

THE EDUCATION TOWARD VALUES IN SLOVAK FAMILIES: HUMANISTIC ORIENTATION

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At the present time an orientation of pedagogy to humanistic philosophy is inevitable. People of our civilization, who are threaten by many problems, can be saved by their own change to humanism, by their approaching their own essence.

This need of humanization is required not only by a man himself and the people he lives with, but also mainly by the people who bring him up.

People should be lead, formed and cultivated - in other words brought up toward humanization, affection to themselves and each other.

Education is practical experience for dealing with goodness that appreciates qualities which are in people, and that is looking forward to what they will be.

To educate means more than to order, and to carry out orders, proved ways, methods and methodologies. Education is a message from one man to another. It is a gift with a high price.

A "young human being" is unique. While other beings are formed in a relatively short time due to biological rules, without any intentional influence, a man struggles for his more human identity throughout his whole life by overcoming many obstacles.

Humanization of education, despite the appreciation of many specialists as well and common people, is sometimes looked upon also in a critical way. These objections concern either the evaluation of the traditional school system, or the uncritical acceptance of foreign pedagogical conceptions.

The theory of humanization of education is based on works written by important humanistic psychologists such as A. H. Maslow and C. R. Rogers.

The works of E. Erikson and A. Adler also contribute to a better comprehension of personality development in accordance with development characteristics.

Theories of global education, having their roots in the conception of personal and social education, show complexity in the development of a personality.

The most important Slovak and Czech authors, devoted to the theory of humanization of education, are J. Pýchová (1990), D. Jelínková (1991), Š. Švec (1991), M. Zelina (1993) and others.

The theory of education promoting social behaviour written by R. Olivar (1992) and otherwise known as ethical education is very important as it is integrated into

practical life. The subject called Family Education is being taught in the Pedagogy Department of the Philosophical Faculty in Bratislava namely in the frame of ethical education.

Many educationists work hard to change traditional schooling and try to improve education in the school system.

Humanization requires a kinder attitude toward children, to appreciate their personalities, to adjust and come closer to them, to fulfill their requirements. A common feature of different attitudes is the orientation toward the development of children's personalities.

The development of children's personalities is also connected with their ability to evaluate, by judging the importance and necessity of a particular value. The axiologization of education is a very important part of humanization. To humanize means to develop personalities by teaching them to evaluate and to lead them to right human values.

C. Rogers, an important humanistic psychologist, says that man has lost his connection with his own process of evaluation. Having lost credibility of their own experiences and feelings, he is also becoming unsure with his own values.

Evaluation is becoming a special psychological and pedagogical field which is a process and result simultaneously; it is a way to values and value itself. V. S. Morgan says that evaluation is a psychological reflection of values with a different order. According to L. P. Doblajev evaluation is the measuring of subjects and their meanings. (According to: M. Zelina, 1994, p. 116).

The renewing of one's contact with himself and his own feelings and experiences is required in order to support their own evaluation of a developed personality. Values have their own process and thus a resultant meaning. They show intentions of our performance, but also the ways and means of how they will reach these aims. For these reasons, we speak about education of values by values.

A common effort in the humanization of education is to lead the educated toward values which make their life better and more "human". The question for discussion is whether there exists a universality of values, in other words whether there are any values suitable for everyone.

Education itself is important value in human life because: "The purpose and intention of education is to show a man how to live his own life" (Kosová, 1993, p. 241). A valuable personality, as a result of education, is characterized by the author as creative, free, reliable, total and complete.

The Necessity of Humanization in Family Education

As of today the most important determinant in the humanization of education has appeared in the school system. A very serious question is: How do the humanistic trends concern a family, the first educational institution which enters a child's life in the process of the development of his personality?

I suppose that parents do not have any access to theories that concern the matter of education and the necessity of humanization in families. They do not take part in

special courses. Families do not have any opportunities, or very often even interest, to better know the theories which give reasons of why to improve education.

It is necessary also to humanize the education in families. That means to form such an environment for a child in which parents that are rich intellectually and spiritually "take part" and where there exist a positive relationship among family members, communication supporting self-consciousness and self-esteem of a child is given and which can support him. Such education suffers from disharmony in family relationships. Then it cannot gain its purpose, it is not effective and it has no importance for practical life. Unsuccessful education becomes everlasting disaster for children who lack this value in their lives.

The education toward values in families has its own authentic form and modification. The rules which are valid in all educational situations have found their place in the framework. The only difference is that parents are not conscious of the "algorithm" of their educational effort, and they often come to conclusions only through experience which psychologists call "the way of experiments and errors".

Many works by G. L. Kohlberg, H. Muszynski, J. Piaget and others show precise periods in child development. One of these periods is forming opinions in the process of socialization of a child. It is necessary to respect the unique characteristics of each of these periods in education.

Kohlberg gives three development stages of esteem contemplation:

1. Anomy - lack of evaluation, e.g. a little child.
2. Heteronomy - evaluation which is influenced by the surroundings, a child takes it from authorities, from culture, and society. It can be observed from ages four to nine years old.
3. Autonomy - the independent evaluation of the base of internalization of external impulses and their own interior evaluation. Through this example I would like to show, however not completely, that the rules in education are also valid in family education, even if the parents do not realize it.

We can say that parents accomplish educating toward values "without knowing how to", and it is necessary to stress that they are the first people who educate a child.

The Purposes of Family Education and Values

The purposes of education are elements of the system of education. They are of determined importance in regard to the tendency of the kind of education which the parents choose to educate their children. These purposes should reflect intently chosen and real educational possibilities.

The determination of the educational purposes is connected with preferences of values. This is important not only in the school educational system but in family education too. The purposes of family education usually reflect the values that are important for parents and that are, according to parents, important for the future life of their children. The purposes of education are also connected with the activity of the parents and they have roots in their life experiences. We can say that family education is prevailingly education toward values.

We know that the system of values is not innate. Many factors help to create it, beginning with the influence of school, family education, the societal group we belong in, and even as far as the accidental meeting of some people.

Value orientation create the main part of the values given to a man by his family which is a substantial part in comparison with other factors influencing a man. This can explain the intense influence of a family. Parents by their relationship and orientation to certain life principles enter directly into the education of their children. The value orientation of a family determines not only the purposes of education but its content, strategies, methods, forms and ways to achieve them.

Which values are accepted by present parents? Are the values preferred by parents humanistic? Which values are considered as typical values for family life? Do parents know value orientation of children and young people? How do they want their children educated? What are their purposes of education? What is the influence of a family to value orientation of children?

I tried to answer these questions concerning the influence of a family to value orientation of children in my research. I was interested namely in the connection between values and education, and family education and values.

The research sample represents the parents of 350 Slovak families whose children are from the age of thirteen to eighteen years old. I proportionally gathered the samples by proportional covering certain regions of Slovakia and also by a fair representation of places of living of every size, meaning villages, small cities, and big cities.

I used questionnaires to obtain the information. There were special questionnaires for parents and for children. The parents were given the questionnaires by their children attending the schools I had asked for cooperation. Having collected the questionnaires from the parents, the children filled in their questionnaires at school.

Due to the chosen method there were comparatively many returns of questionnaires:

- the number of questionnaires sent to the schools - 350;
- the number of respondent families - 330;
- the number of questionnaires returned by parents - 280, that is 84,8%;
- the number of questionnaires returned by children - 315, that is 95,4%.

From the parents' answers I not only obtained an isolated description of a particular value orientation of a family, but also the conception how a family influences children by parent "directed" value orientation education.

By analyzing the children's answers I obtained not only their opinions and orientation in life values, but also their answers reflected, and confirmed or did not confirmed the effect and efficiency of parents' education.

This research material shows connection between a family value orientation and the education in a family. It can help to form pedagogical conclusions.

Questionnaire Items

In the introduction there were questions concerning the demographic data of the respondents. The respondents gave their age, highest level of education, occupation, the

number of children in the family, size of their living place, family status and the relationship to religion.

In the first part of the questionnaire there was a definition of value, what is considered to be value by parents, what, according to them, expresses value. In the next questions parents were supposed to order values from the given list according to what they feel is the degree of importance. They made their own hierarchy of values. In the next question parents had to define the values which are gained in families. Another questions were of supplementary character. The respondents expressed their attitude toward the coming of another child to a family, and whether they prioritize their work before their families.

In the second part of the questionnaire I tried to ascertain how a family invests their time doing particular activities as a family, who advises them or where do they get their advice from trying to solve their problems in marriage life and problems with the education of their children.

The third part of the questionnaire was the most complex. The parents were supposed to express their opinions about the changes in the acceptance of values in contemporary society, and where they were supposed to compare the differences in the acceptance of values by contemporary young people and their generation.

The fourth and last part of the questionnaire concerned educational strategies, rewards and punishments.

Due to the restricted extent of this work I can only show some of the results of the research, and I will concentrate on the part where the parents answered the questions.

The Definition of Value

In response to the question of which of the given definitions of value the respondents consider to be the most suitable, almost a half of them (49,6 %) preferred the answer:

Value is everything that satisfies the requirements in my life, e.g. material, working, cultural e.t.c.(money, assertion in their occupation, good interpersonal relationships, and others).

For 20 % of the respondents value is everything that they accepted from their parents, teachers and educators.

Almost a fifth part of the respondents (18,6 %) say that value is the relationship to different things, phenomena, animals, ideas, and people.

Although value is one of the most important motivating factors of a man's personality, value understood as a director of behaviour and giving a purpose to their activities received a very low evaluation. Only 7,5% of the respondents chose this possibility.

The interesting fact is, that value understood as a social norm and acknowledged in the whole society, had the lowest preferences - only in 1,4 % answers.

From the above mentioned facts we can draw a conclusion that parents prefer identification values with material categories or content, and with satisfaction of their requirements. They are not oriented towards normative or a motivational character of value. We can suppose that will also continue with direction when educating their own

children. In practice it will mean deviation from normative education preserving values gained from predecessors, teachers, and educators. It proves that value education in Slovak families is influenced by social and cultural macro-surroundings.

The Hierarchy of Values

In the second part of the questionnaire parents were supposed to determine the values from those given which are identical with their own life values, or to complete the list with their own values. I chose the most typical and preferred values within Slovak families, and I presented them to the parents.

Here are the percentages of those respondents who regard the given value as important or very important.

At first glance can see that the respondents strongly agree that each item is important. Their share was almost two thirds, concerning religion. With the other values, this share is even higher - 79-96 %.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Family | 96,1 % |
| 2. Life, health | 95,0 % |
| 3. Interpersonal relationships | 91,1 % |
| 4. Healthy environment | 90,8 % |
| 5. Occupation, work, employment | 88,9 % |
| 6. Justice | 88,6 % |
| 7. Love | 86,1 % |
| 8. Material conditions | 84,7 % |
| 9. Freedom | 84,7 % |
| 10. Education | 82,5 % |
| 11. Happiness | 79,0 % |
| 12. Belief, religion | 62,9 % |

We can say that these values are accepted by most parents. It is stressed by a very low share of those respondents who do not consider these values to be important. In only two of the items (belief, religion, and love) did only about one percent consider these values as not important. This proves that parents in Slovakia identify with the preference of the above mentioned values.

According to me, it is a confirmation of the hypothesis that within a contemporary family value system a certain accumulation of values exists with relatively strong substance, which is accepted by Slovak parents. However, the results might not be identical with the real preferences of parents, because results only express their opinion concerning the values which had been given, and only a few of them opted the possibility to add their own values. It is difficult to avoid this when interpreting data of this character.

This phenomenon can also confirm the thesis by C. Rogers which says that a contemporary man gives up his identity mostly because he does not understand his feelings, and he does not believe his experiences. I would like to avoid absolute conclusions that could distort the results or make them unreliable. The given results are reflection of the value world of parents.

Values of Family Environment

Values are a part of the educational system within a family. I supposed that an important subgroup of the value set of respondents are influenced by the family environment and formed in a family. I expected the parent's responses to this hypothesis. In other words it means that parents perceive given values as typical family values.

The following results shows the percentage of respondents who consider the given value to be value perceived only in a family, or mostly in a family.

| | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Emotional background | 92,2 % |
| 2. Good training and attitude to education | 87,1 % |
| 3. Conditions for marriage life | 85,4 % |
| 4. Relationship to beauty | 80,3 % |
| 5. Relationship to nature | 79,3 % |
| 6. Physical health | 78,2 % |
| 7. Respect to old people | 77,8 % |
| 8. Relationship to traditions | 77,5 % |
| 9. Relationship to work | 76,8 % |
| 10. Conditions for interpersonal relationship | 76,1 % |
| 11. Financial conditions | 63,9 % |

If we would like to characterize, to describe, which values create the common substance of typical family values, we could present a list of the above mentioned values. The only exception is probably the item of financial conditions, where 10% of the respondents feel sure that they are only able to reach it outside the family. That means that financial conditions are not a typical family value. I suppose this fact proves that contemporary parents realize that material conditions of a family do not depend only on their own effort but also on the societal conditions of the environment where they live.

However, it is not possible to replace the education toward values, which is typical for the family environment, with other things than family education. Particular forms of education toward values in a family depend on the intensity of overcoming the importance of values for each family.

The Changes of Generally Accepted Values

The structure of the value system is not permanent. It is being changed dynamically, and influenced by different reasons. A very important factor influencing the development of the value system might be the changing of political system in society, which also causes life conditions to change. I supposed that the factor of changes in society has become more important recently and that the respondents also perceived it as very important. In one of the questions from the given set the respondents were supposed to describe changes of generally accepted values.

According to the answers of the respondents, the values are divided into three groups.

The first group - values appreciated in the present are less or a lot less than in the past:

| Value | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Interpersonal relationships | 69,7 % |
| 2. Family relationships | 58,5 % |
| 3. Time required for education | 52,5 % |
| 4. Marriage | 51,5 % |
| 5. Children | 51,4 % |

The second group - values appreciated in the present are more or much more than in the past:

| Value | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Position at work, career | 82,1 % |
| 2. Income, money | 78,9 % |
| 3. Apartment, living | 72,9 % |
| 4. Environment | 71,8 % |
| 5. Work, to be employed | 71,7 % |
| 6. Health | 63,9 % |
| 7. Value of education | 61,4 % |
| 8. Value of conviction, belief | 58,9 % |

The third group - neutral values, without any differences comparing the present and past:

| Value | Appreciation of Value More | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| | In past | In present |
| 1. Value of love | 43,9 % | 45,4 % |
| 2. Value of truth | 48,6 % | 42,9 % |
| 3. Value of tolerance | 49,0 % | 40,0 % |

It is important to recognize the values which are appreciated more in the present than in the past because they will determine the education toward values in a family. Thus we are concerned with the values of the second group.

Nobody doubts that the humanization of social relationships and education is necessary, and that love and truth are replaceable. We call for justice, and tolerance, but our research concerning people's opinions seems to show something different: these values remain without remarkable differences in acceptance. They probably are not concrete enough when coming into practice; they remain as high and unrealistic ideas. They are born in a neutral world, and it causes their change, destruction, and death. The situation in families is similar to the general situation. How much love, tolerance, truth and truthfulness is necessary in contemporary families. If these values are only undefined ideas, only desires instead of reality in spite some people's sacrifices, they remain uneffective, neutral and later useless.

The values of the first group, which are family, marriage, and children, are presently accepted less than in the past. In fact through responding the parents discovered the discrepancy between declared and really accepted values. They placed the family high in the hierarchy of values, thus declaring where they would like to have it. However, the results show that the family and family life are becoming less accepted and they prove the real position of the family in the system of values.

As I have said before analogical discrepancies could be found between several other values.

Value Orientation and Purposes of Education

Value orientation also influences the purposes of education. A parent requires the characteristic for his children which are determined by his value system. I showed to the parents such a set of characteristics which, as I supposed, would be appreciated by parents as necessary for life.

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| 1. Responsibility | 95,3 % |
| 2. Sincerity | 94,7 % |
| 3. Justice | 94,7 % |
| 4. Truthfulness | 93,3 % |
| 5. Diligence | 92,8 % |
| 6. Tolerance | 87,8 % |
| 7. Modesty | 84,3 % |
| 8. Assertiveness | 81,8 % |
| 9. Ambitions | 79,3 % |
| 10. Self-sacrifice | 77,8 % |
| 11. Inventiveness | 75,7 % |
| 12. Venturesomeness | 72,8 % |

In the following results are shown the answers of those respondents who considered a certain given quality to be important, or very important.

The low position of assertiveness and venturesomeness is surprising, as they are qualities necessary for the contemporary world of hard reality and competition. Is this result influenced by the notorious fact that for the younger Slovak population, as well as for the generation of their parents, the lack of self-confidence and self-evaluation is typical?

I suppose, today's parents probably realize that these qualities, which are necessary for today's reality, are often accompanied with some negative qualities, such as egoism, individualism, and disregard for others, and parents want their children to avoid them.

Conclusions

One of the most important sources of recognition of the family is observation its value orientation. Recognition of a family's financial resources, its direction, and inspiration and impulses for better relationships in it, make it easier for a family to become a member of a society and help a family to function.

The family certainly belongs among educational institutions due to its very important and special message, and the full responsibility of the parents for the education of their children. The optimal function of education in a family can be determined by different conditions in a family life, which are socially determined.

Family education should become more important in the system of pedagogical science. It is necessary to determine its position in this system, to create a methodological base for family pedagogy, and to determine the content, purposes, and ways of how to reach them.

Recognition of family value orientation can become a base for a theoretical explanation of pedagogical aspects of family life. It is necessary that parents know the purposes and rules of the educational process in a family.

Family education should be included into the training of the teachers who in different ways and levels cooperate with parents. A good cooperation and relationship between a family and school can help parents in the education of their children.

Another important issue is the preparation of young people for family life, where educational aspects of family life is stressed. Value education should become the most important part of family pedagogy.

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Resumé

VÝCHOVA K HODNOTÁM V SLOVENSKEJ RODINE: HUMANISTICKÁ ORIENTÁCIA

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Orientácia pedagogiky na humanistickú filozofiu je v súčasnosti nevyhnutná. Humanizácia sa prakticky chápe ako požiadavka láskavejšieho prístupu k dieťaťu, k uznaniu jeho individuality. Humanizovať znamená rozvíjať osobnosť tiež tým, že ju učíme hodnotiť a privádzame ju k pravým ľudským hodnotám. Výchova v rodine je vo veľkej miere výchovou k hodnotám. V cieľoch rodinnej výchovy detí sa spravidla premietajú hodnoty, ktoré rodičia uznávajú a o význame ktorých pre ďalší život svojich detí sú presvedčení.

Autorka vo výskume s obsahovým zameraním: "Vplyv rodiny na hodnotovú orientáciu detí" identifikuje typické hodnoty rodinného prostredia a analyzuje vplyv rodiny na hodnotovú orientáciu detí.

V záveroch zdôrazňuje, že rodina v plnej miere patrí medzi výchovné inštitúcie s dôležitým a osobitným výchovným poslaním. Jedným z najhlbších zdrojov inšpirácií a podnetov v živote rodiny je jej hodnotová orientácia.

