

# TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL ACTIONS AFFECTING THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

**Bisera Jevtić**

University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

E-mail: bisera@vaspks.edu.rs

## Abstract

*The methodology of pedagogical actions within the process of moral education of personality is a part of basic, theoretical and empirical researches in pedagogy. When it is referred to moral training, it is primarily referred to the moral aspect of pedagogical actions affecting the development of personality - the formation of moral awareness as a characteristic of a certain individual's values. Moral education of personality refers to the moral behaviour and action, the formation of attitudes and the development of moral reasonable interests, the introduction to the moral norms and demands, as well as the process of development of a personality's moral traits. Moral capacity is expressed through the evaluation of moral acts and through moral action while being in accordance with intellectual capability and developmental logic. The educational role of school can be discussed in general or in a more specific way, depending on the extent up to which the school can contribute to the process of moralisation of individuals and the accomplishment of tasks of moral education. Primary and secondary schools in Serbia do not have moral education as a separate subject, but the curriculum sets certain specific tasks which should be accomplished through classes and all extracurricular activities. In accordance with that, this paper focuses on the problematisation of analysing the role of a teacher in moral education and personality development, as well as the analysis of the attitudes of teachers about the necessity of a separate subject or, at least, a "hidden curriculum" in schools which would refer to moral education. The factorisation of measurement variables shows that the awareness of teachers about techniques and methods of moral education and learning should be heightened, which provides a good direction towards a new research. The obtained results have helped us clarify the general problematisation of moral education, and it is believed that they will contribute to overcoming and advancing the existing situation of the school system in Serbia.*

**Key words:** curriculum, moral education, methodology of moral training, moral judgement, pedagogical action.

## Introduction

Moral education is becoming an increasingly popular theme in the field of education. Social problems are of moral nature, and most of them have a complex origin, which leads to a growing trend of connecting the solutions of these and related social problems through the process of learning about moral and social values in our public schools. However, the evaluations of the role of school can and should be used as the main role in the moral development of young people. Moral education means helping children to acquire moral habits which will help them live independently, and, at the same time, become productive by contributing to the members of their communities. In that sense, moral education should contribute not only to an individual but also to the social cohesion of individuals within the community (Berkowitz, & Oser, 1985). In order to form moral awareness one needs information and experience about moral values, because it is a characteristic of personal values of every individual. The purpose of moral action more and more emphasises the need for training of a personality for tolerance,

for a life in an intercultural community within a multicultural society, for a life in plural society – a society of multitude of different morals and different moral values (Milat, 2005, p. 123).

Moral and intellectual autonomy allows a person to behave freely, that is, to choose freely, by using his common sense. An autonomous person is not subject to necessity and fate, but he/she creates and develops his/her life by using reason and free will. “Freedom” and “autonomy” are sometimes used as synonyms. However, the use of the term “autonomy” is primarily limited to philosophy and social sciences, while the term “freedom” refers to the everyday life. But even in the philosophical analyses, “autonomy” does not seem to have a single meaning. *To be* is autonomy. Personality or its entire essential life consists of psychological connection and continuity through time. Surely, reflection on morality, as well as on the partial system of rules, is not enough, because the rules can be rationally unjustified (they can be rooted) (Haydon, 2010).

Moral education in school is not a question of direct teaching only, and it cannot be considered as teaching discipline or a separate subject. It cannot be limited to specific teaching or a class, but it is necessary to elaborate on and explain the whole system of moral education. Educational action of school happens according to a written, prescribed, official and open programme, but, at the same time, according to an unofficial, hidden, implicit programme, which is determined by personal and individual attitudes, beliefs and values of schoolmasters and teachers, by an organisation of the school itself, by relationships within the school staff, by the social environment of the school, and other. These two programmes – explicit and implicit, can often be incompatible, and contradictory as well. The effect of an implicit programme is therefore stronger if the official programme is less elaborated and is not based on scientific facts but on ideological and political expectations. A good and successful school programme of moral education should contain a clearly determined and operationally formulated goal, and clearly described and carefully planned means and methods whose use can achieve that goal in practice in the best possible way. Elementary schools in Serbia lack this kind of developed contemporary programme of moral education, which would provide teachers and lecturers, that is, educators in general, with security in their educational work. The creation of such programme is a dire need of our school practice. Moral reasoning is based on specific characteristics of the thought process which goes through different stages of development and reflects an individual interpretation of rules, principles and conflict situations. The speed with which an individual goes through the stages of development depends exclusively on the possibilities and potentials of that individual. Moral development runs in parallel with, but separately from cognitive development. Cognitive development is, of course, necessary but not a sufficient requirement for the moral development to happen. Hence, the evaluation of formal operations within the cognitive field can show that those operations are needed, but they are not sufficient for a parallel moral stage of the post-conventional moral reasoning. If someone understands demands, where the highest moral stage corresponds to the highest psychological balance of moral reasoning, then that person can understand the justification that the highest stage is better or more sophisticated by means of development. The concept of development of the next stage provides the basis on which Kohlberg justifies the superiority of higher stages of moral development (Zeidler and Keefer, 2003). Educational means have their specific application; therefore, their application by different actors is very significant for the moral development of personality. The acts of encouragement in school education are *Encouragement of metacognition*, *Subsidiarity*, *Directing of behaviour based on examples* and *Freedom of personality* (Jevtić, 2012). Part of the responsibility of moral education must be assisting them in defining and clarifying personal needs. As more and more teachers, scholars, and educators are becoming aware of this necessity, they are also becoming aware that there must be an important balance between personal needs and collective needs in the whole process of transition; and, very importantly, that any imbalance leaves room for extremism.

The process of moral education points to the need of positive thinking, an ability to think and behave morally, and the requirement for that is a suitable model of presentation. There is

also significance in the methods of moral education which expand towards “spontaneous and natural, active-instrumental, and socio-educational actions” (Grác, 1991, p. 69).

The complexity of the role of teachers in the process of moral training of personality of students in school comes, among other things, from the practical implementation of requirements: in moral education, a student needs to be an active participant in the development of his/her own moral qualities, and the teacher should be a co-worker and a guide. Defined in such a way, the pedagogical function of teachers and students within the process of moral education (Peašinović, 1976) represents an experimental programme of moral development and instruments for the evaluation of the moral development of students. Significant features which determine the pedagogical function of teachers, and, at the same time, support the moral development of students, are: teachers should know contents, forms and methods of the programme, which are applied by them within his/her educational work; while making plans for educational materials, teachers should start with the actual behaviour of students in ethical problem-situations; students should take positive role models from their closer and wider surroundings; teachers should engage students in social relations within their collectives; teachers should apply a democratic model of managing a student collective, which implies socially moral qualities of teachers and individual encouragement and evaluation of the moral development of students. With the current reform of the school system of Serbia, the valorisation of the curriculum, and an effort to reaffirm the educational function of school, the results warn against improvisation and subjective judgments on the plan of educational work of general and moral education, in particular. The method of “valorisation” is represented by Žilinek (Žilinek, 1997) as a method of reasoning which stimulates what is good and prevents what is bad in educational moral actions. Negative features of personality are suppressed by punishment. Punishment, as one of the educational means which have the aim of creating discomfort in a child because of his/her unacceptable behaviour, is a part of the method of suppression. The development of value reflections of personality is enabled by the methods of moral education. Methods of activation, strategy and practice of the formation of moral identity of personality support the development of socio-moral creativity of the personality of those who are educated on the basis of personal, active involvement in interactive relations.

Noticing similarities and differences can be used to encourage the development of tolerance towards something that is different. In this case, there is an expectation of positive effects of empathy, compassion for other persons, starting with an attitude that meeting the other, the unknown, increases the chances to overcome resistances or prejudices, if there are any (Nicholls, 1989).

Globalisation “forces” an educator to look for new arrangements for educational policies, especially an implementation of new teaching plans and programmes of moral education. Without groups and group interaction it is meaningless to discuss moral development. The role of a teacher is to create an environment which will nurture the moral development of students within the classroom. The teacher builds the context of learning and assigns value to the student in his/her experience of learning and the environment. However, schools in many countries are secular today. In secular schools, moral education has to be developed in a different way, where there are mutual expectations in moral development and a formation of the character of a personality (Usakli, 2010).

Regarding the previous, the analysis of documents which regulate the aims and tasks of moral education in our school has shown that the existing plans are incomplete, since they are based on insufficiently comprehensive theories of morality; and, at the same time, they are incoherent in theoretical sense (Popović, 1978, 1988; Đorđević, 1988; Miočinović, 1991, 1993; Mirić, 1996;).

The progressivist pedagogical concept is focused on the development of moral competences. A moral development of cognitive competences implies the development of the abilities of moral judgement and reasoning with the aspects of : “an understanding of social relations, moral self-control and self-criticism, self-assurance of reasoning, cooperation within the peer interaction, verbal solving of moral dilemmas by applying moral reasoning” (Suzić, 2005, p.

117). A moral dimension of emotional competences suggests respect of the emotionality of others, as well as a self-critical acceptance of one's own emotionality with the aspects of morality: emotional realism, respect of the emotionality of others, emotional tolerance, emotional responsibility, fair-play in conflict situations. A moral dimension of social competences is based on the adjustment of individual needs and actions with the social environment. Researches (Nucci, & Turiel, 2009) have shown that moral reasoning can be tied to three bases on two areas: morality, as a ruling paradigm, and socially-conventional influences. The third area refers to the personal actions of a subject. Every pedagogical programme which helps students to develop an optimal level of moral reasoning has to accept these three determinants of moral reasoning. In particular, it is not possible to expect that any of the pedagogical programmes acts without subjective adaptation. The results of longitudinal researches (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) have shown that socially responsible students are self-sufficient, capable of focusing their attention and planning their actions, adaptable, and that they believe in their own efficacy and are capable of moral reasoning and action in given situations. The humanistic approach has nowadays evolved, and many contemporary perspectives have originated from it – self-actualisation theories and theories of group dynamics. Theories of self-actualisation have primarily developed under the influence of Rodgers (Rodgers, 1985). They are characterised by: (1) freedom in learning, (2) positive orientation of a student, (3) learning by experience, (4) teacher as a facilitator, (5) personal narratives and values. Theories of group dynamics are focused on the interactive situations among individuals, and their effects. These theories emphasise: (1) personal development, (2) group interaction and (3) dynamic environment. It is believed that different conceptualisations of moral education (Szczesny, 2001, p. 33) can be formed within two paradigms: “In moral education, with normative meaning where an educator introduces the children to the norms, principles, and moral values whose acceptance and realisation occurs with the help of actions in the form of pressure – the application of different forms of pressure is justified by an intention to turn children into ethically righteous people, as well as by the fact that moral education, described in this way, tends to introduce children to different ways of moral behaviour without any suggestions.”

There is not a lot of agreement about what moral education should be, and there is no “discipline” of moral education corresponding to the disciplines that define the courses we have discussed so far. We will argue that “moral education” is an umbrella term for two quite different tasks and approaches. The first, which might better be called moral “socialization” or “training,” is the task of nurturing in children those virtues and values that make them good people. Of course, good people can make bad judgments; it's often not easy to know what is morally right. The second task of moral education is to provide personality with the intellectual resources that enable them to make informed and responsible judgments about difficult matters of moral importance. Both are proper and important tasks of schools—and both cut across the curriculum (Warren, & Haynes, 1998). All of the above tell us that there is a fully grown need to question the existing legal regulations in this field. Before that, it is necessary to determine the opinions on this matter by the deliverers of the educational process in school. The first step in that direction would be a research which would examine the attitudes of teachers and professional associates about moral education in school. It is needed for pedagogues to re-examine and determine important educational procedures for moral education and development, which will affect the development of the autonomy of personality. It should be clarified – what kind of personality development is needed and what kind do we really get in the existing system of education?

## Methodology of Research

This research has an explorative character, and the aim of this paper was to review the influence of teachers on the moral development of personality. Big social changes, which can occur, impose the need for a re-examination and deep analysis of the existing value patterns, and acceptance of the new ones, which occur rapidly due to the constant progress of the development of science, technics and technology. Today, school has a big role and responsibility in the moral conversion and education of the young. That can be accomplished only if school strives to create moral education which is based on adequate goals and tasks which present universal and humane values, using appropriate teaching methods, means and actions. Through methods and actions, a teacher introduces students with socially moral messages. Within the moral development of personality, a teacher has very complex tasks. In accordance with that, this paper focuses on the problematisation of analysing the role of school and teachers in moral education and development of personality, as well as the analysis of the attitudes of teachers about the necessity of a separate subject or, at least, a "hidden curriculum" in schools which would refer to moral education. The problem of this research is: the evaluation of the attitudes of teachers about the role of school and their own role in the moral development of children and young people.

### *The Aim of Research*

The research wanted to determine the attitudes of teachers about the role of school and manifested personal pedagogical actions on the moral development of children and young people. By searching for the structure of determination, it has been wanted to diagnose the current condition of variables which determine the actual educational procedures of teachers which affect the moral development of personality, as well as the connection of those procedures with the efficacy of their application.

### *General Hypothesis*

It is assumed that teachers interpret the role of school as the promoter of the pedagogy of morality, but that the methods and educational procedures of moral education are not used sufficiently and adequately in the function of the moral development of personality in schools in Serbia.

### *Sample of Research*

The population, which makes the sample for the needs of calibration of instruments includes 492 teachers of different subjects from 268 primary schools on the territory of Serbia. It should be noted that the number of students from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade was different, with different number of classes which fill the teaching hours of teachers, so the balance according to the gender of teachers could not be achieved.

### *Research Procedure*

In accordance with the related problem and the used research methods, appropriate statistical procedures have been applied, which enable the presentation of the obtained results and their analysis. The following methods of processing and analysing data have been used: Descriptive statistics, Factor analysis as a form of multivariate processing of data by using the



method of categorical analysis of the main components. The analysis of the variance (ANOVA) for the testing of the significance of difference between arithmetic means, reliability of instruments (Cronbach's Alpha), Bartlett's test and  $\chi^2$  (chi-squared test).

### *Instruments*

In this research the following instruments have been used:

1. Evaluation scale EMDP-T – education and moral development of personality (for teachers): The adequacy of data is checked with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test whose value 0.737 shows that the data are adequate for the application of this technique.

2. Questionnaire constructed for the need of the research: I Encouragement of moral development; II Efficiency of pedagogical methods and educational procedures for the moral development of personality; III The role and the influence of teachers on moral development; IV The conduction of moral education in school – a hidden curriculum.

The instrument uses the Likert-type scale which has 5 levels. The items which are marked with a star are reversible and they are scored inversely. The total score of statements, which is defined by variables, is 49 on all four subtests. The examples of stated variables are: STRENGTHENING, EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR, SELF-EVALUATION, EMPATHY, REWARDING, INITIATIVE, OPENNESS, COOPERATIVENESS. As dominant samples of high values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, there are many items which are emphasised because the sample consists of adult examinees.

### **Results of Research**

One of the basic assumptions for the application of factor analysis is that the data are measured on an interval scale; however, being that this research is of empirical character, there occurs the problem of measurement of variables because the subject that is being investigated assumes the difference between the statements of the respondents, their attitudes and opinions. Factor analysis, as a multivariate statistical method in this research, has helped in discovering the internal structure of the data matrix. With this method, the primary goal has been to extract a smaller number of important factors from one complex multi-dimensional occurrence and a set of manifested features, that is, factors which are relevant for the occurrence in question, and which are used to explain it and whose combination can give variables of this occurrence.

**Table 1. Measure of representation of measured variables and Bartlett's test of sphericity.**

Measure of representation of measured variables	0.737
Bartlett's test	$\chi^2$
	3141.985
	<i>df</i>
	1176
	<i>Statistical signif.</i>
	0.000

KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Adequacy) and Bartlett's test of sphericity is the measure of representation of measured variables for the group of variables which refer to the moral education in school. Table 1 shows that this measure is larger than 0.70, so it can be said that representation is satisfactory. The interpretation of factors starts with the matrix with factorial structure, after the rotation of factors and the identification of variables which have high absolute loads for the same factor. The extracted factors explain 73.37% of the variance.

**Table 2. Unique values of the matrix of inter-correlations.**

Components	Initial values			Extraction of the sum		
	Total	%Variance	Cumulative. %	Total	%Variance	Cumulative. %
1	13.539	27.630	27.630	13.539	27.630	27.630
2	3.468	7.077	34.707	3.468	7.077	34.707
3	3.064	6.253	40.960	3.064	6.253	40.960
4	2.458	5.016	45.975	2.458	5.016	45.975
5	2.121	4.329	50.304	2.121	4.329	50.304
6	1.865	3.807	54.111	1.865	3.807	54.111
7	1.754	3.580	57.691	1.754	3.580	57.691
8	1.556	3.176	60.867	1.556	3.176	60.867
9	1.416	2.889	63.756	1.416	2.889	63.756
10	1.347	2.748	66.505	1.347	2.748	66.505
11	1.291	2.635	69.140	1.291	2.635	69.140
12	1.045	2.133	71.272	1.045	2.133	71.272
13	1.029	2.101	73.373	1.029	2.101	73.373

Extraction method – Analysis and extraction of the main components

Eight specific factors have been particularly selected (Table 2) and they are saturated with certain variables which have high absolute load. Factors have been defined in the following way - 1. Encouragement of moral development, 2. Discouragement of moral development, 3. Moral education-separate subject in the curriculum, 4. Relationship teacher-student, 5. School as a righteous community, 6. Autonomy and moral reasoning, 7. Socialisation, 8. Moral dilemmas-moral contents.

In the factor analysis, an inherent value of a particular factor is equal to the sum of squares of factor loads including all variables for that factor. The factor analysis of the main components is characterised by the prominence of factors whose inherent values are larger than 1. The results from Table 2 show that, according to that statistical criterion, there are 13 factors which emerge, because the inherent values of all factors which come after the 13<sup>th</sup> factor are smaller than 1. In the application of the factor analysis, the percentage of the explanation of the variance of each individual factor is calculated according to the inherent value and the sum of inherent values multiplied by 100. Being that the main diagonal of the correlation matrix which is analysed uses number 1 for the initial communalities, the sum of all initial communalities is equal to the number of variables. When the inherent value of a certain factor is divided by the sum of inherent values, that is, by the sum of variables, and multiplied by 100, we get the percentage of the total variance of that factor.

Example.  $P_j = \frac{\lambda_j}{\sum \lambda_j} P_j = \frac{\lambda_j}{49} \cdot 100$ ;  $j = 1, 2 \dots$  where  $\lambda_j$  is an inherent value of a certain factor; therefore, according to our table, examples could be provided for the first factor in order to explain the percentage of the total variance of that factor.

$$\text{Example 1. } P_1 = \frac{13,539}{49} P_1 = \frac{13,539}{49} \cdot 100 = 27.630$$

The analysis of variables showed that some variables correlate with several factors, and the analysis shows that the first factor is defined by a high factor load of multiple variables.

Considering a high saturation of the factor *Encouragement of moral development*, which emerged as a first-order factor, the wish was to examine whether the length of service influences the usage of the method of encouragement, that is, whether there is a correlation between the length of service of a teacher and the usage of the method of encouragement. The results have demonstrated a low negative correlation, which has brought us to a conclusion that teachers, regardless of the number of years of service and the location of the school in which they work, own a high level of awareness about the advantages which accompany the method of encouragement, so they act in accordance with that.

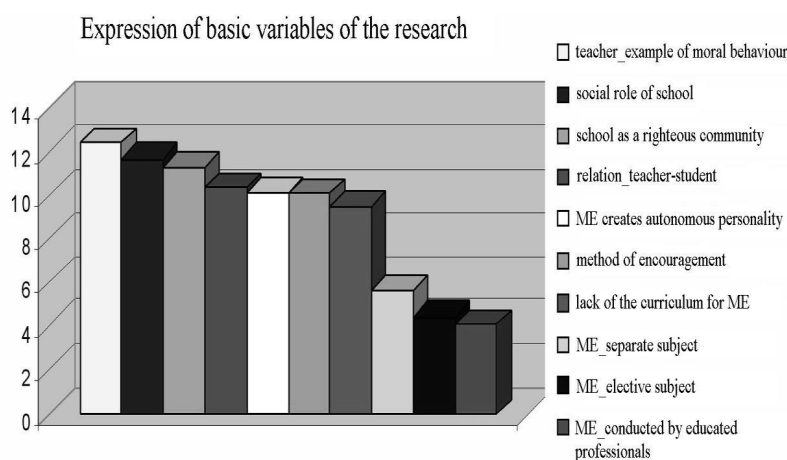
A factor which is named *Moral education-separate subject in curriculum* has brought us to very interesting and significant results by examining interdependence of the attitudes of teachers and the location of a school. Teachers included in this research *partially agree* that moral education should be implemented as a compulsory subject, which shows that they are to a certain degree satisfied with the conduction of moral education through all teaching subjects. Also, there are not many respondents who do not agree that moral education should be implemented as a separate subject. Besides that, there are also differences in the answers based on the location of a school, that is, there were some disagreements between schools on the periphery and in the central part of the territory of Serbia. Some teachers think that moral education in school could be offered as an elective subject which would provide active participation of parents and children in the election of the subject which they want to learn. By going further into the examination of this theme, we have also examined whether the years of service of teachers affect their attitude, and we have arrived at the next conclusion: the highest level of agreement with our claim that moral education should be implemented into school through a compulsory subject has been shown by teachers who have from 10 to 20 years of service. Younger teachers think that it is necessary to put moral education as a separate subject in school, contrary to older teachers who are accustomed to the existing programme.

Also, one of the factors with high saturation referred to the establishment of the '*Relationship teacher-student*'. With this factor, we wanted to examine whether teachers think that the creation of a democratic relationship between students and teachers is a starting point for the moral education of personality of students and whether there are differences in the opinions of teachers from different schools. Values that have been obtained by statistical processing of data have indicated a statistically significant difference in the views of democratic teacher-student relationship as a starting point in the moral education of students. Statistical significance of difference in the answers of the respondents is small but in certain segments is not insignificant. Besides everything else, our research has shown that there is a positive correlation between the establishment of the relationship of equality with students and, on the other side, teachers as an example of moral behaviour to students.

Regarding the factor *School as a righteous community*, it has been wanted to find out whether there is a correlation between the answers of respondents from different schools that school should represent a community where justice is a living thing. After statistical processing of data, we have reached the conclusion that all teachers are, in a certain sense, complementary and they agree that school should represent a righteous community. In addition, it is worth mentioning that there are no differences in the answers of respondents if we view the location of the school in which they work, that is, the location of the school does not affect their view of the school as a righteous community.

A separate factor that has been named *Autonomy and moral reasoning* has also shown high saturation with variables; therefore, there has been a wish to examine whether teachers think that the goal of moral education is the creation of morally autonomous personality and whether the length of their service affects such attitude. The results of our research have shown a high level of agreement among teachers regarding the question of morally autonomous personality, but at the same time, their attitude is not affected by the number of years of their service, so we have reached the conclusion that these are two mutually independent variables.





**Figure 1: Expression of basic variables of the research (mean scores).**

School as a factor of socialisation is very significant because the very arrival of a child to school represents a new environment, an entrance into new and different relationships with individuals who are unknown to the child and they are not a part of his/her family. In that way, teachers and educators become role models for children, who support and accept their behaviours and attitudes, and, at the same time, the society uses school in order to instill into children socially acceptable traits and to repress the unacceptable ones. In school, students upgrade their moral education which they have acquired in the family. The very process of development which is initiated in the family continues in school but under different conditions and different demands than those in the family. The way a child copes with school will depend precisely on the attitudes of teachers – if attitudes of teachers and educators are similar with the attitudes of parents, the adaptation of a child to school and the way a child manages in school will go without problems. The same as family, school is a place where it is important for the teacher/educator to establish an open-hearted relationship with a child, but it has to be objective and equal for all students. The effect of socialisation in school depends on many factors – personal traits of students and teachers, attitudes of teachers towards a student, pedagogical excellence of a teacher, organisation of school life and teaching programme of a school, as well as the very relationship among students. Teachers can transfer certain values to children, and through the content of learning they can also transfer onto children certain world views which are in accordance with the actual views within the society. The data that have been obtained show us that there is no statistically significant correlation between the attitudes of teachers about the socialisation role of school and the length of service of teachers, that is, the length of service of teachers does not affect their attitude about the socialisation role of school; therefore we have rejected our hypothesis.

**Table 3. Curriculum of moral education.**

	SS	df	$\chi^2$	F	p
Between Groups	19.956	3	6.652	1.247	0.297
Within Groups	496.270	489	5.336		
Total	516.227	492			

The assignment referred to the determination of the existence of correlation in the attitudes of teachers from different schools about the deficiencies of the curriculum which affect the moral development of personality. In this assignment, an initial assumption has been taken

that there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of teachers from different primary schools regarding the standardisation of the curriculum for moral education. However, the results from the *Table 3* show that there is no statistically significant difference between the answers of teachers from different primary schools regarding the question of generalisation of the curriculum for moral education. All respondents agree that the curriculum for moral education shows deficiencies because it is too broad but the location of the school where the teachers work does not affect their attitude as such. When it comes to moral education, the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in Serbia includes 37 assignments which contain goals which stretch across all teaching subjects. Teachers should use their subjects as tools through which they would realise at least some of the goals of moral education (moral reasoning, empathy, righteousness), and whether they will be realised depends only on themselves and how much effort they will put into the field of moral education and the formation of personality. Primary schools in Serbia do not have moral education as a separate subject; however, the curriculum provides specific tasks which should be realised through class and extra-curricular activities. Lately, the suitability of some subjects for the achievement of given tasks of moral education has been brought into question. Some researches within this field also show us the attitude of teachers that the curriculum is generalised.

**Table 4. Pearson's coefficient of correlation of the connection between the method of encouragement and the length of service of teachers.**

Service	Method of encouragement
Pearson's coefficient of correlation	-0.170
Statistical significance	0.96
Sum	492

Pedagogical optimism represents a crucial element for the application of the method of encouragement which is accompanied by teacher's faith into the correct development of each separate personality with respect to their possibilities, interests, wishes, desires, etc. It is not desirable to use the method of encouragement only in those situations where a student shows ability and success in his/her work, but also in those where the student finds difficulties in that work, because that increases the benefits on both sides. Educational procedures of the method of encouragement, among which are prizes, approvals, acknowledgments, promises, etc., have the strongest effect if they are combined with the material methods of encouragement. Every teacher should have this in mind, regardless of the number of years spent on working with children. The task referred to the examination of the connection/correlation between the length of service of teachers and the usage of the method of encouragement. The results from *Table 4* clearly show us that there is no statistically significant correlation between the length of service of teachers of different primary schools and the usage of the method of encouragement, because the obtained level of correlation is low and negative, that is, there is no correlation between the usage of the method of encouragement and the length of service of teachers.

**Table 5. Attitudes of teachers about moral education as a separate subject in school.**

	SS	D	$\chi^2$	F	p
Between Groups	15.008	3	5.003	2.039	0.114
Within Groups	225.732	489	2.454		
Total	240.740	492			

The analysis of documentation which regulates the goals and tasks of moral education has shown incompleteness and imprecision of plans. Professional circles have opened a subject for a new discussion which re-examined the possibility of removal of a new deficiency by implementing a separate school subject in schools which would deal with moral education. Taking this into consideration, it has also been wanted to examine the attitudes of teachers from different primary schools about moral education as a separate subject in school, that is, we have wanted to see whether there are differences in their attitudes and how much those differences are prominent and significant for us. On the basis of calculation of  $\chi^2$  and comparison with the limit values on both levels of significance, we can say that the obtained data which are shown in Table 5 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the attitudes of teachers that moral education should represent a separate subject in school. The highest degree of matching with our claim has been shown by teachers who have 10 to 20 years of service. Younger teachers think that it is necessary to implement moral education as a compulsory subject in school, unlike older teachers who are already used to the existing curriculum. This piece of data can perhaps be explained by the fact that older teachers (teachers with more years of service) have entered the routine of their work and they have difficulties in adapting to innovations and changes of the programme. Also, this can serve as a subject of some new research.

**Table 6. Attitudes of teachers about school as a righteous community.**

	SS	Df	$\chi^2$	F	p
Between Groups	36.510	3	12.170	1.285	0.284
Within Groups	880.521	489	9.468		
Total	917.031	492			

This indicates that there is a high level of awareness of teachers about the role of school and functions it should perform. This piece of data tells us that the majority of teachers have an insight into the role and function of school in the development of children and that this attitude does not depend on the school in which they work. Complete access to moral education means full participation in school in which righteousness is a living thing. However, besides the examination of the attitudes of teachers about their view of school as a righteous community, we were also interested in whether there is a correlation among their answers, considering the fact that the respondents from this research work in different schools and different counties in the territory of Serbia. The values shown in Table 6 clearly indicate that there is no correlation between these two parameters in question.

**Table 7. Pearson's coefficient of correlation of the connection between the years of service of teachers and their attitude that moral education creates an autonomous personality.**

Years of service of teachers	Moral education creates an autonomous personality
Pearson's coefficient of correlation	0.103
Statistical significance	0.314
Sum	492

It can be said that the creation of a morally autonomous personality does not start until the post-conventional level of moral reasoning, because that is when the decisions are made from rights, values and principles on which all members of one society agree and whose application would be righteous and fruitful. These values, norms and principles should be followed

by students within the family, school and wider social environment, and the values are defined independently by the authority of a group or persons who promote principles and free from an individual identification with those groups. The standards of behaviour which are followed by a student have internal resources and the way in which a student will act depends on the formal and logical observation of all possible implications. At that time and on this level, moral reasoning becomes autonomous because it is based on internal moral principles themselves and not on avoidance of pain, punishment or self-judgement.

## Discussion

The question of the necessity of a separate subject, or, at least, a “hidden curriculum” in schools, which would refer to moral education, creates a demand for investigating of the current situation within the schools in Serbia by analysing the significance and the role of school as a social institution for the moral education and the development of personality, in order to decide which direction should be taken for further actions. If a teacher creates a relationship of equality with a student and shows the willingness to use the same level of that formal equality in order to talk on the group level, that will then create adequate conditions for the functioning of collective norms. Individualisation and personalisation presuppose the possibility for the self-actualisation of students. “Encouraging class instruction applied to the cognitive function of teaching is not enough in order for the students to feel confident while learning. Students need a motivational and an affective support during interaction with their peers and teachers” (Turner, 2002, p.91). On the other hand, instead of this support, the behaviour of teachers is opposite. They include negative criticism, sarcasm and the emphasis on mistakes. Personal traits of teachers strongly determine either one or the other approach. The way in which the students will experience classes and subjects, whether they will learn or they will avoid certain subject, depends on the personality of teachers!

In the past, a teacher's teaching skills were measured by his ability to express ideas so clearly and logically that students could easily understand and memorise them, often being able to give verbatim answers to teachers' examination questions. But today, the most important task of teachers is creating and guiding learning activities and an atmosphere of openness and trust wherein students are challenged and encouraged to search for truth. The role of the teacher is truly as mentor, accompanying his students in their independent inquiries and search and helping them internalise and integrate what they are discovering. In this manner the truth becomes their truth; it becomes part of their personality. The criteria for evaluating teachers' performance also have changed (Nucci, 2008). Teachers in Serbia, regardless of their age, have shown that they have positive experiences when it comes to the method of encouragement and that they have a high level of awareness about the gains that come from that method; therefore, they use it in order to encourage and motivate students and incite them to work well, while being aware that the use of the method of encouragement can result in the independence of students in their decision making and their learning, as well as in the formation of the moral identity. Blasi (Blasi, 2004, p.15) has formulated a cognitive model of moral identity.

“Firstly, all individuals form moral identity – a collection of beliefs and assumptions about the degree up to which they are moral, caring, compassionate, gentle, righteous, generous, friendly and honest.

Secondly, for some individuals, this is a specifically central identity of their own concept, that is, they really want to see themselves as moral.

Thirdly, this identity, even if it is not a central part of the self-concept, can be activated by different characteristics of the environment, such as words which are synonyms for morality and cooperation.

Fourthly, individuals like to see themselves as consistent; they tend to minimise contradictions in their behaviour, personality and attitudes. Finally, in order to maintain this consistency, individuals will tend to act morally if the moral identity is a central concept only for individuals.”

It is believed that the way in which a person acts towards other people shows the most of his human traits so someone's personal traits are often observed and evaluated through the prism of his/her relationships/actions with/towards other people. A teacher who treats his/her students righteously and humanely becomes popular among them, so he/she has more chances to achieve success in moral education. He/she uses the power of his/her personality, the totality and the vitality of his/her traits and abilities in order to not only represent a role model for the students but also play a role of a moral character on the educational stage. A complete access to moral education requires full participation within the school community where justice is a living thing.

The character education movement of the last decade has been a response, in part, to the perceived relativism of values clarification. According to the "Character Education Manifesto," all schools have the obligation to foster in their students personal and civic virtues such as integrity, courage, responsibility, diligence, service, and respect for the dignity of all persons. The goal is the development of character or virtue, not correct views on "ideologically charged issues. Schools must become "communities of virtue" in which responsibility, hard work, honesty, and kindness are modeled, taught, expected, celebrated, and continually practiced. An important resource is the reservoir of moral wisdom that can be found in great stories, works of art, literature, history, and biography. Education is a moral enterprise in which we need to re-engage the hearts, minds, and hands of our children in forming their own characters, helping them to know the good, love the good, and do the good (Ryan, Bohlin and Thayer, 1996).

Morality is expressed by: moral reasoning (the evaluation of moral actions), moral action (reflects as a virtue-kindness), nobility (when a moral action is not based on greed). One third of all teachers of primary schools in Serbia are convinced that the school system needs radical changes in order to improve educational effects of the moral education. Students complain about the quantity of the learning material which they need to acquire in school, and they show the need for a greater connection between the learning material and everyday life, and they also show discontent over the fact that teachers are not objective enough while evaluating students' work and they do not take into consideration students' own personalities. Under such circumstances, it is even more difficult to perform the proposed tasks of the moral education. Besides that, within this context, it is important to point out that the analysis of the documents which regulate the aims and tasks of moral education in primary schools in Serbia has shown that, so far, the plans have been incomplete. All of the above indicates that there is a need for the re-examination of the existing legal regulations in this field. Since the discussion about the implementation of elective subjects in the schools in Serbia started, the conversation about moral education has gained intensity again.

## Conclusions

On the basis of his/her function and his/her place within the educational process in school, a teacher is a very important factor in the moral education of personality. The process of moral formation, guidance and value-making of students is a very complex and delicate job. In order to succeed in it, besides good will, it is necessary to have knowledge, skills and social support. Teachers will perform their pedagogical function better if their influence on students is planned by a programme and by a systematically appropriate system of methods, procedures, contents and tools, and by their attitude towards students, which will encourage students to improve and express themselves, to develop their preferences, abilities, interests, values, ideas, creativity and creative work. In the light of this research and the results which it brings about the role of school in the moral education and development of personality, factor analysis has been used in order to extract eight factors which proved significant for this research because they have shown a high level of saturation with certain variables. Considering the fact that a factor of socialisation has been extracted by factor analysis, we have wanted to examine whether the years of service of teachers influence the opinions of teachers about the socialisation role of school. In accor-



dance with the results, shown both graphically and by tables, it is a proud fact that schools are still oriented towards the socialisation of children, that is, that a large number of respondents, regardless of the length of their service, think that school primarily has a role of socialisation of young generations. Surely, it is not such discovery if we notice that a larger number of younger teachers, that is, respondents who have 15 or fewer years of service, respond more positively on this question in relation to their colleagues with longer service. As our research has shown, the length of service of teachers does not affect the attitudes of teachers about the socialisation role of school. Problems of the generalisation of the curriculum in schools confront us with different, although equally important, set of questions which have to be studied, and there is also the need for further researches directed primarily towards determination of more concrete and more precise goals and tasks of the curriculum for the implementation of moral education in school. Deficiencies of the curriculum are most noticed by teachers who have 15 or less years of service in relation to older teachers. However, regardless of this fact, there are no major differences in the attitudes of teachers in relation to the location of the school. It is of vital importance to point out that the research has shown that it is necessary to view the fact that teachers are mostly not satisfied with the curriculum because they think it is too general; the tasks which refer to the implementation of moral education in school are neither precise nor concrete, so teachers themselves have to make them more concrete in order to adequately transfer moral values, norms and principles, as well as different social skills which are necessary for efficient functioning within different social contexts. However, almost all teachers agree that moral education in school should be conducted through a separate subject but there is a certain degree of disagreement in whether moral education should be conducted through a compulsory or an elective subject and whether it should be taught by a specially educated professional.

Considering the fact that school is an institution which, after family, plays a large role in the moral education and development of personality and represents an upgrade of the foundation of moral education previously set within the family, we can boast of the fact that our respondents have shown a high level of awareness that school and their personality in the chain of education plays a significant role in the moral education and development of personality. Moral attitudes which are brought by a child to school stem from the family, and the school is the one which analyses, explains, rewards and shapes those attitudes into a final form, but in order for the school to perform that role adequately, it is necessary to make goals and tasks which refer to moral education more concrete as a part of the curriculum, and to regulate the conduction of moral education through a separate subject.

The research of the process of realisation of moral education in school practice requires the analysis of the attitudes of teachers about the moral values which are relevant to the moral development of students; the attitudes of teachers about the contents of moral education (during classes with the class teacher, during all subject-based classes and during extra-curricular activities of students); the influence of the organisation of educational work of school on the moral education of students; the influence of the social climate in school on the moral development of students; determination of the moral profile of students. The facts stated above lead to the conclusion that the current condition of moral education in schools in Serbia is not on the required level, neither in theory nor in practice, even if it is evaluated from the perspective of requirements which are already changed to a large extent.

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Advised by Laima Railienė, University of Šiauliai, Lithuania

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**Bisera Jevtić**

PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Knežinje Milice 106,  
37240 Trstenik, Serbia.  
E-mail: bisera@vaspks.edu.rs  
Website: <http://www.ni.ac.rs/en/>