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# Primary school teachers and their values at the beginning of the XXI century. Case study

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## Abstract

Teachers, including primary education teachers are not only transmitters of (didactically processed) knowledge but also one of the many factors of axiological influence for the younger generations. Primary education teachers, be they aware of it or not, convey – implicitly or explicitly – their system of values onto their pupils. The study aims to reveal the main values of a group of primary education teachers in Prahova County, listing values in which they believe and which they instill in their little pupils.

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## 1. Introduction

Perhaps because everything passes so quickly, perhaps because interactions between people – in the tumult of their lives – are as superficial as they are ephemeral / fluctuating – we grew less preoccupied with our values. It gives the impression that today's world could exist without the need for solid axiological grounds, that we could work (as well) without them. "If - H. Gardner (2012) specifies - we give up on a life marked by truth, beauty and good, or at least to the perpetual search of this trio", then we tend to "resign ourselves to a world where nothing is of worth and everything is fleeting. Lest we succumb to such a joyless existence, lacking in rules or meaning, it is essential to review the concepts of this trio in a clear light" (p. 18). Looks like we could not live in a world where we do not believe in fundamental values or where we pretend not to need them; because they give sense to all the goals of will and also to all "objects of the intellect" (Lavallo, 2001, p 19). For L. Lavallo (2001), the value is "a call of the absolute that people hear, a calling that finds resonance in the relative" (p. 21).

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For their part, pupils need an axiological "genuine and lasting compass" (Gardner, 2012, p 134). But in order to be able to assimilate it is necessary that - first – (their) teachers have such a compass; for – even if they have (or should have) longer experience with values – teachers may lose or may not regain their moral compass. Facing various imposed compromise or the multitude of options created conjecturally in the name of flexibility and adaptability, their moral landmarks can be overlooked or downright eliminated. Maybe this is why it is necessary – and as urgently and thoroughly so – that we deal not only with the teachers ability to form students' (professional) skills, but also their scale of values – crucial for influencing or forming beliefs, motivations, aspirations and life principles of the new generation.

## 2. Micro-research

The study is a phase of a larger project that aims to reveal the values, principles and beliefs of teachers (from both pre-academic and academic education). In the present research we dealt with primary school teachers (working in Prahova County schools). We will review their options from an axiological point of view. The experimental group consisted of 23 subjects and was structured according to the table below:

Table no. 1. The structure of the experimental sample based on seniority in education\*

Seniority in education	No. of subjects	Percentage
Over 20 years (I1)	15	65%
Under 15 years (I2)	8	35%
Total	23	100%

\* Hereinafter, we will note **I1** the group composed of teachers with over 20 years seniority and **I2** the group composed of primary school teachers with less than 15 years seniority (respectively, teachers educated in different ideological contexts).

The research was conducted during October 2012 - March 2013 and is qualitative. The research instrument was a questionnaire (which included questions with open answers and, where necessary, with the requirement to rank the options). For the first option were given three points, for the second were given two points, and for the third was given 1 point.

## 3. Results

Table no. 2. Values which primary school teachers most believe in \*

Over 20 years seniority (I1)	Under 15 years seniority (I2)
Family: 11 p.	Honesty: 13 p.
Respect: 10 p.	Honor, fairness: 8 p.
Honor: 5 p.	Respect: 7 p.
Honesty: 5 p.	Knowledge: 6 p.
Love: 4 p.	Truth: 5 p.

\* For **I1** there were also: seriousness (3 p.), faith (3 p.), friendship (2 p.) cooperation (1 p.); for **I2** there were also listed: love (3 p.), family (3 p.), trust (3 p.), courage (2 p.).

Table no. 3. Values primary school teachers least believe in \*

I1	I2
Lie: 15 p.	Lie: 14 p.
Material values: 6 p.	Material values: 5 p.
Political values: 6 p.	

\* **I1** also rejects: hatred (3 p.), lack of communication (3 p.); and **I2**: hypocrisy (3 p.), hatred (3 p.), stupidity (3 p.). Also, if **I1** believes less in equality, **I2** believes least in friendship!

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