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Diagnostics of moral education of younger schoolchildren

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Abstract

Relevance. The relevance of the stated subject of the study is determined by the importance of moral education of elementary school students as the basis for the harmonious development of the younger generation and the need for its qualitative diagnosis.

Purpose. The purpose of this study is to diagnose the moral education of elementary school students, identify the level of moral education in students, and determine ways to improve the moral education of younger schoolchildren.

Methodology. The basis of the methodological approach in this study is a combination of various theoretical and empirical research methods. In particular, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, generalisation, and abstraction were used to determine theoretical approaches to explaining the concepts of moral education and moral education, their structural components and main features in primary school age, diagnostic research methods, including questionnaires, interviewing, and testing, were used to assess the level of formation of moral education in students, complex research methods, especially pedagogical experiment, were conducted to diagnose the moral education of younger schoolchildren.

Results. The substantiation of the key features of moral education in primary school age, its diagnosis, and identification of the main ways to improve the moral education of primary school students can be considered the main results obtained within the framework of this study.

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Conclusions. The results of this study and the conclusions formulated on their basis are of practical value for educators, teachers, methodologists, and other specialists who deal with the problems of upbringing, education, and development of the younger generation.

Keywords: primary school; personality; spirituality; educational process; diagnostic aspect.

Introduction

Throughout the existence of mankind, various moral qualities have been highly valued. Today, in connection with the processes of globalisation and the digital transformation of society, it is necessary to think about the prospects of the younger generation and the country in general. Therefore, the question of moral education of the younger generation becomes relevant. This is primarily due to the fact that today moral guidelines are becoming more blurred due to the fact that insufficient attention is paid to this issue in modern thematic literature. Therefore, the relevance of the problem of educating younger schoolchildren is increasing more and more every day, and modern Kazakh society needs to train well-educated and moral citizens who possess not only skills, abilities, and knowledge but also remarkable personal traits. In addition, school education by itself is not able to guarantee a high level of moral education, it needs to be purposefully formed and developed since moral knowledge not only informs younger schoolchildren about the norms and rules of behaviour in society but also provides a deep understanding of the consequences of violating these norms or rules.

It is necessary to indicate that primary school age is a key stage in the development of a child and their moral qualities. It is at the primary school age (6-9 years) that the concepts of moral norms are formed. In this age period, children begin to act consciously, according to the concepts of morality. In addition, younger schoolchildren form relatively stable moral ideas and the ability to moral self-regulation. Based on this, an important task of this stage is the examination of the moral education of elementary school students. However, the analysis of the scientific literature on the indicated problems showed the lack of thorough studies since Kazakh researchers who work with this problem do not pay due attention to the diagnosis of moral education of primary school students, but rather consider the organisation of the educational process in school and the problems of modern school education.

The problem concerning the moral upbringing of younger schoolchildren is also quite popular in the modern scientific environment. For example, W. Birhan et al. [1] consider the tasks and goals of moral education of primary school students, methods, forms, and principles of this type of education, and also examine the issues of pedagogical guidance in the process of spiritual and moral education of younger schoolchildren and highlight the special role of the multinational student collective in this process. R.R. Diana et al. [2] argue that the formation and development of the theory of moral education in Kazakhstan were primarily due to socio-political and economic reasons, and the need for deep transformations in the field of education and upbringing. N.N. Hidayati [3] notes that moral education is the basis of all methods of education, and the task of moral education of primary school students is to develop such qualities as commitment, conscience, honour, and

dignity. W. Kay [4] notes that at school it is necessary to consider not only the intellectual but also the spiritual and cultural life of the student and pay special attention to the moral education of students, which is the basis for the formation of personality. H.K. Ma [5] analyses the problem of moral education of younger schoolchildren at the initial stage of education and identifies the priority role of the school in the moral process. In addition, the author identifies pedagogical conditions for the effectiveness of moral education of elementary school students in the educational process.

The purpose of this study is to diagnose moral education and identify its level of formation in younger schoolchildren. Notably, the diagnosis of moral upbringing of younger schoolchildren is an important stage of the educational process since it allows you to identify potentially negative changes that occur in the process of development and formation of the personality of younger schoolchildren in time. This, in turn, allows the teacher to adjust the methods of organising the educational process, and choose effective pedagogical techniques and tools.

Materials and Methods

The methodological approach of this study is based on theoretical and diagnostic research methods. Among the theoretical methods, the main ones are: synthesis, analysis, generalisation, interpretation, and abstraction. The basis of the methodology consists in a systematic approach to the problem under study, a fundamental consideration of the processes of innovative learning. Theoretical methods were used to determine the main approaches to understanding the basic concepts of the study, which include the concepts of moral education, and analyse their structural components and main features in primary school age. Diagnostic research methods, in particular, questionnaires, interviewing, and testing were used to identify the degree of formation of moral concepts in younger schoolchildren. In addition, a pedagogical experiment was also conducted, which is designed to diagnose the moral education of primary school age students.

The presented study was divided into stages. Initially, the corresponding theoretical base was prepared for the study. Regarding theory, the study also analysed the concepts of moral education, characterised the main approaches to the definition of this concept by modern researchers, analysed their main features, structural elements, and characteristics. In addition, the main characteristics of the modern process of moral education of younger schoolchildren in Kazakhstan were also analysed, its main advantages and disadvantages were identified. The theoretical basis of this study is the results of the studies conducted by a number of European specialists, investigating the problems associated with the definition of approaches to moral education as those methods that are fundamental in the formation and comprehensive development of the modern young generation.

In the study, diagnostics were performed to identify the level of moral education of elementary school students. Diagnostics were conducted based on Secondary School No. 102 and Lyceum School No. 24 named after S. Erubaev (grades 3-4) in Shymkent (Kazakhstan). The diagnosis was attended by students of grades 4 in the number of 45 people. A set of diagnostic techniques was used in the study, which was selected in accordance with the problem and included the following methods: a survey, a questionnaire, a Recognise the emotion technique, and a method of pedagogical observation. The questionnaire and survey questions were compiled by the authors. The results of elementary school students were subjected to detailed analysis and processing. The above methods included various questions concerning the moral education of students, their moral motivation, and moral self-esteem. Younger schoolchildren were asked, for example, questions about what kind of person can be called well-mannered, in their opinion, why it is necessary to be a moral and well-mannered person, and how the manifestation of emotions affects the manifestations of good breeding. The survey was conducted individually, the results of the survey were analysed, and it was determined which concepts are familiar to children and which still need to be worked on.

In the study, based on the results obtained, the final conclusions of the study were formulated, determining, in general, the main features of the moral upbringing of elementary school students, the level of formation of moral concepts in younger schoolchildren and the designation of ways to improve their moral upbringing, identified by conducting diagnostics of students in one of the secondary schools of Kazakhstan.

Results

In the context of this study, the key concepts are morality, moral education, and good breeding. Morality is a set of rules and internal qualities that determine a person's behaviour, mental and spiritual qualities, and ethical norms, guiding them and which are necessary for them in society. It is identified that moral education is a process of purposeful and systematic impact on the development of universal values of the individual. Moral education is interpreted as a stable set of moral habits and norms of behaviour that set a high level of culture of communication and relationships in the conditions of the school team.

Notably, the moral education and development of primary school students are the most important tasks of the modern Kazakh educational system and represent the main component of the social order for modern education [1]. However, moral education can be effectively implemented only as an integral process of pedagogical morality and corresponding to the norms of the organisation of the whole life of younger schoolchildren, that is, their activities, communication, considering their age characteristics and relationships [6; 7]. A teacher needs to know the level of moral education of schoolchildren to properly organise the process of moral education in primary school conditions [5]. It is this knowledge that can help the teacher to predict and expediently design the process of moral education and orient it to a specific result.

Thus, today an important component of the moral education of elementary school students is the diagnosis of

moral education, which allows the teacher to determine the level of morality of students, its features and existing problems. A study was conducted based on Secondary School No. 102 and Lyceum School No. 24 named after S. Erubaev (grades 3-4) in Shymkent (Kazakhstan) among fourth-grade students to assess the level of moral education of younger schoolchildren and to investigate the problem in more depth. 45 students in the 4th grade of the primary school took part in it. It should be emphasised that the methods for conducting the study were selected in accordance with the problem of the study. Considering the goals and objectives of the study and the data obtained as a result of the theoretical analysis of scientific literature, it was decided to use the following methods: survey, questionnaire, the Recognise the emotion method, and the method of pedagogical observation. Thus, to determine the level of formation of the idea of morality, upbringing, and good manners in younger schoolchildren, students were offered some questions as a survey [8]. The children were asked the following questions:

- what kind of person can be called well-mannered;
- is it necessary to be a well-mannered person in the modern world and why?

The first, for example, was the question of what kind of person can safely be called well-mannered. Based on the answers, younger schoolchildren can be divided into three groups: with a high level of awareness, average, and primary. The first group included those students who were able to explain that a well-mannered person is someone who cares and helps others, someone who knows how to hear and listen to others. There were 64.4% of such respondents. The second group (20%) included those schoolchildren whose morality and good manners were associated with such personal characteristics as, for example, "not evil", "good", "kind". Only 15.6% of children did not answer the question at all or incorrectly explained the concepts of education and morality. This indicates that children have a fairly well-formed idea of the concepts of upbringing and morality.

The students were asked the following question about whether it is necessary to be a well-mannered person and why to determine the level of awareness of younger schoolchildren in moral terms. The answers received indicated that only 43% of the students were able to clearly and concisely explain why a person should be well-mannered. Among the answers of schoolchildren were such as, for example, "manners are needed so that there is less evil in the world", "manners are necessary so that there is mutual respect and mutual support in communicating with people." 52% of children know that they need to have good manners but they do not have a holistic idea of why this is necessary. Notably, only 5% of schoolchildren could not formulate their thoughts about why it is necessary to be a well-mannered person. This indicates that many students in the class are aware of their actions and can explain them.

According to the results of the survey, it can be concluded that younger schoolchildren can explain such concepts as "good", "evil", "morality", "good manners", "morality" quite well. According to the results of the survey, on average, out of 45 students, 24 students have a high level of understanding of morality, 16 students have an average level, and only 5 students can hardly explain

these categories. The survey results are clearly demonstrated in Figure 1.

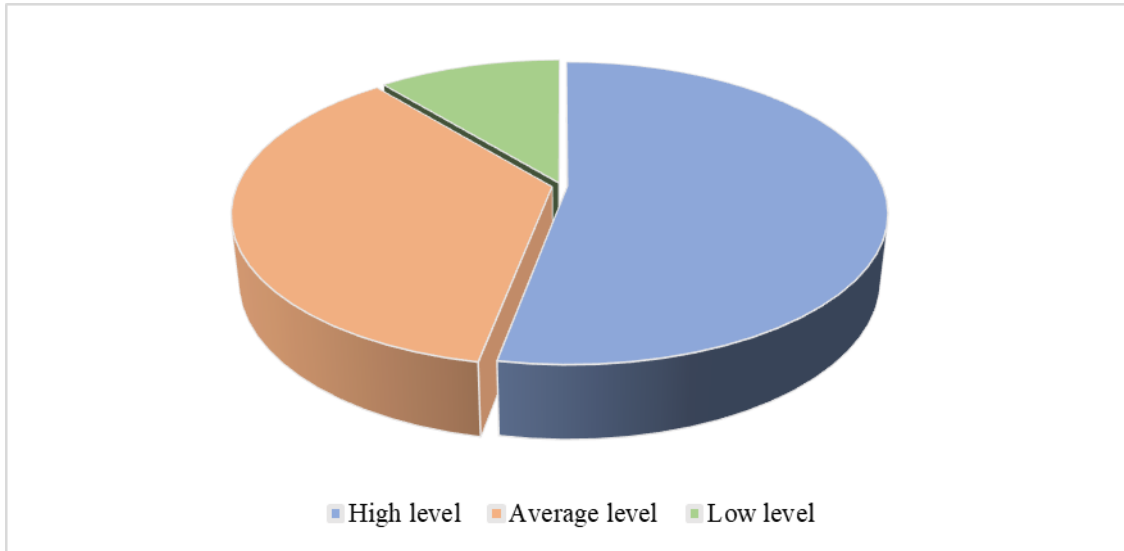


Figure 1. The results of the survey

In the next stage, students were asked to take a small questionnaire [9]. It consisted of the following questions:

- what emotions that a person can experience are familiar to students;
- is it necessary to do something when a person is saddened/joyful/offended/upset/excited about something? If yes, what exactly?

Thus, the first of the questions were asked to determine how well the students are aware of the emotional component of the personality. 45% of primary school students can name more than four emotions, including excitement, joy, indifference, anger, sadness, and despair. 36% of the students were able to name about three emotional states of a person or their external manifestations: sadness, laughter, and crying. 19% of the students either skipped this question or indicated 1–2

emotions. The subsequent questions of the questionnaire were focused on determining whether the students were familiar with the ways of showing morality and good manners in life. Analysing the answers, it was identified that 58% of students know the answers to such questions, 31% of schoolchildren have a general idea of morality and tact in typical situations, and in other cases, they know that something needs to be done, but find it difficult to answer what exactly. Only 11% of the students did not answer these questions or answered only some of them correctly.

Summarising the results of the survey, it is concluded that 23 children have a high level of awareness about the emotional component of a person and 15 have an average level. Only 7 participants had difficulty answering the questionnaire questions. This technique has shown that students have a good level of knowledge on this subject. The results are demonstrated in Figure 2.

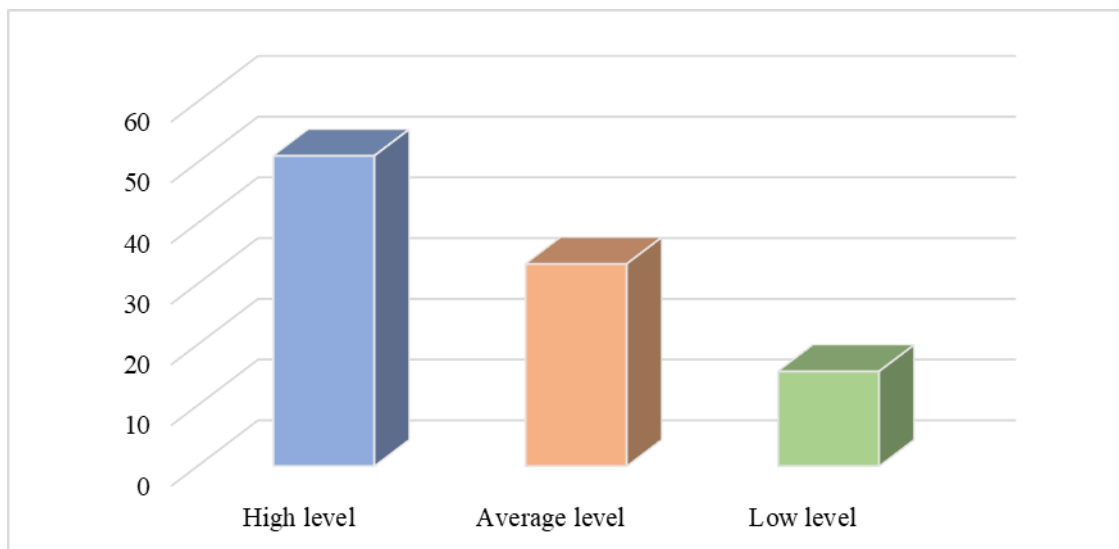


Figure 2. The results of the survey

The manifestation of emotions is a substantial component of morality. It is necessary to understand that personal qualities and the emotional component can say a lot about a person's upbringing. Thus, the study used the

Recognise the emotion technique to determine the ability of younger schoolchildren to recognise emotions that a person can experience using nonverbal gestures [9]. The children were given cards depicting various states of

people, demonstrating seven basic emotions: sadness, joy, anger, indifference, excitement, resentment, and guilt. After viewing the cards, the students were asked a question about what the person depicted in the illustration is experiencing. After analysing the results displayed in Figure 3, it can be concluded that 22 schoolchildren were able to recognise and explain more than half of the

emotions, 17 students recognised several emotional states or did it wrong, and 6 children from the class found it difficult to answer and could not recognise emotions, judging by facial expressions and gestures. This means that a teacher needs to pay more attention to the emotional component of a person while working with children.

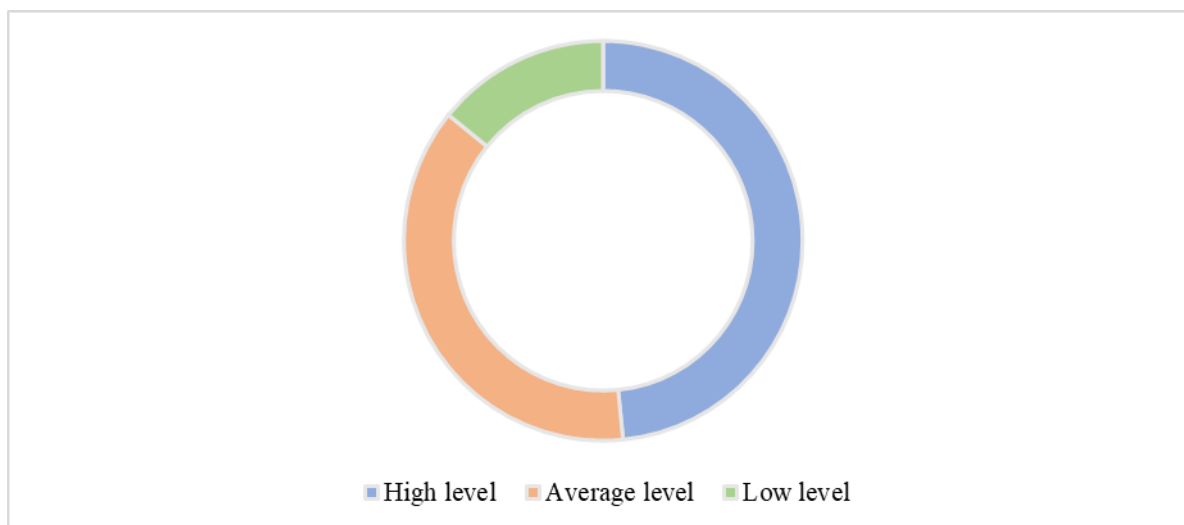


Figure 3. Results obtained after applying the Recognise the emotion method

The method of pedagogical observation was also used in the study. This technique helped to determine how younger schoolchildren show morality and good manners in everyday life. During the observation, such criteria as, for example, the tact of children in communicating with others, caring for the world around them, the ability to help others, and responsiveness were evaluated. The study showed that in most cases children show morality and good manners based on conscious moral motives, which is important. It should also be emphasised that the number of manifestations of indifferent behaviour of children in the situations proposed by the teacher was quite insubstantial. The observation data was summarised and recorded in the evaluation card. The student received a certain number of points for the proposed solution to a certain situation set by the teacher. Based on the answers, the students were conditionally divided into three main groups (high, good, and average level of education).

Thus, the first group included those children who scored from 12 to 18 points according to the results of observation (58.9%). These students were most tactful in communicating with the teacher and the rest of the students, were actively involved in the pedagogical process, and tried to help others with difficult issues without the external influence of the teacher. The second group consisted of those students who scored from 7 to 11 points (31.5%). Notably, in the second group, younger schoolchildren also showed tact and good manners, however, to a greater extent, they were guided by the requests and comments of the teacher, rather than conscious moral motives. Students who did not prove themselves sufficiently in this process or were not interested scored from 1 to 6 points (9.6%). Summarising, it can be noted that there is a tendency among students to increase high and decrease medium and low levels of education, which is important in the formation of a

harmonious, cultured, and intellectually developed personality.

Thus, the conducted study showed that in Secondary School No. 102 and Lyceum School No. 24 named after S. Erubayev (grades 3-4) in Shymkent (Kazakhstan), the moral education of younger schoolchildren is mainly at a high level. Moreover, the "Moral concepts" questionnaire showed that the majority of schoolchildren have a high level of understanding of basic moral concepts. And the Recognise the emotion technique, which is aimed at identifying the level of manners in elementary school students, showed that most elementary school students have a high level of good breeding. Diagnostics of moral education showed that a high level of moral education prevails in elementary school students.

In addition, as a result of the study, it was identified that the students showed the ability to control their emotions, they are able to respect older people, show mercy and friendliness both in relation to peers and adults, are initiative and demanding, and most of the younger students do not need control from adults. However, it is determined that there is a large percentage of those schoolchildren who have shown an insufficient level of moral education. Therefore, it is necessary to develop in schoolchildren the desire for knowledge, constant self-development, independence, respect for themselves and others, the importance of work, cognitive activity, careful attitude to the results of work, honesty and mercy in relationships with peers and older people, and instil the rules of a culture of behaviour [10]. Considering all of the above, it can be concluded that the diagnosis of moral education is an important tool in the process of moral education, which allows for identifying the features of the level of formation of moral ideas in younger schoolchildren and coordinating the process of moral education in the right direction.

Discussion

Today, the main task both in Kazakhstan and in other countries is the spiritual and moral education of the younger generation, the cultivation of love for the Motherland and the surrounding world in children [11; 12]. Thus, among the main factors of the morality of Kazakhstan, such as, for example, feelings of empathy, tolerance, and a humane attitude to others can be distinguished. Democracy, science, and integrity – all these are the foundations of moral education [13-15]. The issues of the development of the educational process of the Republic of Kazakhstan are currently very relevant. Since all developed countries have original high-quality educational systems, Kazakhstan is also actively working to improve the quality of all stages of the national education system. The result of teaching Kazakh students should be mastering the skills of logical and critical thinking, independent search, and thorough analysis of the information received. One of the most important tasks of the modernisation of the education system is to form an intellectual nation, whose representatives will have not only creative thinking and competitive knowledge but also high moral and civic principles, a sense of social responsibility and patriotism, believes M. Abduhakimov [16]. Indeed, as the study shows, moral education occupies an important place in the context of modern national education, and in today's conditions, it acquires special practical significance and relevance.

During the entire period of the development of human society, the education of a moral person has been and is one of the main pedagogical problems, and the subject of consideration in ethics, psychology, philosophy, pedagogy, and other sciences [17-20]. Based on the fact that primary school age is the most positive period in the process of moral formation of personality, the main function of this process is the formation of intellectual, business, communicative, and emotional personalities who are able to actively interact with the outside world [21-24]. Sharing the author's opinion, it can be stated that primary school age is the stage of the greatest opportunities for the formation of moral qualities since in this age period the most intensive development of the social environment takes place, the foundation of moral behaviour begins to be laid in children, and the social orientation of the personality begins to form. C. Darnell et al. [25] argue that the moral upbringing of younger schoolchildren is a personal integrative education that encompasses a set of diverse moral qualities that express the value attitude of younger schoolchildren to the surrounding reality and manifest themselves in their behaviour. Indeed, the moral education of younger schoolchildren presupposes the formation of their value attitude to the surrounding reality in educational work, and the creation in younger schoolchildren of an integral system of individual, selective, and conscious personal connections with various aspects of objective reality and the establishment of stable positions. In addition, the author convinces that moral values are reflected in such personal characteristics of students as caring, politeness, friendliness, respect or reverence, and respect for national values.

O.A. Kvamme [26] believes that moral education is an activity aimed at mastering universal norms of morality, and the development of an internal system of moral

regulators of behaviour. Certainly, morality is inextricably linked with the concepts of honour, conscience, commitment, self-dignity, the ability to make a choice between good and evil, evaluate one's behaviour and actions using humanistic criteria. C. Radulescu [27] believes that moral education is a pedagogically organised purposeful process of developing students as individuals and citizens, mastering and accepting various values, moral norms of society and moral attitudes. R. Pring [28] suggests that the specific feature of the process of moral education is its duration and continuity, and the fact that its results are time-bound. Notably, an essential feature of the process of moral education is its concentric development. The concentric construction consists in the fact that the solution to various educational tasks begins at an elementary level and ends at a higher level.

As for the diagnosis of moral education, A. Peterson [29] is convinced that the main goal of diagnosing the formation of moral education in elementary school students is to obtain information that is necessary for the future development of moral qualities of students, familiarising them with moral norms, values, and behaviour. In the opinion of the authors, the main components of the moral education of primary school children are the development of their moral feelings, moral consciousness, positive attitude towards themselves and other people, humane attitude towards their country. D. Johannessen et al. [30] express the opinion that the diagnostic work of an elementary school teacher in the field of moral education of students is of great importance. The great difficulty, according to the researcher, is precisely the diagnosis of moral education. Indeed, it is necessary to use the criteria of good breeding as reference indicators with which to compare the results achieved. These criteria are really theoretically developed indicators of the level of formation of various personality qualities.

European researchers are actively engaged in the study of the moral upbringing of the younger generation and identify a great interest in the problems of its diagnosis. Thus, researchers are working on these issues, such as, for example, E.R Dewi and A.A. Alam [31]. In their paper, the authors convince that moral education is a form of education that is aimed at actively promoting the moral development of students and the formation of their character and consists of ethics of virtue, specific moral thinking, and education, which is based on moral emotions. Modern European specialists understand moral education as the integrative characteristic of the moral appearance of students, which accommodates the totality of the formed moral qualities of their personality and its content-structural components, which are manifested in activity and behaviour. Regarding the diagnosis of moral education, it is necessary to achieve the effectiveness of the pedagogical process and stimulate the moral education processes of students.

Thus, the analysis of the literature allowed concluding that Kazakh and the above-mentioned foreign researchers pay a lot of attention to the examination of moral education issues. Comparing the results of this study with the results of other researchers, in general, these results are similar to each other and at this stage, more attention should be paid to the diagnosis of moral education. The issue of diagnosing moral education is very acute in the modern

educational process since teachers' knowledge of the moral education of students allows them to make appropriate predictions based on its results and design the process of moral education, focusing on a specific educational result. In addition, the diagnosis of the moral upbringing of elementary school students is an important component of the entire process of moral education in primary school, since during this period the foundation of all subsequent education and upbringing is laid, and moral development and education are the priorities of the national education system of Kazakhstan.

Conclusions

The conducted study of the diagnosis of moral education in elementary school students provides grounds for the formulation of the following conclusions. Moral education is a purposeful process of formation of the young generation of high consciousness, moral feelings, behaviour, and relationships in accordance with the principles and ideals of morality. Moral education materialises in socially valuable qualities and personality traits, manifests itself in relationships, activities, communication, and behaviour. Diagnostics of moral education provide for the determination of the moral assessment of students' behaviour, knowledge of moral concepts, ethics of their behaviour, the level of moral education. The diagnosis of primary school students, in particular, grade 4, conducted based on Secondary School No. 102 and Lyceum School No. 24 named after S. Erubaev (grades 3-4) in Shymkent (Kazakhstan), showed

that the level of moral education of elementary school students is mostly at a high level. Primary school students have shown the ability to restrain their emotions, most children are able to respect their elders, show kindness, mercy, friendliness, and honesty towards adults and peers, they are demanding and know how to take initiative in a variety of situations, often do not need adult control.

The results obtained in the course of this study and the conclusions formulated on their basis can be further used as an effective scientific basis for investigating the features of the diagnosis of moral education of elementary school students, highlighting its main features, indicators, and structural components. In addition, the materials of this study can be used by teachers who deal with the problems of examining the process of moral education in modern elementary schools, methodologies and researchers who are engaged in solving relevant problems related to the moral education of the younger generation. Therewith, this study does not exhaust all aspects of the problem under consideration, therefore, the prospect of further research on this problem is to identify the key features of the moral education of primary school students and diagnose a wider array of respondents to determine their moral position.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Діагностика моральної вихованості молодших школярів

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Анотація

Актуальність. Актуальність заявленої теми дослідження визначається важливістю моральної вихованості учнів початкової школи як основи гармонійного розвитку підростаючого покоління та необхідністю її якісної діагностики.

Мета. Метою даного дослідження є діагностика моральної вихованості учнів початкової школи, виявлення рівня моральної вихованості учнів та визначення шляхів удосконалення моральної вихованості молодших школярів.

Методологія дослідження. Основою методологічного підходу в цьому дослідженні є поєднання різноманітних теоретичних та емпіричних методів дослідження. Зокрема, аналіз, синтез, інтерпретація, узагальнення та абстрагування використовувалися для визначення теоретичних підходів до пояснення понять морального виховання та моральної вихованості, їх структурних компонентів та основних особливостей у молодшому шкільному віці; діагностичні методи дослідження, зокрема анкетування, інтерв'ювання, тестування - для оцінки рівня сформованості моральної вихованості в учнів; комплексні методи дослідження, зокрема педагогічний експеримент - для діагностики рівня моральної вихованості молодших школярів.

Результати. Основними результатами, отриманими в рамках даного дослідження, можна вважати обґрунтування ключових особливостей моральної вихованості в молодшому шкільному віці, її діагностику та визначення основних шляхів удосконалення моральної вихованості учнів початкових класів.

Висновки. Результати дослідження та сформульовані на їх основі висновки мають практичну цінність для вихователів, учителів, методистів та інших фахівців, які займаються проблемами виховання, навчання та розвитку підростаючого покоління.

Ключові слова: початкова школа; особистість; духовність; навчально-виховний процес; діагностичний аспект.