

*Olena Budnyk*

Ukraine

*Piotr Mazur*

Poland

## **The Hierarchy of Values Among Young People from Schools in the Mountainous Regions (Comparative study on the example of Poland and Ukraine)**

DOI: 10.15804/tner.2017.47.1.04

### **Abstract**

The issue of values in the education of young people is always relevant in the pedagogical literature. The main purpose of this article is to show the hierarchy of values of young people aged 12–15. The problem of the meaning of values in the lives of young people will be presented on the basis of our own research conducted among students from the Mysłenice district (Poland) and Nadvirna district of the Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukraine).

*Keywords: youth, value, hierarchy of values, mountainous regions*

### **Introduction**

In terms of integration into the European education system, the question of innovative enrichment of the educational process arises. Globalisation determines the assimilation of cultures, which is why there appear a lot of questions concerning such issues as: formation of universal and national values of young people, providing students from different states with multicultural education and constructive coexistence of human beings and the world (Mazur, 2009).

In the process of children and young people education, we always want to achieve some desired goal, which represents a value for society or for the individual. Therefore, we can say that there is no “worthless” education. Every educational activity assumes the implementation or achieving a value, otherwise this activity would not make any sense (Kotłowski, 1968, p. 33).

These values are of great importance in the whole educational process. It is the values that define a common direction for both the teacher and the pupil. They make it possible to overcome difficulties on the way to growing up for humanity (Budnyk, 2016). In the era of today's discussions on education and upbringing it is worth recalling the good point, preached by K. Chałas, that there is no education without values. In her opinion, "education without values becomes an empty bell, and even when swaying strongly, it does not sound in the expected way. Education must lead to the depths of humanity, which is the content of a person's life and his/her integral development, which is ultimately determined by the materialisation of the highest values and desire for the Absolute" (Chałas, 2003, pp. 41–42).

There is a great number of educational tasks that are considered to be important, mainly the formation of young people's high spiritual values and sense of being a citizen of our Planet, through the sense of being a citizen of the country, the host of this country with the proper attitude toward the native land, language, history, religion, culture, respect for national values, national symbols, etc. (Mazur, Oleksa, 2010).

That is why as "values" we consider everything that is particularly meaningful and important for us in terms of our objectives, interests, needs, communication, etc. Thus, "values" is a subjective category, because things that are valuable for one person may be completely insignificant for another one. That is why there is a formal division of values into *subjective* and *objective*, *absolute* and *relative*, *positive* and *negative*.

*The value system of the individual* is constituted by the "conscious semantic formation of different levels of generality" (Bech, 2015, pp. 19–22). The most common classification of values is their division into *terminal* and *instrumental* ones.

At the same time, depending on the relationship of man to the world, the object of his perception of values, they are divided into *material* and *spiritual* ones; depending on the level of generality – into *concrete* and the *abstract* ones; depending on the way of identifying – into *situational* and *stable* ones. A quite common classification of values divides them depending on the criterion of membership: *personal (individual)*, *group (collective)* *social*, *national* and *universal* values.

## **The features of the Personal Values Formation in the Mountain Province**

The mountain region of the Ukrainian and Polish Carpathians is characterised by specific features: colourful nature contributes to the accumulation of vast expe-

rience of communication with nature, which results in preserving old traditions formed over the centuries: careful management, spirituality and a respectful attitude to the world. The traditional crafts, progressive ritual traditions that certainly serve as an effective factor in the harmonious development of the child have been sufficiently preserved here.

In the school located in the mountains the influence of the landscape-geographical and ethno-cultural environment on the establishment and development of the personal values of growing personality (moral, civic, aesthetic) can be clearly observed. The spirituality of the young person operates in this context (Budnyk, 2014, p. 22).

According to Maslow, “the only known way to prevent a distorted perception of nature, society or ourselves through human values is always being aware of these values, understanding their impact on the perception and making appropriate corrections thanks to such an understanding” (Maslow, 2006).

In the schools located in the Polish and Ukrainian Carpathians we have a lot of potential opportunities to familiarise students with valuable natural resources and unique spiritual and cultural traditions. Therefore, these regions are especially characterised by a number of socio-economic (unemployment, poverty, instability, external migration of the adult population, lower birth rates) and environmental problems (floods, deforestation, etc.). To some extent, such issues affect the quality of education so acutely that there arises the problem of revival and creation of authentic spiritual and moral values of the young person, based on the ideals of truth, goodness, beauty, freedom, education for the real citizen and landlord.

The aim of the study was to make a comparative analysis of the priority values of modern teenage students in mountainous areas of Poland and Ukraine, basing on our own experimental study.

## **Research Methodology**

### **General Background of Research**

The research is comparative. It summarizes data from two mountainous regions – the Myślenice district (Poland) and the Nadvirna district (Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine). The aim of the research was to learn and compare views of junior high school students from the Myślenice district and the mountainous part of the Ivano-Frankivsk region on their personal hierarchy of values. The main problem of the research was to determine the system of values shared

by the junior high school students: which of the values are dominant and which of them are peripheral.

### Instrument and Procedures

The primary research tool was *The scale of assessment of the preferred values* based on the technique developed by P. Oleś (1989), consisting of a catalogue that included the names of 27 different values. Participation in the survey was anonymous. The questionnaires were prepared for junior high school students. The survey was conducted in May and June 2016 in randomly selected schools from the Myślenice district (Poland) and the mountainous part of the Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukraine). Selection of the research sample was random. The study attracted the same number of boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 15. Statistical analyses were prepared based on data obtained from the surveys.

### Research Results

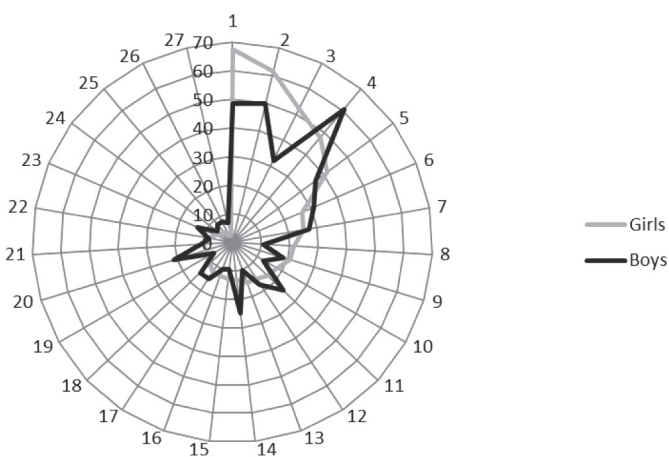
After the quantitative study of the results, the hierarchy of values preferred by the students was obtained. Table 1 presents the responses of the young residents from the Myślenice district divided into the choices made by the girls and boys. The results were arranged in a descending manner, taking into consideration the answers chosen by the girls. It allows us to compare the similarities and differences in the preferences of the students, depending on their sex.

**Table 1.** The hierarchy of values of students from the Myślenice district (Poland)

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Girls	Boys
1. family	67.6	48.6
2. health	61.4	50.0
3. friendship	52.2	32.0
4. faith in God	47.8	60.9
5. peace	41.1	36.3
6. love	26.4	31.0
7. truth	25.2	27.0
8. wisdom	21.4	10.9
9. helping others	20.9	18.6

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Girls	Boys
10. knowledge	17.8	12.6
11. education	16.9	24.4
12. respect	15.0	17.5
13. justice	14.7	10.3
14. freedom	13.0	24.7
15. nature	12.6	9.5
16. job	12.3	10.0
17. beauty	12.3	15.0
18. culture	10.9	15.5
19. goodness	10.1	7.3
20. patriotism	10.0	21.3
21. comfortable life	9.8	11.2
22. spiritual development	8.3	8.1
23. dignity	6.3	13.3
24. material goods	4.9	6.4
25. personal development	4.5	8.1
26. social life	2.6	8.1
27. authority	2.5	7.0

**Figure 1.** The hierarchy of values preferred by the junior high school students from the Myślenice district (Poland)



By observing the two intersecting curves showing the severity of indications made by the girls and boys, one can notice the mutual interweaving of lines, indicating the volatility of the choices made by the respondents. The highest rate of preference was given to such values as: family – 67.6% of the girls and faith in God – 60.9% of the boys. At the very bottom of the hierarchy of values there were: “authority” (girls) and “nature” (boys).

The analysis of the hierarchy of values indicated that in the first group of ten most important values for both groups there were 7 common values: family, love, health, faith in God, friendship, respect, and justice. In the system of values specified by the girls there were additionally: education, freedom, and helping others. The catalogue of the values most important to the boys was complemented by: patriotism, good and dignity.

The analysis of the hierarchy of values indicated that in the first group of ten least important values for both groups there were 6 common values: authority, beauty, spiritual development, nature, material goods and job. In the system of values specified by the girls there were additionally: comfortable life, peace, dignity and truth. The catalogue of the values least important to the boys was complemented by: culture, knowledge, personal development and education.

A distinct advantage of indications made by the girls, constituting more than 10 percentage points, can be observed in the selection of the following values: family, love, health, and education. The largest gap can be noticed in the case of “health” (over 20%).

A distinct advantage of indications made by the boys, constituting more than 10 percentage points, can be observed in the selection of the following values: faith in God, patriotism and dignity. The largest gap can be noticed in the case of “faith in God” (over 13%).

The smallest differences in the values favoured by the junior high school students (5%) can be observed in the case of the following values: friendship, respect, justice, freedom, wisdom, personal development, culture, knowledge, social life, truth, job, peace, material goods, nature, spiritual development, and authority. The smallest gap can be noticed in the case of “material goods” and constitutes 0.15%.

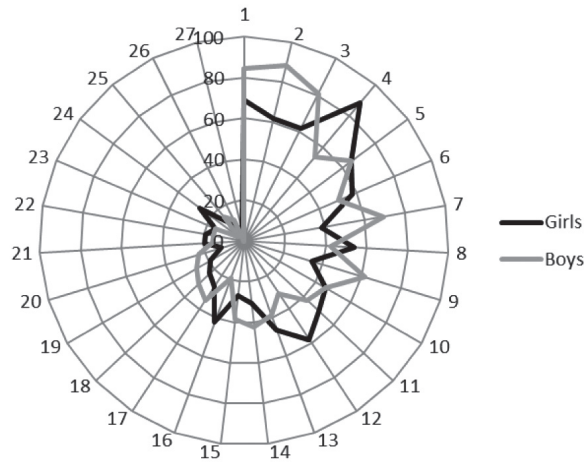
We conducted a survey in the schools of the Nadvirna district (Ivano-Frankivsk region) in order to carry out a comparative analysis of the orientations towards values among the Ukrainian and Polish students who live in the mountainous region. In particular, we were interested in their priority and peripheral values, which serve as a guide in their daily life, education, work, communication, etc.

In the study, we used the same assessment scale as with the schools located in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains (Ivano-Frankivsk region, Nadvirna district, Ukraine). The results of the respondents' answers are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The hierarchy of values of students from the Nadvirna district (Ukraine)

Value	Preference indicator (%)	
	Girls	Boys
1. family	69.2	84.5
2. health	61.5	88.5
3. friendship	61.5	80.8
4. faith in God	88.5	53.8
5. peace	65.4	65.4
6. love	57.7	50.0
7. truth	38.5	69.2
8. wisdom	53.8	42.3
9. helping others	34.6	61.5
10. knowledge	46.2	46.2
11. education	50.0	42.3
12. respect	57.7	30.8
13. justice	46.2	38.5
14. freedom	30.8	42.3
15. nature	26.9	38.5
16. job	42.3	19.2
17. beauty	26.9	34.6
18. culture	23.1	30.8
19. goodness	19.2	26.9
20. patriotism	11.5	23.1
21. comfortable life	19.2	15.4
22. spiritual development	19.2	15.4
23. dignity	15.4	15.4
24. material goods	26.9	3.8
25. personal development	11.5	15.4
26. social life	7.7	11.5
27. authority	3.8	-

**Figure 2.** The hierarchy of values preferred by the junior high school students located in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains (Ivano-Frankivsk region)



Changes in society have led to prioritisation of the values that are of the personal level among young people. Such values ensure their own needs and comfortable feeling. Actually, a person feels the safest in the family, so not accidentally the majority of the Ukrainian teenagers (76.9%) put family at the top of the hierarchy of values.

According to our research, there is a clear difference in the choice of values depending on the respondents' gender (Figure 2): 88.5% of the girls consider *health* to be their priority value (this value was chosen by 53.8% of the boys); on the other hand, the girls turned out to be more empathic – 42.3% of them indicated such a value as *helping others* (boys – 19.2%). This can be explained by the fact that girls (women) are naturally more focused on family comfort, one's own home, family welfare and happiness of children, inner peace, order, etc. For the young residents of the mountainous region, despite the social activity of modern women, the German phrase “Kinder, Kirche, Küche” (Children, Church, Kitchen) is still relevant.

The dominance of such values as: *goodness, love, friendship, honour, respect, justice, and freedom* may be observed among teenagers. High rates of preference were given to such a value as *goodness* – 88.5% of the boys and 61.5% of the girls. In fact, among the ethical values, it is the *good* which means the highest value that reflects ideal and absolute perfection. For instance, *love* was chosen by over 70% of the respondents (61.5% of the girls and 80.8% of the boys) in Ukraine and 55.9%



(61.4% of the girls and 50% of the boys) in Poland. These values are necessary for a person to fulfil certain social tasks not for others, but for themselves, for their spiritual growth and self-improvement. It is interesting that among the Polish and Ukrainian students, in fifth (and very honourable) place *friendship* was chosen both by the boys and girls (Ivano-Frankivsk region – 65.4% of the respondents; Myślenice district – 41.1% of the girls and 36.3% of the boys). The awareness of ethical categories outlined above significantly affects the mind and human behaviour. In order for the pedagogical communication to perform the regulative function, it should not be based on a pragmatic basis, but on altruism and selfless moral guiding activities.

The analysis of the priority spiritual values among the Ukrainian students shows that a high percentage of them chose such values as *peace* (48.1%), *justice* (46.2%), *freedom* (44.2%), and *patriotism* (32.7%). It can be explained by the military-political situation in the Eastern part of the country, which greatly influences the value system formation. Among the respondents from the Polish mountainous region, the selection of these values is also on a relatively high level: *patriotism* – 18.6%, *peace* – 10.5%, *freedom* – 19.8%. It should be noted that the orientation on values among young people is an important factor in determining the direction of their morality.

For the boys (men), the traditional dominating values are: dynamism, renewal of life and the desire for new ways of life. It is not accidental that, according to the research, the boys prefer cognitive values in their hierarchy; these intellectual qualities will help them in their self-realisation and self-determination in the future: *wisdom* – 69.2% (girls – 38.5%), *education* – 61.5% (girls – 34.6%), *knowledge* – 30.8% (girls – 23.1%), and *personal development* – 23.1% (girls – 11.5%) (Nadvirna district, Ukraine).

*Authority* was ranked at the very bottom of the hierarchy of the girls and boys from the mountainous region of the Ivano-Frankivsk region. At the same time, the impact of the mountainous landscape and the climatic environment is clearly reflected by the formation of aesthetic values among the students – 19.2% of the girls and 15.4% of the boys chose *beauty*; the same number of boys and girls (15.4%) indicated the importance of *nature* in their lives.

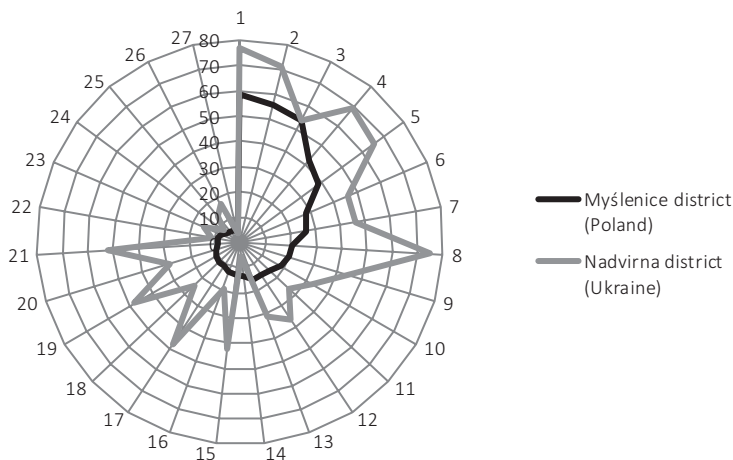
What may worry us is the fact that modern teenagers do not consider such values as: *spiritual development* (11.5% of the girls; 15.4% of the boys) and *social life* (7.7% of the girls; 11.5% the boys) as their priorities. A similar situation may be observed in the case of the junior high school students from the Myślenice district: Only 6% of the respondents chose *spiritual development* and 13.6% – *social life*. In fact, a third of the respondents (Nadvirna district of Ivano-Frankivsk region)

pointed to the personal importance of hedonistic values. For instance, 34.6% of the boys and 26.7% of the girls seek a *comfortable life*.

Table 3 presents the responses of the young residents from the Myślenice district (Poland) and the students from the schools located in the Ukrainian Carpathians (Nadvirna district of Ivano-Frankivsk region).

**Table 3.** Personal evaluation of values

	Value	Preference indicator (%)	
		Myślenice district (Poland)	Ivano-Frankivsk region, Nadvirna district (Ukraine)
1.	family	58.6	76.9
2.	health	55.9	71.2
3.	friendship	54.1	53.8
4.	faith in God	42.5	69.2
5.	peace	38.8	65.5
6.	love	28.6	46.2
7.	truth	26.1	46.2
8.	wisdom	20.5	75.0
9.	helping others	19.8	44.2
10.	knowledge	18.6	32.7
11.	education	16.3	26.9
12.	respect	15.4	36.5
13.	justice	15.3	30.8
14.	freedom	13.6	5.8
15.	nature	13.1	42.3
16.	job	12.6	19.2
17.	beauty	11.2	48.1
18.	culture	11.1	25.0
19.	goodness	10.5	48.1
20.	patriotism	9.7	28.8
21.	comfortable life	8.8	51.9
22.	spiritual development	8.8	11.5
23.	dignity	8.2	15.4
24.	material goods	6.0	7.7
25.	personal development	5.6	13.5
26.	social life	5.2	17.3
27.	authority	4.7	3.8

**Figure 3.** Hierarchy of values preferred by the students

The results are arranged in a descending manner taking into account the answers given by the students from the Myślenice district. This is how we were able to outline the hierarchy of values, which allows us to compare the similarities and differences in the preferences of the youth residing in the mountain areas of Poland and Ukraine.

## **Conclusions**

By analysing the above data we can draw the following conclusions:

1. By observing two intersecting curves showing the intensity of indications of the junior high school students from the Myślenice district and Nadvirna district of the Ivano-Frankivsk region, one can see mutual interweaving of lines, indicating volatility of the choices made by the respondents. It turns out that the typical hierarchy of values is characteristic of the researched age period. This hierarchy is very meaningful to young people. However, the fact that certain students chose certain values depends also on the specific situations, personal characteristics, etc.
2. In both researched groups, “family” received the highest rate of preference, which indicates that this is the most precious value for the junior high school students from the mountainous regions of Poland and Ukraine.

3. For the young residents of the Myślenice district and the mountainous part of the Ivano-Frankivsk region, such values as “love”, “health” and “friendship” belong to the dominant ones. These values were rated among the five most important values by the surveyed students.
4. Analysis of the hierarchy of values showed that in the first group of ten most important values for both groups there were 8 common values: family, love, faith in God, health, friendship, respect, justice and goodness. In the value system of the students from the Myślenice district there were additionally: freedom and patriotism. The catalogue of the values most important for the students of the mountainous schools from the Ukrainian Carpathians was complemented by: wisdom, peace and knowledge.
5. Analysis of the hierarchy of values showed that in the first group of ten least important values for both groups there were 7 common values: culture, job, material goods, spiritual development, nature, beauty and authority. In the value system of the students from the Myślenice district there were additionally: peace, comfortable life and wisdom. The catalogue of the values least important to the students of the mountainous schools from the Ukrainian Carpathians was complemented by: education, social life and personal development.
6. A distinct advantage of indications made by the students from the Ivano-Frankivsk region, constituting more than 10 percentage points, can be observed in the selection of as many as 19 values: family, love, health, friendship, respect, justice, goodness, freedom, patriotism, education, dignity, helping others, truth, knowledge, culture, peace, comfortable life, wisdom, beauty. The largest gap can be found in the case of “goodness” – over 54%.
7. In the case of three values: faith in God, social life, authority, we may observe that they were more often chosen by the students from the Myślenice district.
8. The smallest differences in the values preferred by the students from the Myślenice district and the Nadvirna district of the Ivano-Frankivsk region (up to 5%) can be observed in the case of the following values: faith in God, job, spiritual development, and authority.
9. At the very bottom of the hierarchy of the students both from Poland and Ukraine there was “authority”.
10. The values to which the students are oriented are closely linked to the emotional and volitional sphere and determine the nature of their social interaction, focusing on mastering the future profession and creating moral strategy of their life. This phenomenon can be especially clearly observed in the case of the boys.

Summing up the results of the research, we can conclude that the value systems of the students from the Myślenice district and the Nadvirna district of the Ivano-Frankivsk region are dominated by the ethical (altruistic) and sociocentric values. The collected data also shows that the hedonistic and material values were the least popular among the young respondents.

While teaching universal and national values to teenagers, we should recognise such factors as the priority ones: taking into account the natural abilities of the student, his ethno-psychological and individual characteristics, his cognitive interests; focusing primarily on the study of our own historical experience for the development of high civic culture; focusing on democracy in the organisation of educational activities at the national ground; combining the family and regional-national traditions, customs and rituals popular in the mountainous region for filling the living space with the elements of spirituality; providing conditions for enriching the socio-cultural experience towards teaching progressive ideas of European nations and peoples to young students.

## References

- Bekh, I. (2015). Ideology of Personality Oriented Education. In: Selected research papers. Educating of the Individual. T. 1. Chernivtsi: Bukrek.
- Budnyk, O. (2016). Educational Model of a Modern Student: European Scope. Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Series of Social and Human Sciences. Vol. 3, 2–3, 9. doi:10.15330/jpnu.3.2–3.9–14.
- Budnyk, O. (2014). Teachers' Training for Social and Educational Activity in Conditions of Mountain Area Primary School. Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University. Series of Social and Human Sciences. Vol. 1. 2–3, 22–28. doi:10.15330/jpnu.1.2,3.23–32.
- Chałas, K. (2003). Education towards values. Elements of theory and practice. T. 1. Lublin-Kielce.
- Kotłowski, K. (1968). The philosophy of values and the educational tasks. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków.
- Mazur, P. (2009). Axiological education as the challenge for modern social pedagogy. In: Social pedagogy in Central Europe – present state and its perspectives, ed. Z. Bakošová, E. Jarosz, Brno, 443–453.
- Mazur, P. & Oleksa, I., (2010). The educational role of work at early school age in the context of developmental layers of education. In: Contemporary Challenges in Social Pedagogy, ed. E. Jarosz, M. Jůzl, M. Bargel, Brno, 173–181.
- Maslow, A. (2006). Motivation and Personality, 3rd ed., Moscow-St. Petersburg: Piter.
- Oleś, P. (1989). Evaluation and the personality. Psychological empirical research. Lublin.