ORIGINAL RESEARCH
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ORYGINALNE
ARTYKUŁY BADAWCZE

Katarzyna Jas-Liszok

University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland
e-mail: katarzyna.jas-liszok@us.edu.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8382-1423

Values of Academic Youth: A Polish-Czech-Slovakian Comparative Study

Abstract

This article is a communication from comparative research conducted in 2023 among pedagogy students of Polish, Czech, and Slovak universities. A questionnaire method was used in the research. The survey covered 314 people, they were students from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. The study aimed to find out the value system of students of pedagogy. To verify the research questions, statistical analyses were carried out using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 package. Frequency analyses, Spearman's rho rank correlation analyses, χ2 tests, and Fisher's exact tests were performed using this package. The classic threshold of α = 0.05 was considered as the level of significance. For respondents, values are something that helps them shape their identity, relationships with others, and the way they pursue their goals. As assumed in the formulated thesis, the analysis of the survey results did not reveal significant differences in the understanding of values between the different nationalities. However, the most interesting fact seems to be that Polish non-believers are more likely to indicate the church as a source of values than believers – in contrast to Czech and Slovak respondents.

Keywords: values, education students, academic youth, future teachers, comparative studies.

Introduction

The process of value judgment commences during the earliest years of life, with the family and school environments being the key players in the creation of a value system in a child's life. As a mentor and champion, the teacher acts as a source of values for their students. The teacher is an authority figure in the world of values; with their attitude and conduct, they set an example in bringing values to life. It thus appears worthwhile to address the question by investigating the value system of pedagogy students. As future teachers and educators, they represent a vital pillar for involving children and young people in everyday life, in constructing axiology, in fostering social values, adopting social roles and building interpersonal relationships (Wereszczyńska, 2019, pp. 107–133). The time of studying typically coincides with what is known in developmental psychology as early adulthood (Harwas-Napierała & Trempała, 2000). At that time, young people undertake their studies, thus shaping, whether knowingly or not, their future career. A time in life that is special for any individual, "not only for the development process, but especially for the formation of identity and their sense of quality of life, is – besides the transition from adolescence to adulthood – the transition of young adults from the world of school to the world of work" (Suchodolska, 2017, p. 175).

The goal of this study is to gain insight into the value system of pedagogy students. This paper is a report on comparative research conducted in 2023 among pedagogy students at Polish, Czech and Slovak universities.

Theoretical considerations

The name "value" originates from the Latin word *valor* and *valere*, meaning "to be healthy, to do well", and "to have influence, to be meaningful, to have the ability" (Żuk, 2016, p. 18). The literature on the subject offers numerous definitions and typologies of values; philosophers, educators, psychologists and sociologists, in their turn, propose different interpretations of the concept. Discussions on values such as truth, goodness and beauty were initiated by Plato and Aristotle, and this triad of values is what makes a person truly human (Tatarkiewicz, 1990). In philosophy, value is understood as "every-

thing that is precious, worthy of desire and choice; that represents the goal of human endeavour" (Krajewski & Banajski, 1996, p. 207).

For the purposes of this paper, reference is made to the definition of value proposed by Max Sheller (Scheller, 1980), who is the originator of the concept of value (Dudek & Panas, 2023). The Author argues that values are part of the realm of objective qualities (material things or mathematical truths) and do not depend on the subject as properties of the real world. Values are not created by the human being, but discovered by them. We come to know values not through sensory experience or through rational means, but through intuition and in a variety of emotional acts. The author distinguishes four groups of values: "hedonic values; vital values; spiritual values; religious values" (Perz, 2020, p. 80).

Max Scheler (Scheller, 1980) presents values as objective qualities, independent of individual human preferences. In the context of research on the value system of pedagogy students – future educators and mentors – the assumption of the existence of objective values, which should not only be recognized by students but also communicated and realized in educational practice, is relevant. Scheler also emphasizes the intuitive nature of the cognition of values – their recognition is done not through the senses or reason, but through emotional acts and intuition. This assumption corresponds to the life phase of early adulthood, in which young people shape their emotional and axiological foundations for their personal and professional lives. During this period, the process of valuing takes on particular importance, and the intuitive discovery of a hierarchy of values can influence students' future professional identity.

The classification proposed by the German philosopher – into hedonic, vital, spiritual, and religious values – makes it possible to refer in the analysis not only to material or social values but also to refer in the interpretation of the results to the sphere of spiritual and moral values, which is particularly important in the context of training pedagogues responsible for the education of the young generation. In his reflections, Max Scheler draws attention to the hierarchy of values – he places spiritual and religious values above hedonistic or vitalistic values. In pedagogy, where upbringing for higher values is crucial, this concept forms the basis for analyzing and interpreting the results of research into students' value hierarchies.

In sociological terms, values are typically connected to the society in which a person lives. They influence human beings and their lifestyles, combining individual beliefs with the socio-cultural context (Mariański, 2014). The hierarchy of values in a group is a product of upbringing and educational processes and, as noted by M. Szczepański, results from social differentiation (Szczepański, 1979).

In psychological science, thinking about values is evidence that a person is responsible in that they exercise control over what happens in their life, rather than just submitting passively to it (Popielski & Mamcarz, 2015). As defined by Milton Rokeach, values constitute a hierarchical system, which is "an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or ultimate end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance" (Rokeach, 1973). In his theory, M. Rokeach classifies values into those that have the highest place in the hierarchy – terminal values (ultimate, autotelic) and instrumental (basic) values, which play a supporting role in achieving terminal values. (Łobocki, 2007).

In pedagogy, values are "vital to the proper functioning of educational processes and form a fundamental dimension of insight into educational reality" (Ramiszewska, 2024, p. 12).

Values encapsulate the sense of what should be, of what we desire. They are vital to living in society and indicate what is important in a person's life (Nowak, 2000).

Methodology

The research involved a total of 314 students, of which 102 were in Poland (University of Silesia in Katowice, Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Education in Cieszyn), 104 in the Czech Republic (University of Ostrava), and 108 in Slovakia (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica). The research group is representative of the pedagogy students studying in the researched academic institutions. This group is not representative of students in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which is why the results and conclusions

cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of young people in the afore-mentioned countries[1].

Comparative research was used to establish facts and principles with a view to understanding the condition of young people and then to identifying solutions with respect to different environmental contexts. In order to verify the research questions and hypotheses, statistical analyses were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The software was used to conduct frequency analyses, Spearman's rank-order correlation analyses, χ2 tests and Fisher's exact tests. The classic threshold of α = 0.05 was used as the level of significance.

The method used in the research was a questionnaire (Rubacha, 2008). The survey questionnaire included questions on the understanding of values, hierarchy of values, inspiration in the search for values and demographics. Open-ended and closed questions were used: choice questions, two-step questions and questions with a four-point estimation scale. The research subject was the value system of students from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The goal of the research was to gain insight into the value system of young people studying pedagogy in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The choice of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia as research areas was a conscious research decision resulting from the need to conduct an analysis in countries with similar, but not identical socio-cultural conditions. These Central European countries share a common historical heritage, including the experience of systemic transformation and socio-economic transition after 1989, which significantly influences the process of value formation among the young generation. At the same time, differences resulting from different social policies, educational systems, and the dynamics of social and economic development make it possible to identify different tendencies in the understanding and hierarchization of values. An important aspect of the choice of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia was also the possibility of cooperation with leading academic centers, which provided access to similar groups of students of pedagogy (Siwek, 2016)

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[1] The required representative sample was determined using a sampling calculator. In view of the difficulties in obtaining full empirical material, the research considered inference with an error of 9%, as is acceptable in the social sciences. Only an inference of 15% error is unacceptable (as quoted in: D. Wêziak-Bia³owolska, 2013).

The research problems addressed declarations related to the above-mentioned issues and were framed by the following questions: How do the respondents understand the concept of value? What values are most significant to the respondents? What values are least significant to the respondents? Where do the respondents seek the values that guide their lives? These are research on the state of the variables. The paper is intended to describe the facts, phenomena and processes under investigation, with no in-depth exploration of the existing causal relationships.

The research group comprised pedagogy students. The study group consisted of students studying pedagogy. The research among students of pedagogy was inspired by the professional work of the author of the text. In conversations with students and staff at the aforementioned academic centres, one notices difficulties among young adults in listing values and justifying hierarchy. The curriculum of the pedagogy degree program is rich in modules in which the instructors provide theoretical content from the literature on the subject, but there are few practical, workshop activities to broaden the subject matter, encourage reflection, and prepare students for responsible educational work.

A total of 233 women and 81 men participated in the survey. The research group comprised individuals aged between 20 and 40 years. Barbara Harwas-Napierała and Janusz Trempała (2000) refer to this period of development in human life as early adulthood. This is the time of greatest professional activity, personal development, pursuit of passions and interests, the time of building (autonomy), starting a family, consciously choosing the group to which one wants to belong and creating one's own SELF. 54.8% of the respondents were urban residents, with the rest indicating the countryside as their place of residence. Believers represented 62.1%, while 37.9% of respondents identified themselves as non-believers. Demographics split into these three groups are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the respondents

			Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	total
gender	female	*N*	97	58	78	233
		%	95.10%	55.80%	72.20%	74.20%
	male	*N*	5	46	30	81
		%	4.90%	44.20%	27.80%	25.80%
place of residence	city/town	*N*	48	77	47	172
		%	47.10%	74.00%	43.50%	54.80%
	countryside	*N*	54	27	61	142
		%	52.90%	26.00%	56.50%	45.20%
declaration of faith	believer	*N*	90	27	78	195
		%	88.20%	26.00%	72.20%	62.10%
	non-believer	*N*	12	77	30	119
		%	11.80%	74.00%	27.80%	37.90%

Source: Own research.

Presentation of own research results

It appeared relevant to verify the values that are indicated among the five most important to the respondents. The responses of individuals from different countries were compared (Table 2). Thirteen statistically significant differences were identified. The value of family happiness was most frequently mentioned by individuals from Slovakia and least frequently by individuals from the Czech Republic. The value of friendship was clearly the one least frequently mentioned by individuals from Slovakia. God as a value was most frequently indicated by Poles and least frequently by Czechs. The value of success was mentioned clearly less frequently by individuals from Poland, whereas the value of contact with culture was mentioned most frequently. Career was indicated most frequently by Poles and least frequently by Czechs. What was important to Poles was the aspect of material stabil-

ity and freedom. Self-esteem in turn, was indicated more frequently by respondents from the Czech Republic. The aspect of gender was mentioned significantly less frequently by Poles. The aspect of peaceful and safe living was most often indicated by Slovaks, while the aspect of health was mentioned most frequently by Czechs, with both values indicated less frequently by Poles. Freedom as the most important value was mentioned by Czech students and was least frequently chosen in this category by Polish students. For the other values, no statistically significant differences were found between the representatives of the three countries under comparison.

Table 2. Share of respondents indicating specific values among the five most important versus the nationality of the respondents

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
family happiness	*N*	80	70	90	$\chi2(2) = 7.89$ $p = 0.019$ $V = 0.16$
	%	78.4%	67.3%	83.3%	
love	*N*	79	73	90	$\chi2(2) = 5.19$ $p = 0.075$
	%	77.5%	70.2%	83.3%	
friendship	*N*	54	51	2	$\chi2(2) = 76.45$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.49$
	%	52.9%	49.0%	1.9%	
homeland	*N*	5	1	7	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.103$
	%	4.9%	1.0%	6.5%	
God	*N*	41	6	30	$\chi2(2) = 33.92$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.33$
	%	40.2%	5.8%	27.8%	
success	*N*	4	14	17	$\chi2(2) = 8.24$ $p = 0.016$ $V = 0.16$
	%	3.9%	13.5%	15.7%	
contact with culture	*N*	10	4	1	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.011$ $V = 0.17$
	%	9.8%	3.8%	0.9%	

Tabela 2. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
a life full of adventure and excitement	N	9	14	22	χ2(2) = 5.79 p = 0.055
	%	8.8%	13.5%	20.4%	
career	N	13	0	4	χ2(2) = 17.28 p = 0.019 V = 0.16
	%	12.7%	0.0%	3.7%	
social recognition	N	8	4	11	χ2(2) = 3.20 p = 0.202
	%	7.8%	3.8%	10.2%	
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	N	42	22	17	χ2(2) = 19.48 p < 0.001 V = 0.25
	%	41.2%	21.2%	15.7%	
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	N	53	36	50	χ2(2) = 6.55 p = 0.038 V = 0.14
	%	52.0%	34.6%	46.3%	
self-esteem	N	7	19	10	χ2(2) = 7.39 p = 0.025 V = 0.15
	%	6.9%	18.3%	9.3%	
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	N	6	10	17	χ2(2) = 5.53 p = 0.062
	%	5.9%	9.6%	15.7%	
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	N	8	9	12	χ2(2) = 0.73 p = 0.694
	%	7.8%	8.7%	11.1%	
sex	N	1	9	8	χ2(2) = 6.47 p = 0.039 V = 0.14
	%	1.0%	8.7%	7.4%	
peaceful and safe living	N	14	16	30	χ2(2) = 8.10 p = 0.017 V = 0.16
	%	13.7%	15.4%	27.8%	
health	N	45	75	69	χ2(2) = 17.79 p < 0.001 V = 0.24
	%	44.1%	72.1%	63.9%	

Tabela 2. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
honest life	N	8	8	9	χ2(2) = 0.03
	%	7.8%	7.7%	8.3%	p = 0.984
truth	N	8	19	17	χ2(2) = 5.05
	%	7.8%	18.3%	15.7%	p = 0.080
freedom	N	8	28	12	**χ2(2) = 16.69**
	%	7.8%	26.9%	11.1%	**p < 0.001** **V = 0.23**
physical appearance	N	0	3	0	Fisher's exact test
	%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	p = 0.066
national security	N	0	3	2	Fisher's exact test
	%	0.0%	2.9%	1.9%	p = 0.334
tolerance	N	5	9	9	χ2(2) = 1.31
	%	4.9%	8.7%	8.3%	p = 0.518
other	N	0	1	0	Fisher's exact test
	%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	p = 0.655

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100, as the respondents were able to identify the 5 most significant values.

When explaining the statistically dominant presence of women among teachers, Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik argues that this feminisation results from the fact that the profession has lost its attractiveness and bears witness to the profession's low prestige in the social structure (Gromkowska-Melosik, 2013, p. 86). Given that most of the surveyed pedagogy students are women, it appeared interesting to explore the opinions of the respondents in terms of their declared gender.

Analyses were performed by the three nationalities of the individuals surveyed, with regard to their gender. As shown in Table 3, a total of seven

statistically significant correlations were identified: two in the Czech group and five in the Slovak group. Among Czechs, men were less likely to indicate family happiness and freedom. Among Slovak students, men were less likely to mention peace, safe living and health, while being more likely to mention friendship, career, financial stability and a prosperous life. The other relationships were not statistically significant.

Table 3. Indication of specific values among the five most important versus the gender of the respondents

	gender (male)		
	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia
family happiness	0.12	**-0.20***	0
love	-0.09	-0.14	0.06
friendship	0.12	0.02	**0.22***
homeland	-0.05	0.11	0.17
God	-0.19	0.03	-0.11
success	-0.05	-0.01	0.02
contact with culture	0.08	-0.08	-0.06
a life full of adventure and excitement	0.09	0.16	0.10
career	-0.09	–	**0.21***
social recognition (success through professional, scientific or artistic achievements)	0.10	-0.08	0
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	0.09	-0.13	**0.24***
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	-0.05	**0.21***	0.17
self-esteem	-0.06	-0.07	0.02
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	-0.06	-0.09	-0.10

Tabela 3. (continued)

	gender (male)		
	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	-0.07	0.07	-0.09
sex	-0.02	0.14	0.06
peaceful and safe living	0.04	-0.17	**-0.25***
health	-0.02	-0.05	**-0.22***
honest life	-0.07	0.11	-0.04
truth	-0.07	0.18	-0.04
freedom	0.10	0.11	0.04
physical appearance	–	-0.15	–
national security	–	-0.04	-0.09
tolerance	0.16	0.07	-0.04
other	–	0.11	–

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100, as the respondents were able to identify the 5 most significant values.

CEBOS surveys (2013) indicate that "a majority of rural residents find family happiness (81%) and staying healthy (72%) to be the most important values. Nearly a third of them (30%) regard an honest life to be important, and about a fifth attach considerable importance to career (21%), respect from others (20%), peace of mind (19%) and religious faith (18%)" (CEBOS, 2013, p. 5). With regard to the place of residence, four statistically significant correlations were observed, all in the Polish group (Table 4). Individuals living in the countryside were more likely to indicate family happiness and an honest life and less likely to indicate contact with culture and wisdom. The strength of the two positive relationships was low, while that of the two negative relationships was moderately strong. The other correlations were not statistically significant.

Table 4. Indication of specific values among the five most important ones versus the place of residence of the respondents by the nationality of the respondents

	living in the countryside		
	Poland	**Czech Republic**	**Slovakia**
family happiness	**0.27****	0.09	0.11
love	-0.04	0.10	-0.04
friendship	0.06	0.08	-0.16
homeland	0.12	-0.06	-0.07
God	-0.07	-0.05	0.04
success	0.09	-0.04	-0.08
contact with culture	**-0.35****	-0.12	0.08
a life full of adventure and excitement	-0.12	0.09	-0.07
career	0.01	–	0.07
social recognition (success through professional, scientific or artistic achievements)	**-0.31****	0.11	-0.01
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	-0.09	-0.04	-0.13
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	0	-0.02	-0.05
self-esteem	0.10	-0.05	0.02
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	0.07	-0.04	0.07
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	-0.09	-0.10	-0.17
sex	0.09	-0.03	-0.04
peaceful and safe living	0.09	-0.07	0.09

Tabela 4. (continued)

	living in the countryside		
	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia
health	0.05	-0.07	0
honest life	**0.20***	-0.01	0.13
truth	0.06	-0.05	-0.08
freedom	0.13	0.14	0.07
physical appearance	–	-0.1	–
national security	–	0.03	0.12
tolerance	-0.15	0.05	0.06
other	–	-0.06	–

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100, as the respondents were able to identify the 5 most significant values.

The system of values is often equated with faith in the literature on the subject; M. Scheler regards religious values to be absolute. "The world is changing, and it is essential to think in a modern way, making use of the benefits that the technological world offers us, and to be mindful of the courage of one's reason (the Age of Enlightenment); at the same time, one must bear in mind that the Founding Fathers of Europe saw Christian values as a guarantee of stability, democracy and peace" (Wielecki & Walewski, 2022, p. 18). It appears to be interesting to identify specific values among the five most important ones with respect to whether one identifies oneself as a believer or a non-believer. Analyses were performed by the three nationalities of the persons surveyed. As shown in Table 5, a total of eight statistically significant correlations were identified: three in the Polish group, one in the Czech group and five in the Slovak group. Non-believers in Poland were more likely to mention contact with culture and social recognition, while being less likely to mention health. The strength of these effects was low. Among Czech, non-

believers were less likely to indicate God. The strength of this relationship was moderately strong. Among Slovaks, by contrast, non-believers were less likely to indicate family happiness and God while being more likely to mention social recognition, freedom and equality. The strength of these relationships was low. The other correlations were not statistically significant.

Table 5. Indication of specific values among the five most important ones versus being a non-believer by the nationality of the respondents

	being a non-believer		
	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia
family happiness	-0.10	0.10	-0.22*
love	0.05	-0.10	-0.11
friendship	-0.02	-0.08	-0.09
homeland	0.06	-0.17	0.09
God	0.14	**-0.42***	**-0.29**
success	0.08	-0.02	-0.04
contact with culture	**0.29**	0	-0.06
a life full of adventure and excitement	0.10	0.17	0.10
career	0.13	–	-0.01
social recognition (success through professional, scientific or artistic achievements)	**0.23***	-0.11	**0.20***
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	-0.18	0.09	0.19
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	0.17	-0.03	**0.21***
self-esteem	-0.10	0	-0.06
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	-0.09	0.04	**0.24***

Tabela 5. (continued)

	being a non-believer		
	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	0.01	-0.05	0.11
sex	-0.04	0.03	0.06
peaceful and safe living	-0.06	0.01	-0.06
health	**-0.26****	0.02	-0.01
honest life	-0.11	0.09	-0.11
truth	-0.11	0	-0.10
freedom	0.01	0.01	0.18
physical appearance	–	-0.16	–
national security	–	0.10	0.07
tolerance	-0.08	-0.05	-0.11
other	–	0.10	–

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100, as the respondents were able to identify the 5 most significant values.

A comparison was also made between the responses of people from different countries (Table 6) in terms of the nationality of the respondents. The research area is not radically varied, as the countries listed are all located in Europe, and the differences will arise from each nation's socio-cultural background and sense of national identity. Among the respondents of the three nationalities, eight statistically significant differences were found among the five least important values. Friendship as a value was clearly the one most frequently mentioned by individuals from Slovakia. The strength of this effect was moderately high. God as a value was least frequently indicated by Poles and most frequently by Czechs. The strength of this effect was also moderately high. Success as a value was indicated clearly more frequently by Polish residents while being mentioned least frequently by

Czechs. The strength of this effect was low. Career as a value was indicated least frequently by Poles and most frequently by Slovaks. The strength of this effect was low. Social recognition as a value, by contrast, was among the five least important values most frequently mentioned among Poles and least frequently indicated among Czechs, and this effect was also characterised by low strength. Material stability was more often mentioned by Slovaks. This effect was moderately strong. Sex was mentioned significantly less frequently by Czechs. This effect was also weak. Tolerance was most frequently indicated by Czechs and least frequently (in general) by Slovaks. The strength of this effect was once again low. For the other values, no statistically significant differences were found between the representatives of the three countries under comparison.

Table 6. Share of respondents indicating specific values among the five least important versus the nationality of the respondents

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
family happiness	N	0	2	1	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.542$
	%	0.0%	1.9%	0.9%	
love	N	0	1	1	Fisher's exact test $p = 1$
	%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	
friendship	N	2	3	33	$\chi2(2) = 52.74$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.41$
	%	2.0%	2.9%	30.6%	
homeland	N	21	29	21	$\chi2(2) = 2.51$ $p = 0.285$
	%	20.6%	27.9%	19.4%	
God	N	18	63	32	$\chi2(2) = 44.09$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.38$
	%	17.6%	60.6%	29.6%	
success	N	28	9	14	$\chi2(2) = 14.68$ $p = 0.001$ $V = 0.22$
	%	27.5%	8.7%	13.0%	
contact with culture	N	37	31	30	$\chi2(2) = 1.91$ $p = 0.385$
	%	36.3%	29.8%	27.8%	

Tabela 6. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
a life full of adventure and excitement	N	33	19	26	χ2(2) = 5.52 p = 0.063
	%	32.4%	18.3%	24.1%	
career	N	10	30	38	χ2(2) = 19.44 p < 0.001 V = 0.25
	%	9.8%	28.8%	35.2%	
social recognition	N	52	32	38	χ2(2) = 9.79 p = 0.007 V = 0.18
	%	51.0%	30.8%	35.2%	
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	N	10	11	37	χ2(2) = 27.27 p < 0.001 V = 0.30
	%	9.8%	10.6%	34.3%	
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	N	0	1	0	Fisher's exact test p = 0.656
	%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	
self-esteem	N	1	4	3	χ2(2) = 1.74 p = 0.419
	%	1.0%	3.8%	2.8%	
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	N	6	7	8	χ2(2) = 0.20 p = 0.907
	%	5.9%	6.7%	7.4%	
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	N	5	4	4	Fisher's exact test p = 0.885
	%	4.9%	3.8%	3.7%	
sex	N	32	14	34	χ2(2) = 11.83 p = 0.003 V = 0.19
	%	31.4%	13.5%	31.5%	
peaceful and safe living	N	0	4	2	Fisher's exact test p = 0.127
	%	0.0%	3.8%	1.9%	
health	N	0	0	1	Fisher's exact test p = 1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	

Tabela 6. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
honest life	N	3	4	6	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.686$
	%	2.9%	3.8%	5.6%	
truth	N	1	1	4	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.371$
	%	1.0%	1.0%	3.7%	
freedom	N	1	1	5	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.225$
	%	1.0%	1.0%	4.6%	
physical appearance	N	57	43	52	$\chi2(2) = 4.36$ $p = 0.113$
	%	55.9%	41.3%	48.1%	
national security	N	4	14	12	$\chi2(2) = 5.89$ $p = 0.053$
	%	3.9%	13.5%	11.1%	
tolerance	N	4	10	0	**$\chi2(2) = 11.60$** **$p = 0.003$** **$V = 0.19$**
	%	3.9%	9.6%	0.0%	
other	N	1	2	0	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.321$
	%	1.0%	1.9%	0.0%	

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100 as the respondents were able to identify the 5 least significant values.

Table 7 compares the responses of people from different countries with regard to the least important values indicated. Eight statistically significant differences were identified. Friendship as a value was clearly the one most frequently mentioned by individuals from Slovakia. The strength of this effect was moderately high. God as a value was indicated least frequently by Poles and most frequently by Czechs. The strength of this effect was also moderately high. Success as a value was indicated clearly more frequently by Polish residents while being mentioned least frequently by Czechs. The strength of this effect was low. Career as a value was indicated least frequently by Poles and most frequently by Slovaks. The strength of this effect was low.

Social recognition as a value, by contrast, was among the five least important values most frequently mentioned among Poles and least frequently indicated among Czechs, and this effect was also characterised by low strength. Material stability was more often mentioned by Slovaks. This effect was moderately strong. Sex was mentioned significantly less frequently by Czechs. This effect was also weak. Tolerance was most frequently indicated by Czechs and least frequently (in general) by Slovaks. The strength of this effect was once again low. For the other values, no statistically significant differences were found between the representatives of the three countries under comparison.

Table 7. Share of respondents indicating specific values among the five least important versus the nationality of the respondents

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
family happiness	N	0	2	1	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.542$
	%	0.0%	1.9%	0.9%	
love	N	0	1	1	Fisher's exact test $p = 1$
	%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%	
friendship	N	2	3	33	$\chi2(2) = 52.74$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.41$
	%	2.0%	2.9%	30.6%	
homeland	N	21	29	21	$\chi2(2) = 2.51$ $p = 0.285$
	%	20.6%	27.9%	19.4%	
God	N	18	63	32	$\chi2(2) = 44.09$ $p < 0.001$ $V = 0.38$
	%	17.6%	60.6%	29.6%	
success	N	28	9	14	$\chi2(2) = 14.68$ $p = 0.001$ $V = 0.22$
	%	27.5%	8.7%	13.0%	
contact with culture	N	37	31	30	$\chi2(2) = 1.91$ $p = 0.385$
	%	36.3%	29.8%	27.8%	
a life full of adventure and excitement	N	33	19	26	$\chi2(2) = 5.52$ $p = 0.063$
	%	32.4%	18.3%	24.1%	

Tabela 7. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
career	N	10	30	38	χ2(2) = 19.44 **p < 0.001** **V = 0.25**
	%	9.8%	28.8%	35.2%	
social recognition	N	52	32	38	χ2(2) = 9.79 **p = 0.007** **V = 0.18**
	%	51.0%	30.8%	35.2%	
financial stability and a prosperous life (well-being)	N	10	11	37	χ2(2) = 27.27 **p < 0.001** **V = 0.30**
	%	9.8%	10.6%	34.3%	
freedom (personal independence, freedom of choice)	N	0	1	0	Fisher's exact test p = 0.656
	%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	
self-esteem	N	1	4	3	χ2(2) = 1.74 p = 0.419
	%	1.0%	3.8%	2.8%	
equality (equal opportunities for everyone)	N	6	7	8	χ2(2) = 0.20 p = 0.907
	%	5.9%	6.7%	7.4%	
wisdom (mature understanding of life)	N	5	4	4	Fisher's exact test p = 0.885
	%	4.9%	3.8%	3.7%	
sex	N	32	14	34	χ2(2) = 11.83 **p = 0.003** **V = 0.19**
	%	31.4%	13.5%	31.5%	
peaceful and safe living	N	0	4	2	Fisher's exact test p = 0.127
	%	0.0%	3.8%	1.9%	
health	N	0	0	1	Fisher's exact test p = 1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	
honest life	N	3	4	6	Fisher's exact test p = 0.686
	%	2.9%	3.8%	5.6%	

Tabela 7. (continued)

		Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	
truth	N	1	1	4	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.371$
	%	1.0%	1.0%	3.7%	
freedom	N	1	1	5	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.225$
	%	1.0%	1.0%	4.6%	
physical appearance	N	57	43	52	$\chi2(2) = 4.36$ $p = 0.113$
	%	55.9%	41.3%	48.1%	
national security	N	4	14	12	$\chi2(2) = 5.89$ $p = 0.053$
	%	3.9%	13.5%	11.1%	
tolerance	N	4	10	0	**$\chi2(2) = 11.60$** **$p = 0.003$** **$V = 0.19$**
	%	3.9%	9.6%	0.0%	
other	N	1	2	0	Fisher's exact test $p = 0.321$
	%	1.0%	1.9%	0.0%	

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Source: Own research, percentages do not add up to 100 as the respondents were able to identify the 5 least significant values.

Analogous analyses were performed by the three nationalities of the persons surveyed. A total of six statistically significant correlations were identified: one in the Polish group, two in the Czech group and three in the Slovak group. In the Polish group, men were more likely to indicate career as important; in the Czech group, men were more likely to indicate self-esteem and national security; in the Slovak group, in turn, men mentioned social recognition less often and truth and national security more often. The strength of all these correlations was low. The other relationships were not statistically significant.

No statistically significant results were found in the category of the respondents' place of residence by nationality for the five least important values.

Analyses were also performed by the three nationalities of the respondents who declared themselves to be non-believers. A total of five statistically sig-

nificant correlations: three in the Czech group and two in the Slovak group. Non-believers in the Czech Republic were more likely to indicate the values of God while being less likely to mention the values of tolerance and sex. The strength of the first two of these relationships was moderately strong, and that of the last one was low. Among Slovaks, by contrast, non-believers were less likely to indicate sex while being more likely to mention God. The strength of the former relationship was low, while that of the latter was high. The other correlations were not statistically significant.

In the survey questionnaire, the respondents were asked about the source of their search for value[2]. Three statistically significant differences were identified. Friends as the source were most often indicated by Slovak residents and least often by Poles; church/denominational groups were most often mentioned by Poles and least often by Czechs; universities were most often named by Czechs. The strength of all these effects is low. For the other sources, no statistically significant differences were found between the representatives of the three countries under comparison.

Statistically significant relationships were also identified: one in the Polish group and two in the Slovak group, based on the gender of the respondents. In the Polish group, men were more likely to indicate the media, while those in the Slovak group tended to mention university and other places. The strength of all these correlations was low. The other relationships were not statistically significant.

The place of residence played no significant role in relation to the sources in which the respondents seek values, with no statistically significant results in this category.

Analogous analyses were performed by the three nationalities of the persons surveyed. A total of seven statistically significant correlations were identified: two for the Polish group and the Czech group each, and three for the Slovak group. Interestingly, in Poland, non-believers were more likely to identify both church/denominational groups and university as sources of values. Both effects were weak. In the Czech Republic, being a non-believer meant be-

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[2] Due to the limited number of characters, the author has refrained from including tables in the text.

ing less likely to indicate church/denominational groups and career. The former effect was moderately strong, while the latter was weak. In Slovakia, non-believers were less likely to indicate family, church/denominational groups and other options as sources of values. The strength of the observed effect for Church/denominational groups was moderately strong, while the other two effects were weak. The other correlations are not statistically significant.

Consideration was also given to the differential effect of the following demographic variables: gender, place of residence and being a non-believer. The Fisher's exact tests were found not to be statistically significant either in the whole group of respondents or in the three nationality subgroups.

Conclusions

For a number of years, academics in the field of pedagogy have been seeking to answer the questions of what values are, what their determinants are, and how children, adolescents and adults, including students, can build a system of values. Observed for a number of years, socio-cultural changes can give rise to choices of values that are increasingly pleasant and more easily achieved. Each individual has their own world of values, the origins of which can be traced back to the individual themselves, the society and the culture in which the individual exists (Wojciechowska, 2022). In order to be able to teach about values, the teacher, as a creator of the educational process, needs to be aware of their own value system and have the ability to act consistently in line with the hierarchy of these values.

As adults, students of pedagogy are already shaped in a certain way; still, as members of the academic community, they continue to undergo intensive development in terms of their cognitive abilities and worldview. The cultural context in which the respondents exist is important to reveal certain similarities in the understanding of the concept of values. When analysing the study results, no significant differences were found in the way the concept of value was interpreted. Students understand values as certain guideposts in their family and professional life, viewing them in the context of the culture in which they were raised and the society in which they live. As assumed in the formulated thesis, the analysis of the research results showed no significant differences in the understanding of values between the different nationalities.

What appears most striking, however, is that Polish non-believers are more likely than believers to identify church as a source of values, unlike Czech and Slovak respondents.

Material stability a prosperous life (well-being) and professional work are examples of material values in Scheler's view (Perz, 2020). These values often appear in the responses of Poles, where material stability and prosperity are frequently highlighted as important. Also in the context of freedom, the association with its value, especially in the case of Poles, indicates the importance of values of a material and social nature. Professional work, on the other hand, was least frequently indicated by Poles, suggesting that it may be regarded in this case as a lower priority value compared to others.

Family happiness, love, friendship, or social recognition are values of a spiritual nature that are in the middle part of M. Scheler's hierarchy of values (Perz, 2020). In particular, family happiness and love appear in people's responses from different countries, but they differ according to nationality. Most frequently chosen by Slovak respondents, these values can be seen as a strong indication of the value of human relationships. Scheler indicated the superiority of values such as love over material aspects of life. One can also notice a difference in the perception of friendship. Slovaks indicate this value most often, which may suggest that friendship has a stronger character for them within the middle class of values.

The value of God fits into Scheler's highest hierarchy of values. Most frequently indicated by Poles, least by Czechs, indicating a significant difference in attitudes to religious values between the two nations. The philosopher emphasized that religious values are the most important, but in this case, the differences between the countries show how strongly they are influenced by culture and traditions. God as a value was indicated less frequently among non-believers, which is in line with Scheler's theory, where a lack of religiosity leads to a diminution of the importance of religious values. He believed that the more developed the personality is, the more the individual will seek higher values. Students, as young people, are at the stage of searching and discovering the way to universal values.

About different nationalities, cultural differences can be observed, which affect the hierarchy of values indicated by the respondents. An example is contact with culture, which was most frequently indicated by Poles and least

frequently by Slovaks. Such variation shows how cultural values can differ from country to country and how social and educational contexts shape the hierarchy of values of individuals.

One should bear in mind, however, that the research group is not representative of students in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which is why the results and conclusions cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of young people in the aforementioned countries. This paper is not exhaustive, but the studies presented here may inspire further research on a larger scale.

The research results provide up-to-date knowledge about young people's value systems – knowledge that can be directly used in the creation of academic modules within which axiological content will be implemented. Axiology content can be incorporated into modules that already exist in general pedagogy, social pedagogy, comparative pedagogy, prevention, and multicultural and intercultural education. Perhaps the text will prompt the reader to prepare workshop activities that can prepare future educators to implement with their pupils practically.

The comparative approach to the study of value preferences of academic youth reveals the cultural conditions of upbringing and socialization, allows a better understanding of how social, religious, and educational differences affect the formation of values, support cross-cultural pedagogy, the development of which is of great importance in a globalized world. Perhaps the results of the research will become the basis for designing programs used in preventive and educational activities in youth multicultural educational environments.

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