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TANÁRKÉPZÉS ÉS OKTATÁSKUTATÁS

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VALUE PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS OF HUNGARIAN TEACHER EDUCATION

HOW DO WE DEFINE THE VALUE SYSTEM?

The structure of value systems varies in every culture. Personal or group values do not exist independently and separately, but they mutually depend on each other creating a system. When a new value is accepted or an old one gets in crisis; in other words the strengthening or the weakening of a value affects the whole system. Since the system is hierarchical, value preferences constitute a 'value ladder' (Rezsóhazy 2006).

For Inglehart, the basic change of human value preferences takes place when subsistence seems to be assured, because subsistence needs are provided, thus the demand for self-realization and self-expression arises from the absence of the actions aiming at the procurement of subsistence means. The need for ensuring well-being causes the dissolution of the individual in the community, so as to achieve the community aims synergistically. If these aims (primarily well-being and security) are achieved, the individual strengthens again, and personal independence and freedom are revalued. Inglehart calls the values connected to self-expression post-materialist, while he, similarly to Weber (Weber 1982), links the considerations called materialist value system to the Protestant ethics (Inglehart 1997: 34, 2000: 219-225). The theory of Inglehart is criticized by Suhonen who emphasizes that the dimensions created by Inglehart represent only a small cross-section of the value universe (Suhonen 1985: 351).

Rokeach differentiates between the definitions of attitude and value. In Rokeach's work, values are preferences concerning desirable end points and modes of behaviour (Rokeach 1969: 550-552). Based on this, Rokeach creates two theoretical categories: terminal and instrumental values. The first one refers to the goal values concerning the desirable end points, while the second one includes the mean values that determine behaviour. The relation between these value categories is defined as a hierarchical system. This hierarchical relation means the basis for the organisation of values into a system (Rokeach 1968, 1969, 1973).

Schwartz (1992, 2005) derives the values from needs, but rejects the dichotomy of goal and mean values, and defines values as ordaining goals which are the governing principles behind actions. Schwartz placed value groups in two bipolar dimensions. He

imagined the organization of values along two perpendicular axes where 10 basic values evolve in four directions into higher values (conservation, openness, egoism, altruism).

The members of the society stick to some values more than to others, so values have both cognitive and emotional elements. As a consequence some values are central while others are peripheral. As far as the world of values is concerned, the term 'system' indicates that values accepted to varying extent by people entail rationality that is describable. Thus, the term 'structure' indicates an inner logic.

However, the lifelong socialization generates continuous changes. By entering a group (where there are ready roles, see Kozma 2004), we accept certain values that will be prioritised in that specific environment during the social interactions, but they might be ignored under different circumstances.

In the case of TE students, institutional (formal pedagogic) influence, the value transfer processes in the inner world of professional socialization and 'defining communities' during the university courses (Pusztai 2013) shape value priorities significantly.

The choice of values, the structure of values are influenced by social environment, social factors as well, as these have a definitive impact on the desirable ends, on human needs and on their formation (Kohn 1969). Accordingly, we can conclude that values are not endogenous. It is important to raise the question therefore how and how dominantly the single elements of this role-complex determine the ideological and praxis values accepted by individuals? As far as the values of the students are concerned, it would be important to know whether studying at a university (the requirements of this role) pushes students towards the ideological dimension of values, or only those apply for further (teacher) education who already have the elements of its value system endogenously, because they had internalized these values during earlier, family, school etc. socialization.

The systems of praxis values and the ideologically accepted values might differ significantly. A contradiction arises, if action and behaviour, or in other words, the praxis values confute normative and ideological values. Similar value crisis can social changes undermine the mentality of society (Schütz 1970).

In our understanding, the basis for the orientating role of values is the distinction made by the good-bad opposition. As a consequence, people consider some values more than others in their decision making process, in other words, values function as value preferences.

Nowadays, the methods of Hungarian¹⁰ and international¹¹ examinations on values are based on the theories of Rokeach, Schwartz and Inglehart. The historic arc of scientific approach extends from the members of the classic school to today.

¹⁰ The Institute for Sociology of the HAS (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and Value Sociological Workshop of the Institute for Political Science of the HAS have carried out 8 research on a national representative sample with the Rokeach test: 1977-78 (N=807), 1982 (N=2938), 1990 (N=1320), 1993 (N=1538), 1996 (N=1500), 1997 (N=1500), 1998 (N=1521), 2003 (N=1445).

¹¹ The European Values Survey (EVS) launched in 1981 in 10 member states of the European Union examines the international and cultural differences between value systems. The research has been extended under the name of World Value Survey (WVS). Although the examinations are realised by

Gábor and his fellow researchers examined youth at the end of the 1990s with the application of new methods (free-time scenario, information technology, stress release techniques). The most important conclusions of this research (Gábor 2012) relevant to our present study is that the members of the youth do not draw back from social space anymore, but their adaptation is flexible which results in the resolution of the traditional framework of becoming adult. The new communication status influences the value system of the young generations: post-materialist values and the growing influence of individualization manifest in a specific kind of value orientation.

Bauer who examined the value system of 15-29 years old individuals in a regional relation (2002, Bauer-Szabó 2008) concluded that young Hungarians prioritize immaterial values. Bauer listed in this category family security, true friendship, love, peaceful world and inner harmony. Bauer's other homogeneous value category included values associated with material values, such as wealth, order, interesting and colourful life, creativity. The third group which was describes as 'social consciousness' consisted of values, such as national identity, importance of traditions and relation to power (Bauer 2002).

Pusztai's research carried out with students in the higher education deals with the presence and functioning of 'determining communities' that increase the importance of the education's goal system and the institutional influences. The relational structures of an individual create resources (in addition to traditional types of capital) which increase personal efficiency in the educational system (Pusztai 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b).

The influence of peer groups on the stratification of the students' value systems and the 'successfulness' of careers in higher education were examined by Veronika Bocsi in the higher educational institutions (Debrecen, Beregszász, Nagyvárád) of the Hungarian-Ukrainian-Romanian border regions (Bocsi 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2014).

METHODOLOGY, HYPOTHESES

The sampling took place in spring 2011 with the TE students¹² of 19 faculties of 12 Hungarian institutions of higher education (N=1211). The distribution of the sample is shown in the on table 1 in the appendices.

Our questionnaire was developed according to the theories of Inglehart, Rokeach, Schwarz and Gábor that we have reviewed above in the first chapter.

different research groups with not utterly identical questionnaires, the samplings are harmonised. The phases of the research: 1981–1984; 1989–1993; 1994–1999; 1999–2004; 2005–2008. 66 countries are involved in the sampling. Based on the research data, the comprehensive theory of the change in the value systems was conceived by Inglehart. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

¹² The students of teacher education in our sample studied the following majors: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, Hungarian language and literature, English and P. E.

We asked the respondents to place the listed values¹³ on a 5-grade scale (1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest value) according to the importance that the value represented for them.

It has to be noted that this study is incomplete in the sense that the chosen and examined values cannot entirely cover the complex value universe of modern societies. However, we did not intend to describe the entire value system, our primary goal was to examine the values described by the available variables.

Our hypotheses were the following:

1. Material values are less prioritized as post-materialist and traditional values.
2. Students would prioritize different values depending from their fields of study (humanities, science, languages, P. E.). We assumed that students of humanities would prioritize post-materialist values, while students of sciences and P. E. would be characterized by the preference for traditional values.
3. The students would prioritize different values according to their study programmes (full-time or correspondence). This was associated with the institutional influence (the value system of teacher education), in other words the value transfer function better in case of the students on full-time study programmes.
4. Value orientation of the students would differ according to (a) gender, (b) the size of the living place, (c) the educational attainment of the parents, (d) the presence of pedagogical professions in the family, (e) religiousness and (f) the choice of teacher career (want to be a teacher or not).

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Our results indicated that individual goal values are dominant in the case of the students of teacher education; more specifically, values of human relationships and security are principal. It could also conclude that attitudes towards life that were determined earlier by the value norms of traditional social institutions have lost their importance.

The values prioritized mostly by the students (1. table), ‘family security’ (averages: full-time students: 4, 8; correspondence programme: 4, 8), ‘love/happiness (4, 8; 4, 6), ‘inner harmony’ (4,7; 4,8), ‘true friendship’ (4,7; 4,5), ‘peaceful world’ (4,5; 4,6) and

¹³ The listed values: inner harmony, power, freedom, social order, interesting life (an exciting life), politeness, wealth (a prosperous life), patriotism, creativity, peaceful world (a world at peace), respect for traditions, religion (religious faith), family security, unity with nature, colourful life, right to lead and decide, true friendship, a world of beauty, love/happiness. The questionnaire includes the goal values of Rokeach, but omits the mean values. We introduced this reductions, because we considered the filling of one complete question group (approx. 15-30 min.) in case of the questionnaire that includes 70 question groups and gives a throughout picture of the student world too time-consuming, so we were afraid that the questionnaire would produce a significant divergence between motivated and less motivated respondents. (See also Jancsak 2011, 2014)

‘freedom’ (4,5; 4,5) are all post-materialist values, but at the same time they can be seen as universal values because of their transhistorical character. The middle part of the students’ preference list was constituted by postmodern values (‘creativity’, ‘interesting life’, ‘colourful life’), traditional values (‘patriotism’, ‘religious faith’) and material values (‘wealth’, ‘power’) stood at the end of the list.

1. table: The importance of values by study fields (averages of the 5-grade scale)

	Humanities	Sciences	Languages	P. E.
Family Security	4,8	4,8	4,8	4,8
Inner Harmony	4,7	4,7	4,8	4,7
Love/Happiness	4,7	4,6	4,8	4,7
True Friendship	4,6	4,5	4,6	4,7
A World at Peace	4,6	4,5	4,6	4,5
Freedom	4,4	4,3	4,6	4,6
Politeness	4,3	4,2	4,3	4,4
Creativity	4,3	4,2	4,2	4,2
Interesting life (An Exciting Life)	4,1	3,9	4,2	4,1
Respect for Traditions	4,0	3,7	3,8	3,8
Unity with Nature	3,9	4,1	3,9	4,1
Colourful Life	3,9	3,8	4,0	4,2
Patriotism	3,8	3,6	3,6	3,5
Social Order	3,8	3,6	3,7	3,6
A World of Beauty	3,8	3,6	3,8	3,7
Right to Lead and Decide	3,5	3,4	3,6	3,7
Wealth (A Prosperous Life)	3,2	3,2	3,4	3,4
Religion	3,0	3,1	3,0	2,6
Power	2,3	2,3	2,4	2,8

The value priorities of the full-time students and correspondence students were similar, but some distinctive divergences could be discovered: ‘unity with nature’, ‘respect for tradition’, ‘patriotism’, wealth’ and ‘religious faith’ were considered more important by the correspondence students (2. table).

2. table: The importance of values (averages of the 5-grade scale)

	Full-time students	Correspondence students
Family Security	4,8	4,8
Love/Happiness	4,8	4,6
Inner Harmony	4,7	4,8
True Friendship	4,7	4,5
A World at Peace	4,5	4,6

Freedom	4,5	4,5
Politeness	4,3	4,3
Creativity	4,2	4,2
Interesting Life (An exciting life)	4,2	3,9
Colourful Life	4,0	3,8
Unity with Nature	3,9	4,1
Respect for Traditions	3,8	4,0
A World of Beauty	3,7	3,7
Social Order	3,7	3,7
Right to Lead and Decide	3,6	3,5
Patriotism	3,6	3,7
Wealth (A Prosperous Life)	3,2	3,3
Religion	2,9	3,1
Power	2,4	2,3

The divergence according to study fields (humanities, science, language, P. E.) became obvious not in the case of the highly esteemed values, but in the case of the underrated ones. Traditional values ('respect for traditions', 'patriotism', 'social order') had higher results than the average by the students of humanities. Students of sciences considered postmodern hedonistic values ('interesting life', 'colourful life') less important than the average. Values associated with independence ('freedom', 'right to lead and decide', 'wealth', 'power') were highly regarded by the P. E. students, while religion had the least importance in their case.

The next step in our research on the value structure of the students in teacher education was to determine those groups of original variables that showed significant correlation, thus they belong to the same factor. We were able to differentiate between 4 factors (3. table).

3. table: Value orientations

Rotated Factor Matrix ^a				
	Traditional	Postmodern	Universal	Material
Respect for Traditions	,793	,037	,175	,037
Respect for Traditions	,793	,037	,175	,037
Patriotism	,779	,078	,089	,093
Religion	,672	-,155	,018	,032
Unity with Nature	,494	,390	,119	-,043
Politeness	,480	,143	,307	,068
Colourful Life	,002	,777	,091	,231
Interesting Life (An Exciting Life)	-,001	,726	,043	,209

Creativity	,281	,585	,130	-,119
Freedom	-,037	,561	,183	,144
Love/Happiness	,001	,102	,755	,080
Family Security	,245	-,078	,668	-,016
Inner Harmony	,110	,107	,651	-,062
True Friendship	,058	,213	,500	,097
Peaceful World (A World at Peace)	,380	,306	,487	-,052
Power	,003	,014	-,091	,833
Wealth (A Prosperous Life)	-,007	,041	,005	,791
Right to Lead and Decide	,014	,287	,074	,624
Social Order	,359	,114	,071	,429
Beauty (A World of Beauty)	,189	,265	,281	,362

Extraction method: Alpha Factoring, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Our questionnaire enabled us to unveil the deep structure of the value orientation of the students as well. We analysed the role of gender, the type of the living place (large village, county seat, Budapest, abroad), intellectual patterns (whether there were graduates in the students' families) and the presence of pedagogical professions in the family (whether there were teachers amongst the parents or relatives in the students' families), and the students' religiousness and their inclination for teacher career (whether the students really would like to be teachers (the distance between the factor weight and the averages, see appendices, 2. table). In this sense, we discovered significant differences. Female students could be characterised by universal value preferences and prioritised material values the least. Male students showed a reverse trend: materialist values were highly prioritised by them. There were less significant divergence by the type of the living place; however, it became obvious that the residents of large village preferred traditional values, while the residents of Budapest prioritised postmodern and material values.

Similarly slight difference was discovered by the educational attainment of the parents. Those who were to become the first generation of graduates in the family had universal and traditional value orientation, while second-generation graduates showed postmodern value system.

The presence of pedagogic professions in the family influenced value orientation as well: those who had teachers in their extended family were characterised by universal and traditional value orientation, but those students who had teacher parent(s) prioritised material and postmodern values.

By religious conviction, the results indicated significant divergence: atheist students ('not religious, if the subject comes up, s/he argues against it') prioritised postmodern and (less characteristically) material values. The students indifferent to religion had post-materialist value system, while religious students preferred mainly traditional values.

In this aspect, we found no difference between students who considered themselves 'religious in his/her own ways' or 'convicted believer': these two groups both had traditional value orientation (and disregarded postmodern and materialist values). The results repeated by religious activity: the students who weekly attend to church had traditional, while the students who never go to church had postmodern value orientation.

The inclination for becoming a teacher did not produce significant differences; however, the students who did not really want to work as teachers showed material orientation, and preferred universal values from the post-materialist value group, and rejected traditional value orientation.

CONCLUSIONS

Our results verified our initial hypothesis that students prioritised post-materialist values. It has also become obvious that traditional and materialist values are underrated, and the students' value orientation was primarily characterised by transhistorical universal value orientation. In this regard (generational influences), our survey confirmed the results of youth research carried out in a national sample. Assuming the uniformity of the goal system (value universe) in teacher education, we presupposed pronounced divergence between study fields. The results confirmed our hypothesis; inasmuch students prioritised different values according to discipline (humanities, science, language, P. E.). However, the data confuted the assumption that students of humanities would prioritise post-materialist values: they could be characterised by traditional value orientation. In addition, it was confirmed that students of sciences were the most likely to underrate post-materialist values. In the case of P. E. students the preference for traditional values could be described as 'traditionalism without religion'. Further investigations are needed on the correlation between Hungarian teacher education and institutional influence in higher education, as well as on the influence of peer groups of higher education (group of friends in teacher education, study circles, colleges, scientific associations of students, scientific workshops, etc.).

Furthermore, we assumed that students would prefer different values according to the type of the study programme they participated in. Our results showed that the students of correspondence study programme prioritised traditional and material values more than full-time students. The reason for this divergence is most likely the fact that correspondence students usually work besides studying and they are usually members of an older age group. Our survey did not analyse this question in details, thus it can be the subject of further examinations.

We also expected differences in the value orientation of students by gender, the size of living place, the educational attainment of their parents, the presence of pedagogic professions in the family, religiousness and the inclination for teacher career. Male students were more characterised by material value system than female students. Only a slight difference was discovered by the type of the living place: residents of small villages

had traditional, residents of Budapest had materialist and postmodern value orientation. The (future) first-generation graduates opted for transhistorical and traditional value orientation, while the children of intellectual families adopted a postmodern value system. The students whose parent(s) was/were teacher(s) preferred materialist and postmodern value orientation.

Religious conviction caused significant differences in the value orientation. Atheist students prioritised postmodern (and less significantly) materialist values, the students who ‘religious in their own ways’ had a traditional value system and underrated postmodern and materialist values. The same fraction appears by religious activity: the value orientation of those who attend to church weekly was traditional, and it was postmodern in the case of those who never go to church.

The inclination for working as a teacher did not produce significant divergence in the students’ value orientation. However, it can be stated that the students who do not really want to be teachers feel materialist values closer to themselves and disregard traditional value orientation.

The results of the deep analysis did not confute the presence of generational influence. Although materialist and traditional values are more and more peripheral in the students’ value orientation, postmodern and transhistorical (universal) coexist. This coexistence of multiple value systems indicates that globalisation, other age groups and the media as a combined control factor have a more significant influence on the value priorities of students than traditional control factors (higher educational institution or family). This conclusion can be the starting point for future examinations.

APPENDICES

1. table: Distribution of respondents

Institutions	full-time	correspondence	together	unweighted sample		weighted sample	
				full-time	correspondence	full-time	correspondence
University of Debrecen	43	30	72	6	5	6	5
Eszterházy Károly College	44	191	237	7	35	6	36
Eötvös Loránd University	194	41	235	29	7	30	7
Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary	52	0	52	8	0	8	0
University of Miskolc	36	13	49	5	2	6	3
College of Nyíregyháza	26	96	122	4	18	4	17
University of West Hungary	0	72	72	0	13	0	13
Pannon University	12	30	42	2	6	2	6
University of Pécs	78	25	103	12	5	12	5

University of Szeged	106	47	153	16	9	16	10
Pázmány Péter Catholic University	12	0	12	2	0	2	0
Semmelweis University	62	0	62	9	0	8	0
together	664	547	1211	100	100	100	100

2. table: The divergence of factor weights from the averages in the entire sample

LIVING PLACE	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
Budapest	,0991914	,1761237	-,0674059	,1885151
County seat	-,1340102	,0089370	,0329954	-,0113353
Town	-,0011793	,0397884	,0504839	-,0495606
Large village	0,106745633	-0,204014303	-0,076248198	-0,050982237
Abroad	-,1019399	-,2129946	,1090244	-,1800167
GENDER	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
Male	,0210944	,0349466	-,3268764	,2454053
Female	-,0078416	-,0129909	,1215121	-,0912263
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARENTS	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
no graduates	,0569930	-,1308811	,0324286	-,0728516
graduates	-,1402200	,1482467	,0074496	,0049985
PEDAGOGIC PROFESSION IN THE FAMILY	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
one of the parents/both parents is/are teacher(s)	-,0280321	,0535271	-,0438542	,0810111
there is/are teacher(s) in the extended family	,0674379	-,0882085	,0296307	-,1055761
No teacher in the family	-,0665205	,0745056	-,0058419	,0766102
RELIGION	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
convicted religious person and committed follower of the teaching of his/her church	,7834841	-,3478558	-,0255636	-,2418844
religious, but do not accept all teachings of his/her church	,1604630	-,1336944	,0483801	-,0089147
did a lot of consideration, but not religious	-,1050491	,2230536	,0575846	-,0603607
indifferent to religion, do not care	-,3015349	,3046519	,0498505	,2779038
not religious, but no objection to religion	-,4120304	,1274433	-,0287474	,1287702
not religious, if it comes up, argue against religion	-1,1925203	,3889602	-,3642368	,1414606
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
at least weekly	,8172223	-,3825539	-,0820703	-,3034292
more times in a month	,4668444	-,4136930	-,0710166	,0044036

more times in a year	,3076087	-,0117804	,0473115	-,0439662
once a year	-,0630749	,1076336	,1416444	,1191314
rarely	-,0854718	-,0411628	,1100554	,1698141
never	-,6232280	,2275643	-,1469767	-,0034861
INCLINATION FOR TEACHER CAREER	traditional	postmodern	universal	material
want to be a teacher	-,0513575	,0229171	,0534617	,0224816
do not want to be a teacher	-,3741841	,2186124	-,1334423	,2073166
not decided	,1968140	-,1048278	-,0326832	-,1004842

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ABSTRACT

In our study we examine the value orientation of the students of Hungarian teacher education. We consider this subject a very important field of investigation for several reasons. Firstly, university students (as a youth sub-stratum) can be seen as a reference group for younger age groups (primarily for teenagers) which intensifies generational influence. Secondly, the value orientation of students qualified and employed as teachers is manifestly reflected in the educational processes. The empiric source of our examination was provided by a sampling carried out in 2011 in 19 faculties that are involved in teacher education (N=1211). Our attention was primarily focused on the internal patterns of the value system generated by gender, type of living place, the presence of pedagogic professions in the family, religiousness and the students' inclination to work as teachers.