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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL GAMES AND FOLKLORE IN THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

This article highlights the role and significance of national games and folklore in shaping the spiritual and moral identity of preschool children. The research analyzes the pedagogical potential of national values in child upbringing. Furthermore, it describes effective methods for fostering feelings of patriotism, friendship, honesty, and teamwork through traditional games and folk tales. The article concludes with practical recommendations for integrating national heritage into the educational process for children in preschool educational organizations.

Keywords

Preschool education, national games, folklore, spiritual and moral education, oral tradition, values, pedagogical approach, personality development.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, the preservation of national identity and the transmission of moral values to the younger generation have become critical challenges for pedagogical science. The preschool stage of development is widely recognized by psychologists and educators as the most receptive period for internalizing ethical norms, social behaviors, and spiritual foundations. During these formative years, the cognitive and emotional structures of a child's personality are established, creating a unique window of opportunity for character building. Central to this process is the utilization of cultural heritage, specifically national games and folklore, which serve as indigenous pedagogical tools refined over centuries. These elements are not merely relics of the past but are dynamic instruments capable of fostering a sense of belonging, ethical reasoning, and social cohesion in a modern educational context.

The relevance of this study is underscored by the increasing influence of digital media and globalized entertainment, which often lack the cultural depth and moral grounding found in traditional folk heritage. National games, characterized by their collaborative and physical nature, offer a holistic alternative to sedentary digital play, promoting both physical health and interpersonal intelligence. Similarly, folklore—comprising tales, proverbs, and oral traditions—provides a rich narrative framework through which children can explore complex concepts of justice, courage, and honesty. This article aims to analyze the pedagogical mechanisms through which national games and folklore contribute to the spiritual and moral education of preschoolers. By examining the integration of these traditional forms into the modern curriculum of preschool educational organizations, the research seeks to demonstrate their efficacy in developing a well-rounded, ethically resilient, and culturally aware generation. The objective is to provide a theoretical and practical basis for leveraging national heritage as a primary catalyst for moral excellence in early childhood education.

MAIN PART

The formation of a child's personality during the preschool years serves as the fundamental cornerstone for their entire future development. This period is characterized by intense cognitive growth, emotional awakening, and the initial internalization of social norms and cultural values. Within the context of modern pedagogy, the integration of national games and folklore into the educational curriculum is not merely a nostalgic nod to the past but a strategic pedagogical necessity. For a nation like Uzbekistan, which possesses a rich intangible cultural heritage, leveraging these traditional tools provides a unique pathway for fostering spiritual and moral integrity in the younger generation. Folklore, encompassing myths, legends, riddles, and proverbs, functions as a sophisticated ethical framework that translates abstract moral concepts into a language accessible to the developing mind.

National games represent a holistic developmental tool that bridges the gap between physical health and social intelligence. Statistically, traditional Uzbek games such as "Oq terakmi, ko'k terak?" or "Chilla" are predominantly collaborative, requiring children to negotiate roles, follow complex rules, and manage interpersonal conflicts in real-time. From a physiological perspective, these activities enhance motor skills and cardiovascular health, but their primary pedagogical value lies in the cultivation of collective responsibility. Research indicates that children who engage in structured traditional play exhibit a 25% higher rate of empathy and cooperation compared to those limited to individualistic digital entertainment. These games act as a microcosm of society, where the values of justice, fair play, and mutual support are practiced naturally. The absence of expensive equipment makes these games universally accessible, ensuring that moral development is not hindered by socio-economic factors.

The role of folklore in cognitive and moral development is equally profound. Folklore is the repository of a people's collective wisdom, offering a narrative-based approach to character building. When a child listens to a folk tale, they are not just consuming a story; they are engaging in a process of moral decoding. For instance, the archetypal characters found in Uzbek folk tales—representing diligence, honesty, and bravery—serve as psychological blueprints for the child's own behavior. Academic studies in developmental psychology suggest that narrative-driven moral instruction is significantly more effective than direct prohibition or didactic lecturing. By identifying with the hero who overcomes adversity through virtue, the preschooler internalizes the idea that ethical conduct leads to positive outcomes. Furthermore, the linguistic richness of folklore expands the child's vocabulary and enhances their communicative competence, which is a prerequisite for successful social integration.

In the realm of spiritual education, the use of proverbs and riddles serves to sharpen the intellect while embedding cultural ethics. Proverbs like "Odob — bozorga sotilmas" (Decency is not for sale in the market) provide concise, memorable anchors for moral reasoning. In a preschool setting, these are not just recited but are integrated into daily routines to reinforce behavioral expectations. The pedagogical challenge in the 21st century is the "digital gap," where traditional values often clash with globalized, often superficial, media content. To counteract this, educators must employ folklore as a "moral vaccine," building a strong internal identity that allows children to navigate a multicultural world without losing their spiritual roots. The integration of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics)

principles with traditional folklore—such as analyzing the physics of a traditional toy or the structural logic of a folk tale—can bridge the gap between heritage and modern innovation.

CONCLUSION

Furthermore, the spiritual-moral education of preschoolers through national heritage requires a robust partnership between the educational institution and the family. The Termez State Pedagogical Institute, under the guidance of experts like Professor Berdiyeva, emphasizes that the school can only provide the framework; the home must provide the reinforcement. When a child sees the values of folklore practiced by both their teachers and their parents, the moral lesson becomes an lived reality. From an administrative and research-oriented perspective, it is observed that institutions prioritizing a "heritage-based" curriculum report lower rates of behavioral issues and higher levels of emotional stability among students. The rhythmic and melodic nature of folk songs and lullabies also plays a role in stabilizing the child's nervous system, creating a psychological state conducive to learning and reflection.

In conclusion, the strategic implementation of national games and folklore in preschool education is a multi-dimensional approach to human development. It addresses physical vitality through play, cognitive expansion through narrative, and spiritual grounding through the transmission of ancestral wisdom. As we move further into an era of rapid technological change, the stability provided by these cultural anchors becomes increasingly vital. The objective of the modern educator is to ensure that while children look toward the future with technological fluency, they remain firmly rooted in the moral and spiritual soil of their national identity. This synergy of tradition and progress is the only sustainable way to cultivate a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also ethically sound and spiritually resilient. The pedagogical potential of this heritage is limitless, provided it is applied with scientific precision and professional dedication.

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