

Value Forming Education of Prospective Primary School Teachers in Kazakhstan and Germany

Gulnara Ye. Utyupova^a, Zhanar B. Baiseitova^a,
Aizhan A. Mukhamadiyeva^b

^aPavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, KAZAKHSTAN;

^bKazakhstan Innovative University, Semey, KAZAKHSTAN

ABSTRACT

Value education is one of the most effective forms of education. However, this system is applied only in developed countries due to a number of factors. The purpose of this study is to develop a method for training primary school teachers capable of implementing the value education system in developing countries. Teachers not only convey knowledge of the foundations of science and helps to develop specific skills and practices in a particular area, but also bears values. This is extremely important in primary schools, where the worldview fundamentals are formed. The paper presents the results of a comparative study of the training of prospective primary school teachers for working with primary-school children in Kazakhstan and Germany in terms of the axiological approach.

KEYWORDS

Comparative research, values, prospective teachers,
teacher training

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Introduction

Education is an integral tool of social development, a process of consistent learning for the purpose of conveying knowledge and acquired skills and abilities that are required to develop society and the nation. The quality of the system of education affects both the social (Dalton & Crosby, 2010) and economic spheres (Glewwe & Jacoby, 2004).

Values are the foundation of society. Values may vary from one society to another and from time to time. However, each society adheres to a specific set of values, while their combination are values that are supported by all communities and are referred to as “Global values” (Inglehart, 2006).

The concept of “value education” is regarded by researchers as the teaching of social, political, cultural, and esthetic values (Stephenson et al., 1998; Veugelers,

CORRESPONDENCE Gulnara Yeltayevna Utyupova ✉ natan82008@mail.ru

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2000; Gabdrakhmanova, Khuziakhmetov & Yesnazarova, 2015; Tagunova, Selivanova & Valeeva, 2016)). The most accurate term is “value forming education”, since it emphasizes the pedagogical component of this process (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003).

The typical feature of value education is its positive effect on social development. Studies that were carried out in 2004-2007 in New Zealand found a high level of social feedback during the implementation of special value education programs. These programs improved the quality of each participating institution (Cornerstone Values, 2009).

Value education is capable of transforming the educational environment completely, forming inclusive ethos of the school, thus facilitating the social development of students by strengthening relationships between students, as well as between students and teachers (Lovat & Clement, 2008). Furthermore, a group of Australian researches measured empirically the positive effect of value education on such indicators as (Lovat et al., 2009):

- diligence of students;
- atmosphere in the school in general;
- student-teacher relationships;
- wellbeing of students and teachers;
- participation of students' families in the educational process.

The problem is that value education is studied mostly in developed countries like Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and Germany (Singh, 2011). At the same time, the implementation of value education can change the social sphere in developing countries radically. The basic requirement of value education is the ability of teachers to present values in the most accessible and easy to understand form. Teachers should model values that will be understood by all classes, focus on developing students' strengths, and facilitate their social development. The school administration should also promote respective relationships between students and involve their families in various projects (Brown et al., 2006).

Australian researchers argue that the effort and will of a small group of enthusiastic teachers is not enough to provide for complete value education in the entire school (Lovat et al., 2009).

Thus, two key parameters are required for the value education system to function:

- competent teachers capable of formulating and conveying values to the students;
- a resolute administration capable of providing for proper involvement of teachers, students, and even their families in the value education process.

The training of personnel for the system of education is one of the most problematic issues for developing countries, including Kazakhstan (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Glewwe & Kremer, 2006).

Since “values” are a concept with a broad meaning, its modeling for students is the teacher's task. Students, especially primary school students, may find it difficult to understand such an extensive theoretical concept as “value”. However, studies found that the students' ability to comprehend such concepts, as well as the ability to add a value context to complex social situations can be enhanced; teachers should assist in this (Oser, 1994).

According to the study of Nucci (1997), the results whereof can be applied to primary school students, the development of the value communication ability requires:

- developing a long-term teaching program with regard to the stages of students' personal development;
- facilitating the use and adaptation of skills beyond the specific field of education;
- using learned skills in social conditions;
- actively reacting to the successful use of skills.

It is necessary to establish that value education is aimed at the independent development of the value orientation by students, rather than at the transfer of values from the teacher to the students. Teachers often are unable to take a neutral stand and force their own values upon students. Furthermore, the school and state policy sometimes obliges them to form in students a specific set of values "required" by the society (Veugeliers & Vedder, 2003). Such a policy has nothing to do with the true value education system.

At the same time, teachers cannot be value-free – their values are reflected in the studied subject, their explanations and behavior (Gudmundsdottir, 1990; Suttle, 1991). This is worth bearing in mind when training primary school teachers, since their students are very susceptible to external influence. In addition, with value education, the student-teacher relationships are closer, which means the degree of influence is greater, as well.

Despite the growing interest in the value education system, a number of issues remain virtually unaddressed:

- the prospects and problems associated with the use of the value education system in developing countries;
- the features of the implementation of the value education system in primary school education;
- the features of training of primary school teachers for work according to the value education system.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a method for teaching values to primary school students and a strategy of training primary school teachers for effective implementation of the value education system.

Methods

The study used the following methods:

- Comprehensive analysis of literature from the Scopus and Web of Science scientometric databases on the following subjects: "value education", "civic education", "moral education", "primary school education", "educational system in developing countries", and "teacher training".
- Comparative analysis of the primary school teacher training system in Germany and Kazakhstan.



Data, Analysis and Results

Events occurring in the world today cannot be analyzed without taking into account the values that guide politicians, economists and public figures. If these values have universal significance and are clear to the representatives of the different countries, they allow implementing positively the ideas of integration that are being actively implemented in the world.

Europe can serve as an example of such integration. However, Dr. Susanne Moser, a well-known scientist from Germany, argues that the meaning of values for the social and economic integration of Europe is highly controversial. On the one hand, values have a central role in the social cohesion of the society. On the other hand, they are not devoid of emotional explosiveness. Values are an integral part of identity and self-awareness of people on an individual and collective level. They form an ethic and cultural background of the life of the society. Thus, they are not easy to discuss as material objects, processes, and phenomena.

For these reasons, some scientists are very skeptical about the role of values in the integration of the modern international community (Moser, 2013).

Despite this, clear and accepted values (life, peace, love, mercy, goodness, health) can be conveyed through education. Education is especially important for modern humans because it gives opportunities for a better life both for an individual and for the entire society. Nowadays, education is becoming the strategic recourse for sustainable growth. Value education is the process by which people give values to others (Powney et al., 1995). An educated person can benefit others by helping, supporting, evaluating his or her activity and relation to the surrounding reality.

A primary school teacher is an educator who affects greatly the formation of the schoolchild's personality by virtue of the peculiarities of the forming educational system. Primary school, being the first stage of school education, is aimed at helping schoolchildren to master the general methods of educational activity, while the teacher should contribute not only to the adaptation of an individual to the new social conditions, but also to the formation of value orientations, which will be the basis for the development of the individual. In modern conditions, occupational training of primary schools teachers in Kazakhstan implies, firstly, the optimization of education, which allows prospective teachers to organize the educational process in the primary school in the most proper way by selecting and organizing the educational process correctly, secondly, the activation that focuses on the creation of favorable conditions for education, thirdly, the development of facilities for future primary school teachers that enable them to acquire and create new, innovative approaches to teaching and educational problems, and prepare them for making decisions and accept responsibility for their implementation. In this regard, the goal of vocational education in Kazakhstan is to integrate traditional values of education and pedagogical ideas that determine the direction of development of occupational training systems. This phenomenon is characterized by the increasing role of the general cultural component and humanitarization of education. Significant experience is gained in creating and using a variety of pedagogical conditions and means of organizing the educational process with the use of multicultural environment opportunities.

The basic educational training program for primary school teachers, which is implemented under the conditions of basic teaching education, focuses on the formation of the general and teaching culture, professional competence of teachers,

and consists of three blocks of disciplines. The general cultural block includes two cycles of subjects:

General humanitarian subjects (for instance, foreign language, Kazakh language/Russian language, Physical training, History of Kazakhstan, etc.);

General science subjects (developmental psychology, fundamentals of mathematics, etc.). This block accounts for 25% of the entire study time and aims to provide the option of advanced specialty, to provide for the holistic formation of the teachers' personality, to develop their worldview, life and professional self-determination.

The general occupational block aims to prepare every teacher, regardless of his or her specialization, for working with people, performing basic pedagogical functions – education and teaching, protecting the life and health of children, and improving their development. It accounts for 18% of the study time and includes the disciplines of the psychological and pedagogical cycle. The subject block that accounts for 57% of the study time includes disciplines of subject training that are specific to the pedagogical specialty and provide a fundamental scientific training of teachers in the subject they teach; the block focuses on the development of the individual student by means of the studied subject. The basic educational program for teacher training consists of compulsory (basic) courses (mandatory for study in all colleges of education and accounting for 81% of the study time), optional courses (determined by the university according to the needs of a particular region and the subjects chosen by the student), and other additional types of training. This block accounts for 19% of the study time and allows satisfying the socioeconomic, cultural, and educational needs of the region and of each student (Chapman et al., 2005).

Basic higher education lays the groundwork for scientific and occupational teacher training in the chosen area of education and enables the graduates to work as primary school teachers. The functions of the teaching activity of primary school teachers reflect both the general assignment of the teacher and the special social order, which is determined by the specific nature of the primary school and modern requirements thereto. In previous ages, the role of the child's first teacher was frequently considered narrow – to teach schoolchildren the basics of subject knowledge and simple skills and competences; nowadays, these functions are extended and are comparable to those of a secondary school teacher.

A modern primary school teacher is a teacher, educator, organizer of the children's activities, an active participant of communication with students, their parents, colleagues, a researcher of pedagogical process, a consultant, and educator, and a social worker. He or she constantly improves his or her professional and pedagogical skills, and is creative in looking for new ideas. The functions of the professional activity of younger schoolchildren's teachers are even more wide-ranging than those of subject teachers are, because they always work as class teachers and teach a greater number of diverse disciplines.

The listed functions are performed in the structure of educational activities – in education, communication, self-revitalization of the teacher's personality, and his or her professional growth. This structure should be psychologically complete and consistent. Meanwhile, the number of distinguished substructures in the activities varies from scientific approach to scientific approach. A.K. Markova, T. Matis & A. Orlov (1990) argues that it has three aspects: motivational and indicative, operating, control and evaluation. According to V.D. Shadrikov's (1996) theory of professional activity systemogenesis, six subsystems (and substructures) should be

distinguished in the activity system: personal and motivational, component and focus, program, informational, decision-making subsystem, and the subsystem of professionally important qualities (Shadrikov, 1996). Apparently, it is not the number of substructures or subsystems that is important, but their content. It is important that all its constituent elements function in an activity and that no aspect of it is overlooked. The main peculiarities of teachers' work are part of a complete psychological structure of an activity – the specific character of problems solved by the teachers, the means and methods that he or she uses to regulate the activity.

Teaching tasks are characterized by irregularity, creativeness, and a need for constant coordination of the teacher's goals and schoolchildren's goals.

The means of solving teaching problems are education content, consideration of the age and individual peculiarities of schoolchildren, learning and choice of methods and forms of education, and communication.

In order to regulate and evaluate his or her activity, to improve his or her effectiveness, the teacher practices different methods of self-analysis, self-control, self-assessment, and self-correction, trying to achieve a high professional level and to form not only an individual, but also an optimal style of activity.

A teacher is complete only when he or she has certain professional and personal qualities or professional suitability for the work of choice. It is worth noting that the profession of a teacher, despite its large scale, is a specific large-scale profession. According to E.A. Klimov's (2010) classification, it is a P2P-type profession that involves work with people, especially considering that their upbringing has been always difficult. According to the results of most studies, the general structure of a teacher's professionally important qualities is as follows:

Teaching orientation of a person as an integral quality that includes a substructure of interest and inclination for pedagogical work, love of children, and focus on the development of the individual student.

With regard to primary school teachers, this general structure of professionally important qualities should be verified and specified. However, the professionally important qualities of primary school teachers are still not well understood, while available occupational training programs for primary school teachers are incomplete.

However, it is possible to list a number of qualities necessary for a children's first teacher. They are focused on pedagogical work with younger schoolchildren, occupational training that emphasizes the curriculum of primary schools, the ability to present the course material in simple form that is clear to younger schoolchildren, knowledge of the age-related and individual characteristics of primary schoolchildren, bright creative thinking, knowledge of their opportunities and elaboration reserve, ability to communicate with little schoolchildren by supporting their immediacy and emotionality, empathy, pedagogical intuition, pedagogical vigilance and observance, special kindness and mothering in relation to the students, sense of words, and aptitude for gaming and other teaching methods. The teacher's personality is a core factor in pedagogical activity, since the self-realization of the teacher's personality that focuses on the mental development of the schoolchild is the main goal of the teacher's work. However, each work has its result – in the case of the teacher's work, it is the level of training (+ teaching ability), in the case of schoolchildren, it is the level of education (+ ability to learn manners).

Therefore, the development of the ability to achieve the best results of their work and to evaluate them objectively is also part of the teachers' training.

At the current stage of development of vocational teacher education in Kazakhstan, the reformation should be accompanied by a constant search for mechanisms to improve the training of teacher and the improvement their abilities, with a view to meeting the increasing demands not only of an individual, but also of the world community.

In this regard, the modern system of vocational teacher education is becoming increasingly integrated, thus giving new opportunities for personal, social, and professional development. This is made possible, in part, by studying the positive experience of progressive systems of vocational teacher education. Consider, for example, Germany.

Due to the rich historical experience, Germany has successfully created a functional educational system, which is divided into two types of facilities, depending on the conditions of enrollment and completion terms: 131 first-grade high schools and 43 high schools that specialize in various arts constitute one branch of the university system, 138 specialized universities (including 26 administrative institutions) constitute the other branch (Blossfeld & Stockmann, 1998).

The training of teachers in Germany today consists of two stages: university training (followed by the First State Exam) and two years of teaching internship (before the second Final State Exam). Depending on the stages and types of schools where students would like to work after graduating from the university, they can get a variety of teacher positions, including the position of first stage I teacher (primary school teacher). The choice of studied subjects depends on the student's future teaching position and the curriculum of the respective school stage (Jones, 2000).

At the first stage, the compulsory subjects for all students are German, mathematics, and one optional subject. Any two subjects can be selected from a wide range of subjects for the second stage I and II. The following combinations are mostly chosen: a teacher of German and history, German and English language teacher, German and French language teacher, teacher of mathematics and physics. However, there are also rare combinations of mathematics and sports, biology and German language, etc. School and practical training takes place in the following forms (Viebahn, 2003):

Tadespraktika, the preparation of lessons and their subsequent discussion held at teaching and methodology classes and visits of classes – during the semester (simultaneously with studies or immediately after their completion).

Blockpraktika, during which the preparation of lessons and subsequent discussions also take place at teaching and methodology classes, but class visits are extracurricular and last for four weeks.

At the end of the study at the university, students take the First State Exam in two or three academic subjects and pedagogical sciences – in written and oral form. One work must be written before the exam at home (on one academic subject). Examination requirements differ slightly, depending on the graduate's position of choice.

After successfully passing the First State Exam, prospective teachers do a two-year teaching internship – Referendariat – professional internship training at

school and at so-called training seminars. The centerpiece of occupational teacher training are class visits, trial classes, and self-teaching. At the end of the internship, teachers have to pass the Second State Exam, which includes written homework, two trial classes, and an oral examination. Teacher training ends when the Second State Exam has been passed successfully. Graduates try to find jobs in schools. The labor market determines the level of employment for teachers. Active development and implementation of a set of educational measures under the general title «Ausbildungsoffensive» or “active educational activities” has been carried out in Germany since 2003 with the direct assistance of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. They include a series of innovative projects aimed at the modernization and optimization of the activities of educational institutions, especially in the vocational education system (Viebahn, 2003).

This program of the German Federal Government aims to improve the situation of apprenticeship places; at the same time, it is a central element of the “National Agreement on Education and Young Specialists in Germany” that supports the activities of the state. The economy should be supported in regard to the establishment of industrial training places through various actions. In addition, one of the main objectives of the new educational policy should be to create more training places, particularly in the most promising industrial areas or in new technological fields.

“Active educational activities” is an integrating element of the activities in the framework of the “National Agreement on Education and Young Specialists in Germany” signed on June 16, 2004 by the Federal Government and the leading representatives of the most important economic unions. “Active learning activities” include a variety of tools ranging from new programs to the support of educational campaigns by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and have the following areas (The German Federal Training Assistance Act, 2004):

- Regional campaigns have programs aimed at supporting individual regions with the weakest demand-offer ratio or above-average decrease in the supply of industrial training places (the “Staregio” program),

- A program for the creation of industrial training places in the western and eastern states «Ausbildungsplatzentwickler West» / «Ausbildungsplatzentwickler Ost»,

- A new federal program for the development and support of the educational structure (“Jobstarter”, “Patenschaftsprogramm” patronage program).

Value-meaning (personal) components of modern teachers’ professional competence include the willingness to exercise personal initiative, value-based attitude to the profession, willingness to work in a team (for example, a research team), value-based attitude to events, to people, and to oneself. Value guidelines are reflected in the freedom of students to choose subjects in accordance with their priorities and the freedom of expressing one’s position in training.

Thus, the identification of optimal conditions for training and development of the personality of prospective primary school teachers has become essential.

Nowadays, new ideas in the educational policy, the practical implementation of advanced educational technologies, and adapted progressive national systems of teacher training play a major role in the modernization of vocational education; a competitive graduate is now seen as an indicator of the quality of university training. The growing role of comparative studies is increasingly noticeable in the

current context of an interdependent and globalized world. The analysis of education in a closed national context, which was conducted previously by comparatists, is replaced in modern conditions by the consideration of the country's position in the international context.

The design of goals, program sections, and teaching methods for the educational program of prospective primary school teachers are focused on the needs of the society. Ethical aspects of training are taken into consideration via the content of training, which is based on system of values adopted in the country.

Discussion

The state policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of education and science is designed in the context of the objectives of improving competitiveness in a global educational environment. The development of adequate measures for the development of vocational pedagogical education in the Republic of Kazakhstan is impossible without comparing them with the experience of the leading systems of teacher training. One of the most important issues on the agenda of the world pedagogical community is the realization of values in education.

Teachers are the main driving force of innovations in school education (Van Driel et al, 1997). For instance, teachers are responsible for implementing innovative technologies in primary schools (Hermans et al., 2008).

Vocational education in Germany is rationalistic and is focused on the public needs, labor market, and educational practice. Accordingly, all reforms in Germany nowadays are practice-oriented.

Despite the fact that the overall management of education is carried out by the Ministry, issues related to the nature of content (educational and regulatory documents) and the educational policy are addressed by local educational authorities, which monitor the demand for personnel and transform the required content into educational standards with regard to the existing cultural traditions of the region.

The efforts of twenty-first-century German teachers are focused on the search for effective means of high-quality mass education. At that, they believe that the most effective way is the diversification of education, which involves the expansion of the range of training and organizational activities that aim to serve the diverse interests and abilities of schoolchildren and the diverse needs of society.

There is another example of recent educational success in European countries – Finland. Despite the fact that this country was the last in the European Union to implement a modern system general education (Meyer, Ramirez & Soysal, 1992), studies show that Finland is constantly among the top-five countries in terms of the quality of the comprehensive school system (OECD, 2012). The key characteristics of the primary school education system of Finland are as follows (Simola, 2005):

- strict, almost totalitarian state policy in the field of compulsory education;
- teachers enjoy a high social status, even higher than in other countries with a similar economic and social level;
- most parents are satisfied with the existing system of state education and do not consider it necessary to send their children to private schools;
- the profession of a teacher is one of the most respected ones, which is proven by a large number of students that wish to master this profession.

These characteristics confirm the necessity of two key factors that were identified at the beginning of this paper:

- 1) authoritarian policy of the administration facilitates the effective implementation of educational policies;
- 2) the occupational prestige of teachers provides for high-quality education and training of prospective teachers.

When considering the methods of value education, it is worth paying close attention to the methods that have already been implemented in practice and the results whereof can be measured empirically. In 2009, a team of Australian researchers presented a governmental report on a 12-month experiment for the implementation of value education in Australian schools and its practical results. In terms of the methods used, the most important ones are as follows (Lovat et al., 2009):

- explicit teaching of values;
- whole-school assemblies;
- modeling of teachers' values;
- use of visual images of studied values;
- involvement of students' families;
- integration of the value system into the existing school structures.

The most important indicator for primary school students was the classroom ambience. The pre-post results differed significantly, despite the insignificant difference between the results of teaching. Thus, when investigating the effect of the value education system in primary schools, it is necessary to focus on qualitative indicators, rather than quantitative ones.

Conclusion

The study of the teacher training experience in Kazakhstan and Germany shows that the quality of the educational systems is improving constantly.

The educational policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is stipulated by the vital importance of the social function – the creation and transfer of knowledge, which is implemented by education, it being a social institution in the modern social division of labor. One of the most important tasks in the development of higher education is the integration of the system of higher education in Kazakhstan into the world educational environment without abandoning the established traditions of teaching the younger generation. Some measures in this direction have already been taken. A multi-level structure of higher education was formed. It is managed with regard to the following fundamental principles: focus on personal development, accessibility of education for all, flexibility and adaptability of the educational system to changes, lifelong education, democracy, transparency and accountability, transfer and implementation of new methods, technologies, and the best international practices, and wide access to information resources. At the same time, mechanisms are being developed for improving the quality of occupational training that are aimed at providing multistage, diverse, active, flexible, fundamental, and universal training of specialists.

By studying the international experience of educational systems, it is possible to implement the positive aspects thereof, with a view to improving the entire educational system of Kazakhstan.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Gulnara Yeltayevna Utyupova holds Master degree in Pedagogy and now works at Pavlodar State Pedagogical, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.

Zhanar Baiseitovna Baiseitova holds a PhD in Pedagogy and now is an Associate Professor at Pavlodar State Pedagogical University, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.

Aizhan Argynovna Mukhamadiyeva holds a PhD in Economics and now is a Professor at the Kazakhstan Innovative University, Semey, Kazakhstan.

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