



MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDYING PEDAGOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF MANIFESTED VALUES

Joanna Szczyrba-Poroszewska

ORCID: 0000-0003-1740-2113

University of the National Education Commission in Kraków

e-mail: joanna.szczyrba-poroszewska@up.krakow.pl

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Abstract. Entering the study of preschool and early childhood pedagogy is an important decision that can determine the future life of an individual. The purpose of this article was to find out the motives that guide candidates to the teaching profession, as well as to interpret them in the context of manifested values. The selection of the group was purposive. The study involved 91 female students of preschool and early childhood pedagogy who were completing their bachelor's degree, full-time in the 2015/2016 academic year, at the KEN Pedagogical University in Kraków. As part of the diagnostic survey, students were asked to respond in writing to the question: why did I study preschool and early childhood pedagogy? The narratives were subjected to qualitative analysis. The study showed that the respondents' motivations were most often based on manifested values: emotional, utilitarian, personal and cognitive. Much less often did the respondents justify their choices with aesthetic values, although music and art education is an important part of the preparation of future teachers working in kindergartens and grades I-III. Respondents focused exclusively on positive aspects of a teacher's work. The present study is an attempt to enrich knowledge about the motivations for entering teacher education studies in the context of the values they represent. Motivations to study teaching are a load-bearing topic taken up by researchers in various academic centres, but there is a lack of comprehensive and nationwide research on learning about motives and revealed values.

MOTYWACJE DO PODJĘCIA STUDIÓW PEDAGOGICZNYCH W KONTEKŚCIE PRZEJAWIANYCH WARTOŚCI

Słowa kluczowe: motywacje, wartości, studenci pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej, przyszli nauczyciele

Streszczenie. Podjęcie studiów z zakresu pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej jest istotną decyzją, która może determinować przyszłe życie jednostki. Celem niniejszego artykułu było poznanie motywów, jakimi kierują się kandydaci na nauczycieli, a także zinterpretowanie ich w kontekście przejawianych wartości. Dobór grupy był celowy. W badaniach wzięło udział 91 studentek pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej, które kończyły studia licencjackie stacjonarne w roku akademickim 2015/2016 na Uniwersytecie Pedagogicznym im. KEN w Krakowie. W ramach sondażu diagnostycznego poproszono studentów o pisemne udzielenie odpowiedzi na pytanie: *Dlaczego podjęłam/tem studia z zakresu pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej?* Narracje poddano analizie jakościowej. Badania pokazały, iż motywacje respondentów najczęściej wynikały z przejawianych wartości: odczuciowych, utylitarnych, osobowych i poznawczych. Znacznie rzadziej respondenci uzasadniali swoje wybory wartościami estetycznymi, chociaż edukacja muzyczna i plastyczna stanowi istotny element przygotowania przyszłych nauczycieli pracujących w przedszkolach i klasach I-III. Respondenci koncentrowali się wyłącznie na pozytywnych aspektach pracy nauczyciela. Niniejsze badania stanowią próbę wzbogacenia wiedzy na temat motywów podjęcia studiów pedagogicznych w kontekście reprezentowanych wartości. Motywacje do podjęcia studiów nauczycielskich stanowią nośny temat podejmowany przez badaczy w różnych ośrodkach akademickich, brakuje jednak kompleksowych i ogólnopolskich badań w zakresie poznawania motywów i ujawnianych wartości.

Introduction

Deciding to study preschool and early childhood education is a significant choice that can shape an individual's future life. Understanding the motivations of prospective teachers is important not only for their future professional career and personal development but also provides insight into the values that guide young people in choosing their life paths. The suitability of the chosen life path with an individual's predispositions and values can resonate with creating conditions for the harmonious development of a child, which is the primary goal of preschool education and integrated education.

Motivation and values in the context of previous research

Motivation is a frequently used concept – both in everyday discourse and in academic research. Generally, it is understood as “what causes someone to take certain actions or make decisions” or as “the justification for someone’s actions or decisions” (*PWN Polish Language Dictionary*). In psychology, motivation is recognized as “[...] a mediating process or an internal state of the organism, stimulating or propelling action [...]” (Reber et al., 2008a, p. 404). In pedagogy, “motivation is understood either as a set of factors (motives) triggering purposeful action of an individual, or as the entirety of needs and values determining the direction of human aspirations [...]” (Kupisiewicz, Kupisiewicz, 2009, p. 106). Both psychology and pedagogy agree that motivation can be:

- Internal – “stimulates actions that are valuable in themselves; examples include an interest or fondness for something” (Okoń, 2007, p. 258); “its source is usually a sense of satisfaction or fulfilment, rather than a reward” (Reber et al., 2008b, p. 405);
- External – has “its source in factors outside the individual” (Reber et al., 2008c, p. 405); is determined by a “system of rewards and punishments” (Okoń, 2007, p. 258).

It is important to note that educators study the motives for undertaking teacher training in various fields and academic centres, using both quantitative (e.g., Mydłowska, 2020; Chodkowski, 2020) and qualitative strategies (Dróżka, Madalińska-Michalak, 2016; Sosnowska-Bielicz, 2020). They often interpret the motives for undertaking studies in the context of internal and external motivation (e.g., Dróżka, Madalińska-Michalak, 2016; Mydłowska, 2020; Sosnowska-Bielicz, 2020), which is justified within pedagogical and psychological theory. Although the topic of values is significant and present in the pedagogical discourse (e.g., Adamski (Ed.), 1991; Denek, 1994; Kunowski, 2003; Kostkiewicz, 2004; Szymański, 2006; Wołoskiuk, 2010; Muszyński, 2010; Rodek, Szadzińska, Wędreńska, 2012; Gajda, 2013; Koźmińska, Olszewska, 2014; Lewicka, 2015), the interpretation of motives shown by respondents in an axiological context is often overlooked. In pedagogical research, values and motives are generally the subject of separate studies, although their relationship is signalled in pedagogical theory. For example, Czesław Kupisiewicz writes that an individual’s actions and aspirations are determined by their needs and values (Kupisiewicz, Kupisiewicz, 2009, p. 106). It is worth emphasizing that “in the field of psychological research, many

researchers consider values as motivational factors, and adopting a cognitive psychology perspective, they regard them as elements of the human cognitive system” (Domurat, 2009, p. 17). According to neuropsychologist Manfred Spitzer: “People are motivated because they consider something good; they think something is good because they are or have been rewarded for it. The systems of the organism responsible for processes that are commonly, albeit imprecisely, referred to as emotions, motivation, drive satisfaction, or social intelligence, all deal with values” (Spitzer, 2012, p. 239). A. Domurat pays much attention to values and motives in his research. He writes that “identifying personal values as motives for human behaviours and choices is the subject of numerous psychological studies. These include research on consumer behaviours, pro-social behaviours, political choices, student behaviours in school, and patient behaviours in psychotherapy. The hierarchy of values is commonly analysed, while directly identifying individual values as motives for choices in specific situations is less popular” (Domurat, 2009, p. 9). As A. Domurat (2009, pp. 28, 30) emphasizes, quantitative research may suggest motives and values to respondents that they would never have thought of on their own, and for this reason, he considers qualitative research to be particularly valuable in this regard.

Values are a significant issue for pedagogy. According to Kazimierz Denek, “One of the primary tasks of education is to cultivate universal values among its participants. They revolve around the transcendental triad: truth, goodness, and beauty. Each of these values ennoble different aspects of human nature. Truth perfects the intellect, while goodness and beauty respectively refine the will and feelings” (Denek, 1994, p. 27). Given that the literature on values is very extensive, it is necessary to narrow the focus to accepted classifications of values. According to K. Denek, there is a “division (that is) relatively clear and useful for the needs of school education and sciences about it” (Denek, 1994, p. 24; Morszyński, 1992). This includes values of: goods (utility, serving humanity), hedonistic (individual orientation towards experiencing broadly understood pleasure), vital (related to physical vigour), cognitive (related to broadly understood knowledge), aesthetic (beauty), moral (related to the good of another person), and religious (related to the sacred) (Denek, 1994, p. 24; Morszyński, 1992). The division outlined by K. Denek (following Morszyński), in general terms, is used by many other researchers (e.g., Puzynina, 1992; Wołoskiuk, 2010; Lewicka, 2015). As the literature analysis shows, there is general agreement among researchers regarding the division of values into hedonistic, cognitive, vital, aesthetic, and moral. Minor modifications are noticeable in the naming of some

values. For example, instead of hedonistic values (e.g., Denek, 1994; Wołoskiuk, 2010; Lewicka, 2015), the term affective values is used (Puzynina, 1992, p. 40). K. Denek (1994) provides a rather general characterization of religious values, which he associates with manifestations of the sacred. Monika Lewicka (2015, p. 139) refers to Max Scheler's description of values (Brzozowski, 1995, pp. 14-15), where the semantic field of sanctity is further detailed. Scheler distinguishes secular sanctities ("country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism") and religious ones ("God, faith, salvation, eternal life") (Brzozowski, 1995, pp. 14-15; Lewicka, p. 140). In the classifications proposed by individual researchers, we can identify values to which they devote more attention than others. For example, K. Denek (1994) discusses utilitarian and instrumental values, while Jadwiga Puzynina (1992, pp. 31-32) characterizes the complex relationships and dependencies between instrumental and ultimate, absolute values. There are also values that appear only with selected researchers: J. Puzynina (1992, p. 40) distinguishes customary values, whereas Beata Wołoskiuk (2010, pp. 210-212) emphasizes personal values (i.e., "capabilities, developmental tendencies") and social values (i.e., "patriotism, self-governance, rule of law"). The classification of values according to K. Denek (1994), J. Puzynina (1992), and B. Wołoskiuk (2010) serves as a starting point for interpreting the motives of the respondents studied.

Research methodology

In the state of research known to the author of this article, motives for undertaking teacher training studies have not been interpreted in the context of values. Therefore, this publication attempts to fill this research area in the field of pedagogical studies. Consequently, the aim of this research¹ is not only to present the motives for undertaking studies in preschool and early childhood education but also to attempt to interpret these motives in the context of different classifications of values. Two research problems were formulated: What motivations for undertaking studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy are reported by the respondents? What values are revealed in the motives of the respondents for undertaking studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy?

¹ They are part of multidirectional research on the musical competencies of students in preschool and early childhood education, undertaken by the author of this publication in: Szczyrba-Poroszevska, J. (2020). *Kompetencje muzyczne studentów pedagogiki przedszkolnej i wczesnoszkolnej*, unpublished doctoral dissertation. Kraków: UKEN.

As part of a diagnostic survey, students were asked to provide written answers to the question: *Why did I undertake studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy?* The selection of the student group was based on purposiveness and the criterion of accessibility of the respondents (Babbie, 2013, pp. 211-212). All students of preschool and early childhood pedagogy who were completing their undergraduate, full-time studies in the academic year 2015/2016 at the Pedagogical University of the National Education Commission in Kraków were chosen². A total of 91 female students participated in the study.

The narratives were subjected to qualitative analysis (using elements of the narrative method (Gibbs, 2011, pp. 111-112)). The textual data were coded (Gibbs, 2011, pp. 79-101), and based on this, the most frequently occurring categories related to the motives for undertaking studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy were identified. The motives were interpreted in the context of the classification of values proposed by K. Denek (1994), J. Puzynina (1992), and B. Wołoskiuk (2010).

Results

In this study, it was important to understand the motives guiding the respondents in choosing studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy. These motives have been presented in Table 1.

² On September 5, 2023, the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, signed a bill that changes the name of the Pedagogical University of the National Education Commission in Kraków to the University of the National Education Commission in Kraków. The new name of the university has been effective from October 1, 2023.

Table 1. Motives for undertaking studies in preschool and early childhood pedagogy

No.	Motives	N	Selected responses of the respondents
1.	I like children and working with them	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I like children; I enjoy all sorts of activities with them; - I have always liked children and working with them; - I love working with children. I feel good about it; - As I have always enjoyed being in contact with children, I wanted to spend time with them; - I love working with children. It's the only profession in which I feel comfortable; - I like working with children and find joy in watching their development; - I undertook studies in the field of preschool and early childhood pedagogy because I love children and working with them; - Because of my fondness for children;
2.	I want to work in this profession.	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I undertook these studies because I think this is what I want to do in life; - I undertook these studies because I have always wanted to work with children; - I chose to study in the field of preschool and early childhood pedagogy because I have always wanted to work with children; I find it an interesting occupation; - Because I like the further job prospects after completing this course; - Because I want to be a teacher in a primary school; - Because I want to become a teacher for grades 1-3 or in a preschool; - I chose such studies because I like working with children; it is the profession I would like to pursue after finishing my studies; - I want to become a teacher. I love working with children
3.	I fulfil my passions and interests here, deepening my knowledge	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because pedagogy is one of my interests. During my studies, I acquired knowledge in this field; - Working with children is my passion; I have always been interested in it; - Because I would like to work with children, mainly in creative activities, such as theatre; - I undertook my studies because I am interested in educational themes and child psychology; - I am interested in child development at this stage; I wanted to deepen my knowledge and also to work in this field in the future.

No.	Motives	N	Selected responses of the respondents
4.	I possess the appropriate characteristics	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – From my experience, I have a good approach to children; – Because I like spending time with children, I am understanding and patient; – I am a patient person, willingly working with children. Moreover, because the profession requires continuous improvement; – I believe that I get along well with children; – Because they [children] trust me; – My personality matches the traits that a good teacher should possess.
5.	I want to share knowledge	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I want to share knowledge; – I have always wanted to share the knowledge and skills I have acquired. I establish connections with children quickly and am interested in their development and how to support it; – Because I like children and would like to convey knowledge to them; – I feel good in the company of children, I like working with little ones, and I would like to convey knowledge to children, help them develop and expand their knowledge; – Because of my love for children and teaching others; – Since my junior high school days, I have really liked children, taken care of them, and I very much enjoy sharing my acquired knowledge with them; – Since childhood, I wanted to teach, I like children.
6.	Working with children is my dream.	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Because in the future, I plan to work with children. It has always been my dream; – I believe my personality matches the traits that a good teacher should have. It has always been my dream; – It was my dream. Working with children brings me a lot of joy and satisfaction.
7.	Previous experience	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Before choosing my studies, I worked several times as a part-time babysitter; – Previously, I volunteered with children from dysfunctional environments (during high school), which led me to begin studies focused on working with children; – I was the leader of a Cub Scout Pack, which reinforced my belief that I want to work with children; – My past experiences in working with children have shown me that I am suited to this profession, and I find it satisfying; – Since the third year of junior high school, I have gone on trips as a group leader and believe I performed well in this role.
8.	A passion for music	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Based on my interests. I was looking for something where I could develop holistically. Music played a significant role for me. I wanted my studies to expand this part of my life; – I really like children, and I also enjoy dancing and singing with them; – I undertook studies in Preschool and Early Childhood Education because I like drawing and singing; – Because of a passion for music.

No.	Motives	N	Selected responses of the respondents
9.	Suggestions of others	2	– Because my family said I was suited for it, and I also like children. I had to choose something since I had only completed high school.
10.	Calling	2	– I undertook these studies because I have always had a great rapport with children and believe I have a calling for it.
11.	Random choice	2	– Due to a lack of ideas for studies; – The choice was rather random;
12.	Focused solely on this field of study	1	– I couldn't see any other field for myself.

In the statement, several motives could have appeared, which is why the sum of values was not presented.

Source: Own research.

In this study, a variety of motives were identified based on the expressions used by the respondents (see Table 1). The student participants justified their choice of studying preschool and early childhood education by feeling affection for children (37 respondents). Some saw in their work the opportunity to fulfil their dreams (7 respondents). In these motives, what seems significant is the pleasure the respondents experience (stemming from contact with children, pursuing dreams, goals), satisfaction, and broadly understood love for children. In the statements of the students, terms characteristic of positive emotions frequently appear, such as *like, feel joy, adore, makes me happy, derive joy, love*. Within the framework of the classifications of values adopted in this article, living life guided by broadly understood pleasure is associated by researchers with hedonistic or affective values. According to K. Denek, hedonistic value relates to pleasant or unpleasant feelings and is expressed “with adjectives such as: good, nice, disgusting, repulsive, delicious, tasty, exquisite” (Denek, 1994, p. 24). J. Puzynina, on the other hand, sees affective values as “selfish values, values ‘for oneself’ [...]. They are based on the pursuit of happiness in various forms, from very primitive to highly sophisticated” (Puzynina, 1992, p. 41). Feeling and showing sympathy, from the perspective of M. Scheler’s concept, is associated with psychic feelings (Wędzińska, 2013, p. 37). As Wędzińska emphasizes, “Man, according to Scheler, is, [...] primarily *ens amans* (a loving being), and only later *cogitas* (a thinking being) and *ens volens* (a will-guided being)” (Wędzińska, 2013, p. 37). In M. Scheler’s view, love is “the fundamental axiological experience, directed at values. The object of love can only be that which is a bearer of value [...], love is a movement from a lower value to a higher one, [...] it is a creative experience [...]. Love precedes the recognition of values – it is a primal feeling that opens the way

for man to recognize values” (Galarowicz, 1997, pp. 67-70; Wędzińska, 2013, p. 37). The potential of the respondents and their positive attitude are in many cases focused on working with children. As the analysis shows, 37 respondents associate their future with the profession of teaching children in preschool and early childhood pedagogy, which can be interpreted as being guided by utilitarian values among others. The combination of utilitarian and affective values may indicate the maturity of the respondents, in line with the statement that “The capacity to love and the capacity to work, as Sigmund Freud once said to his student, Erik Erikson, signifies full maturity” (Goleman, 1997, p. 207).

Furthermore, 13 respondents indicated that personal values guided their choice of studies. They asserted that they possessed the appropriate character traits and personality to pursue the profession. Some mentioned that they were characterised by patience, understanding, the right approach, and good contact with children. Meanwhile, two respondents declared that they have a calling for this profession. It seems that additional experience (six respondents) in working with children was significant for discovering or confirming the personal values useful for the profession (which determined their choice of studies). They gained this experience by working as caretakers, volunteers, and team leaders.

Studies in the field of preschool and early childhood pedagogy, due to their interdisciplinary nature, were of interest to 18 respondents. In choosing their studies, they were likely guided by cognitive and aesthetic values. They declared that their choice of course was motivated by the desire to develop various interests and passions (14 respondents). The students wrote about interests including child developmental psychology, pedagogy, art, visual arts, theatre, and Polish studies, as exemplified by the statements in Table 1. Motives possibly indicating guidance by aesthetic values in the field of music education were exhibited by only four participants, although music and art education constitute an important element in preparation for working with children in preschool and grades 1-3. Furthermore, many respondents' statements indicate that they want to share their acquired knowledge, disseminate it, and expand the intellectual horizons of children (Table 1). From these statements, it is evident that the students are guided not only by cognitive values but also by moral ones: developing one's own potential serves the good of the individual and society.

The present research has shown that the overwhelming majority of respondents undertook their studies guided by their own happiness and well-being, as well as an understanding of their predispositions, which will serve them in working with children. It is worth emphasising that, according to the respondents'

statements, the studies were – for almost the majority – a conscious choice. No remarks were observed in the statements regarding potential difficulties in future professional work, which could be due to a desire to provide a precise answer to the posed question or an idealistic attitude of the students.

Discussion

In the present research, it was observed that many respondents undertook their studies due to the positive emotions associated with working with children. Being guided by positive motivations was interpreted in the context of affective-hedonistic values. Experiencing satisfaction from undertaken activities is linked by Daniel Goleman to a new model of education and the feeling of exhilaration, which “is an essential condition for achieving masterful proficiency not only in every profession, but also in learning” (Goleman, 1997, p. 155). It is worth adding that: “the search for and maintenance of the feeling of exhilaration through learning is undoubtedly a more humanitarian, also natural, and probably more effective way of harnessing emotions in the service of education. It also shows that directing emotions towards a useful goal is a masterful skill” (Goleman, 1997, p. 158). Therefore, the positive emotions of the respondents constitute a good basis on which future educators can build their professional excellence and mastery. The importance of pleasure values was observed in other studies (Wojciechowska, 2022, p. 73). For example, positive emotions also guided respondents from other countries, where teachers indicated that working with students brings them much satisfaction and is undertaken due to love and passion for teaching (Onyefulu, Madalińska-Michalak, Bavli, 2023, p. 54).

It is worth emphasising that for some respondents, their studies represented the fulfilment of dreams, often initiated in childhood. This was noted, among others, in the research of Ewa Sosnowska-Bielicz (2020), where it was captured as an expression of intrinsic motivation and a ‘distinguishing motive of this professional group’ (Sosnowska-Bielicz, 2020, p. 75).

The overwhelming majority of respondents decided independently to undertake their studies. Only two respondents mentioned in their narratives suggestions from others (family) regarding their suitability for the teaching profession. Only two respondents undertook studies by choosing a random field due to a lack of other ideas for further education. The majority of the above statements concerning various motivations for undertaking studies challenge the opinion of pedagogical studies being undertaken ‘by chance, without passion’ (Denek,

2011, p. 60), constituting a contingency plan in case of not getting into other fields of study (Dejna, Nalaskowski, 2015, p. 80). The present research showed that respondents from the Kraków university are also guided by a high level of self-awareness and independence in choosing their studies, which to some extent corresponds with the results of research conducted among Polish, Slovak, and Czech students (Kruszewska, Nazaruk, Fasnerová, Bernátová, 2023, p. 13).

It should be noted that the respondents from the Kraków university were primarily guided by internal motivations. It is interesting that the respondents did not focus on working conditions, salary, prestige, length of holiday, although such factors were pointed out by the researchers themselves (including Mydłowska, 2020; Sosnowska-Bielicz, 2020). Research conducted by Beata Mydłowska in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship showed that: 'for individuals choosing the field of pedagogy, an important motivational factor is not only interests but also knowledge of the labour market. It can be assumed that financial stability, regular income, are important determinants in students' choice of profession. It seems that in society, perceptions and opinions about the short working hours of teachers and their long holidays, constitute an important external motivator in deciding on the teaching profession' (Mydłowska, 2020, pp. 125-126). The respondents under study also did not point to motives revealed in other research, such as social prestige, respect, or admiration (Kruszewska, Nazaruk, Fasnerová, Bernátová, 2023, p. 13) or the opportunity to benefit from a long summer vacation (Mydłowska, 2020; Onyefulu, Madalińska-Michalak, Bavli, 2023, p. 54). The students were also not guided by religious values or secular sanctities, which can be identified in the statements of Turkish teachers (Onyefulu, Madalińska-Michalak, Bavli, 2023, p. 54). Many respondents chose their studies due to appropriate predispositions, and B. Mydłowska (2020, p. 126) also highlights their significance in the recruitment process for the position of a pedagogue.

From the present research, it emerges that the students' statements can most often be interpreted in the context of affective-hedonistic and utilitarian values. Meanwhile, other studies have shown that the preferred values among early school pedagogy students are the moral values and truth (Langier, Siembida, 2018) – presumably, such discrepancies may arise from differences in the adopted research methodology.

It is worth emphasising that the research showed that students do not often guide themselves by aesthetic values, which has also been proven in other studies (Langier, Siembida, 2018; Wojciechowska, 2022). Mariola Wojciechowska

critically addresses such positioning of aesthetic values in the world of values: 'It is with concern that one should relate to the low placement in the hierarchy of cultural values and the world of beauty and imagination. According to M. Rokeach's assumptions, the obtained ranks confirm the treatment of these values as peripheral, which proves a superficial understanding of complex offers and a narrowing of the field of interest to simple forms. Cultural values continue to be understood as ceremonial and festive, and thus significantly removed from everyday realisation, confirming the lack of internalisation of norms derived from tradition and a socially accepted value system, as well as a proper understanding of cultural canons. The possibility of using existing freedoms and rights is often understood, also by the respondents, without due reflection. This superficializes the possibility of participating in life to its simple meanings, to easy and accessible forms for all. Consequently, respondents relate to the world of beauty, assigning it a peripheral status, which on one hand can be explained by the fact of traditional high recognition, e.g., for family security, mature love, on the other – by underestimating the connection of beauty with other aspects of life, including one's own intellectual development' (Wojciechowska, 2022, pp. 73-74).

In the respondents' statements on motivation, no difficulties associated with practising the teaching profession were even signalled. Contemporary difficulties are described by Wanda Dróżka and Joanna Madalińska-Michalak: 'Different from 25 years, or even 15 years ago, are the current prospects of work and professional career. There is a dominant lack of social security feeling, troubling is the sadness of transformation, the necessity of emigration, postponing adulthood, starting a family, having children due to uncertainty of work and employment. In this situation, natural as it may be in the youthful phase of life, motives and attitudes more idealistic, full of romantic visions, aspirations, a sense of teaching and educational mission, mix already during studies with the difficult reality, which forces the revision of dreams and effectively cools down the fervour. It should be noted that the motives for choosing a profession have not actually undergone a fundamental change over the past 25 years' (Dróżka, Madalińska-Michalak, 2016, p. 175).

Based on the analysis of these studies, it can be concluded that the respondents who studied at the Pedagogical University of KEN in Kraków did not undertake their studies by chance. In the respondents' statements, the topic of difficulties in the work of a pedagogue was completely omitted, which can be interpreted as youthful idealism (cf. Dróżka, Madalińska-Michalak, 2016). It remains to wish

the respondents that the positive feelings associated with pedagogical work accompany them throughout their future professional careers and contribute to their mastery of pedagogy.

Conclusions

The analysis of motives can serve as a diagnosis of the values that guide future teachers. The conducted research shows that the respondents, in choosing their studies, were guided by affective, utilitarian, personal, cognitive, aesthetic, and moral values. References to religious values were not identified in the respondents' statements. It is worth emphasising that in most cases, the choice of studies in the field of preschool and early childhood pedagogy was thoughtful, stemming from the potential of the candidates.

Qualitative research does not impose a foreign system of motives or values on respondents but allows them to be discovered and interpreted in the light of literature (cf. Domurat, 2009). Motivations for undertaking teacher education studies are a prominent topic undertaken by researchers in various academic centres, using diverse strategies and research procedures. However, there is a lack of nationwide qualitative research in the field of understanding the motives for undertaking pedagogical studies.

In the present research, respondents were not directly asked about the values that guided them in choosing pedagogical studies, but an attempt was made to read them from statements justifying their actions. So far, motives have most often been interpreted in the context of external and internal motivation, but it is also worth looking at them through the prism of values. For, as K. Denek writes, 'underestimation and lack of values in school education, human life, and community' results in, among other things, the brutalisation of life, a crisis of consciousness, insensitivity to the beauty contained in nature, works of culture and art, and human creations (Denek, 1994, pp. 14-15). For this reason, it is necessary to nurture values and positive emotions in the education process, and in the teacher, to see a person who did not necessarily choose this course of study because of 'long holidays'. Due to the local nature of the conducted research, great caution should be exercised in generalising its results.

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