Original Contribution

VALUE LANDMARKS OF 5-7 YEAR OLDS

G. Georgieva*
Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT
Children's value landmarks are a major factor in their personal construction in preschool and subsequent periods of development. This report attempts to assess the moral development of 5-7 year olds by analyzing the responses they received regarding a moral case proposed by the teacher. Placed in the same situation, children demonstrate different views about their peers' behavior towards others and how they would react to their loved ones (brother or sister). Their responses are influenced by the values acquired in the family and educational environment. The fact that they are an only child in the family, whether they have siblings, what is the value system of their parents, grandparents, also influences moral information.

Key words: value, orientation, family, educational institution,

INTRODUCTION
Questions about value landmarks in preschool children are the subject of a number of studies (E. Petrova, I. Koleva, S. Rubinstein). One part of the research focuses on the problems of the formation of value orientation in the educational institution, which in this case is the kindergarten, and another part in the family environment. These two orientations are important in studying the value system of children at 5-7 years of age.

In this publication we present results obtained in the study of the value system of children in 5-7 years of age in educational institutions under the influence of the family environment. Value is an important structural element of behavior. Interiorized with a certain value is the first stage on the road to transformation and into conscious behavior. This is a process in which it comes to the fore and becomes the subject of information processing in the psyche. Therefore, the question arises whether it is necessary to form in the modern child virtues that are present on a daily basis in his actions and behaviors?

The child masters values by communicating with adults, peers, in the family environment, and in kindergarten, with art, and the help of media and literature. Preschool is a period in which the foundations of spiritual personality building are laid. Pre-school childhood is of particular importance in the process of human inclusion in moral values. During this self-assessment period, the child "looks" into the world of "good" and "beauty", learns what "should" and what "should not" do, this is the period where the child is introduced into social relations. In this period of moral socialization of adolescents its responsible place occupies the kindergarten. It provides opportunities for the child to apply what adults learn in a children's society, in specific relationships and actions. In the kindergarten, pedagogical conditions are created to enrich the social experience of the children and to ennoble the children's mentality.

For decades, pedagogical theory and practice in Bulgaria have been based on the thesis that the game is a leading activity in preschool. This staging stems from the activity concept developed by the Russian psychologists S. Rubinstein, A. Leontiev, etc. According to the activity approach, each age period has a certain type of activity that is crucial for development.

The game as a form of self-organization takes precedence over the rest, forms, because it makes it possible to provide, above all, the very life of children, their autonomy and activity.
Free games are where the true autonomy of preschoolers arises.
The problem with the game as a form of organizing children's lives is among the new questions the researchers are looking at. A. P. Usova defines the game as a form for organizing the lives of preschoolers and identifies the following features of the game as a form of self-organization:
adolescents voluntarily unite to play;
the children are initiators of the game design and the means for its realization;
in the joint game activity, the players choose the leader themselves and voluntarily obey him;
every child knows his place in the collective game;
in the game there is co-submission, with everyone knowing who they are leading and who they need to obey.

There is a close link between the absorption of moral orientations and the mental education carried out within the framework of pedagogical interaction in the educational process. Children's intellect develops as a priority in the leading preschool game activity.

"The game is also essential for mental education. While the child is playing, he is not only having fun, but also learning. When accepting a certain role, it recreates its impressions of the reality in game behavior, both in the direction of organizing the environment and in the direction of the relationship from the position of the role assumed. In the game develop the main forms of thinking and their mutual connections. The child thinks, judges, reproduces the remembered life situation. Intuitive decisions are very important in game activity, as they compensate for the lack of knowledge to recreate the image from the position of the accepted role, while at the same time prompting the child to search for and find new life dependencies. But in order for intuition to appear, it takes continuous work aimed at developing perception, logical memory, ideas and imagination. When reality is perceived, there must be a connection between understanding the meaning of phenomena and emotional attitude towards them". (1)

In children's society, the children are taught the skills to act collectively and united. They learn to set a common goal, exhibit mutual control in the performance of the commitments undertaken through the role and the design, observe the rules and consistency of the game action. In the playing children's society, the mechanisms of behavior related to self-assessment and self-education begin to manifest. Also manifest are the first elements of self-education. In this society, the need for communication is also strengthening, and voluntary participation in the game becomes a prerequisite for responsiveness and mutual assistance. The development of the game as a form of self-organization of children makes it possible to create a playing children's collective. Depending on the degree of development of cognitive processes and the specifics of the activity, different forms can be used to teach skills in children to design the upcoming activity.

"The need of the cubs to play is so strong that they create game worlds even without toys: improvising using household items (it can be played, for example, with real utensils, with pieces of cloth, etc.), natural materials (pebbles, cones), modeling (rag doll, ball). Noticing this natural tendency of children to make the surrounding reality, adults from ancient times began to make objects specially designed for play – toys." (2)

Toys, in turn, reflect the world of the big ones, how they behave in a situation when working with certain tools and their attitude, both to their surroundings and to their human environment. E. Petrova and F. Dascalova define the toy as a generalized and schematic image of objects of the environment, adapted to the peculiarities of children, through which they model human actions and relationships. Some toys can also be accepted as works of art, such as images that combine harmoniously plastic shapes and colors. (3)

"The game is an inseparable component of childhood that contributes, among other activities, to the elementary well-being of children, to their creative realization." (4)

According to I. Milensky, the game has four main features:
- Free and independent activity – children choose their own theme of play.
- Reflective and modeling – children with the game reflect the actions of those around them and model their relationships.
- Creative – with this game children demonstrate guessing, ingenuity and wits.
- Games of an emotional nature – this type of games are collective games in which they express – responsiveness, fairness, team play.

These characteristics of game activity make it an effective means of exercising moral acts and moral behavior. Responsiveness, fairness, team play are of great importance for the value development of children, especially in preschool.

METHODOLOGY
In order to study and analyze the value orientations and moral development of 5-7 year old children, a survey was conducted covering 19 children (8 girls and 11 boys) from the third group of kindergarten "Sunny home" Veliko Tarnovo. The tasks conditioned by this objective were:

I. To study and analyze the moral norms and notions of preschoolers.
II. To characterize the value orientation of children from 5-7 years of age.

Enabling these tasks required answering questions: To what extent were moral notions formed in children that were correct and wrong? Do they know certain values and how do they educate themselves in them?

In order to realize the purpose of the survey with the children in the group, a preparatory lecture was held /to describe the discourse/ including the following questions to the children:

- "What do we know about good deeds?"
- "If I take Petya's toy, is that a good thing or a bad thing?"
- "Why do you think that's a bad thing?"

The children were offered the following moral case:

- Today, during free games and activities, the children of the group built a city of cubes, some constructed high apartment blocks, others built large shopping centers from where they shopped and third garages in which they parked their cars. Only Iva stood on the sidelines and watched the children's game without participating in it. She was repeatedly invited by her comrades to join their construction work. When it came time for the children to finish their game to put the cubes in their boxes, they asked Iva to join in the harvest so that they could finish faster. And here comes the moment of discussion – the teacher puts the children in a situation where Iva has responded to her peers with the following words:

'I haven't played with these toys and I'm not going to help put them away.'

Once the children were familiar with the case, each answered the following questions, and the answers were further analysed.

- "Is Iva doing the right thing in this situation?"
- "Is it right or wrong?"
- "How do you rate her response as "positive" or "negative"?"
- "If Iva has to help her peers, then why justify yourself"?

According to the content of the replies received and their respective justification, the following three levels were formulated for assessing moral development (Figure 1).

I. High level: Iva does not do the right thing by refusing she should help although she will not have played with the cubes in question (justified for her answer).

II. Middle level: Iva does not do the right thing by refusing she should help although she will not have played with the cubes in question (can not be justified for her answer).

III. Low level: Evaluates Iva's response as correct, cannot distinguish right from wrong.

Results and discussion:
The results obtained from the analysis of children's responses are presented in Figure 1. Of the 19 children who participated in the study, 3 demonstrated a high level of moral development, 13 of them fell into the average level and the rest were in the low level.

The analysis here shows that the majority of children (68%) understand this situation, can determine whether it is right or wrong, but cannot justify why they think so. In our opinion, the reason for this is the fact that in the surrounding environment, in communication adults rarely justify the reasons for why they define an act as good or bad. It is rare for children to be inciting critical thinking, including the actions of others.
As another good reason, we can accept the disinterest of a large number of parents in influencing the moral development of their children with the help of fiction. A small proportion of young parents devote the necessary time to introducing children to literary works of high artistic value, supporting the moral formation of the child's personality. Very often this time is replaced by games with innovative electronic devices (tablets, phones, laptops, etc.)

A small proportion of children who participated in the study demonstrated a high level of moral development (16%), understood the case and justified themselves very well. They fall into the group of children with a high level of moral development. The relationships of these children with their peers in the group are distinguished by manifestations of responsiveness, selflessness, striving for help. During the talks related to the analysis of the actions of characters from literary works, they are actively involved in full sentences, correct statements and their own argumentation adequate to their age characteristics. Observations on relations in the family testify to a well-carried family upbringing, including the introduction of children to a wide range of works of fiction.

The social interaction of the child and the family is the basis for the formation of social relations. "The way they are formed varies from culture to culture, but there is one general rule – the maturation of the child is related to complicating these relationships, so that the relationship with other members of the cultural community becomes more effective. The behaviour of adults provides a role model for the child that is culturally valuable". (5)

A low level of moral development was observed in 16% of children who participated in the pedagogical experiment. They can't distinguish between good and bad, properly appreciate Iva's doing, argue. In relationships with their peers, they often exhibit aggression (verbal and physical), in many cases do not demonstrate socially acceptable behavior. For this reason, quite often they are isolated from other children in group games and are not a preferred partner. In order to correct this behavior, discussions are held with these children during which the educator analyzes the technohavior in order to be aware of it. The parents of these children have a disinterest in their behavior and learned moral norms. This requires the search for new forms of interaction with them.

CONCLUSION
"Full education is seen and carried out as an example and communication of adults with children, in which they, of their own free will and inner satisfaction, are involved in the perceived, experienced need to follow it and
make efforts to acquire the necessary qualities and skills” (6).

"A person is not born of a certain nature. Character traits are not conveyed by inheritance, but are built in a person's individual life. Just because often children look like their parents or other relatives does not mean that they have acquired their character by virtue of biological heredity. It means, however, that they have been influenced by living conditions, in particular by the example of others, and certain character traits have formed in them". (7)

The results of the survey prove the need to implement a system of targeted pedagogical interactions in the educational process in kindergarten, aimed at the full moral formation of the child's personality according to the requirements of modern society. No less important in this case is also the promotion of the pedagogical culture of parents.

Insufficient communication in the family on issues related to the manifestations of low morality also has a negative impact on the moral aspects of children's behavior. For the elimination of this deficit, it is recommended to conduct talks with parents by a pedagogical specialist and a psychologist of the kindergarten.

One wise man said, "Pedagogy is not science, but a state of the soul." The life of the parent-educator and the educator is filled with work and happiness, with the happiness of the artist who creates the most expensive on earth: the child's soul. And if someone's heart lacks the natural sense of happiness, then we're doing something wrong - we're wrong. We need to change many things in our lives, in our behavior, in our own attitudes to the surrounding world, not to pass on our failures, our parental and pedagogical inedification to children. Children are the appreciation for our whole lives, its meaning and continuation.

REFERENCES