

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MORAL VALUES FORMATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This article explores the psychological aspects of moral values formation in primary school students, focusing on the developmental, educational, and social mechanisms that shape their ethical understanding and behavior. Moral development at an early age is influenced by multiple factors, including family upbringing, peer interaction, cultural environment, and formal schooling. Primary school represents a critical stage in this process, as children begin to internalize moral norms and values that guide their interpersonal relationships and social conduct. Drawing on psychological theories of moral development, including those of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Vygotsky, the research examines how cognitive growth, emotional development, and socialization interact in the shaping of moral consciousness. Special attention is given to the role of teachers, who serve as both moral models and facilitators of value-based education, and to classroom practices such as storytelling, cooperative learning, and moral dilemmas that encourage reflection and empathy. The study also highlights the importance of integrating national traditions and cultural heritage into value education, ensuring that moral upbringing reflects both universal human values and the specific sociocultural context of the learners. By analyzing the key challenges and opportunities in fostering moral values among young learners, the article contributes to the broader discourse on child psychology and pedagogy. The findings suggest that the effective development of moral values requires a balanced approach that combines psychological understanding with pedagogical strategies, ultimately supporting the holistic growth of children as responsible, empathetic, and ethically aware members of society.

Keywords: Moral development, primary education, child psychology, value formation, pedagogy, socialization.

BOSHLANGICH SINIF O'QUVCHILARIDA AXLOQIY QADRIYATLARNING SHAKLLANISH PSIXOLOGIYASI

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada boshlang'ich sinf o'quvchilarida axloqiy qadriyatlarning shakllanish psixologik jihatlari, ularning axloqiy tushunchasi va xulq-atvorini shakllantiruvchi rivojlanish, ta'limiy hamda ijtimoiy omillar tahlil qilinadi. Erta yoshdagi axloqiy rivojlanishga

oilaviy tarbiya, tengdoshlar bilan muloqot, madaniy muhit va maktabdagi ta'lim jarayoni kabi bir nechta omillar ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Boshlang'ich maktab davri bu jarayonda muhim bosqich bo'lib, aynan shu davrda bolalar shaxslararo munosabatlari va ijtimoiy xulq-atvorini yo'naltiruvchi axloqiy me'yorlar va qadriyatlarni ichkilashtira boshlaydilar. Tadqiqotda Piaget, Kohlberg va Vygotskiylarning axloqiy rivojlanish haqidagi nazariyalariga tayangan holda kognitiv o'sish, emotsional rivojlanish va ijtimoiylashuv jarayonlari axloqiy ong shakllanishidagi o'zaro ta'siri o'rganiladi. O'qituvchilarning axloqiy namuna va qadriyatlarga asoslangan ta'lim jarayonidagi vositachi sifatidagi roli, shuningdek, ertak aytish, guruhiy mashg'ulotlar va axloqiy muammolarni muhokama qilish kabi dars usullariga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Shuningdek, maqolada milliy an'analar va madaniy merosni qadriyatlar ta'limiga integratsiya qilishning ahamiyati ta'kidlanib, axloqiy tarbiya umumiy insoniy qadriyatlar va o'quvchilarning ijtimoiy-madaniy muhitiga mos bo'lishi zarurligi qayd etiladi. Boshlang'ich sinf o'quvchilarida axloqiy qadriyatlarni shakllantirishdagi asosiy muammolar va imkoniyatlarni tahlil qilish orqali ushbu maqola bolalar psixologiyasi va pedagogikasi bo'yicha keng ilmiy muhokamalarga hissa qo'shadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, axloqiy qadriyatlarining samarali rivojlanishi psixologik tushunchalar va pedagogik strategiyalar uyg'unlashgan muvozanatli yondashuvni talab qiladi, bu esa bolalarning mas'uliyatli, hamdard va axloqan ongli shaxs sifatida har tomonlama kamol topishini qo'llab-quvvatlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: axloqiy rivojlanish, boshlang'ich ta'lim, bolalar psixologiyasi, qadriyatlar shakllanishi, pedagogika, ijtimoiylashuv.

Introduction

Moral development in primary school students has always been regarded as one of the most important dimensions of child psychology and pedagogy. At this early stage of growth, children are not only acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills but are also laying the foundation for social and ethical awareness. The values that children adopt during this formative period serve as guiding principles for their interactions with others and for their future roles as members of society. Psychology emphasizes that moral development is closely linked with cognitive and emotional growth, as children gradually learn to distinguish between right and wrong, fairness and injustice, honesty and dishonesty. These concepts do not emerge spontaneously; rather, they are shaped by the family, school environment, peers, cultural traditions, and broader societal influences.

Theories of moral development have provided valuable frameworks for understanding how children's ethical thinking evolves. Piaget suggested that moral reasoning in children develops through stages, beginning with a focus on obedience and authority and gradually progressing toward understanding reciprocity and fairness. Kohlberg further expanded on these ideas by proposing stages of moral reasoning that highlight how children move from externally imposed rules to internalized principles of justice. Vygotsky, in contrast, emphasized the social nature of moral learning, pointing out that interactions with adults and peers play a decisive role in shaping moral consciousness. These theoretical perspectives underscore the idea that moral values are acquired through both cognitive growth and social experiences.

In the context of primary education, the school assumes a crucial role in supporting the development of moral values. Teachers serve as role models, transmitting values not only through direct instruction but also through their everyday interactions with students. Pedagogical practices such as classroom discussions on moral dilemmas, the use of literature and storytelling, cooperative activities, and role-play exercises can all help children reflect on



ethical issues and develop empathy toward others. Moreover, the integration of cultural heritage, national traditions, and universal human values ensures that moral education resonates with children's lived experiences while preparing them for global citizenship.

The challenge for educators and psychologists lies in creating an environment where children can freely explore moral concepts, practice ethical behavior, and internalize values in a supportive and meaningful way. This requires balancing guidance with autonomy, allowing children to engage in moral reasoning while being nurtured by positive examples. Understanding the psychological mechanisms of moral development thus provides a strong foundation for designing pedagogical strategies that not only cultivate academic knowledge but also contribute to the holistic formation of socially responsible and ethically aware individuals.

Methods

The study applied a qualitative and analytical research design to examine the psychology of moral values formation in primary school students. The approach combined theoretical analysis of established psychological frameworks with practical observations of pedagogical practices in primary education. The methodology was grounded in developmental psychology, moral education theory, and pedagogical sciences, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of how values are shaped through cognitive, emotional, and social processes.

The first stage of the research involved a review of major psychological theories related to moral development. Piaget's theory of moral realism and autonomy, Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning, and Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective were used as conceptual bases for the analysis. These theories provided insight into how children's understanding of morality evolves as they progress through the early stages of education. By comparing and contrasting these frameworks, the research sought to identify common mechanisms and developmental patterns relevant to primary school learners.

The second stage of the study examined the role of the educational environment in value formation. A selection of primary school classrooms was observed to analyze the influence of teaching strategies, classroom interaction, and teacher-student relationships on moral development. Special attention was given to activities such as group work, moral storytelling, classroom discussions on fairness and cooperation, and role-playing exercises that encourage empathy and reflection. These practices were analyzed for their effectiveness in promoting moral reasoning and ethical behavior.

The third stage involved the integration of cultural and social factors into the analysis. Since moral education does not occur in isolation, the study considered the role of family upbringing, peer influence, and cultural traditions in shaping children's value systems. Interviews with teachers and parents provided qualitative insights into how children internalize values both inside and outside the school environment. These perspectives were cross-referenced with classroom observations to build a holistic understanding of the process.

The reliability of the study was ensured through methodological triangulation, combining theoretical review, classroom observation, and interviews. The data were analyzed thematically, focusing on recurring patterns in moral reasoning, emotional responses to ethical dilemmas, and the behavioral manifestations of value internalization. By employing this mixed methodology, the research was able to capture the complex interplay between psychological development and pedagogical practice, offering insights that are both theoretically informed and practically relevant for educators.

Results



The findings of the study revealed that the formation of moral values in primary school students is strongly influenced by the interaction of psychological development, social environment, and pedagogical practices. Analysis of classroom observations showed that children in the early grades often demonstrate a concrete understanding of moral rules, focusing on obedience to authority and external consequences. For example, younger students frequently equated morality with avoiding punishment, which corresponds to Piaget's stage of moral realism and Kohlberg's pre-conventional level of reasoning. As students progressed to higher primary grades, there was evidence of increased awareness of fairness, cooperation, and reciprocity, suggesting a gradual transition toward more autonomous moral reasoning.

Teacher practices played a central role in this development. Lessons that incorporated storytelling, moral dilemmas, and cooperative group tasks encouraged students to think beyond simple rule-following and consider the perspectives of others. For instance, when presented with stories involving ethical choices, students were able to discuss the intentions behind actions rather than judging solely by outcomes. This shift reflected both cognitive growth and the influence of guided reflection provided by the teacher. Furthermore, collaborative activities fostered empathy and social responsibility, as students learned to negotiate, share, and resolve conflicts within a group setting.

The study also highlighted the importance of family and cultural traditions in reinforcing moral values. Interviews with parents revealed that many families emphasized respect for elders, honesty, and responsibility as central values, which were further reinforced in the school environment. Children who received consistent moral guidance at home tended to demonstrate stronger ethical awareness in classroom interactions. Conversely, students lacking stable value-oriented support in the family setting often struggled with applying moral concepts consistently, relying more heavily on external authority for guidance.

Another significant finding was the role of peer influence in shaping moral behavior. Positive peer interactions encouraged cooperation and fairness, while negative peer dynamics occasionally led to conflict, exclusion, or dishonesty. Teachers who actively mediated these situations and transformed them into learning opportunities were more successful in guiding children toward ethical resolutions.

Overall, the results suggest that moral values formation in primary students is a dynamic process shaped by developmental readiness, structured pedagogical practices, and the broader sociocultural context. The integration of psychological understanding with active classroom strategies proved most effective in fostering empathy, fairness, and responsibility among young learners.

Discussion

The results of the study highlight the complex interplay of psychological, social, and pedagogical factors in the formation of moral values among primary school students. The evidence indicates that while children in the early stages of schooling often operate at a basic level of moral understanding, with an emphasis on authority and consequences, they gradually develop more autonomous reasoning through guided learning experiences. This developmental trajectory aligns with Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories, showing that children's moral reasoning evolves from externally imposed rules to an internalized sense of fairness and justice. Importantly, the findings underscore the idea that moral growth is not automatic but must be nurtured through intentional educational strategies.

The role of teachers emerged as particularly influential in this process. Classrooms where teachers actively employed moral storytelling, ethical discussions, and cooperative tasks



demonstrated greater progress in students' moral reasoning. These approaches allowed children to reflect critically on actions, understand motives, and develop empathy, which are essential components of moral maturity. The study suggests that teachers should be trained not only as instructors of knowledge but also as facilitators of moral dialogue and models of ethical behavior. Their ability to guide discussions, mediate conflicts, and embody values in daily interactions contributes significantly to the moral climate of the classroom.

Family upbringing and cultural heritage were also shown to be vital in reinforcing the moral lessons introduced in school. Consistency between home and school values provided children with a stable framework for understanding right and wrong, making it easier for them to internalize ethical principles. Conversely, where discrepancies existed between school instruction and family practices, children often displayed confusion or inconsistency in applying moral concepts. This highlights the necessity of cooperation between parents and educators in ensuring that moral education is coherent and supportive across contexts.

Peer interactions were another factor influencing moral development. Friendships, group activities, and even conflicts served as opportunities for students to practice fairness, responsibility, and empathy. However, without teacher intervention, negative peer dynamics such as exclusion or dishonesty could hinder moral growth. This reinforces the need for schools to create structured opportunities where students can engage positively with one another and learn conflict resolution skills.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the psychology of moral values formation in primary students should be addressed through a holistic approach that integrates developmental understanding, pedagogical practice, family involvement, and peer dynamics. By doing so, educators can foster not only academic competence but also the ethical and social foundations necessary for children to become responsible and empathetic members of society.

Conclusion

The study of the psychology of moral values formation in primary school students demonstrates that moral development at this stage is a multifaceted process requiring the integration of psychological, pedagogical, and social factors. Children enter school with initial notions of right and wrong shaped primarily by family influence and cultural traditions, but it is within the structured environment of the classroom that these values are further developed, refined, and internalized. Teachers, through their role as models and facilitators, hold a central position in guiding students toward higher levels of moral reasoning, helping them move from obedience-based morality toward autonomy, fairness, and empathy.

The findings confirm that effective moral education cannot be reduced to the teaching of abstract rules. Rather, it must involve active engagement in real-life situations, cooperative learning, and reflective practices that encourage children to understand the motives and consequences of actions. Storytelling, group work, and moral discussions proved to be particularly effective in stimulating ethical awareness and promoting a deeper understanding of values. At the same time, consistency between family and school environments plays a crucial role in ensuring that children are not faced with conflicting moral messages, allowing them to construct a stable and coherent moral framework.

An important conclusion of this research is the recognition of peer relationships as both a challenge and an opportunity in moral development. While conflicts and negative behaviors among peers can undermine value formation, these same interactions can be transformed into valuable learning opportunities when guided by skilled educators. Through positive peer

engagement, children learn responsibility, fairness, and cooperation, which are central to their personal and social growth.

Ultimately, the psychology of moral values formation in primary school students emphasizes the need for a holistic and coordinated approach. Moral development should not be viewed as separate from intellectual and emotional growth but as an integral part of a child's overall education. By combining insights from psychological theory with practical pedagogical strategies, educators and families can create an environment that nurtures ethical awareness, empathy, and responsibility. This holistic perspective ensures that children not only acquire knowledge but also grow into socially responsible and morally conscious individuals prepared for the demands of modern society.

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