Moral Education of Students of Pedagogical Higher Educational Institution

Tatyana Shumeiko Cand.Ped.Sci

Gulnar Ismagulova Cand.Phil.Sci

Aigul Balzhanova

Aliya Shalgimbekova

Roza Baikenova

Kostanai State Pedagogical Institute, Kazakhstan
Email: T.Shoomeyko@mail.ru

Abstract

The article reviews the problem of moral education of students of pedagogical higher educational institution, various forms of educational work in higher educational institution for the purpose of realization of students` moral education. The special attention is given to formation of moral qualities of students in the course of organization and realization of project-research activity. The authors reveal and prove criteria of moral education of personality based on the theoretical analysis of scientific and pedagogical works on the problem of developing moral qualities of the younger generation. The experience of organization of students project-research activity is described while studying discipline "Ethnopedagogics" and during work of student research groups. Much attention is given to interaction with regional comprehensive schools in realization of the projects developed by students. The experimental work on developing moral qualities of students` personality, and also on formation of readiness of future teachers for moral education of schoolchildren held on the basis of Kostanai State Pedagogical Institute allowed to draw conclusion on the productivity of specially organized project-research activity of students directed on moral education of personality.

Keywords: moral education, forms of educational work on moral education, readiness of future teachers for moral education of schoolchildren, project-research activity

1. Introduction

The problem of moral education has attracted the attention of people of different times and nations. It has caused considerable interest throughout all history of mankind beginning with high antiquity.

The practices of contemporary moral character education can be traced to ancient Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (Narvaez, 2006). Socrates thinking about the sense of various moral concepts (good, wisdom, justice, etc.) in ethics adhered to strict rationalism asserting that virtue is identical to knowledge, and that the person who knows what good is couldn't behave badly (Averintsev, 1989). Socrates` learner Plato continues to investigate problems of life and consciousness, person inner world, and virtue. According to Plato the higher moral value is good, and opposite to good is evil. Addressing to concept "virtue", Plato notes: "It seems that virtue is certain health, beauty, soul well-being, but perversity is illness, disgrace, and weakness". Modern researchers of platonism notice that according to Plato's works moral virtues are shown in various kinds: the reasonable part of soul corresponds to virtue *wisdom*; the strong-willed part of soul forms virtue *courage*; the virtue of the sensual part of soul connected with desire, passion is *moderation and self-restriction* (Vassilyev, 2004). The central principle of Aristotle`s ethics is reasonable behaviour, moderation.

Pointing out such virtues as *courage, prudence, generosity, magnificence, majesty, ambition, friendliness, honesty, courtesy* and revealing their nature Aristotle understands virtue as soul constitution where the development of person occurs. Underlining the importance of Aristotle`s doctrine "about moral virtues as a regulator of harmonious relations of person" (Artyomova, 2012) for modern education, teachers focus attention on its value for developing such personal qualities of students as kindness towards people, respect for elderly people, readiness to help each other, prudence, courage, honesty, justice (Artyomova, 2012).

The reference to works of ancient East thinkers in particular Confucius works is of interest for the research of the problem of moral education. According to modern scientists "Confucius concerns the eternal, first of all, person mission. So it is also interesting to our time" (Grigoryeva, 2011). The importance of moral education in Confucius` pedagogical doctrine proves to be true by his words: "I feel grief when people do not improve morals, do not understand what they learn, and are not capable to correct their evils" (Confucius). Humanism expresses an ideal principle of human relations. Confucius urges to study ancient traditions as a source of culture, wisdom and morals. "… from Confucius` point of view traditions help to restore the lost times links, spiritually to transform people, as they are a moral core of public consent" (Vassilyev, 2006).

There are ideas of morals in al-Farabi`s social and ethical treatises devoted to the doctrine about public life ("The Treatise about views of inhabitants of a virtuous city", "The Book about happiness achievement", "Instructions of ways of happiness", "The Civil policy", "The Book about war and peace life", "The Book of studying society", "About virtuous morals"). Taking into account political and ethical ideas of Greek philosophers and social ideas of ancient East, al-Farabi developed the harmonious theory of the social system developing the doctrine about "virtuous city". In virtuous cities heads who are governors-philosophers aspire to achievement of true happiness for all inhabitants, there dominates good and justice, injustice and evil. Al-Farabi opposes virtuous cities to ignorant cities, where governors and inhabitants don`t realize true happiness and do not aspire to it, and pay attention only to physical health, pleasures and wealth.

Thinkers of all times address to the mentioned problem. So, person is the centre of philosophy of Abai Kunanbaev (1845 - 1904); Abai appeals "Adam bol!" ("Be a person!"). Here there is his accord with great East humanists who struggled for man`s rights and freedom, for his worthy existence. Abai marks the importance of person's moral qualities: "Justice is mother of all blessings. … Do not lose sense of justice; be not tired to create the good. Without justice there is no either belief or humanism" (Kunanbaev,1993).

Moral education does not cease to be actual in the modern world. The problem causes interest of many scientists of the 21st century. The works of A.A.Kuragina, T.I.Plaksina, V.V.Rybnikov, J.V.Fedina are devoted to developing moral values of students of higher educational institution; G.I.Fazylzyanova`s works concern formation of moral values of students by means of folk art; the works of N.G.Nabiulina, E.Z.Plotnikova, S.V.Sorosheva are devoted to moral education of college students. Moral development of students in Kazakhstan technical institutes is investigated by D.N.Kinitaeva; realization of social-pedagogical potential of institutes of civil society in moral education of students of Humanitarian Institutes is studied by A.J.Tulubaev; the works of H.J.Botasheva, A.L.Gorbachev, S.G.Suhanova are devoted to moral development of personality and formation of moral culture; L.V.Sibileva`s work deals with formation of readiness of students of pedagogical institutes to moral education of schoolchildren. At the same time many aspects of moral education of students of pedagogical higher educational institution, and in particular the use of possibilities of project-research activity in the given process are not studied enough.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research objectives and methods

For the goal to study the process of developing moral qualities of students of pedagogical higher educational institution the following objectives were set in our research:

1) analysis of scientific literature for concepts definition on the research problem, historiography and current state of the studied process;
2) working-out of methodical support of students` project-research activity on ethnopedagogics directed to development of their moral qualities;
3) experimental control of influence of specially organized students` project-research activity on ethnopedagogics on the level of development of their moral qualities and readiness for moral education of schoolchildren.

In our research the following methods have been used: theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the given problem; pedagogical modeling; pedagogical experiment; supervision over activity of students; method of expert evaluation; studying products of students` activity; questioning, interviewing; methods of statistical processing of results.

The usage of the interconnected complex of the mentioned theoretical and empirical methods adequate to the subject and research objectives has allowed to provide validity and reliability of its results. For this reason we used the given complex of methods for conducting our research.

2.2   Results and discussion

Moral education is directed to formation of such qualities of personality as spirituality and morals. Researchers notice that "earlier in pedagogics such concepts as spirituality, morals were not differentiated so clear as it was made by academician B.T.Likhachev" (Markova, 2006).

According to B.T.Likhachev spirituality is moral-aesthetic condition of person expressed in adherence to such values as freedom, humanism, social justice, truth, good, beauty, in the internal dialogue directed to knowledge of life meaning. Morality represents the complex social-psychological structure consisting of personal beliefs and emotional positions that "supervise" requirements and motives, and define person`s interests, his spiritual shape and the way of life. Morality "sets" person's inside behaviour, helps to resist pressure of negative external influences that provide self-esteem. Therefore morality can be defined as person`s belief in the necessity to adhere to moral standards in the relation to the world, people and to himself (Likhachev, 2010).

In the pedagogical dictionary spirituality is defined as "concept reflecting values and corresponding experience, opposite to empirical ("material"," natural") existence of man or at least different from him"; "spirituality is found out in man's look to supreme values, to an ideal, in conscious tendency of man to perfection" (Bim-Bad, 2003). The term "morality" is used as a synonym to the term "morals" (consciousness of person's duty before other people; one of the basic ways of regulation of person's actions in the society by means of norms), more rare - "ethics" (philosophical discipline studying morality) (Bim-Bad, 2003).

Researchers define the term "moral education" as "the purposeful pedagogical process promoting comprehension of higher spiritual human nature and the world, where transformation of student and instructor as subjects of own spiritual search takes place" (Omarova, 2010). There is also an opinion that "moral education is an organized and purposeful activity of teachers, parents and clergymen directed on formation of students` higher moral values, and also patriotic qualities"; thus the spiritual component reflects man's inner world, and the moral component is formed mainly by influences on consciousness, and influences external behaviour of the person, his relation to the world (Shirshov). Taking into account the secular character of our state (realizing the role of confessions as consolidating force of the modern society), we only partially agree with the mentioned characterization of moral education believing that it is first of all the activity of teachers and parents. Undoubtedly moral education in conditions of the subject-subject mutual relations of teachers and students is polyphonic, i.e. promotes spiritual development of all its subjects. Thus the moral component of moral education means orientation on formation of moral consciousness, moral senses and moral behaviour; the spiritual component assumes formation of system of person values, and it is the most difficult component in the structure of moral education. Therefore for revealing of essence of moral education it is necessary to refer to the theory of values (axiology).

Values are specifically social definitions of objects of the world environment that reveal their positive or negative meaning for man and society (blessing, good and evil, beautiful and ugly), existing in the phenomena of public life or nature (Rosental).

The category of value became the subject of philosophical learning in science since the 60s of the 20th century when the interest to problems of man, morals, humanism has increased. From the position of the humanistic paradigm in education students` universal values are supposed to be displayed and developed, they are the values significant not for the certain limited circle of people, but for all mankind. Such values (peace, health, motherland, education, etc.) are inherent in all social groups, but not equally shown. Some distinctions of their expression depend on features of cultural-historical development of this or that state, religious traditions and other factors. Therefore the approach to educational process from positions of universal values assumes its deideologization that is refusal of imposing certain views, beliefs, ideological views, and also accent on moral, intellectual, aesthetic development of personality on the basis of development of cultural heritage of all mankind.

Formation of moral qualities of youth in the conditions of higher educational institution demands the use of various forms of educational work. The curator hour is the basic form of educational work with students. Curator hours on moral education are regularly held in our institute according to plans of work of curators with student groups. Annually according to the plan students get acquainted with history and cultural life of the institute and Kostanai city during the organisation of excursions to museums and showrooms; there are meetings with veterans of pedagogical work; visiting theatres, philharmonic hall with the aim to develop a harmonious personality; participation in amateur performance among the collectives of the institute faculties; competitions of military-patriotic songs; organization and conducting events devoted to celebrating of national holidays; participation in city events.

Scientists note the basic importance of fixing valuable reorientation of the multinational society consisting in the following. "Growth of national consciousness of people, increase of interest to native culture, customs and traditions have made the problem of turning the society and man to ethnic moral and cultural values as priority". It is fair that fixing of the

given valuable reorientation "has put a strong and reliable basis" of moral development of the multinational society (Kalilakhanova, 2006), and has caused some interest of pedagogical community to national pedagogical culture. In professional-pedagogical education it has been realized by the introduction of the course of ethnopedagogics into the process of education.

Not presenting in detail the other aspects of studying of the given course in the pedagogical institute we`d like to note that we have assumed the following in our research. Developing moral qualities of student personality and their readiness as future teachers to moral education of schoolchildren will be more effective under condition of activization of students educational activity through involving of students into the project-research activity.

The importance of such activity proves to be true according to the opinion of scientists that today "project work gets into all humanitarian branches of scientific knowledge as the technology of modern culture and as the basis for creation of innovative systems with the use of which teachers see the solution of the problem of improvement of quality of education" (Yakovleva, 2008). Students build critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, problem solving, innovation and other skills (some include: flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-directed, accountability, leadership, responsibility, social and cross-cultural skills) needed for success in today's world (Montgomery, 2014).

Student project-research activity on ethnopedagogics is based on common didactic principles, on principles of voluntariness, choice possibility, personal interest, independence and initiative, cooperation, professional orientation, variability, publicity. The principle of voluntariness assumes voluntary participation of students in the project-research activity. The given principle is realized through giving students the choice - to perform a project according to the chosen theme or other tasks for independent work on some themes of the discipline according to the syllabus. The principle of choice opportunity provides students the right to choose one of the offered by the teacher project-research works or to offer the theme for project performance themselves. The given principle is connected with the principle of personal interest assuming the account of interests and possibilities of the student while choosing the theme and defining the content of the project activity. It is also closely connected with the principle of independence and initiative which allows to adapt the theme offered by the teacher for students` requirements, possibilities and interests in the course of its defining, and to develop creativity at all stages of the project performance defining the content and projecting the results of their own activity. The cooperation principle assumes giving opportunity to students to perform pair and group projects, and also to discuss the course and productivity of the project activity in the students group and with the teacher, realization of interaction and mutual aid in the course of work on the project. The principle of professional orientation provides acquisition of professional-pedagogical skills and development of professional significant qualities of student personality, and also acquisition of experience of professional work in the course of the project performance. The variability principle assumes possibility of the choice of the project theme; independent defining of its structure, content and results; the choice of the project type (research or creative) and the project performance level (the discipline level or the level of the problem-research group). The publicity principle assumes obligatory presentation of results of complete project-research work in the student group and presence of accurate criteria for assessment of the project performance quality. The work at the level of the problem-research group includes periodic discussion of the course and results of the project in the research group, participation in scientific student conferences, and also publication of projects results.

One of the important conditions of the effective organization of the student project-research activity on ethnopedagogics is its scientific and methodical support of the project-research activity of students which assumes working out and realization in the educational process of the institute of scientific and methodical materials directed to the rational organization of the project-research activity of students, and also individual consulting work of the teacher with students experiencing certain difficulties of scientific-methodical character in realization of the project-research activity.

The methodical materials developed by us for the organization of the project-research activity of students on ethnopedagogics include themes of project-research works and methodical recommendations about their performance, and also criteria of assessment of project-research works.

The specificity of a speciality is taking into account while choosing themes of projects. So, students of speciality "Computer science" were offered the themes connected with designing of electronic textbooks on various aspects of ethnopedagogics, and also the general theme "Possibilities of modern computer technologies in studying national pedagogics and their realization in the educational process of school" that assumed the opportunity for students to choose the concrete theme. The themes connected with development of national crafts and arts, studying of the national costume, ornament, etc. were developed for speciality "Vocational training". During working out of themes of project-research works we considered the multiple-aspect of researches of this or that phenomenon of national pedagogics. So, for the ornament studying future mathematicians were offered the themes connected with intellectual education, with geometrical construction of ornament elements; as for technologists there were the themes connected with labour education, technology of ornament making from various materials; geographers - comparison of ornamental art of various

nations, its uses in upbringing; historians - research of historical aspects of development of ornamental art and its educational value. At the same time we did not limit the choice of the theme of project-research work to students within the framework of their speciality. It has allowed realizing not only professional, but also personal orientation of project-research activity of students.

Methodical recommendations about performance of project-research works define the order of the organization of student activity at various stages of performance of the work: choice of the project theme and substantiation of its relevance; theoretical analysis of the problem of research; practical work of student; results; project presentation. While developing methodical recommendations about performance of project-research works on ethnopedagogics we projected the activity of students so that practical work on realization of the developed project had professional orientation, was carried out in educational organizations. For example, students while developing project "Traditions and ceremonies of the Kazakh people and forms of their studying in out-of-class activities at school" independently studied Kazakh national traditions and ceremonies. The practical part of the given project was to work out, conduct, and analyze the class hour devoted to the holiday Nauryz and the acquaintance of schoolchildren with traditions and ceremonies.

The students who wanted to continue the research have been involved in project-research activity on actual problems of ethnopedagogics within the limits of the research group. Their projects are distinguished by high enough level of the social, professional and personal importance. For example, the group of students during the project performance on the theme "Role of national traditions in modern education" on the basis of the research of activity of ethnocultural associations of Kostanai House of Friendship on preservation and strengthening of national traditions developed and realized a complex of educational actions for secondary comprehensive school on formation of moral qualities of pupil personality.

The students participating in the project-research activity were offered to answer the question: What does project-research activity give for your personal and professional development?

The answers formulated by the students were ranged according to significance value for the student (while processing of results the answer put by the student on the first place was considered) and on frequency of occurrence. The following results were received (see figure 1):
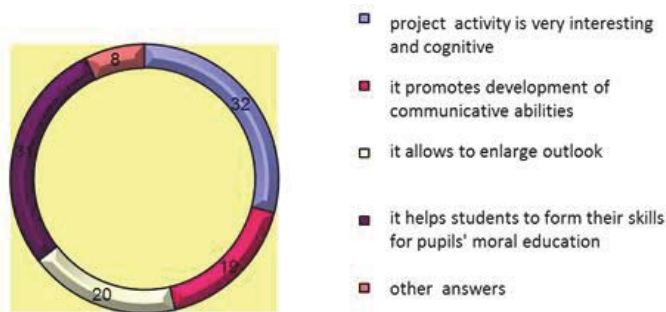

Figure 1. Results of student estimation of the value of project-research activity

For the purpose to check the efficiency of formation of moral qualities of students personality and readiness for moral education of pupils the second-year students of different specialities of the pedagogical institute studying ethnopedagogics have been divided into two groups: experimental and control. The students of the experimental group participated in the project-research activity at the level of studying discipline or in the research group. The students of the control group have not been involved into the project-research activity. The level of developed moral qualities of student personality such as humanism, justice, social activity, honesty, decency, tolerance, etc. was estimated with the use of methods of expert assessment, self-assessment and questioning. As a result we got the data based on the zero control (1 - before the experiment) and total control (2 – at the end of projects performance and studying of the course of ethnopedagogics) that testify more considerable increase of the level of developed mentioned qualities of students of the experimental group in comparison with the control one (see figure 2).
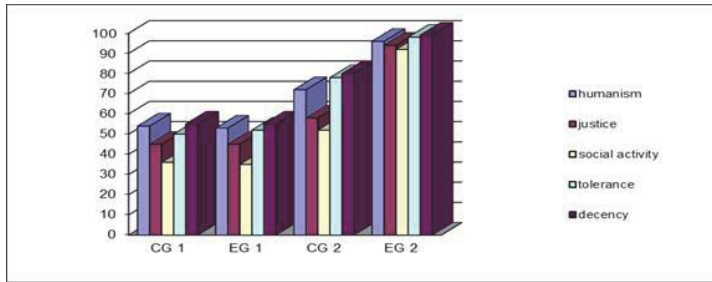
Figure 2. Level of developed moral qualities of student personality based on the zero and total control of the pedagogical experiment

With the aim to explore readiness of students - future teachers - to moral education of schoolchildren we have addressed to concept "readiness" in psychological and pedagogical literature and have tried to reveal criteria, indicators and levels of the investigated readiness.

In the psychological dictionary the term "readiness" is treated as active and effective condition of personality, orientation on certain behaviour (Dyachenko, 2006). For revealing the criteria of readiness of teachers to moral education of pupils we took into account the approach (K.M.Durai-Novakova, V.A.Slastenin) according to which readiness is defined not only by person orientation and certain knowledge, skills, but also by person qualities, and includes motivational (presence of requirements, interests, desire defining the positive relation to the chosen activity), theoretical (defines knowledge and their personal sense) and practical (represents the system of professional abilities) components.

Defining the criteria of readiness of teachers to moral education of pupils we also considered the research data of K.Z.Kozhahmetova who in moral education defines moral culture education, education of ethnic culture and education of tolerance and culture of interethnic interaction in the conditions of polyethnic and polyconfessional environment (Kozhakhmetova, 2013). She defined the following criteria of developed moral culture: acceptance and observance of standard moral norms; internal freedom in choosing of behaviour and acceptance of moral decision, autonomy, fidelity to belief and to himself as spiritual and socially responsible personality; active moral opposition of immorality; flexibility of moral thinking, ability to break moral dogmas, stereotypes, to values reorientation on the basis of truth and facts of life; comprehension of moral values of world religions (Kozhakhmetova, 2013). The criteria of developed ethnic culture are: ethnic consciousness, ethnic identity; knowledge of cultural heritage of the nation; interest of personality to ethnic and national culture; observance of customs and traditions of the nation; mother tongue competence; knowledge of rich ethnoculture of Kazakhstan (Kozhakhmetova, 2013).

We also considered the opinion of the scientists who believe that the structure of readiness of teacher to work in the polyethnic educational environment can be presented by the unity of the three components: valuable (belief in the importance of ethnopedagogical knowledge), behavioral (efficiency in the choice of the priority of values, forms of tolerant interaction in the conditions of polyethnic structure of pupils), reflective (adequate relation to himself and other people from the position of respect to person) (Berezhnova, 2013).

As a result of the theoretical researches and generalization of experience of moral education of students of pedagogical higher educational institutions we define the following criteria and indicators of readiness of future teachers to moral education of schoolchildren: motivational and valuable (acceptance and observance of standard moral norms; comprehension of common moral values; interest of personality to ethnic and national culture; belief in the importance of ethnopedagogical knowledge; requirement for activity on moral education of pupils); cognitive (ethical knowledge; knowledge of cultural heritage of the nation; knowledge of riches of world culture; ethnopedagogical knowledge; psychological and pedagogical knowledge); behavioral (active spiritual opposition of immorality; observance of customs and traditions of the nation; mother tongue competence; pedagogical abilities; efficiency in the choice of the priority of values, forms of tolerant interaction in the conditions of polyethnic structure of pupils); personal (humanism, justice, social responsibility, tolerance, flexibility of moral thinking).

During the pedagogical experiment with the experimental and control groups we got the results showing the higher level of developed readiness of future teachers of the experimental group to moral education of schoolboys at the total control (2EG) in comparison with the control group (2CG) with approximately identical results at the zero control (1EG and 1CG) (see figure 3).
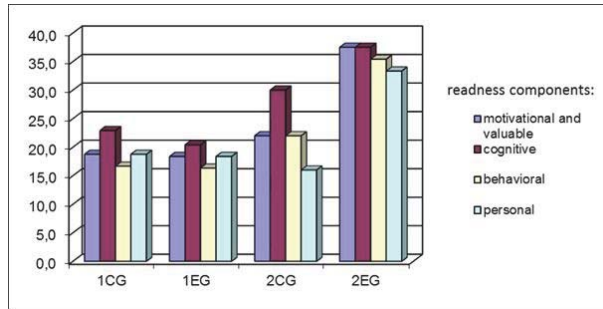
Figure 3. Readiness of future teachers for moral education of schoolboys at the zero and total control of the experiment

3. Conclusion

Thus, the problem of moral education has not lost its relevance in the modern world. Its importance is defined by sociopolitical changes in the society strengthening the necessity of morality formation, system of universal and national values, and also moral qualities of personality of the younger generation.

Moral education of students of pedagogical higher educational institution gets special sense as reflexion of requirement of the society in competent pedagogical staff with high level of moral qualities ready to transfer values and culture of the previous generations to new, younger generations.

The theoretical researches have allowed to organize effectively the process of moral education of students of the pedagogical institute both during the educational work with students, and in the course of organization of the project-research activity on ethnopedagogics. The conducted pedagogical experiment has confirmed the influence of the special organized activity for moral education of students on the efficiency of the process of formation of their moral qualities and the level of developed readiness of future teachers for moral education of schoolchildren.

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