented research results should draw the attention of those who are close to the matter of upbringing and education, especially those for whom values constitute the essence of professional activity - teachers and educators. The conducted research was also intended to stimulate teachers to axiological reflection and become an inspiration for further work on themselves and their image in the profession. Undoubtedly, the art of creating oneself is difficult, but necessary and worth taking up in the teaching profession.

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The axiological image of contemporary teachers

Abstract

The area of considerations undertaken in this study was determined by the value category. The article is a theoretical-research one and its aim is to attempt to characterize the values of modern teachers. This goal was achieved through a statistical presentation of the values indicated by respondents that are valuable to them in life, based on criteria such as: gender, age, type of school, length of work and the degree of professional promotion. On this basis, an attempt was made to define the axiological image of a contemporary teacher.

Keywords: axiology, values, teacher

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