CURRENT CHALLENGES OF INSTILLING NATIONAL VALUES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

To'ychiyeva Shoxidaxon Qaxramon qizi
Fergana Region Pedagogical Skills Centre, teacher
Email: shohidatuychiyeva95@gmail.com
Telephone: +998 93 640 78 89

Abstract: This paper examines the pedagogical challenges of instilling national values in preschool children in the information environment. It considers how digital content shapes children's value orientations and where cooperation between kindergartens and families breaks down. The need to improve methods for developing national identity in older preschool groups is substantiated.

Keywords: preschool children, national values, national identity, information environment, digital content, early childhood education.

Introduction:

Preschool age is the period in which a child first absorbs the language, customs and moral norms of their community. Today, however, this process unfolds in a very different setting from that of previous generations. Children in Uzbekistan, as elsewhere, encounter cartoons, video platforms, mobile games and social media from an early age, and a large share of this content is produced outside the child's own cultural context. As a result, the symbols, heroes and behavioural models that children admire are increasingly drawn from foreign cultures, while national characters, folk narratives and traditions occupy a smaller place in their daily experience.

Research on early childhood development has long stressed that a child's values form within several interacting environments, from family and kindergarten to the wider cultural and media context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and that cultural tools such as language, stories and play mediate the child's development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Today, digital media have become one of the most influential of these tools. UK-based studies of young children's use of touchscreen apps show that such technology can support play and creativity when used purposefully (Marsh et al., 2015), while paediatric guidance stresses the importance of content quality and adult involvement in young children's media use (Council on Communications and Media, 2016). These findings suggest that the question is not whether children should encounter digital media, but what cultural content they meet there and how adults mediate it.

In Uzbekistan, the Law "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" (2019) and the Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System until 2030 set the task of comprehensive child development, which includes education in national values. Yet a scientifically grounded methodology for achieving this task in the information environment remains insufficiently developed. This paper therefore outlines the key problems that justify a new methodological approach for children aged five to seven.

Main part:

1. Imbalance between media content and national values. The animated and video content that children watch most often contains few national images, little of the native language, and few examples of local customs and moral behaviour. A child who spends much of their leisure time with such material may come to regard foreign characters as ideal models, while the heroes of folk tales and national traditions seem distant and less attractive.

2. Theoretical and methodological gaps. Criteria, levels and diagnostic tools for national identity at preschool age have not been clearly defined. Identity has been studied in depth in adolescents and adults (Phinney, 1990), but approaches suited to the cognitive and emotional characteristics of children aged five to seven are scarce. Existing pedagogical studies focus mainly on folklore and general moral education, and the influence of the information environment is rarely incorporated into the methodology.

3. Insufficient preparation of educators. Kindergarten teachers often lack practical experience in selecting digital content, adapting it to the aims of national upbringing, and teaching children to engage with media critically. Training programmes rarely treat media literacy and cultural education as a single, integrated competence.

4. A gap between kindergarten and family. Much of the child's screen time takes place at home, where parents often have little pedagogical guidance on choosing content or on reinforcing national values through everyday family practices such as storytelling, shared meals, holidays and respect for elders. Without coordinated action, the kindergarten's educational influence is weakened.

5. Lack of integration between traditional and modern means. Folk games, tales, lullabies and proverbs remain powerful educational tools, but they are seldom combined with modern digital formats. Presented only in traditional ways, they may lose appeal for children accustomed to dynamic visual media; presented through well-designed national animation and interactive materials, they can regain their attractiveness.

Conclusion:

The identified challenges indicate the need for a new methodology for developing national identity in older preschool and school-preparation groups under the conditions of the information environment. The planned research includes: (1) developing criteria, indicators and a diagnostic tool for assessing national identity in children aged five to seven; (2) creating a methodology that integrates folk games, tales and national animated content; (3) preparing methodological recommendations for educators and parents; and (4) testing the effectiveness of the methodology through a pedagogical experiment with experimental and control groups.

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