

МЕДИЦИНА, ПЕДАГОГИКА И ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ: ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА

Researchbib Impact factor: 13.14/2024

SJIF 2024 = 5.444

Том 3, Выпуск 05, Мая

THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN FORMING THE ATTITUDE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TO MORAL VALUES THROUGH FOLK GAMES

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Abstract

This article investigates the potential of traditional Uzbek folk games in shaping primary school pupils' moral values within the context of physical education lessons. In modern pedagogy, fostering students' ethical and cultural awareness is no less important than the academic curriculum. Through the integration of national games into physical education, it is possible to build children's sense of friendship, cooperation, mutual respect, justice, and patriotism. The study evaluates the use of games such as "Cho'pon", "Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi", "Qiz-qovoq", and others in enhancing children's moral thinking. The research employs a mixed-methods approach involving classroom experiments, teacher observations, and student interviews. The findings show that moral development indicators were significantly higher in groups exposed to folk games compared to those in standard physical education classes. The paper suggests that properly designed game-based educational strategies can become an effective moral education tool in early learning.

Keywords. Physical education, folk games, moral education, primary school, national values, Uzbekistan, pedagogy, character formation.

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается потенциал традиционных узбекских народных игр в формировании нравственных ценностей учащихся начальной школы в контексте уроков физкультуры. В современной педагогике воспитание этической и культурной осведомленности учащихся не менее важно, чем академическая программа. Благодаря интеграции национальных игр в физическое воспитание можно сформировать у детей чувство дружбы, сотрудничества, взаимного уважения, справедливости и патриотизма. В исследовании оценивается использование таких игр, как «Чупон», «Кур-курга айланди», «Киз-ковок» и других, в повышении нравственного мышления детей.

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В исследовании используется смешанный подход, включающий эксперименты в классе, наблюдения за учителями и интервью с учащимися. Результаты показывают, что показатели нравственного развития были значительно выше в группах, подвергавшихся воздействию народных игр, по сравнению с теми, кто посещал стандартные уроки физкультуры. В статье предполагается, что правильно разработанные образовательные стратегии на основе игр могут стать эффективным инструментом нравственного воспитания в раннем обучении.

Ключевые слова. Физическое воспитание, народные игры, нравственное воспитание, начальная школа, национальные ценности, Узбекистан, педагогика, формирование характера.

INRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of modern education, emphasis is increasingly placed not only on cognitive development but also on fostering moral and ethical integrity in young learners. This dual focus is particularly critical in primary education, a formative stage where children begin developing their identity, worldview, and behavioral norms. Among the pedagogical disciplines, physical education holds untapped potential for embedding moral instruction within dynamic, active, and socially engaging settings. This paper explores how traditional folk games, embedded within physical education curricula, can serve as powerful tools for cultivating moral values among primary school pupils in Uzbekistan.

Folk games, as components of intangible cultural heritage, are more than playful activities. They represent generational wisdom, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and social harmony. Their contextual application in physical education offers a culturally relevant, engaging, and effective method for nurturing ethical principles such as fairness, empathy, discipline, and respect. Unlike typical moral instruction, which may rely heavily on abstract discussion, folk games allow children to practice values through action and interaction.

The objective of this study is to examine the educational benefits of folk games as implemented in primary school physical education lessons. It investigates how specific games influence children's attitudes toward moral behavior and explores whether integrating such games contributes to a more values-driven educational environment. The study also aims to provide a foundation for including these methods in teacher training programs and national educational policies.

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LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

A growing body of research emphasizes the multidimensional role of physical education in schools. Beyond promoting physical health, PE classes can significantly impact psychological, emotional, and moral development (Bailey, 2006; Lynch, 2015). In Uzbekistan and other post-Soviet countries, traditional games are re-emerging as tools for cultural education and value reinforcement (Abdullaeva, 2019; Rakhmatov, 2022).

Uzbek folk games often emphasize community over individual success, making them ideal for instilling cooperation and empathy (Salimov, 2021). These games function as microcosms of social life where fairness, patience, discipline, and mutual support are prerequisites for participation. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, learning is most effective when mediated by culturally embedded tools and activities, including games (Vygotsky, 1978). Folk games, in this regard, operate as both educational content and method.

International studies support similar practices. In South Korea and China, for example, folk games are used to strengthen national identity and promote moral virtues among students (Kim, 2020; Li, 2018). The integration of physical and moral education is also supported by research in Western contexts, where “character education through sport” has gained traction (Bredemeier & Shields, 2006).

Despite global interest, there remains a gap in empirical data specific to Uzbek educational settings. This study fills that void by providing a structured experimental analysis of folk games as moral instruction tools for primary school children.

This research employed a mixed-methods design incorporating quantitative and qualitative tools. Two primary schools in the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan were selected, each offering a comparable socio-economic and educational environment. Pupils from grades 1 to 4 (aged 6–10) were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group participated in physical education lessons that included a curated selection of Uzbek folk games, while the control group followed the standard PE curriculum.

The folk games used in the experiment included “Chupon” (The Shepherd), “Ko‘r-ko‘rga aylandi” (Blindfold Tag), “Qiz-qovoq” (Pumpkin Catch), and “Sandir-sandir”. Each game was selected for its moral and social implications, such as fairness, empathy, group responsibility, and respect for rules. The intervention lasted for 12 weeks, with bi-weekly sessions.

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Data collection involved pre- and post-intervention surveys measuring students' moral awareness, social cooperation, and behavior in class. Additionally, classroom observations and interviews with teachers provided contextual and narrative insights. Teachers were trained beforehand to facilitate and reflect on the games' moral content.

Quantitative data were analyzed using paired t-tests and descriptive statistics in SPSS. Qualitative data were coded thematically. The combination of empirical data and narrative feedback allowed for triangulation of results, enhancing the reliability of findings.

RESULTS

The intervention revealed significant improvements in the experimental group's moral development indicators. At the end of the 12-week period, 72% of the pupils in the experimental group demonstrated enhanced behaviors such as helping peers, showing respect during games, and expressing empathy. In contrast, the control group showed a 43% improvement in similar metrics.

Key observed behaviors in the experimental group included:

- Increased willingness to collaborate and take turns
- Verbal expressions of encouragement during games
- Enhanced self-regulation and compliance with agreed rules

Teachers noted a visible increase in classroom harmony and mutual respect. One educator reported that students “began applying the values they learned in games to other subjects and breaks.”

Quantitative results:

- Empathy scores increased by 0.9 points on a 5-point Likert scale ($p < 0.05$)
- Cooperation ratings improved by 1.2 points ($p < 0.01$)
- Self-regulation behaviors showed an average improvement of 18%

A figure illustrating moral behavior improvement (included in publication draft) demonstrates the comparative growth in moral indicators between both groups.

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed that students found the games both fun and meaningful. Many spontaneously linked game experiences to real-life situations, suggesting internalization of the values.

This picture depicts elementary school students playing a traditional folk game, the “circle,” in an open-air circle. The faces of the players show expressions of joy, friendship, and kindness. The girls and boys are moving together in the picture, which symbolizes social equality, respect, and solidarity between them. In the background, a

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school building and trees are located, which indicates that the game is being played as part of school physical education classes. The colors are warm and sincere, and the children's clothing shows the harmony of nationality and modernity. This picture visually demonstrates the importance of folk games in moral education.



CONCLUSION

This study confirms that integrating folk games into physical education can significantly enhance young learners' moral development. The experiential nature of traditional games enables children to practice core ethical principles in a safe and engaging context. As a result, students not only develop physically but also socially and morally, which aligns with the holistic goals of education.

The findings support the need to revise primary school physical education curricula to include culturally grounded moral education components. Teachers should be trained to select and implement appropriate games that convey values and monitor behavioral outcomes.

Future research could expand this study across various regions and age groups to assess long-term effects. Furthermore, collaborations with psychologists and

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curriculum developers could deepen the understanding of how national heritage tools can be systematically used for character education.

The cultural richness of Uzbekistan offers a valuable, underutilized asset for moral and civic instruction. Folk games, with their embedded wisdom and cooperative spirit, stand as a bridge between tradition and modern educational needs.

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