Behavioural Component in the Development of the Moral Culture among Preschool Children

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Abstract: The relevance of the study is defined by the need to identify the current moral level of pre-schoolers, to identify factors that positively and negatively affect the moral culture of the child, as well as to develop a methodological foundation for the effective and controlled development of moral culture, ethical principles and empathy among children of 4-5 years old considering the behavioural component. This study focuses on assessing the real levels of moral and cultural development among children, their systematisation and analysis, and making recommendations for teachers and parents to develop moral qualities in a child. The leading method for studying this problem is an experimental method that enables a comprehensive assessment of the moral culture among preschool children. In addition, methods such as structural analysis, comparative method, statistical method, synthesis and deduction methods, and the method of classification were used in the study. The study presents the results of an experiment to establish the level of development of the behavioural component of moral culture among preschool children, reveals the weaknesses of the development of this component, identifies methods of pedagogical influence on the development of moral culture, and makes recommendations for activities, pedagogical methods, and techniques that can be used to make a predictable positive impact on the moral culture of the child. The study materials are of practical value for teachers of preschool educational institutions, child psychologists, as well as teachers and students of pedagogical programmes, and parents.

Keywords: Pedagogy, morality among preschool children, methods of education, child psychology, assessment of moral culture.

INTRODUCTION

The behavioural component is a complex ability to effectively use verbal and non-verbal means of communication, be attentive to the interlocutor and yourself during communication, listen, ask questions, express one's feelings and reflect the feelings of a partner, as well as using feedback techniques [1-5]. Social interaction is the source of a child's development. The way society treats a child determines the child's feelings towards society, behaviour, attitude to the world, the level of knowledge, feelings, and reactions. The socio-cultural space develops all the social and communication skills of a child [2, 6-11]. The most productive time for a child's development is the preschool age. During this period, the foundations of the morality of the future adult take form, and habits, reactions, and feelings are developed [3, 12-15]. Preschool age is a difficult period in the child's development, which includes many aspects such as human relationships, the world around them, science, and culture that the child needs to learn. The strive for knowledge encourages pre-schoolers to be interested in everything, create and transform, and be happy and sad. Many teachers and psychologists claim that the main period of development of the child's personality is precisely the preschool age [4, 16-19].

When considering in detail the older preschool age, it can be stated that at this stage, the child develops ideas about ethical norms and begins to understand the motives of one's actions and control the responses. In addition, at this age, the child develops new skills and needs such as recognition and respect from adults and peers, in the team and collective activities; there is a new (indirect) type of motivation, which is the foundation of arbitrary behaviour; a stable pattern of motives appears; the child begins to understand and follow social values, moral norms, and rules of behaviour in society [5, 20-27]. A child of older preschool age begins to develop one's internal position and self-esteem, which largely affects the child's attitude towards one's successes and failures. Children often overestimate their abilities during this period [6, 28, 29].

To bring up a moral culture in a child, one needs to develop the child's habit of reacting in a socially acceptable way, to teach it the rules of behaviour in society. Teaching a child the correct ideas about social reality can be done within a preschool education system. Being in a circle of peers and following the example of their elders, children learn themselves and introduce each other to behaviour within the framework

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of morality and ethics, respect for the rights of other people, and respect for the world around them. However, these skills largely depend on the surrounding reality and the behaviour of adults [30-33].

Although a significant number of studies have been dedicated to the child's moral development, scholars still have not provided a general solution regarding the methods of working with children in preschool educational institutions [34-36]. In preschool education, there are contradictions regarding the methods of forming and developing a moral culture in children such as this process should be based on the systematic work of the teacher considering methodological manuals [37, 38], or children will better perceive situational actions focused on explaining the moral and ethical bases on specific examples; there is a demand for an academic and methodological foundation for purposeful work on the development of morality and ethics in preschool children, but developments in this area have not been done [39-42]. What results in children will show in mastering moral and cultural skills through preschool educational institutions depends on the teacher in the first place. One's ability to work efficiently and competently with the child, build the activities based on academic approach, and have the skill of planning the process and the result of learning will directly affect the results of one's pupils in the near future. Nowadays, the teacher must have a design method to evaluate and analyse the possible effect of one's actions [43-47]. The purpose of this study was to assess the real levels of children's moral and cultural development, their systematization and analysis, and to develop recommendations for teachers and parents on the development of a child's moral qualities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main method for this study is an experimental approach studying the behavioural component in the development of moral culture among preschool children. This study also involved such research methods as structural analysis, comparative method, statistical method, deduction method, classification method. The systemic approach was used to discuss the subject matter as a system with many interrelated and interacting elements. A comparative method is used to compare two or more objects with each other. The objects for comparison can be phenomena, ideas, and results of the research. The comparative method allowed identifying common and different aspects for further classification and typology. In this study, the comparative method was used to compare the results

of the experimental and control groups. A statistical method is several interrelated methods of studying mass objects and phenomena to obtain quantitative features and identify general patterns by eliminating random features of individual observations. It was used to describe the results of the experiment in quantitative terms.

The structural analysis involves studying a system using its graphical model presentation, which begins with a general overview and then becomes detailed, acquiring a hierarchical structure with an increasing number of levels. In this study, structural analysis was used to systematise information about the factors that influence the development of moral culture among preschool children. Synthesis is a method of identifying the whole from the functional parts. Combined with the analysis method, synthesis allows getting an idea about the relations between the components of the subject matter. Synthesis was used to organise information about the influence of development factors on each other. The deduction is a method where knowledge about processes and phenomena is developed during the transition from general statements to particular and individual judgments. The deduction is defined by building up from the abstract to the concrete. The classification method is a general academic method of systematisation of knowledge, which is focused on organising a certain number of studied subject matters from various fields, knowledge, and activities into a system of subordinate groups, where these subject matters are distributed based on some of their similar features. In this study, the classification method was used to identify the factors of the development of morality in the category.

Scholars in pedagogy and psychology often discuss and study issues related to the development of moral culture among children. Recently, foreign and Kazakh scholars have been researching problems and ways to improve the methodological manuals for teachers to develop morality among preschool children. The study also included a theoretical analysis of recent academic publications.

In this study, the concept of moral culture was considered from the standpoint of the behavioural component. The experiment involved 67 children of 4-5 years old attending preschool educational institutions in Nur-Sultan. There were 39 boys and 28 girls. All study participants were divided into an experimental group (34 children) and a control group (33 children). Parents of children in the experimental group were also working

with teachers to develop a moral culture among preschool children. The second task from the original methodology by Melnikova and Ovcharova was used for the diagnosis.

RESULTS

After studying the experiment results, the participants were divided into three groups: high, medium, and low degrees of development of the behavioural component of moral culture (Table **1**).

No children were included in the group with a highly developed behavioural component of moral culture. 38.2% and 33.3% of children from the experimental and control groups were assigned to the group with an average development of the behavioural component of moral culture. In these situations, the children described their possible reactions, remaining within the ethical norms in 5-6 cases for the most part. In the 4-5 cases, the children could not cope with and could not motivate the proposed actions. For example, when asked to explain the situation, "When I'm lying", several children replied, "I was just joking". In addition, the situations "When a bird dies in a cartoon" and "When my mother has a headache" were difficult. The answers were selfish and sometimes even aggressive such as "It was a bad bird", "Mom should take a pill". The group with a low level of development of the behavioural component of moral culture was the largest one. It included 61.8% of children from the experimental group and 66.7% from the control group. The children's responses to the given situations were often aggressive, indifferent, and selfish, while the number of responses corresponding to moral standards was only 2-3. For example, in the situation "If a friend asks me to share my favourite sweet", the answers were: "No way!", "And I will hit him so that my friend does not want it"; in the situation, "If a girl is bullied", the children answered, "I will run away" and "I will beat the bullies".

Thus, it can be concluded that the moral qualities of preschool children are at the lowest level of development. For changing this situation, it is necessary to organise purposeful and methodical work

of teachers and educators to develop a proper level of empathy and reflection among children. Children should be taught to evaluate their behaviour and the behaviour of others correctly, to understand the feelings of others, to show kindness and care, to be honest [11, 48-52].

The analysis of the psychological and pedagogical literature provides for the conclusion that the process that determines the development of a child's moral culture is a positive transformation under the influence of the child's environment, social environment, upbringing, personal experience, and the experience of adults [53-59]. When comparing the pedagogical theory with practice, the type of activity that is most accessible to develop the moral culture of a preschool child is a game. The child learns new skills and fixes the encouraged behaviours in practice during the game. During a game that re-enacts social relationships, the child subtly learns to interact with others by using emotional, cognitive, and efficient activities [13].

The specificity of the behavioural component is that it is associated with self-control: according to psychological studies, from the age of four, a child shows the sign of controlling one's actions, and from the age of six, the child starts to take the initiative in setting goals, and, thus, imitating the actions of one's adult environment. "I will do it myself" is a phrase that indicates that a child can act on their own from now on. The behavioural component positively affects the child developing new types of activities, including situational response to a situation that requires highly moral behaviour. The child's personality's high development of the behavioural component determines the child's readiness to take the initiative and perform the required tasks.

For the proper development of a child's moral culture, it is also necessary to consider the reflexive component as a factor of thinking about oneself, one's actions, and their impact on other people's feelings. At the age of four, the child already begins to think about what person they will become. Therefore, the development of the reflexive component helps the child

Table 1:   Comparative Table of Results

The level of development of the behavioural component of moral qualities in a preschool child*	Experimental group, %	Control group, %
High	-	-
Medium	38.2	33.3
Low	61.8	66.7

determine the boundaries of what is allowed [60-66]. An adequate assessment of one's actions and feelings during performing this action and getting the result through reflection will positively impact the behavioural component of moral culture in the future. This analysis will help the child to continue to monitor their actions and evaluate their results. At an older age (5-6 years), the reflexive component helps the child become aware of one's actions and experiences. At this stage, it is necessary to train the child to recognise and name their emotions and find and understand their stimuli [15, 67-71].

The obtained data prove the need for purposeful interaction between teachers and children that allows for and considers the preschool children's judgments, suggestions, and disagreements. Pre-schoolers have a specific way of thinking and little life experience, so it is necessary to build a strategy of moral and cultural education of pre-schoolers based on the accumulation of positive life experiences of the child. For example, it includes providing mutual assistance (if a person helps, they will get help in return), developing truthfulness and honesty in the relationship (the lies will always be revealed someday, and no one will believe a liar anymore), etc. In this case, the teacher should not just give the knowledge, and it should be gained and understood by every child individually. This feeling will become the foundation for harmony and moral unity among children. As a rule, children should accept the moral norm through reasoning. In this case, the norms of morality will be their personal conclusions drawn from practical experience.

A set of cards that demonstrate both the right behaviour (help, compliance, benevolence, approval, joy for another person) and destructive interaction within the children's team (quarrel, indifference to each other, selfishness, etc.) can be used followed by discussion of these situations and the coming up with the children's real stories. When explaining situations and making up stories, children understand that personal well-being is possible only if the choice is consistent with the other person's well-being. This can be achieved if children are guided by the intentions they consider most suitable for themselves in their relationships with other people. While maintaining the social and moral vector in the education and development of preschool children, it can be recommended to the teachers to develop a programme that includes four consecutive stages:

1. "This is me": to help the child to develop an idea about oneself, to discover one's personal qualities, to realise oneself as a subject of activity (educational, labour, communication).

2. "Me and you": to teach a pre-schooler to build dialogue with peers, to help see a friend in the interlocutor, to correct one's ideas about moral behaviour (own and others).

3. "I and We": to expand the child's perception of oneself as part of a community (group), to identify a comfort zone and a risk zone in communication and interaction with peers and with adults, to adopt the rules of social interaction.

4. "I and the world": to develop an awareness of the involvement of pre-schoolers in the socio-cultural space (kindergarten, school, family, micro-society), which is very important during the preschool period; to develop readiness for a new social stage of school education, new social contacts, a new social role, and awareness of the value of learning. This strategy of social and moral education will allow pre-schoolers to understand themselves and their personal qualities as a result of interaction within the children's team; to experience joy and happiness as a social feeling, to develop personal relationships and attachments, and to strengthen the children's community [16].

DISCUSSION

There is no doubt that preschool age is the most important period for the qualitative development of a child's morality. Teachers and psychologists say that the development of this component will affect the quality of communication with other people and manifest itself in attitude towards oneself. When studying the factors and specificities of the development of morality among preschool children, the significance of a truly positive attitude of the child to oneself was noted. When practising self-love, the child realises the importance of a respectful and friendly attitude to others, the importance of care and attention in relationships with loved ones, understands the value of communication.

Before reaching a certain age, the child can give an effective response to moral education due to the nervous system's flexibility. However, around the age of seven, this process slows down, and the established patterns of behaviour of the child can be traced. The

level of moral culture is fixed. For establishing moral and ethical standards among children, the development and implementation of a methodology for developing the moral qualities of pre-schoolers in the preschool education programme are crucial, but until then, the teacher's explanatory work remains the leading method: about ethics, social norms, actions and feelings, their motives and consequences. In general, the establishment of moral foundations is a vital and responsible process for the future adult personality, which should be based on the absolute acceptance of the child's personality, assistance in discovering the interests of the child, and recognition of the exclusivity of every child [72-77].

When considering the question about the need to develop a methodology for the development of moral qualities of pre-schoolers, it is necessary to note that, in the work of N. V. Lomonosova [18], during developing a value-target model for the development of moral qualities of children, the author points out the need to expand the concept of morality and includes issues of citizenship, ethnic self-identification, the division of national ideas and values, while leaving the ability to accept and positively evaluate cultural, social, economic, scientific and other achievements of other countries of the world. The lack of methodological developments decreases the number of opportunities for the development of children's morals significantly and their knowledge about the cultural diversity of the world based on the preschool educational institutions. An experiment conducted as part of the N V. Lomonosova [18] study confirmed that preschool children's ideas about the world around them are extremely limited; children do not know anything about other nations, their cultures, religions, national clothes and ways of life, or this knowledge is derived from life experience. In her work, the author suggests that the factor influencing the lack of knowledge and interest in obtaining it is the childrens' excessive fascination with cartoons and computer games with aggressive overtones. The child loses the opportunity to develop its horizons by devoting all free time to such activities, and becomes emotionally tense, social and moral levels of the norm are at low levels, it is difficult for them to give a moral assessment of any situation. All of the above is a reason to develop a pedagogical methodology for developing morality in preschool children in the shortest possible time.

When analysing the concept of morality, it can be assumed that it covers much broader aspects than the reproduction of socially encouraged actions such as

caring, kindness, generosity, and others. Moral culture developed at an early age subsequently affects all areas of human life. The level of morality established once in childhood determines a person both for others and for oneself. Morality in the context of traditional culture determines a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness from others, and a sense of belonging. The development of morality affects the personal identity that defines a person's awareness of oneself as a whole and separate entity.

People develop social identity and group identity through their belonging. The concept of self is certainly the knowledge and understanding of the self-being. Self-perception is different from self-awareness, which is being aware of oneself. The components of self-esteem include physical, psychological, and social attributes that can be influenced by a person's attitudes, habits, beliefs, and ideas. Cultural identity is a feeling of belonging to a group or culture. Thus, ethnic identity is an identification with a particular ethnicity usually based on a presumed shared genealogy or ancestry. In addition, national identity is an ethical and philosophical concept that suggests that all people are divided into groups known as nations. Members of a nation share a common identity and usually a common origin. Finally, religious identity is the number of beliefs and customs that a person usually adheres to, including codified beliefs and rituals and the study of ancient or cultural traditions, scriptures, history, and mythology, as well as faith and mystical experiences [78, 79].

The problem of a tolerant attitude toward people of other nationalities, cultures, and religious confessions can also be considered a morality issue. The search for a solution in this situation should be developed by the responsible institutions since solving it at the stage of preschool education is seen as the easiest and most effective solution. Nowadays, the preschool education programme does not have pedagogical means for teaching children tolerance and familiarising pre-schoolers with the global cultural diversity. Academic and methodological manuals on educating preschool children to have a tolerant attitude towards people of other nationalities would bring such benefit to society as a generation of highly effective people who can establish cross-cultural and inter-ethnic ties for domestic politics and business based on tolerance and high morality. In general, during the study of tolerance among pre-schoolers, it was found that a multicultural environment has a lot of advantages over a monocultural one. This is the development of

communication skills among children, and the development of politeness and culture of communication, the ability to find common features in other cultures and their own to build productive relationships with others. This multi-ethnic environment allows children to bring universal values in various forms to the group, study them, share them, and follow them in adulthood [80].

In addition to implementing methodological and pedagogical methods for the development of morality, it is also necessary to consider the "proven" method by generations, which is reading fiction. The analysis of pedagogical results showed that in groups where teachers introduced artistic and communicative activities on a regular basis, used situational riddles, and taught poems to the children by memory, pupils had higher levels of moral culture development than in groups where such types of activity were not regular. The results of the analysis of the parents' attitude to the issue of children's reading confirm the same thing. Children are little engaged in reading fiction, and, in most cases, the interaction of a child and a fiction book occurs only in a preschool educational institution and during the preparation of homework, which does not contribute much to the development of an established reading habit and a positive perception of this process.

An experiment conducted to determine the level of moral development in older pre-schoolers revealed that only 10% of children from the experimental group have a high level of moral development, while 50% of pre-schoolers have a low level of moral development. The authors also found a correlation between the highest levels of morality among children and parents' reading fiction and setting the example for the children. Thus, the study of the influence of fiction on the child's morality should continue, and it will not be excessive to have explanatory conversations with parents to develop the moral culture of children through fiction [81].

According to I. Kokina, E. Drelinga, S. Zarina, D. Ilisko [22], parenting is another method of developing the child's morality. A small child is active and inquisitive, this is one's natural behaviour, and at this stage of the child's development, the main task of the adult environment is not to cause the child to feel guilty about one's reactions. This concept of education is completely different from the concept previously exploited in pedagogy, where the parent contributed to the child's achievements with preaching and standards. In this case, the child could only become happy by meeting the parents' expectations regardless of how high they set the bar. The modern pedagogical concept states that the child is already born complete and happy; it does not need to become an "achiever" to receive respect and love. These emotions should be given to the child by one's adult environment. Thus, having reversed the cause and effect, pedagogy has concluded that an already happy person can achieve any heights, and the only factor for this is the support, faith, and acceptance of the child's personality by the parents. A child raised with a modern pedagogical concept grows up open, confident, optimistic, and without suspicion of other people and the world. The moral level of this child is very high since living in a respectful and accepting environment, and a child does not have aggressive or selfish attitudes [22].

Considering the need to observe the moral culture among children during the period of preschool education as an important component of the pedagogical process, it should be noted that this evaluation is not made currently. In the system of preschool education, there is a regular assessment of the training and education of students, but very little attention is paid to the assessment of the moral qualities of children to introduce various methods of implementing a moral culture into the curriculum. The development of a methodology for assessing the level of moral development of preschool children would contribute even without the introduction of pedagogical methods to improve the level of moral culture in the curriculum, to better understanding between teachers and parents about what qualities a child has that would encourage the development of morality with the mentioned methods [82].

Children who have a low level of moral culture development due to various factors can be described as self-oriented individuals. These children have difficulties self-identifying; it is difficult for them to separate their own "I" from "we". Therefore, it is difficult for them to maintain a social distance both during communication and physically. They show selfishness, aggression, indifference, and sometimes even cynicism. Moral boundaries are blurred and poorly understood, rules are made following the choice by the majority, but the child will not hesitate to abandon them if the situation requires it. Children with an average level of moral culture development are group-oriented, situational, and extremely susceptible to external influence. They do not have their established moral beliefs, or these are poorly developed, heterogeneous, but the child understands their importance and adheres

to the environment's expectations. Children with a high level of moral culture are also oriented towards others, but their approach is more individualistic than group one. They are independent when making judgments, regularly perform moral acts about relatives and friends, understand and accept socially established moral boundaries, respect others. In preschool age, a child's transition from a low to a high level of moral development is normal [83].

CONCLUSIONS

Methods of working with 4-5 years old children for the development of moral culture include the following:

-    talking about ethics and moral norms;

-    discussing the positive actions of the cartoons and fiction characters;

-    encouraging children to act morally;

-    showing approval of the children's moral statements;

-    modelling and discussing ambiguous situations;

-    analysing conflict situations that have occurred;

-    persuading and motivating children to act morally;

-    discussing moral feelings and emotions;

-    conducting activities focused on developing morality and empathy.

The analysis of the literature dedicated to pedagogy and child psychology showed that it is possible to determine the factors and actions that affect the development of the behavioural factor of moral culture among children such as the high moral development of the adult environment of the child has a beneficial effect on the development of the child; humanism and worldview represented by the teacher of preschool educational institutions and parents encourages the child to the same social manifestations; in the development of the behavioural component of moral culture, a reflexive component is involved, so for the development of morality, it is necessary to teach the child to understand and evaluate their feelings and actions; well-organised children's activity positively affects the development of moral qualities within the entire children's group; educational activities under the guidance of teachers based on pedagogical and psychological recommendations to develop the moral qualities of the child.

In addition, it is necessary to emphasise the extremely positive impact of collective games focused on socialisation and communication on the moral qualities of children. This type of activity teaches children the rules of communication and social values, teaches them to treat other children with respect, to observe the rules of a certain type of activity, to use their creative potential, as well as to play different roles and develop an understanding of the feelings and motives of others. Teacher's participation in the game increases the productivity of this lesson in terms of the development of moral culture dramatically. The game's main idea is achieved with the guidance of an adult; children do not lose concentration and consolidate, creating a friendly atmosphere in the group. In this case, the child acquires the skill of non-violent communication and learns to respect the choices of other children.

After analysing the current levels of development of the behavioural component of moral culture among pre-schoolers, it can be argued that the development of empathy depends on the child's idea of moral norms. A child can get a correct idea of morality while being in a healthy, empathic and friendly micro-climate, as well as through various interactions with other children of different ages.

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