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CONTEMPORARY REQUIREMENTS FOR MORAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN AN INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. This article analyzes the contemporary requirements imposed on Moral Education teachers in an innovative educational environment. The digitalization of the education system, the widespread implementation of the competency-based approach, and the integration of artificial intelligence and information and communication technologies into the educational process require Moral Education teachers to acquire new knowledge, skills, and competencies. The article also highlights the importance of pedagogical mastery, digital competence, communication skills, and the ability to engage in innovative professional practices.

Keywords: innovative education, Moral Education, pedagogical competence, digital pedagogy, teacher competence, educational activity, artificial intelligence, innovative technologies.

Today, the processes of globalization and digitalization are bringing about fundamental changes in the education system. In modern society, education is expected not only to provide knowledge but also to promote the comprehensive development of individuals, foster national and universal values, encourage independent thinking, and cultivate a sense of social responsibility. From this perspective, the subject of Moral Education taught in general secondary schools plays a significant role in ensuring the moral and ethical development of the younger generation.

In an innovative educational environment, the role of the Moral Education teacher has become increasingly important. Such teachers are expected to function not only as providers of knowledge but also as mentors, facilitators, advisors, and innovators. Contemporary research recognizes teachers' digital competence, continuous professional development, and ability to apply innovative technologies as key requirements for effective professional practice [1].

The ongoing reforms in the modern education system, the digitalization of educational processes, and the widespread implementation of competency-based approaches have introduced new requirements for the professional activities of Moral Education teachers. The subject of Moral Education serves not only to cultivate moral and ethical values among students but also to develop their social engagement, critical thinking, communication culture, and civic responsibility. Therefore, teachers working in innovative educational environments are expected to possess a range of professional competencies. According to researchers, the professional competence of a modern educator is reflected in the integration of pedagogical, communicative, information and communication technology (ICT), and innovative competencies [3].

Pedagogical competence occupies a central place in the professional activity of a Moral Education teacher. This competence encompasses pedagogical knowledge, methodological preparedness, an understanding of student psychology, and the ability to effectively organize teaching and learning processes. In an innovative educational environment, teachers are expected to move

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beyond traditional lecture-based instruction and employ interactive methods, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-study approaches, and collaborative learning technologies.

A distinctive feature of the Moral Education subject is that it places greater emphasis on real-life situations, social interactions, and ethical decision-making than on theoretical knowledge alone. Therefore, teachers must be able to connect educational content with real-life experiences and organize educational activities by taking into account students' age-related and individual characteristics. The UNESCO Teacher Competency Framework also identifies the ability to organize learner-centered education as one of the key competencies of contemporary teachers [9].

In the context of digital transformation, a teacher's ability to effectively utilize information and communication technologies has become one of the key determinants of professional success. Digital competence refers to a teacher's capacity to use electronic educational resources, distance learning platforms, multimedia tools, cloud technologies, and artificial intelligence applications for pedagogical purposes.

Through the use of modern digital tools, Moral Education teachers can facilitate interactive communication with students, conduct virtual discussions, and employ educational videos and multimedia presentations in the learning process. Furthermore, artificial intelligence-based platforms provide opportunities to identify students' individual needs, personalize learning materials, and enhance reflective learning practices. The European Commission's DigCompEdu (Digital Competence Framework for Educators) recognizes teachers' digital competence as one of the fundamental factors contributing to the improvement of educational quality [5].

The effectiveness of the moral education process largely depends on the teacher's communicative competence. Communicative competence encompasses the ability to establish effective interaction, promote pedagogical collaboration, resolve conflicts constructively, and create a positive psychological environment.

Moral Education teachers are expected to maintain regular cooperation with students, parents, fellow educators, and community representatives. Effective communication is particularly important in addressing contemporary challenges such as cyberbullying, internet addiction, and the negative influence of social media among students. Therefore, teachers should possess strong listening skills, empathy, pedagogical tact, and a high level of communication ethics. The socio-constructivist theories of Vygotsky and Leontiev also emphasize the crucial role of communication in the development of an individual's personality and learning process [11].

Innovative competence reflects a modern teacher's ability to adopt, develop, and implement new ideas and practices in educational settings. In an innovative educational environment, Moral Education teachers are expected to continuously explore emerging pedagogical technologies, analyze best practices, and adapt them to their professional activities.

This competence is closely associated with creative thinking, research skills, reflective practice, and a commitment to continuous professional development. Through innovative approaches in Moral Education, teachers can foster students' independent thinking, problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, and social engagement. As emphasized in Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the successful implementation of innovations largely depends on the human factor, particularly the preparedness and competence of professionals responsible for introducing and applying innovations [6].

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Therefore, in an innovative educational environment, the professional competencies of Moral Education teachers are formed through the integration of pedagogical, digital, communicative, and innovative competencies. These competencies not only enhance teachers' professional effectiveness but also contribute to students' moral and ethical development and their formation as individuals capable of meeting the demands of modern society.

In addition to professional competencies, the personal qualities of Moral Education teachers are of great importance in an innovative educational environment. The effectiveness of the educational process depends not only on a teacher's knowledge and skills but also on their moral character, worldview, and personal example [3].

First and foremost, Moral Education teachers should possess high moral and ethical standards. Qualities such as honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and humanism form the foundation of effective pedagogical practice. While Abu Nasr Al-Farabi emphasized the significance of morally mature individuals in the development of society and the education of young people, Alisher Navoi regarded virtue and justice as essential indicators of human perfection.

Furthermore, teachers should demonstrate patriotism and civic responsibility. The Concept of Continuous Spiritual and Moral Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan identifies fostering loyalty to the homeland and promoting active citizenship among young people as one of the priority objectives of the national education system [4].

Leadership, creativity, and initiative are also essential qualities in an innovative educational environment. Teachers should be able to guide students toward meaningful goals, apply contemporary pedagogical approaches, and introduce innovative ideas into the educational process [10; 7].

Moreover, resilience, fairness, and objectivity significantly contribute to the effectiveness of pedagogical practice. Treating students equally and making unbiased judgments help foster trust, respect, and a positive learning environment [3].

A commitment to continuous professional development is another important requirement for modern educators. In the context of rapid scientific and technological advancement, teachers must regularly update their knowledge and skills to remain effective and responsive to changing educational needs [10].

Therefore, qualities such as high moral standards, patriotism, leadership, creativity, resilience, fairness, and a commitment to self-improvement not only enhance the professional effectiveness of Moral Education teachers but also enable them to serve as positive role models for their students.

The rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies is creating new opportunities within the education system. Moral Education teachers can effectively utilize AI-powered tools for developing instructional and educational materials, personalizing learning experiences, and facilitating interactive communication with students [8].

However, the use of artificial intelligence must be aligned with the principles of educational ethics, academic integrity, and information security. According to experts, artificial intelligence is not intended to replace teachers; rather, it serves as a supportive tool that enhances their professional practice [2]. Therefore, the responsible and effective use of AI has become one of the key competencies required of contemporary Moral Education teachers.

In conclusion, the requirements imposed on Moral Education teachers in an innovative educational environment have expanded far beyond the scope of traditional pedagogical practice. Modern teachers are expected to possess pedagogical expertise, digital competence, communication

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skills, innovative thinking, and a commitment to continuous professional development. The digital transformation of education and the integration of artificial intelligence technologies require teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills. Successfully meeting these requirements will contribute to improving the quality of education and further strengthening the moral and ethical development of younger generations.

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