

KÓSA, MAJA

*kosamaja@edu.u-szeged.hu*

PhD student (University of Szeged, Doctoral School of Education)

# The Value Structure of Students of Teacher Education



Jancsák, Csaba (2018):

*Students of Teacher Education in Hungary: before and during the Bologna process*  
Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitara Clujeana. 157 p.



DOI 10.14232/belv.2018.4.17

<https://doi.org/10.14232/belv.2018.4.17>

Cikkre való hivatkozás / How to cite this article: Kósa, Maja (2018): The Value Structure of Students of Teacher Education *Belvedere Meridionale* vol. 30. no. 4. 225–227. pp.

ISSN 1419-0222 (print)

ISSN 2064-5929 (online, pdf)

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In his upcoming book, entitled *Students of Teacher Education in Hungary: before and during the Bologna process*, Csaba Jancsák aims to understand the value structure of students taking part in teacher education. The author's work, which is the result of nearly two decades of scholarly endeavour, primarily focuses on youth research, within which students participating in teacher training play a prominent role (JANCSÁK 2011a, 2012, 2014).

The book, published at the Presa Universitară Clujeană, provides a framework for the author's research of many years. In the first part of the book, one gains an insight into the details of a research conducted in 2009. At the dawn of the Bologna process, altogether 526 students from eight faculties of the University of Szeged and the University of Debrecen took part in the research. In the paper-based questionnaire study, students responded to questions related to their academic

progress, personal values, future orientation, career perspectives, and the evaluation of their training programs. The second research took place during the Bologna process, in 2011. Through a nationwide representative data collection with the help of the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (OFI), 1210 students of 19 faculties and 12 pedagogical institutes were involved in the research. In the second part of the book, one can read about several aspects of this large-scale research, such as the characteristics of transition from secondary education to higher education, the motives for choosing teacher education program and the institute offering it.

The topic is relevant due to the changes affecting Hungarian higher education in recent decades, the accelerated world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the continuous transformation of the economic and social environment. The author emphasizes that change of the concept of knowledge necessitated the reformulation of the role and functions of school and teacher as well. What is more, as a result of the expansion of higher education, students with special needs, learning opportunities and values, have also appeared. The above mentioned factors put teacher training into a new context. As the teacher's role affects students' progress in school, which indirectly influences their future labour market positions (CSAPÓ 2016), it is crucial to understand how teachers of the future generations think.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the research presented in the book focuses primarily on the questions of teacher education from the viewpoint of university students. In accordance with the relevant literature, the research claims that the value of the students basically reflects the nature, content and other formal and non-formal factors of education in the institution. Taking students' feedback into account allows communication among students of teacher education, institutes and educational policy makers, which is in turn relevant in order to increase efficiency.

One of the returning motifs in the book is change. The results show that traditional carriers of values (e.g. school, state) have decreasing impact on the value structure of students, but at the same time new influencing factors (e.g. media, other age groups) become significantly more important. This kind of retreat into smaller communities justifies the idea of an emerging value crisis.

On the basis of the results, it can be clearly seen that students were mostly motivated to enrol in higher education by the acquisition of tertiary level qualifications (college or university degrees). This motivation was driven by the prestige of higher education qualification, the financial benefits and the easier prevailing in the labour market. According to the students' opinion, the role of educational institutes is outstanding in value transfers as they serve as examples for teacher trainees. It is also proved that the students consciously prepared for the teaching career were more receptive to the content of the training, which is essential for successful socialization. Moreover, it is interesting to note that students committed to the teaching profession were characterized by a preference to traditional values, while the lack of such awareness was generally associated with material values. The research also revealed that conscious career planning was also related to the interest in the chosen subject.

One of the most exciting research questions in the book is the social appreciation of the teaching profession. It is an interesting result that both daytime and correspondent students have evaluated the social esteem of the profession as low, and only instruction in higher education was rated as a high prestige position. However, students with conscious career motivations saw their future more positively than their less committed peers. They believed in the social usefulness of the teaching profession and had more trust in successfully being employed in the labour market.

Furthermore, it is particularly worth emphasizing that the book is written in English, as the dissemination of these results in international academic life is also directly realized. By orienting towards evidence-based educational research, the author is involved in a scholarly discourse that can contribute to improving the efficiency of Hungarian teacher education in the long run (e.g. JANCsÁK 2011B, CsAPÓ 2016; CsAPÓ – BODORKÓs – BÚs 2015).

The book can serve as a valuable resource for educational policy makers, education researchers and teacher trainers, as well as for practicing teachers. The actuality of the topic is well illustrated by the fact that since the results of this research have been presented, there have been many changes as regards the structural and the content elements of the Hungarian teacher training. On the basis of the results of *Csaba Jancsák's* research, it can be plausibly argued that globalization, the media and other age groups emerge as stronger control factors than the higher education institution or the family. At the same time, all this prompts the relevance of undertaking further research.

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