

## **The Moral Education Of Children And Youth From A Pedagogical Retrospective**

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### **Abstract**

*Contemporary educational science is actively seeking ways in which it is possible for the growing personality to consciously absorb basic principles of high morale where national and universal human values would be equally combined. The latter serve as guidelines determining the subject of interaction between educators and pupils. In this respect, cooperative pedagogy with its methodology comes into the picture. It involves mutual respect, equality, sociability – all the attributes of the subject-to-subject interaction oriented towards the maximum activity of educators as well as pupils. It brings about a change in the traditional approach to essence, methods and forms used in the educational process. Its ultimate goal has to consist not only in pupils' understanding of a profound meaning hidden in moral values – it is more about moral act commitment through actions, words and feelings. Only such an educational strategy leads to the result when pupils embrace social and natural environment and become true patriots of their country.*

**Keywords:** *moral education; spiritual education; moral ideal; moral and educational values; historical and educational experience.*

### **1. Introduction**

The third millennium introduces new demands towards the individual who is a member of society and these demands affect his or her moral development. A person's moral education is the main direction of upbringing when the growing personality consciously acquires social values and starts to

behave in an appropriate manner. The content and aim of such education is to be adaptable to the norms of the current historical criterion and the current social requirements of society. From this point of view, the implementation of moral and spiritual development became a priority in pedagogical and educational purposes.

The attention of the government to the educational needs of youth is one of the fundamental principles of state-building. It is a sign of social stability and peace strengthening tolerance and respect among members of society. Therefore, one of the key principles in the development and formation of a balanced personality of a young citizen who respects the norms of the state and society is moral education.

In a historical context moral education is determined by certain optimal characteristics that allow for the most flexible formation of a personality and their value system in accordance with social priorities. However, the current state of the educational system carries certain contradictions, caused by the ineffectiveness of the present-day structure of moral education. This contradiction exists between: the demands of society towards the young individual and the quality of his or her moral education, the problem of regional peculiarities and insufficiencies of child and youth education, the existing level of moral education and society's demands towards the morally educated individual.

## **2. Review of literature**

The investigated problem was in the scope of the famous Ukrainian scholars' scientific interests whose scientific papers comprise its theoretical basis, namely V. Sukhomlynskyi (1997), G. Vaschenko (1994), I. Bekh (2009), N. Vozniuk (2005), O. Sukhomlynska (2006), etc. Educational regional periodicals issued by I. Dobosh (1995) and M. Kuhta (1997) also present considerable findings on the problem under examination.

## **3. Design and methods**

**The aim of this paper is to reveal the role of educational periodicals as well as educators, priesthood and men of art in youngsters' moral education of that time with regard to social changes in today's society.**

### **3.1. Methodology**

The main methodological approach underlying accomplishment of the specified aim consists in historical and pedagogical phenomenology transformation into a logical meaningful structure. In the context of modern systemic outlooks on social or natural objects and processes it gives new insights into the concept of "moral education" historical evolution ensuring its analysis not only in statics but also at the development level and from the holistic theoretical and methodical perspective that has been the subject to adequate elaboration or qualitative changes.

It is a logical transformation in traditional methodological principles that contributes to the determination of the driving force behind historical development and tracing cause and effect relationships between this phenomenon and the quality of education acquired in the specific historical period.

Another transformation in historical and pedagogical phenomenology is connected with the idea of development that for a long time was not objectified in pedagogy. In this connection moral education is treated as the growing personality's socialization process. The main mechanism of the latter

consists in adaptation to particular social situations. From this perspective, the individual acts as a passive receiver. This fact is reflected in their view of life, future plans and value systems.

In general terms, we put emphasis on youngsters' active position as a subject of free and responsible subject-to-subject relationships. It serves as a scientific basis for comparison of the national and European traditions in moral education. Consequently, we relate spiritual wealth as a motivating factor of activity to the nature of the personality acting as an author of their own life trajectories.

#### **4. The results of the research**

There are many theoretical works about moral education - from ancient authors such as Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, pedagogists and philosophers of the past (O. Dukhnovych, 1967; K. Ushinsky, 1983; S. Rusova, 1929; V. Sukhomlynskyi, 1997), as well as modern authors (I. Bekh, 2009; A. Boyko, 1996; N. Vozniuk, 2005; S. Karpenchuk, 1997; O. Sukhomlynska, 2006). According to experts, educators and priests played a key role in developing the system of moral education.

These people organized educational periodicals and as a result made enormous contributions to the overall development of education and culture in the late 1920s and 1930s. The representatives of the then intelligence, in spite of significant cultural, national, ideological and political differences, actively joined the effort to create a united system of pedagogical periodicals. The high social and professional status of the representatives of the publishing industry suggests that this set of efforts largely contributed to the formation and daily work of the publishing business as a whole, along with the pedagogical press. However, it is especially important to emphasize their significant contribution towards making a step in the evolution of publishing in general, an important legacy in the national pedagogical heritage.

Moral education has served as a pivotal direction in child and youth education making social development much more efficient. There have been various factors that affected this process, (social, personal, subjective), which helped spread the democratic foundations of humanism. The combination of these circumstances directly affected the development of youngsters' personality and moral character. This has resulted in the improvement of society as a whole greatly benefiting the country.

The current national scientific studies focusing on moral education have shown an insufficient pattern of proper approaches and qualifications, due to differences in interpretation of its components, tasks, and methodological scheme. Therefore, it is important to analyze the theoretical and methodological foundations of moral education, while considering contemporary requirements. The pedagogical works of authors such as V. Gomonnay (1990), I. Dobosh (1995), M. Kliap (2001), M. Kuhta (1997), etc., are important additions to the collection of regional religious periodicals. There is a particular disagreement about the interpretation of the concept of moral education. According to the interpretation of T. Ponimanska (2004), this form of education is a "purposeful interaction between the adult and the child with the intention of forming and assimilating moral awareness and guidelines, as well as developing moral intentions and behavioral skills". (Ponimanska, 2004, p.185). There is another interpretation by N. Volkova (2002) – "as the educational activity of the school, the family, the formation of moral consciousness among students, the development of morality, skills, abilities and appropriate behavior". (Volkova, 2002, p.78). In both definitions there is an emphasis on the

connection of the educator's age with the educational process, yet the demands of the society are not taken into account properly.

The most renowned definition of the moral education is the one by S. Goncharenko (1997), which talks about the "purposeful formation of moral consciousness, the development of habits and skills connected to the morality of a certain ideology"(Goncharenko, 1997, p.123). The researcher states that "moral education begins in the family, continues in preschool, school, and later in higher education" (Goncharenko, 1997, p.81), essentially continuing over the entire duration of the ontogeny.

Moral education involves the moral development of the individual, who serves as an "immanent dialectic incipience of specific internal and external contradictions that determine the qualitative changes in moral consciousness and behavior", with "objective reasons (macro and micro-social environment), defining the morality of the individual who is able to react while breaking his or her own subjective determinates."(Vozniuk, 2005). The individual is able to develop themselves in two ways: through practical activities aimed at improving the social relations, as well as through self education. Both of these processes act in unity and interdependence.

Ancient western civilization developed two models for approaching education – Spartan and Athenian, the first of which emphasized physical education, and the latter accentuated the idea of an all-round harmonious development. In ancient Greece, education focused on dance, gymnastics, oratory, art and music evoking competitiveness.

The ideal of beauty, along with a harmonious development of the mind and soul, as well as the idea of patriotism, honesty, duty, democracy and humanity, has become the basic pedagogical tradition of the Western civilization. It is this very tradition that we follow in education, especially in gymnasiums, for example in the Transcarpathian region. In connection with the ideals of Christian ethics, humanism, the idea of anthropocentrism is addressed in the theoretical works of O. Dukhnovych (1967), A. Voloshyn (1995). It was also cultivated by the media, in particular the pedagogical newspaper "Teacher", the magazines "Our native land", "Pottery for Subcarpathian children", and "Bdzhilka".

The classical European tradition of moral education affirmed a sense of individuality and creativity, strongly tied to an effort to harmonize the relationship a person has with society. The strong link between the subject of moral education and society results in its dependence on social norms outlining the priorities of a particular social value system respectively.

In the national system of pedagogy, the system of moral values is categorized into eternal values (good, truth, love, honesty, dignity, beauty, wisdom, justice), national values (patriotism, national dignity, historical memory, etc.), civil rights (human rights and freedom, duties, law), family values (marital fidelity, child care, respect for the elderly, cherishing the memory of the ancestors), and personal values (restraint, politeness, organization and efficiency, self-esteem, self-criticism, self-demand, the capacity for self-education, interpersonal skills, etc.).

The most common notions that characterize the morals and behavior of an individual in the axiological and deontological aspects, according to N. Vozniuk (2005), are the categories of good

and duty. Good expresses morality as a social value, while duty emphasizes an imperative meaning. (Vozniuk, 2005).

Ukrainian scientific research addresses moral education in addition to the task of acquiring a universal and national value system the development of human emotions, formation of a belief system, skills and habits of moral behavior. These components do not act linearly, but are in a dialectical relationship, as the behavior of an individual is largely a manifestation of the person's effort to master the norms of a behavioral system, and through practical activities it is possible to check the individual's level of competence for using specific skills in a particular situation. However, the methodical tools for performing the above-mentioned tasks of moral education directly depend on social development, social orientation and social requirements. In the process of substantiating the theory of education, scientists highlight three main paradigms concerning the social and biological determinants of personality formation. The paradigm of social education recognizes society as the main influence in the process of influencing a person with an educational purpose.

The biopsychological paradigm emphasizes the importance of the innate qualities of an individual when it comes to self-education and upbringing. The paradigm of the harmonious combination of biological and social factors in the educational process or the paradigm of harmonizing evolution is primarily specific to native education. V. Sukhomlynskyi (1997), in particular, emphasized labor as the main factor of moral education, specifying that pedagogy combines 'life wisdom with maternal and parental love' (Sukhomlynskyi, 1997).

In the Transcarpathian region, in the pre-Soviet times, there was a third, more traditional paradigm in which *Dukhnovych (1967) underlined the importance of society* ("Danauchity / teacher / children of Russian songs ... "), as well as the biological qualities of a child ("Like father, like son"), this paradigm aligns with the norms of national pedagogy.

Another important role in the development of the study of moral education is played by Hryhoriy Vaschenko (1994) who distinguished the main types of educational ideals in European pedagogy during the civilization period. The primary ideals in Europe according to H. Vaschenko (1994) have been national (folk) morality and the religious value system of Christianity. He also held the opinion that the so called national ideal is the main basis of the pedagogical process, aimed at the formation of a person conscious of his or her nationality. The traditional ideal of a person – it's an embroidered shirt, ready to be taken off, while the person still remains true to his or her Ukrainian nationality. The ideal of the person is the best thing that has been created by the nation in order to understand human nature and its purpose.

The educational ideal is formed by the individual's family, school, extracurricular activities, confessional education that are the so called institutional varieties of moral education. Material and spiritual culture (literature, media, theater, art) are the means of moral education.

In interaction with children, during the formation of morality, the conscious use of a particular style of communication plays an important role. As such, the authoritarian style of communication of a teacher with a child could be characterized by adjectives such as superiority, inferiority, dismissal, as

well as the emotional suppression of the child's opinion with a demand for discipline and authority. This style of interaction predominantly prevailed in the past, for instance in the family, in school, not to mention in society in general.

In contrast to the authoritarian approach, the democratic style of communication in pedagogy is characterized by collegiality and partnership, recognizing the child's right to an own opinion, as well as pluralism of judgment and allows an individual approach on the basis of freedom of choice.

The liberal, in other words compliant style of communication promotes the noninterference of the teacher in the development of the child, assuming an existential conclusion that a person's ability to promote complete change is unachievable.

Regarding the question of style, there are a few distinctive methods of moral education – the word (conversation, dialogue, lecture, debate, discussion), beliefs, suggestions (command, order, guidance), exemplification, pedagogical requirements (direct demand, request, demand-trust, demand-approval, advise, hint, demand-distrust, condemnation, demand-threat), public opinion, exercise, training, anticipation, creating educational situations, games, competition, promotions, punishment, propaganda in the media. According to V. Sukhomlynskyi (1976), *"in the education of a personality, one of the leading melodies belongs to self-education, which is based on a sense of self-esteem, and respect for oneself"* (Sukhomlynskyi, 1976, p.152).

*It is important to note, that the moral education of a personality is an uneven process, with different paces and stages. The first and lowest among these stages is the concept of moral standards, the following – the existence of moral feelings and motives of behavior, the third – habits of moral behavior, and the fourth – the basics of social competence.*

*At a tender age, there is a "basic thrust towards the world", a child's perception of the trustworthiness and reliability of adults. With proper education, this perception grows into receptiveness to social influences, keenness to accept other people and a general interest in communication. The success of this process depends on the harmony of moral consciousness and behavior, which determines, in this instance, the role of an adult as a "social leader", a model for imitation, the organizer of social experiences.*

For the formation of morality, certain conditions must be ensured. The role of a teacher as an example to the students is especially significant. It should stem from a basic respect towards the child's individuality, combined with a reasonable demand towards him or her, humanity and democracy, support; the consideration of the age and individual peculiarities of the pupils; systematic and sequential education, the unity of the pedagogical requirements of the school, the family and the public; nationality; culture and nature compliance; democratization, humanization, and ethnicization (Volkova, 2002).

Another important condition is a proper interconnection of the operations of the family and the school, which is mentioned in our study. Bearing in mind that the basis of moral action is the ability to act purposefully, it brings us to the importance of motivation. The highest level of motivation – the desire to self-improve – encourages self-education beginning with self-awareness and self-esteem.

In the work of A. Boyko (1996) "The renewed paradigm of education: the ways of realization", we define an educational, subject-subjective, moral-aesthetic relationship between student and teacher. In particular, it is noted that while bearing in mind that the child, the student, the person is the subject or the goal of the educational process, there is also an essence of the new paradigm of self-determination and self-realization of the individual. (Boyko, 1996).

I. Bekh (2009) in his work "Psychological sources of education", in our opinion, provides the most optimal educational model of moral development, based on the contradictions between the external and internal world of the individual (Bekh, 2009).

When a teacher introduces a new moral standard, often the pupil tends to doubt this new model, a resentment that could develop into anger. The teacher overcomes the pupil's doubts, drawing his attention to the qualities that could help him develop within this model. The pupil, through the actions of the teacher, reevaluates his or her needs and aspirations, creating an internal prerequisite for change and growth. Such an emotional model ensures the development of a stronger internal development. Learning to work on oneself is a difficult path in moral education, all proven by the obstacles pupils face throughout this journey.

The works of Ukrainian psychologists such as M. Boryshevsky (1997), E. Pomytkin (2005), M. Savchyn (2001) and others are as relevant as ever. According to the scientists, moral maturity was expressed through the principle of educational coaching (Boryshevsky, 1997). The deductive reserves of the educational process are strongly connected to its form, the organization of pedagogical communication and humanistic subject-subject interaction, with a strong attention to the moral content of the educational material. Being limited in their educational subject, teachers do not always create an educational environment for the formation of moral norms and values in children and young people. The phenomenon of spirituality involves a holistic approach to the formation of morality, revealing various individual levels of assimilation of moral norms and values.

Such categories as "higher values", "spiritual personality" and "spiritual world of personality" are currently being introduced into educational theory and practice and are based on the philosophy of cordocentrism by G. Skovoroda (1994) and P. Yurkevich (1993) that is a theory that involves learning through the "heart" – through the pupil's own emotions and experiences.

The most concentrated embodiment of the rule of law and freedom of the human spirit is the free, responsible and conscious choice of moral principles and responsibilities that guide the personality in social and spiritual practice. These practices give an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the idea of morality. It can be considered in two dimensions - phylogenetic and ontogenetic. In the first one – morality appears through the prism of a historical spiritual experience, in the second one – through transforming this experience into practice.

In the first approach, the mechanisms of normative regulation of moral behavior of a person are historically produced by cultural concepts (moral norms, principles, concepts of good), all of which already exist as ideals in the collective consciousness of the community. The second approach concentrates on a particular "internal moral law", that corrects the established norms of the society

according to certain life situations of the individual, which is essentially the highest form of personal freedom and the ability to reach cultural and spiritual heritage, creating a phenomenon of moral behavior.

As long as knowledge is not "passed through the door of their own emotions" Sh. Amonashvili (1988), they are alienated from it. As I. Bekh(2014) notes, "spiritualization can only begin when a pupil has a cognitive attitude to a particular educational material" (Bekh, 2014). Therefore, spirituality is closely linked to personal perception.

Spirituality is the connection of the individual to a higher spiritual value, which holds a personal significance to the individual. (Bekh, 2014). The intellectual – spiritual pedagogy is a requirement of our time, and the school system is on the path from an intellectual-moral to an intellectual – spiritual pedagogical approach. If a morally conscious person is the final result of moral education, then spiritual awareness is the highest quality of a morally conscious individual.

## **5. Conclusions**

The paper presents a profound overview of the search for effective ways of making the growing personality receptive to high moral values from both theoretical and practical (methods and tools) perspectives with the reference to the historical domain.

It is the historical aspect of the research that allows not only consideration and objective assessment of the approaches underlying the development of this complex educational field but also the opportunity to reveal some inefficient paradigms not contributing to the enhancement of what constitutes complicated pedagogic determiners in the system "society-personality". We believe such an analysis to be a strong point of the conducted research because this way of scientific text structuring may be of use for young scholars and may serve as a model of problem analysis related to the humanities.

Scientific novelty of the research lies in the synthesis of the scientific findings that are characterized by a broadside approach to the problem under examination and generalization of the obtained theoretical and practical results.

Matching up the traditional conceptual framework with the modern interpretation of the pedagogic terms that include current aspects of scientific discourse clarifying moral issues of individuals` spiritual dimension is scientifically justified and is also characterized by some degree of originality. There two key educational tendencies that can be clearly seen in youngsters` upbringing. Firstly, in terms of pedagogical influence on pupils, it is object-to-subject transformation implying appropriate methods that educators have to familiarize themselves with and to master. Secondly, individual moral development should be treated from the competency perspective. It will definitely facilitate the educational process manageability.

The paper also presents not only the findings and ideas introduced by the Ukrainian scholars, but also by a number of educators, practitioners, priests, men of art. Thus, the article offers a comprehensive overview of the vital problem in pedagogy.

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