



PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF THE FORMATION OF MORAL VALUES IN STUDENTS OF A SMALL SCHOOL AGE.

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 20th December 2023 Accepted: 18th January 2024 Published: 20th February 2024</p>	<p>This article explores the psychological processes involved in the formation of moral values in small school-aged students. Through a comprehensive literature analysis, various theories and frameworks are examined to understand the factors influencing moral development during this critical stage of childhood. The methods section outlines practical approaches for educators and parents to support the cultivation of moral values in young learners. Results highlight the importance of social interactions, role modeling, and educational interventions in shaping children's moral compass. The discussion delves into the implications of these findings for educational practices and offers recommendations for fostering positive moral development in small school-aged students. Conclusions underscore the significance of early intervention and collaborative efforts between educators, parents, and communities in nurturing morally responsible individuals</p>

Keywords: Moral values, small school-aged students, psychological development, education, socialization

INTRODUCTION:

The formative years of childhood, particularly the small school-age period, are crucial for the development of moral values in individuals. During this stage, children begin to internalize societal norms, differentiate between right and wrong, and form their moral compass. Understanding the psychological processes underlying moral development in small school-aged students is essential for educators and parents alike. This article aims to explore the intricate interplay of cognitive, social, and emotional factors that contribute to the formation of moral values during this critical period.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS:

Numerous psychological theories shed light on the process of moral development in children. Piaget's theory of moral development suggests that young children progress from a heteronomous morality, where rules are seen as absolute and imposed externally, to an autonomous morality, where rules are understood as socially constructed and subject to negotiation. Kohlberg's stages of moral development extend Piaget's work, proposing a hierarchical sequence of moral reasoning from pre-conventional to post-conventional levels. Additionally, social learning theories emphasize the role of observation, imitation, and reinforcement in shaping moral behavior.

METHODS:

To investigate the formation of moral values in small school-aged students, a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative observation and quantitative assessments can be employed. Qualitative methods such as participant observation and interviews can provide insights into children's moral reasoning, perspective-taking abilities, and social interactions. Quantitative measures such as moral dilemma scenarios and moral judgment scales offer standardized assessments of moral development.

RESULTS:

The formation of moral values in students of small school age is a critical aspect of their development, as this is the stage where they begin to internalize societal norms and ethical principles. Several psychological peculiarities influence this process:

- **Imitation and Role Modeling:** Young children often learn by imitating adults and peers. They observe the behavior of significant others, such as parents, teachers, and older siblings, and emulate their actions. Therefore, positive role models who exhibit desirable moral values play a crucial role in shaping children's moral development.

Imitation and role modeling are fundamental aspects of how young children learn and develop their moral compass. Children are like sponges, soaking up the behaviors and attitudes of those around them, particularly the significant adults and peers in their lives.

Positive role models who demonstrate desirable moral values serve as powerful examples for children to emulate. Whether it's a parent, teacher, older sibling, or another influential figure, these individuals shape children's understanding of what is right and wrong, fair and unfair, kind and unkind.

When children witness positive behaviors consistently modeled by those they look up to, they are more likely to internalize and replicate those behaviors themselves. Conversely, exposure to negative role models or inconsistent moral behavior can confuse children and hinder their moral development.

Therefore, fostering a supportive environment with strong, positive role models is crucial for guiding children along a path of moral growth and development. It's not just about telling children what is right or wrong; it's about showing them through our own actions and behaviors.

- **Concrete Thinking:** Children at this age typically engage in concrete thinking, meaning they interpret situations based on literal observations rather than abstract principles. Moral lessons are more effectively conveyed through tangible examples and simple explanations rather than complex philosophical concepts.
- **Empathy Development:** Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, begins to develop during early childhood. Teaching children to consider the perspectives and emotions of others is essential for cultivating empathy and fostering prosocial behavior.

Empathy is a crucial skill that helps children navigate social interactions and build healthy relationships. Here are some strategies to promote empathy development in children:

- **Model Empathetic Behavior:** Children learn by observing the behavior of others, especially adults. Model empathy by demonstrating understanding and kindness towards others in your daily interactions.
- **Encourage Perspective-Taking:** Help children understand that different people may have different thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. Encourage them to imagine how others might be feeling in different situations.
- **Validate Feelings:** Acknowledge and validate children's emotions, even if you don't agree with their perspective. This helps them feel understood and teaches them to do the same for others.
- **Teach Active Listening:** Teach children to listen attentively to others without interrupting, and to ask questions to understand their feelings better. This shows respect and empathy towards the speaker.
- **Promote Kindness and Compassion:** Encourage acts of kindness towards others, whether it's helping a friend in need or being considerate of others' feelings. Praise and reinforce empathetic behavior when you see it.
- **Read Empathy-Building Books:** Choose books and stories that highlight empathy, kindness, and understanding of others' feelings. Discuss the characters' emotions and perspectives with your child to deepen their understanding.
- **Practice Problem-Solving Skills:** Help children brainstorm solutions to conflicts that consider the needs and feelings of all parties involved. This teaches them to empathize with others' perspectives and work towards mutually beneficial solutions.
- **Cultivate Gratitude:** Encourage children to appreciate the kindness and support they receive from others. Gratitude helps develop empathy by fostering an awareness of others' contributions to their well-being.
- **Set a Positive Example:** Show empathy towards your child and others in your life. Children learn from the behavior of significant adults in their lives, so demonstrating empathy in your actions and words is crucial.
- **Provide Opportunities for Social Interaction:** Engage children in activities that involve cooperation and teamwork, such as group projects or team sports. These experiences allow children to practice empathy in real-life situations and develop their social skills.

By incorporating these strategies into daily life, parents and educators can play a significant role in nurturing empathy and compassion in children, ultimately fostering a more empathetic and caring society.

- **Reinforcement and Punishment:** Children in this age group are sensitive to praise and punishment. Positive reinforcement for exhibiting moral behavior and gentle correction or consequences for inappropriate actions help reinforce moral values.
- **Socialization and Peer Influence:** As children spend more time interacting with peers in school and other social settings, peer influence becomes increasingly significant. Peer relationships can either reinforce or challenge existing moral values, highlighting the importance of fostering positive peer interactions and creating environments that promote ethical behavior.
- **Storytelling and Narrative:** Children are drawn to stories and narratives, which provide them with opportunities to vicariously experience moral dilemmas and their resolutions. Moral stories, fables, and fairy tales often convey moral lessons in a manner that is engaging and relatable to young children.

Storytelling and narratives play a crucial role in shaping the moral development of children. Through stories, children are exposed to various situations, characters, and outcomes, allowing them to vicariously experience different moral dilemmas and their resolutions.

Moral stories, fables, and fairy tales have been used for generations to convey important life lessons in a way that is engaging and relatable to young minds. Whether it's the classic tales of Aesop's Fables, the adventures of characters like Cinderella or Robin Hood, or the lessons embedded in folktales from different cultures, these narratives

provide children with a framework for understanding right and wrong, empathy, and the consequences of their actions.

By identifying with the characters in these stories, children can explore complex moral concepts in a safe and imaginative environment. They learn not only about the importance of honesty, kindness, and courage but also about themes like perseverance, justice, and the value of empathy.

Moreover, storytelling fosters imagination, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence in children. It encourages them to ask questions, consider different perspectives, and reflect on their own beliefs and values. Through discussions prompted by these stories, parents, teachers, and caregivers can further reinforce the moral lessons and help children internalize them.

Overall, the power of storytelling in shaping moral development cannot be overstated. By immersing themselves in narratives that explore ethical dilemmas and moral choices, children not only enhance their cognitive and emotional abilities but also build a foundation for becoming compassionate, responsible individuals in society.

- **Cognitive Development:** Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children in the preoperational stage (roughly ages 2 to 7) are beginning to develop the ability to understand rules and moral concepts. However, their understanding is still limited compared to older children and adults.
- **Family Environment:** The family plays a central role in shaping children's moral values. Parenting styles, familial relationships, and the presence of moral discussions and modeling within the family all contribute to children's moral development.

Understanding these psychological peculiarities can guide educators, parents, and caregivers in creating environments that support the formation of positive moral values in students of small school age. By leveraging age-appropriate teaching methods, providing opportunities for moral reasoning and reflection, and fostering supportive relationships, adults can help instill in children the ethical principles necessary for responsible and compassionate behavior.

DISCUSSION:

The findings underscore the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters moral growth in small school-aged students. Educators and parents should collaborate to model ethical behavior, provide opportunities for moral reflection and discussion, and establish clear expectations for moral conduct. Incorporating moral education into the curriculum can help cultivate empathy, compassion, and responsible decision-making skills in young learners. Furthermore, promoting a culture of respect, fairness, and inclusivity within schools and communities can contribute to the holistic development of children's moral identity.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In conclusion, the formation of moral values in small school-aged students is a multifaceted process influenced by cognitive, social, and emotional factors. Educators, parents, and communities play pivotal roles in nurturing children's moral development through positive role modeling, educational interventions, and creating an ethical learning environment. By fostering empathy, integrity, and social responsibility in young learners, we can empower them to become morally conscientious individuals capable of navigating the complexities of the modern world. Moving forward, it is essential to continue researching effective strategies for promoting moral growth in children and implementing evidence-based practices in educational settings.

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