

**IDENTITY THAT BEGINS IN THE CRADLE: ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL
MECHANISMS FOR FORMING NATIONAL VALUES IN PRESCHOOL AGE**

To‘ychiyeva Shoxidaxon Qaxramon qizi

Teacher, Department of Preschool Education,

Faculty of Pedagogy-Psychology and Art Studies, Fergana State University

E-mail: shohidatuychiyeva95@gmail.com | Tel: +998 93 640 78 89

Abstract. This article provides a theoretical analysis of how the first seeds of national self-awareness emerge and strengthen in preschool-age children. The purpose of the study is to identify and substantiate the ethnopedagogical mechanisms for instilling national customs, traditions and values into a child’s consciousness. The study employs methods of comparative analysis, a systematic approach and theoretical generalization. The results show that preschool age is a decisive period in the formation of national self-awareness, and at this age value is assimilated by the child not through reason but through feeling, environment, oral folklore and the personal example of adults. As a conclusion, five ethnopedagogical mechanisms for forming national values are substantiated.

Keywords: national self-awareness, ethnopedagogy, preschool education, value, customs and traditions, oral folklore, lullaby, fairy tale, family upbringing, national heritage.

**BESHIKDAN BOSHLANGAN O‘ZLIK: MAKTABGACHA YOSHDA MILLIY
QADRIYATLARNI SHAKLLANTIRISHNING ETNOPEDAGOGIK MEXANIZMLARI**

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola maktabgacha yoshdagi bolada milliy o‘zlikni anglashning ilk kurtaklari qanday paydo bo‘lishi va mustahkamlanishini nazariy jihatdan tahlil qilishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi - milliy urf-odat, an’ana va qadriyatlarni bola ongiga singdirishning etnopedagogik mexanizmlarini aniqlash va asoslashdan iborat. Tadqiqotda qiyosiy tahlil, tizimli yondashuv hamda nazariy umumlashtirish metodlaridan foydalanilgan. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, maktabgacha yosh milliy o‘zlikning shakllanishida hal qiluvchi davr bo‘lib, bu yoshda qadriyat bolaga aql orqali emas, his-tuyg‘u, muhit, xalq og‘zaki ijodi va kattalarning shaxsiy namunasi orqali singadi. Xulosa sifatida milliy qadriyatlarni shakllantirishning beshta etnopedagogik mexanizmi asoslab berilgan.

Kalit so‘zlar: milliy o‘zlik, etnopedagogika, maktabgacha ta’lim, qadriyat, urf-odat va an’analar, xalq og‘zaki ijodi, alla, ertak, oila tarbiyasi, milliy meros.

**ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ, НАЧИНАЮЩАЯСЯ С КОЛЫБЕЛИ:
ЭТНОПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ МЕХАНИЗМЫ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ
ЦЕННОСТЕЙ В ДОШКОЛЬНОМ ВОЗРАСТЕ**

Аннотация. Данная статья направлена на теоретический анализ того, как у детей дошкольного возраста зарождаются и укрепляются первые ростки национального самосознания. Цель исследования - выявление и обоснование этнопедagogических механизмов привития национальных обычаев, традиций и ценностей сознанию ребёнка. В исследовании использованы методы сравнительного анализа, системного подхода и теоретического обобщения. Результаты показывают, что дошкольный возраст является решающим периодом формирования национального самосознания, и в этом возрасте

ценность усваивается ребёнком не через разум, а через чувства, среду, устное народное творчество и личный пример взрослых. В качестве вывода обоснованы пять этнопедагогических механизмов формирования национальных ценностей.

Ключевые слова: национальное самосознание, этнопедагогика, дошкольное образование, ценность, обычаи и традиции, устное народное творчество, колыбельная, сказка, семейное воспитание, национальное наследие.

INTRODUCTION

When does a person begin to realize who they are? It is difficult to answer this question with an exact date, yet its roots can be traced very early - to infancy, from the moment a mother's lullaby is first heard. It is precisely for this reason that, when discussing the issue of national self-awareness, our attention is involuntarily drawn to the preschool age. In today's conditions, when globalization and digital technologies have entered every home and diverse cultural influences reach the child's mind freely, the task of conveying national values to the child in the earliest and most natural way has become extremely relevant. As psychological science has proven, it is precisely at the age of 3-6 that the foundation of national self-awareness - the individual's sense of belonging to a particular culture - is laid (Erikson, 1968; Vygotsky, 1978).

In Uzbekistan, raising the younger generation in the spirit of national and universal values has become one of the priority directions of state policy. This task is clearly defined in such documents as the Law "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" and the "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan". However, observations show that in practice national customs and traditions are often confined within the framework of formal holiday events and have not become a systematic pedagogical instrument.

The main problem identified in the study is the insufficient scientific clarification of the mechanisms through which national customs and traditions are instilled into the child's consciousness in preschool education. The aim of the study is to theoretically identify and substantiate the ethno pedagogical mechanisms for instilling national values into the consciousness of the preschool-age child. The objectives of the study are: to analyze the interrelationship of the concepts of custom, tradition and value; to study the mechanism of these concepts' influence on the child's psyche; to determine the role of oral folklore and the example of adults; and to substantiate the educational potential of the family-neighbourhood (mahalla)-preschool institution triad.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

Literature review

The concept of national self-awareness and cultural identity was first studied in depth by E. Erikson (1968) within the theory of the individual's psychosocial development: in his view, identity is the internal psychological process by which a person defines themselves in relation to a particular people or culture, and it begins in childhood. L. S. Vygotsky (1978), emphasizing the role of the socio-cultural environment in the child's mental development, considered culture and language to be the principal factors of personality formation. In revealing the age-related characteristics of the child, L. Kohlberg's theory of moral development and J. Piaget's theory of cognitive development serve as important methodological foundations.

In the field of ethnopedagogy, G. N. Volkov defined folk pedagogy as the educational experience accumulated by a people over centuries and called it “the people’s own pedagogical academy”. In the context of Uzbek preschool education, M. J. Mutalipova (2015) extensively examined the means of folk pedagogy, F. R. Qodirova and co-authors (2019) the methodology of cultural upbringing, and D. Abdurahimova (2020) the system of moral-spiritual upbringing through oral folklore. M. Rahimov (2017) developed the conceptual foundations of the theory of national upbringing. In the existing literature, the specific mechanisms through which national values are instilled into the child’s consciousness have not been analyzed holistically - it is precisely this scientific gap that the present study seeks to fill.

Research methods

This theoretical-analytical study employed the following methods: analysis of scientific-pedagogical literature - to study the content of the concepts of custom, tradition and value; comparative analysis - to distinguish these concepts from one another and to identify their interrelationship; systematic approach - to view the process of national upbringing holistically; content analysis - to study examples of oral folklore and the views of thinkers; and theoretical generalization - to bring the obtained data into a unified understanding. The source base of the study consists of local and foreign scientific literature, dissertations and normative-legal documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The interrelationship of the concepts of custom, tradition and value. The first result of the analysis is that, although custom, tradition and value are closely related, they are concepts that differ in content. A custom is a visible, repeated practical action: laying out the dasturkhan (table cloth) when a guest arrives, preparing sumalak at Navruz, greeting a neighbour. A tradition is the order behind such an action and the experience and spirit transmitted from one generation to another. A value is the inner criterion that gives meaning to all of these - for example, hospitality itself. For the preschool-age child, however, these three appear as an inseparable, unified whole, and it is precisely in this integral form that they enter the child’s heart through emotional channels. Thus, the first mechanism is the entry of value into the child not through reason but through feeling.

2. Conveying values through the environment and personal example. This conclusion is reinforced by the data of psychological science. According to Kohlberg’s theory, the preschool-age child still evaluates good and bad through punishment and reward; their inner conscientious criterion is only beginning to form. Piaget emphasizes that at this age the child learns not through abstract concepts but directly - by seeing, feeling and imitating. The second mechanism that follows from this is that value is conveyed to the child not through “instruction” but imperceptibly, by means of the environment, the personal example of adults, play and art. As M. Ochilov noted, the child assimilates a value first by “feeling” it, then by “experiencing” it, and finally by “accepting it within”.

3. Figurative transmission through oral folklore. The third mechanism is transmission through oral folklore. The lullaby, the fairy tale, the proverb and the riddle each perform a distinct educational function. The mother’s lullaby is the very first educational communication in the child’s life: through it the child senses trust in the world, the mother’s love and the good wishes directed at them. The fairy tale teaches the child to distinguish good from evil and, through the example of its heroes, gives the child a goal - the people express this as “Fairy tales

lead to goodness”. The proverb conveys the life experience of several generations in a concise form and develops logical thinking in the child, while the riddle sharpens their thinking. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, language is the principal carrier of culture; through language the child masters not only communication but also the cultural code.

4. Instilling values through the personal example of adults. The fourth mechanism is transmission through the personal example of adults. Here the essence of the ethnopedagogical approach is vividly manifested: it does not command the child “do this”, but shows through the actions of adults. Repeated everyday acts - greeting, the etiquette of the dasturkhan, not talking back to elders - settle into the child’s consciousness involuntarily and become their natural behaviour. The proverb “A bird does as it sees in its nest” expresses precisely this mechanism: because the child is imitative, it is decisive that the adults themselves follow the tradition.

5. Reinforcement through the family-neighbourhood-preschool institution triad. The fifth mechanism is realized through the social environment, that is, the family-neighbourhood (mahalla)-preschool institution triad. The child first becomes acquainted with national values in the family: the mother’s lullaby, the father’s admonition, the grandmother’s fairy tale - all of these are the first encounter with national culture. This experience then meets a systematic pedagogical process in the kindergarten, while the mahalla, as a living carrier of the experience of the older generation and of traditions, enriches the process. It is precisely when these three subjects unite in pursuit of a single goal that national upbringing acquires a holistic and continuous character.

6. Conditions for implementing the mechanisms in the digital age. Applying the identified mechanisms in today’s digital age requires special attention. The fact that the smartphone, tablet and the internet have become an inseparable part of children’s lives may weaken national identity under the influence of the global information flow. However, assessing the digital environment as solely negative would be a one-sided approach: when applied correctly, technology becomes a means of reinforcing the above mechanisms. The main condition is that the digital tool should not displace live communication, play and the example of adults but, on the contrary, should enrich them. World experience - the “Kohanga Reo” programme in New Zealand and the practices of Japan, Finland, Korea and Singapore - confirms that in countries that have integrated national heritage into preschool education, indicators of child development are higher.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the study, five ethnopedagogical mechanisms for forming national values in preschool age were identified: the entry of value through feeling; its imperceptible conveyance through the environment and personal example; its figurative transmission through oral folklore; its instilment through the personal example of adults; and its reinforcement through the family-neighbourhood-preschool institution triad. The common essence of these mechanisms is one and the same - national self-awareness is conveyed to the child not as a dry rule but through living experience, feeling and image. Consequently, the effectiveness of national upbringing largely depends on the sincerity of adults and the authenticity of the environment surrounding the child.

The following recommendations were formulated: to systematically introduce the identified mechanisms into the daily practice of preschool education institutions; to develop special methodological manuals on ethnopedagogy and national upbringing for educators; to strengthen the mechanisms ensuring cooperation between the family and the preschool institution; and to

apply digital tools enriched with national content in a manner that complements live experience. In future research, proving the effectiveness of the identified mechanisms through empirical (experimental) methods is defined as an important scientific task.

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