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FORMING AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE MORAL AND AESTHETIC EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

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Abstract. The article examines the theoretical foundations and practical mechanisms of building an integrated system aimed at improving the moral and aesthetic education of primary school pupils. It argues that moral and aesthetic development in early school years cannot be achieved effectively through isolated subjects or occasional extracurricular events; instead, it requires a coherent structure in which curricular content, classroom methods, school culture, family involvement and community resources reinforce one another. On the basis of an analysis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical sources, the author proposes a four-component model of the integrated system (target, content, procedural and evaluative components) and outlines the pedagogical conditions necessary for its implementation. Criteria and indicators for assessing the moral and aesthetic maturity of younger learners are suggested, and the practical value of interdisciplinary lessons, project activities and art-based reflection is discussed.

Keywords: moral education, aesthetic education, primary school, integrated system, interdisciplinary integration, values, pedagogical conditions, younger schoolchildren.

1. Introduction

The primary school years represent a decisive stage in the formation of a child's personality. It is during this period that children first encounter systematic learning, begin to compare their own behaviour with social norms and develop an emotional attitude towards the world of nature, people and art. The moral and aesthetic experience acquired at this age tends to become the inner foundation on which later civic, professional and cultural orientations are built. Consequently, the question of how the school can purposefully support the moral and aesthetic growth of younger learners remains one of the most pressing issues of modern pedagogy.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the upbringing of a harmoniously developed generation is regarded as a strategic priority of state educational policy. The Law "On Education" adopted in 2020 identifies the education of young people in the spirit of national and universal values as one of the key principles of the education system. This creates a legal and conceptual basis for rethinking the content and organisation of moral and aesthetic education in general secondary schools, beginning with the primary grades.

Nevertheless, school practice still demonstrates a number of contradictions. Moral topics are often presented to pupils as a set of rules to be memorised, while aesthetic education is frequently confined to music and fine arts lessons. Teachers of different subjects rarely coordinate their educational aims, and the potential of the family, the mahalla and cultural institutions is used episodically. As a result, the

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knowledge children acquire about goodness and beauty does not always turn into stable attitudes and habits of behaviour.

These contradictions point to the need for an integrated approach in which moral and aesthetic education are treated not as two parallel lines but as mutually enriching dimensions of a single educational process. The purpose of this article is therefore to substantiate the theoretical foundations of an integrated system for improving the moral and aesthetic education of primary school pupils, to describe its structural components and to identify the pedagogical conditions under which such a system operates effectively.

2. Literature Review

The idea that the sense of beauty and the sense of goodness are closely interconnected has deep roots in the history of thought. In the Eastern intellectual tradition, thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Alisher Navoi and, later, the Jadid educator Abdulla Avloniy viewed good manners, inner purity and the appreciation of beauty as inseparable qualities of a perfect person. Avloniy's work "Turkiy guliston yoxud axloq" (1913) is particularly significant, since it explains moral virtues and vices in language accessible to children and links upbringing directly with the future of society.

In European philosophy, F. Schiller, in his letters "On the Aesthetic Education of Man", argued that aesthetic experience reconciles sensual and rational impulses and thereby prepares the individual for moral freedom. J. Dewey developed a related position in "Art as Experience", maintaining that aesthetic quality is not limited to works of art but is present in any complete, meaningful experience; from this perspective, a well-organised learning activity itself can carry aesthetic and moral value.

Psychological research provides further arguments for integration. L. S. Vygotsky in "The Psychology of Art" showed that art transforms emotions and stimulates reflection, which makes it a powerful tool for developing personal attitudes. L. Kohlberg's theory of moral development demonstrates that moral reasoning progresses through stages and that cognitive conflict, dialogue and role-taking stimulate this progression. These findings suggest that discussions of literary characters, dramatisation and joint creative work can serve as natural contexts for moral growth in younger children.

Among pedagogical sources, the experience of V. A. Sukhomlinsky deserves special attention. His concept of educating through beauty — through nature, the native word, music and work — illustrates how moral sensitivity can be cultivated by emotionally rich and aesthetically organised activity rather than by moralising. Contemporary authors in character education, notably T. Lickona and M. Berkowitz, emphasise that values are internalised most effectively when the school functions as a caring community and when cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of character are addressed together. E. Eisner, for his part, stresses that the arts develop forms of thinking — attention to nuance, imagination, tolerance of ambiguity — that are equally important for ethical judgement.

Research on curriculum integration (R. Fogarty, S. Drake and R. Burns) offers models ranging from simple connections within a subject to fully integrated, theme-based approaches. However, the analysis of the literature shows that these models are mainly applied to the cognitive content of learning, while their potential for

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systematically combining moral and aesthetic aims in primary education has not yet been sufficiently explored. This gap determines the relevance of the present study.

3. Materials and Methods

The study is grounded in systemic, personality-oriented, activity-based and axiological approaches. The systemic approach makes it possible to regard moral and aesthetic education as a set of interrelated components whose effectiveness depends on their coherence. The personality-oriented approach places the child's experience, feelings and interests at the centre of the educational process, while the activity-based approach emphasises that values are formed through the pupil's own practical and creative actions. The axiological approach, finally, orients the content of education towards national and universal values such as kindness, respect, honesty, diligence and a careful attitude to nature and cultural heritage.

The research employed the following methods: theoretical analysis and synthesis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical literature; comparative analysis of primary education curricula and textbooks in terms of their moral and aesthetic potential; pedagogical observation of lessons and extracurricular activities; conversations and questionnaires with primary school teachers and parents; analysis of pupils' creative works; and modelling as a means of designing the structure of the integrated system.

Modelling was used to identify the components of the system and the links between them. The resulting model was then examined from the standpoint of its correspondence to the age characteristics of children aged 7–10, the requirements of the national curriculum and the actual capabilities of general secondary schools.

4. Results

The analysis made it possible to define the integrated system of moral and aesthetic education in primary school as an organised unity of goals, content, forms, methods and assessment tools in which moral and aesthetic values are acquired by pupils through interconnected cognitive, emotional and practical activity across all subjects and areas of school life. The structure of the proposed system is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Structural components of the integrated system of moral and aesthetic education

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Component	Content	Means of implementation
Target	Formation of moral feelings, aesthetic perception, value attitudes and culturally appropriate behaviour	Educational aims coordinated across subjects; annual school upbringing plan
Content	National and universal values reflected in reading, the native language, the world around us, music, fine arts, technology and physical education	Interdisciplinary themes (e.g. "Beauty in Nature and in Deeds", "My Family and Traditions")
Procedural	Integrated lessons, art-based dialogue, role play, creative and social projects, excursions, cooperation with family and mahalla	Integrated lesson plans; project calendar; joint events with parents and cultural institutions
Evaluative	Diagnosis of moral knowledge, emotional responsiveness and behaviour in real situations	Observation sheets, pupils' portfolios, situational tasks, self- and peer assessment

The target component unites moral and aesthetic aims into a single set of expected outcomes, so that, for instance, a reading lesson pursues not only comprehension skills but also the development of empathy and sensitivity to the beauty of the word. The content component relies on interdisciplinary themes which allow the same value — care, respect or responsibility — to be viewed from different angles: through a literary text, a piece of music, a drawing, an observation of nature or a practical task.

The procedural component is decisive for transforming knowledge into attitudes. Observation showed that pupils were most actively involved in activities where moral content was presented through aesthetic experience: dramatising fairy tales and folk stories, discussing the feelings conveyed by music and paintings, creating collective works for classmates or elderly neighbours, and caring for the school garden. In such situations children not only spoke about kindness and beauty but experienced them and acted accordingly.

The evaluative component ensures feedback and allows teachers to correct their work. Since moral and aesthetic qualities cannot be measured by marks alone, a set of criteria and indicators was developed (Table 2).

Table 2. Criteria and indicators of moral and aesthetic development of primary school pupils

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Criterion	Indicators	Diagnostic tools
Cognitive	Understanding of moral concepts and aesthetic categories; ability to explain the motives of characters' actions	Conversations, situational questions, analysis of texts
Emotional and value-based	Empathy, emotional response to works of art and nature, preference for kind and beautiful actions	Observation, drawings and essays, unfinished-sentence method
Behavioural	Politeness, helpfulness, care for surroundings, participation in creative and social activities	Observation sheets, teacher and parent feedback, portfolio

Three levels of moral and aesthetic development — low, medium and high — were distinguished on the basis of these criteria. At the low level, the pupil knows certain rules but applies them mainly under external control and shows limited emotional response to beauty. At the medium level, the pupil understands moral norms, responds emotionally to art and nature, but acts consistently only in familiar situations. At the high level, moral and aesthetic attitudes become the pupil's own internal motives and manifest themselves independently in different situations.

5. Discussion

The results confirm that integration enhances the educational effect of each component taken separately. When moral ideas are supported by vivid aesthetic images, children perceive them not as abstract demands but as something personally meaningful and attractive. Conversely, aesthetic education acquires depth when the appreciation of beauty is linked with the evaluation of human actions and relationships. This conclusion is consistent with the views of Sukhomlinsky and Dewey on the unity of emotional experience and moral development.

At the same time, the effectiveness of the integrated system depends on several pedagogical conditions. First, teachers need methodological readiness to design integrated lessons and to coordinate their aims with colleagues; this requires targeted professional development and collaborative planning. Second, the school environment itself must be aesthetically organised and morally consistent, since children learn as much from the atmosphere of relationships as from lesson content. Third, systematic cooperation with families and the mahalla is necessary so that the values cultivated at school are reinforced in everyday life. Fourth, the use of national cultural heritage — folk tales, proverbs, crafts, music and traditions — makes the content of education close and understandable to pupils while opening a path to universal values.

Certain risks should also be taken into account. Excessive formalisation of integration can lead to artificial links between subjects and to an overloaded curriculum. Moreover, the moralising tone that sometimes accompanies upbringing activities may provoke indifference among children. Therefore, integration should be based on genuinely meaningful connections, and moral conclusions should, as far as possible, be reached by pupils themselves through discussion and reflection.

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6. Conclusion

The study shows that improving the moral and aesthetic education of primary school pupils requires a transition from fragmented measures to a purposefully organised integrated system. Such a system includes target, content, procedural and evaluative components that function in close interconnection and cover both curricular and extracurricular activities as well as cooperation with the family and community.

The proposed model allows teachers to combine the cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of upbringing, to make use of the educational potential of every subject and to assess pupils' progress on the basis of clearly defined criteria. Its successful implementation depends on teachers' methodological readiness, an aesthetically and morally consistent school environment, partnership with parents and the mahalla, and reliance on national cultural heritage combined with universal values.

Further research may focus on developing a set of integrated lesson plans for each primary grade, on digital resources supporting moral and aesthetic education, and on longitudinal studies of how the values formed in primary school influence pupils' behaviour at later stages of education.

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