

EWELINA SZLACHTA

REALIZATION OF MORAL VALUES
IN THE OPINION OF RESPONDENTS
AS A FACTOR CONDITIONING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Educational achievement is a term used by educators in the field of evaluation of educational goals and refers to procedures that determine the extent to which students master knowledge, skills and attitudes set out in the core curriculum for a given stage of education. Achievement is based on school competences, the level of which is determined by measurable methods of assessment, such as partial grades, grade point average, test results or competition results. R. Gagne, L. Briggs, W. Wager defined educational achievement as the outcome of the learning process, which they defined by five categories of fitness: motor skills, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, and attitudes, which are expressed in the operational goals set at each stage (Gagne, Briggs & Wager, 1992). An interesting definition of educational achievement was proposed by B. Wallace, who deals with inclusive education. The author, going beyond the traditional and standardized system of assessment, emphasized the role of effort put in the learning process, as one of the building blocks of educational achievement, and not only the final result (Wallace, 2010, p. 6).

Educational achievement is influenced by specific groups of factors. These are: biopsychic (internal) factors, environmental factors, and pedagogical factors, which include curricula, working conditions, working methods used, etc. Among the many subcategories of factors, the student's attitude toward school responsibilities and the student's intrinsic motivation to take action for better

EWELINA SZLACHTA, PhD – Department of Didactics, School Education and Pedeutology, Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Social Sciences, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; correspondence address: Al. Raławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin; e-mail: ewelina.szlachta@kul.pl; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9697-8358>.

educational achievement play an important role (Gagne, Briggs & Wager, 1992). The realization of moral values such as responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth and kindness in the perspective of strengthening educational achievements indicates the building of positive attitudes to school duties. Values, which play a huge role in human life, give direction to human behavior.

Research in the context of the importance of certain groups of values for educational achievement was conducted by A. E. Sękowski and M. Czerniawska. A. E. Sękowski carried out research into the preferred system of values and achievements of gifted students in three areas – gifted in the humanities, mathematics and music. The fourth group consisted of students with average learning skills, who were the control group. Analysis of the results indicated that in each of the three groups of gifted students, moral values were more frequently chosen in the preferred hierarchy of values compared to the control group (Sękowski, 1998, p. 105–120). On the other hand, the analysis of M. Czerniawska's results showed that students with higher grade averages valued more highly the values whose realization leads to cognitive development associated with educational achievement. The above results were the starting point of the research undertaken by the author of the study (Czerniawska, 2002, p. 218).

1. THEORETICAL BASIS – DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are adopted:

Educational achievement: the result of the didactic and educational process; the student's acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, reflected at school in subject grades, in grades for behavior, and in the results of subject competitions and contests.

Moral values: “general patterns and ideals of conduct relating to particular categories of human action (due respect to others, telling the truth), expressing the perfection that not only corresponds to these actions and is realized in them perfects the human being as a person” (Ślipko, 2004, p. 181).

The spectrum of moral values proposed by D. von Hildebrand: righteousness, loyalty, responsibility, truth, and kindness (1982, p. 12–13).

The realization of values: “the acquisition of such attitudes to values that they become characteristics of our personality. Thus one can say about a person: just, loving, good, tolerant, etc.” (Ostrowska, 1994, p. 14).

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The paper will present the results of the survey conducted to help formulate an answer to the research problem contained in the question: How, in the opinion of the respondents, does the realization of moral values determine educational achievement?

Research hypothesis: In the opinion of the majority of the respondents, responsibility, honesty and goodness play the most important role. Moral values are attributed the following functions: organizational, preventive and dynamizing (similar research was conducted by: K. Podstawka (2017), J. Koziński (2000), S. Ossowski (1967), E. Winiarczyk (2017)).

The presented results are a part of a broader study on relationships and causal relations between the realization of moral values declared by the surveyed secondary school students and their educational achievements.

3. METHOD

The conducted empirical research is quantitative in nature. The research method used involves a diagnostic survey conducted by means of the questionnaire technique (Pilch & Bauman, 2001) with the use of qualitative analysis of open questions.

The relevant research was conducted on the territory of Poland in 9 schools – 4 technical schools and 5 high schools – located on the territory of the Lubelskie Province in the period March 2018 – October 2019. 823 students of secondary school graduation classes participated in the research. 641 sheets were qualified for analysis. The sample selection was random.

The study included 321 females, which is 50.10% of all respondents, and 320 males – 49.90%.

325 secondary school students – 50.70% and 316 technical school students – 49.30% participated in the study.

171 students living in rural areas participated in the survey, which is 26.68% of all respondents. A small city, having up to 20 thousand inhabitants was indicated by 158 people – 24.65%. A medium city, with 20 to 100 thousand inhabitants was indicated as the place of living by 147 people – 22.93%. Big city as a place of residence was indicated by 165 respondents – 25.74%.

4. PROCEDURE

In response to the research problem posed, two types of questions were included in the questionnaire. The first category of questions was of a general nature, the aim of which was to find out which of the moral values: responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth, kindness, according to the students, had the greatest influence on their educational achievements: their school results (grade average, participation in subject competitions and contests) and on their behavioral grades. On the other hand, the second type of questions was open and aimed at finding out the rationale for one's evaluation. The questions were answered by students who had previously declared that, in their opinion, moral values had an impact on educational achievements.

5. RESULTS

The analysis of the data regarding the respondents' assessment of the impact of the realization of the moral values of responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth and kindness on educational achievements will be presented below. For data pertaining to all respondents the value is N=641, for the female group N=321, while for the male group N=320. For secondary school the value is N=325, for technical school N=321. For data pertaining to pupils living in the countryside the value is N=171, for those living in a city of up to 20,000 inhabitants N=158, for those living in a city of more than 20,000 inhabitants N=158, for students living in a city with 20 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants N=147, and for students living in a city with more than 100 thousand inhabitants N=165. The number expressing the percentage value for particular groups was calculated in relation to the corresponding set of N.

Table 1. Moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest impact on educational achievements with respect to gender and type of school

| Moral value | Overall | | Gender | | | | Type of school | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | | Female | | Male | | Secondary school | | Technical school | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Responsibility | 499 | 77.85 | 235 | 73.21 | 264 | 82.5 | 257 | 79.08 | 242 | 76.58 |
| Righteousness | 127 | 19.81 | 78 | 24.30 | 49 | 15.31 | 63 | 19.38 | 64 | 20.25 |
| Loyalty | 3 | 0.47 | 1 | 0.31 | 2 | 0.63 | 1 | 0.31 | 2 | 0.63 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| Truth | 10 | 1.56 | 5 | 1.56 | 5 | 1.56 | 3 | 0.92 | 7 | 2.22 |
| Kindness | 2 | 0.31 | 2 | 0.62 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 0.31 | 1 | 0.32 |
| Total | 641 | 100 | 321 | 100 | 320 | 100 | 325 | 100 | 316 | 100 |

Analysis of the data presented in Table 1 indicates that the vast majority of respondents indicated responsibility as the value whose realization has the greatest impact on learning outcomes. This type of response was given by 77.85% of the respondents. And every fifth student – 19.81% – indicated righteousness, the realization of which significantly affects learning achievements. The other values received much lower levels of indications. Truth – 1.56%; loyalty – 0.47%; kindness – 0.31%. Responsibility was the value most frequently indicated in each group.

Table 2. Moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest impact on educational achievements with respect to their place of residence

| Moral value | Place of residence | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| | Rural area | | City up to 20 thousand inhabitants | | City with 20 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants | | City with more than 100 thousand inhabitants | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Responsibility | 130 | 76.02 | 117 | 74.05 | 124 | 84.35 | 128 | 77.58 |
| Righteousness | 34 | 19.88 | 36 | 22.78 | 21 | 14.29 | 36 | 21.82 |
| Loyalty | 0 | 0.00 | 3 | 1.90 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Truth | 6 | 3.51 | 2 | 1.27 | 2 | 1.36 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Kindness | 1 | 0.59 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 0.60 |
| Total | 171 | 100 | 158 | 100 | 147 | 100 | 165 | 100 |

The analysis of data presented in Table 2 indicates that the vast majority of respondents coming from various centers indicated responsibility as the value, the implementation of which has the greatest impact on learning outcomes. This type of response was given by 76.02% of respondents living in rural areas, 74.05% coming from a city with up to 20 thousand inhabitants, 84.35% coming from a city with 20 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants and 77.58% living in a city with more than 100 thousand inhabitants.

Sample statements of respondents regarding the role of responsibility values:

“Responsibility is, in my opinion, the most conditioning quality because if one is responsible then he or she also possesses the other qualities mentioned.

Learning is our duty which we have to perform responsibly. If someone is irresponsible with their duties then they will not perform them properly and then they will not be well prepared for class. Responsibility allows you to make well-considered decisions that will lead you to achieve your goals.” (F)

“One must take responsibility for their decisions and behavior. A responsible person learns more because he or she realizes, for example, that they need more time to study for a test and is able to schedule time to study. Responsible person is organized and if he/she sticks to his/her resolutions then they will have good results. When we are responsible we pursue our goals and we are aware of their importance.” (F)

“Responsibility is a key quality because it makes me realize that I am responsible for my future. A responsible person feels that their academic performance is key to be well-off in the future or be poor. School is the only way to succeed and academic achievement will secure my future. Responsibility is the kind of value that encompasses all the others – righteousness, loyalty, truth and goodness.” (M)

“Responsibility forces us to be diligent in earning our grades. A responsible person prepares for lessons, tests. Being responsible we try to achieve the highest possible results, we are responsible for ourselves and it depends only on us if we are responsible enough to succeed in our studies.”(M)

“Being responsible one has a better chance of academic achievement because if a person is responsible he will try to study, do homework. Responsibility is one of the most important for a student because it makes us learn systematically. It is a value that influences the approach to learning and motivates us.” (F)

Examples of respondents’ statements regarding the role of the value of righteousness:

“Righteousness is one of the most important values in the life of a human being, not only a student, because through it we can function well in society. Only an honest person is able to live a decent life. Their decisions and conscientiousness help in achieving better grades. By being honest about one’s duties, one can expect good results.” (F)

“In my opinion, honesty is important in getting better academic performance. If we are honest and we have to learn then we do it and something is left in our mind that can be useful in the future.” (M)

“Righteousness (honesty) is a value that has a great impact on academic achievement. On the one hand, when we are honest and conscientious about learning then we will have better results and it can pay off in the long run. Honest people avoid cheating during tests. On the other hand, if a person is not

honest, but only cheats then he/she can get better results without much effort. Depending on whether being a righteous person is important to a person or not, he or she will present the appropriate attitude.” (M)

“In my opinion, righteousness has the greatest impact because you have to earn your achievements and not cheat in class. Honestly earned grades are real knowledge that you may need in the future, e.g. for your high school diploma. A person who is honest will not even consider cheating on tests, and even less so on the final exam.” (F).

According to the students surveyed, responsibility has the greatest impact on academic performance, as indicated by 77.85% of the respondents. Analysis of the respondents’ statements indicates that this choice was dictated by the fact that, in the opinion of the respondents, this value entails the implementation of others, thus giving it an organizational function.

In turn, those indicating righteousness – 19.81%, explaining their position, gave it a preventive function.

Table 3 presents data on the moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, most affect the assessment of behavior.

Table 3. Moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest influence on the evaluation of behavior taking into account gender and type of school

| Moral value | Overall | | Gender | | | | Type of school | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | | Female | | Male | | Secondary school | | Technical school | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Responsibility | 185 | 28.86 | 100 | 31.15 | 85 | 26.56 | 97 | 29.85 | 88 | 27.85 |
| Righteousness | 132 | 20.59 | 66 | 20.56 | 66 | 20.63 | 73 | 22.46 | 59 | 18.67 |
| Loyalty | 8 | 1.25 | 4 | 1.25 | 4 | 1.25 | 2 | 0.62 | 6 | 1.90 |
| Truth | 26 | 4.06 | 13 | 4.05 | 13 | 4.06 | 14 | 4.31 | 12 | 3.80 |
| Kindness | 290 | 45.24 | 138 | 42.99 | 152 | 47.50 | 139 | 42.76 | 151 | 47.78 |
| Total | 641 | 100 | 321 | 100 | 320 | 100 | 325 | 100 | 316 | 100 |

An analysis of the data presented in Table 3 indicates that almost half of the students surveyed, i.e. 45.24%, indicated that they believed the realization of the value of kindness had the greatest impact on their behavioral assessment. Responsibility was the value chosen by 28.86% of the respondents. In turn, every fifth respondent – 20.59% – indicated the righteousness as having the greatest impact on behavioral evaluation. In the declarations, the lowest percentage of indications was related to the truth and loyalty, which were selected by 4.06%

and 1.25% of respondents. Kindness was the value that was most often indicated by the representatives of each of the surveyed groups.

Table 4. Moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest influence on their behavioral assessment taking into account their place of residence

| Moral value | Place of residence | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| | Rural area | | City up to 20 thousand inhabitants | | City with 20 thousand to 100 thousand inhabitants | | City with more than 100 thousand inhabitants | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Responsibility | 53 | 30.99 | 51 | 32.28 | 33 | 22.45 | 48 | 29.09 |
| Righteousness | 40 | 23.40 | 27 | 17.09 | 29 | 19.73 | 36 | 21.82 |
| Loyalty | 3 | 1.75 | 2 | 1.27 | 3 | 2.04 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Truth | 8 | 4.68 | 5 | 3.16 | 7 | 4.76 | 6 | 3.64 |
| Kindness | 67 | 39.18 | 73 | 46.20 | 75 | 51.02 | 75 | 45.45 |
| Total | 171 | 100 | 158 | 100 | 147 | 100 | 165 | 100 |

The analysis of the data presented in Table 4 indicates that kindness is the value that was most frequently indicated by respondents living in each of the following areas: rural area (39.18%); city up to 20 thousand inhabitants (46.20%), city from 20 to 100 thousand inhabitants (51.02%) and city over 100 thousand inhabitants (45.45%).

Examples of student statements regarding the role of kindness:

“The value that I think has the greatest impact on a behavior grade is kindness. When we are good, others are so for us too. Kindness is always rewarded by others, especially at school.” (M)

“In my opinion, such a value is kindness, which makes us want to be better people, to change for the better. A good person is fully aware of what they are doing, of the consequences of their actions. Goodness will always defend itself, as well as the goodness that we give to others will return to us.” (F)

“I chose kindness because I believe that helping others defines ourselves. A person of goodness is able to help others, and can also earn a very good grade in behavior because he will be careful not to break the rules.” (F)

“A good person tries to help others. It is evident that he is not immune to human harm, even in the smallest matters. You don’t have to do great heroic deeds to be a good person, because goodness manifests itself in many ordinary everyday actions, such as a smile or a simple good morning or thank you. I believe

that these are the kinds of things that make a big difference in your behavioral grade – small acts of kindness in the simplest actions that make us better people for others and for ourselves.” (F)

Sample student statements on the role of responsibility:

“I chose responsibility because attending class regularly, not skipping without a reason affects our behavioral grade, and in my opinion, doing so is an expression of being a responsible person.” (F)

“A responsible person, in my opinion, is most perceived as a good person, because responsibility is the value in which the other of the moral values are contained.” (F)

“When we are responsible, our behavior is appropriate to the situation in which we find ourselves.” (M)

Sample student statements on the role of righteousness:

“In my opinion, the value that has the greatest impact on a behavior grade is righteousness because it involves following the rules that the school has.” (F)

“For me, a person who is good, truthful and honest is ideal. I wish there were more people like that in the world.” (F)

“Integrity is a value that has a big impact on grades. To get a good grade, it’s enough to make excuses for absences, no matter if they’re true or not.” (M)

The distribution of indications in the case of declarations concerning the influence of realized moral values on behavioral assessment is more diversified than in the case of academic achievements. In the declarations of the students surveyed, the following values dominate: kindness, responsibility and righteousness. These values were assigned the following functions: motivating and dynamizing.

6. DISCUSSION

Analysis of the results of the study indicates that the vast majority of the surveyed secondary school students in Lubelskie Province assessed that the implementation of the value of responsibility has an impact on academic achievements – average grades and participation in competitions and contests. Analysis of the written statements of the students surveyed has shown that responsibility is a value that is assigned an organizational – ordering function, consisting of the ability to prioritize objectives in relation to the student’s achievements in a given subject, i.e. the ability to determine which of the tasks is more important and which of them should be addressed first. The respondents paid special attention to the ability to plan activities – time management,

so that, bearing in mind the short-term goals (e.g. passing a test covering one subject block) and long-term goals (final examinations), to find enough time for studying, without compromising on rest or leisure time. We may also speak of the self-educational function of responsibility (Podstawka, 2017), which consists in the fact that a specific value (here: responsibility) constitutes a point of reference for decisions taken.

Analysis of the collected data has shown that the students surveyed also indicated righteousness as one of the values that significantly affect academic performance. The qualitative analysis of the justifications showed that the respondents assign it a preventive function, consisting in counteracting, reducing the risk of the appearance of disorderly situations and, consequently, inhibiting development in the context of achieving long-term goals related to education (e.g., a low score on the final high school exam). The respondents relate this value to the conscientious performance of school duties, which is reflected in the grades they receive, which are adequate to their knowledge and skills, as opposed to those who cheat. The above results correspond with the research conducted by K. Podstawka (Podstawka, 2017), where the respondents indicated that the above moral values have similar functions in their lives.

The analysis of the data on moral values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest impact on the assessment of behavior indicates that kindness, responsibility and righteousness, in their opinion, have the greatest impact on achievements in this area. The qualitative analysis of the students' written statements indicates that the respondents, justifying their answers, gave the above values the following functions: dynamizing and motivating.

The most frequently indicated value was kindness which, as indicated by the respondents, in the context of educational attainment in the area of behavioral assessment, is associated with well-considered behavior in relation to others, including compliance with the school's statute and cultural behavior, which are criteria included in the intracurricular grading system. According to the respondents, the realization of the value of kindness activates them to set goals and make changes in their conduct, intrapersonal and interpersonal relations.

Qualitative analysis of students' written statements on the realization of responsibility and righteousness and their impact on educational achievements in terms of behavioral assessment indicates that the respondents associated both values with action, which is based on knowledge of the school's statute, its observance and behavior appropriate to the situation.

In summary, the respondents believe that moral values affect educational achievements to varying degrees and in different ways.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Taking into consideration the analysis of the results of the study on how, in the opinion of the surveyed secondary school pupils from the Lubelskie Province, the implementation of moral values determines educational achievements, it may be concluded that: responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth and kindness affect educational achievements in different ways. The values that, in the opinion of the respondents, have the greatest influence on educational achievements are: responsibility, righteousness and goodness. Respondents assign the following functions to them: responsibility – organizational and motivational function, righteousness – dynamizing function, kindness – dynamizing and motivating function. Considering the analysis results, the following actions are recommended:

a) conducting activities aimed at shaping the ability to effectively manage one's own time, which in the future will bring benefits in the professional work undertaken by the student;

b) carrying out activities aimed at shaping the ability to organize goals and tasks in terms of their importance and redefine them on the basis of shaping the ability to assess one's own abilities;

c) introduction of systemic solutions concerning cheating in classes, due to its frequent occurrence in Polish schools

d) work on building a school community, based on subjective treatment of students, which will allow to motivate and inspire students to take action for better educational achievements

e) conducting research to explain the detailed mechanisms of influence of individual moral values on enhancing educational achievements;

f) conducting qualitative research – research in action – on the optimization of conditions of upbringing towards moral values.

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URZECZYWISTNIANIE WARTOŚCI MORALNYCH W OCENIE BADANYCH JAKO CZYNNIK WARUNKUJĄCY OSIĄGNIĘCIA EDUKACYJNE

STRESZCZENIE

Wartości moralne pełnią istotną rolę w życiu każdego człowieka – stanowią drogowskaz dla jego postępowania, swojego rodzaju wewnętrzny kompas nadający kierunek jego działaniom na każdej płaszczyźnie funkcjonowania. W tej perspektywie wartości moralne stają się „filtrem”, który nadaje charakter postępowaniu podmiotu działania w dążeniu do obranego celu. Środowisko szkolne, stanowiąc jedną z płaszczyzn, na której funkcjonuje młodzież, jest obszarem, gdzie osiągnięcia edukacyjne, takie jak: wyniki w nauce oraz ocena z zachowania, stanowią jeden z elementów określających efektywność prowadzonych działań dydaktyczno-wychowawczych przez pozostałe podmioty szkoły, w tym edukacji aksjologicznej, a w jej obrębie niezwykle ważnej, skutecznej edukacji moralnej, obejmującej także wartości moralne, jak: odpowiedzialność, prawość, wierność, prawdę i dobroć. Urzeczywistnianie wartości stanowi podstawę dla wzmacniania motywacji wewnętrznej, która stanowi istotny czynnik w dążeniu do postawionego celu, jakim są określone cele edukacyjne, których odbiciem są m.in. oceny szkolne, ocena z zachowania, uczestnictwo w konkursach przedmiotowych i olimpiadach. W procesie wychowania do wartości, istotnym etapem jest klaryfikacja wartości, odnosząca się w pierwszej fazie do autorefleksji nad własnymi zachowaniami, postawami, uczuciami, zainteresowaniami oraz obranymi celami, co w następstwie prowadzi do uświadomienia sobie oraz oceny własnego systemu wartości. Analiza własnych działań ucznia w perspektywie osiągnięć edukacyjnych pod względem urzeczywistniania wartości moralnych ukazuje różne przestrzenie dla edukacji aksjologicznej, wymagające podejmowania działań ze strony nauczyciela–wychowawcy. Celem opracowania jest zaprezentowanie tego, w jaki sposób w ocenie badanych uczniów szkół średnich, urzeczywistnianie wartości moralnych – odpowiedzialności, prawości, wierności, prawdy oraz dobroci oddziałuje na osiągnięcia edukacyjne.

Słowa kluczowe: osiągnięcia edukacyjne; wartości moralne Hildebranda; urzeczywistnianie wartości moralnych; edukacja aksjologiczna; wychowanie moralne.

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SUMMARY

Moral values play an important role in everyone's life - they are a guideline for one's actions, a kind of internal compass providing direction to one's activities on every level of functioning. In this perspective, moral values become a "filter" that determines the character of the subject's actions in pursuit of the chosen goal. The school environment, being one of the planes on which the youth functions, is the area where educational achievements, such as: learning results and behavioral assessment, are one of the elements determining the effectiveness of didactic-educational activities carried out by other school subjects, including axiological education, and within it, extremely important, effective moral education, including such values as: responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth and kindness. The realization of values is the basis for strengthening intrinsic motivation, which is an important factor in the pursuit of the set objective, i.e. specific educational goals expressed as school grades, behavioral assessment, participation in competitions and contests. An important stage in the process of upbringing is the clarification of values, which in the first phase refers to self-reflection on one's own behavior, attitudes, feelings, interests and chosen goals, which then leads to the realization and evaluation of one's own value system. The analysis of the student's own actions in the perspective of educational achievements in terms of the realization of moral values reveals different spaces for axiological education that require actions on the part of the tutor. The aim of the study is to present how the realization of moral values – responsibility, righteousness, loyalty, truth and kindness – affects educational achievements in the opinion of the analyzed secondary school students.

Keywords: educational achievements; Hildebrand's moral values; realization of moral values; axiological education; moral upbringing.