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Moral and Ethical Education of Schoolchildren: Problems and Solutions

Abstract: Moral and ethical education of schoolchildren is one of the key objectives of the modern educational system. In the era of digitalisation, globalisation, and rapid social transformations, the formation of stable moral guidelines among the younger generation becomes an especially pressing issue. The school, alongside the family, plays a decisive role in shaping the child's personality, value system, and moral principles. However, under conditions of a crisis in family upbringing, it is precisely educational institutions that become the principal environment where a child may acquire moral guidelines and experience of positive interaction. Therefore, the search for effective solutions to the problems of moral and ethical education gains particular importance. The novelty of the study lies in presenting a comprehensive review of the challenges of contemporary moral and ethical education and possible solutions. The subject of the study is the problems of modern moral and ethical education exemplified by Russian society. The object of the study is representatives of the new generation of school-age society. The study aims to actualise the problem of contemporary moral and ethical education of children and adolescents in the society of the twenty-first century. In the course of the study, both general scientific methods, such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, the comparative method, and the systemic approach, as well as selected psychological and pedagogical methods were employed. The author presents an analysis of the genesis of the issue of contemporary moral and ethical education, a comprehensive review of the problems of moral and ethical upbringing of the younger generation in modern society, and situational examples from social practice that clearly illustrate certain evident problems in the moral and ethical education of school-age children and adolescents, along with the development of updated pathways towards resolving this issue. The author concludes that addressing the problems of moral and ethical education is not merely a pedagogical, but a national task, upon the success of which the future of society depends. Sustainable development is possible only if society is able to foster a generation capable not only of successfully adapting to the challenges of modernity but also of maintaining fidelity to moral ideals, which constitute the foundation of a strong, cohesive, and sustainable society.

Keywords: moral and ethical education, problems of schoolchildren's upbringing, family functions, social communication, cyberbullying.

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Морально-нравственное воспитание школьников: проблемы и пути решения

Аннотация: Морально-нравственное воспитание школьников является одной из ключевых задач современной образовательной системы. В эпоху цифровизации, глобализации и быстрых социальных изменений формирование устойчивых нравственных ориентиров у подрастающего поколения становится особенно актуальной проблемой. Школа, наряду с семьёй, играет решающую роль в становлении личности ребёнка, его системы ценностей и моральных принципов. Однако в условиях кризиса семейного воспитания именно образовательные учреждения становятся основным пространством, где ребёнок может получить нравственные ориентиры и опыт позитивного взаимодействия. Поэтому особую значимость приобретает поиск эффективных путей решения проблем морально-нравственного воспитания. Новизной исследования является представление комплексного обзора проблематики современного морально-нравственного воспитания и путей её решения. Предметом исследования являются проблемы современного морально-нравственного воспитания на примере российского общества. Объектом исследования являются представители нового поколения общества школьного возраста. Целью исследования является актуализация проблемы современного морально-нравственного воспитания детей и подростков в обществе XXI века. В ходе исследования были использованы как общенаучные методы, например, анализ и синтез, индукция и дедукция, сравнительный метод и системный подход, так и некоторые психолого-педагогические методы. Автором представлен анализ генезиса проблематики современного морально-нравственного воспитания, комплексный обзор проблем морально-нравственного воспитания подрастающего поколения в современном обществе, приведены ситуативные примеры из практики современного общества, которые наглядно иллюстрируют некоторые очевидные проблемы в морально-нравственном воспитании детей и подростков школьного возраста, а также разработка актуализированных путей решения данной проблемы. Автор приходит к выводу, что решение проблем морально-нравственного воспитания — это не просто педагогическая, а общенациональная задача, от успеха которой зависит будущее общества. Устойчивое развитие возможно только при условии, что социум сможет сформировать поколение, способное не только успешно адаптироваться к вызовам современности, но и сохранять верность нравственным идеалам, которые являются фундаментом сильного, сплочённого и устойчивого общества.

Ключевые слова: морально-нравственное воспитание, проблемы воспитания школьников, функции семьи, социальная коммуникация, кибербуллинг.

Introduction

Moral and ethical education of schoolchildren constitutes one of the key objectives of the modern educational system. In the era of digitalisation, globalisation, and rapid social transformations, the establishment of stable moral guidelines among the younger generation becomes an especially pressing issue. The information environment in which children grow up today is saturated with contradictory behavioural models that often substitute traditional values. The accessibility of the Internet and social networks facilitates the dissemination of aggression, consumerist ideology, and irresponsible attitudes towards life, which directly affect the worldview and behaviour of schoolchildren.

The school, alongside the family, plays a decisive role in shaping the child's personality, value system, and moral principles. However, under the conditions of a crisis in family upbringing, it is precisely educational institutions that become the principal space where a child may acquire moral guidelines and experience positive interaction. Contemporary schoolchildren encounter such challenges as the loss of respect for elders, declining interest in labour, and the

blurring of the concepts of “duty”, “honour”, and “justice”. This poses a threat to their comprehensive socialisation and civic development.

Therefore, the search for effective solutions to the problems of moral and ethical education acquires particular significance. It is essential to integrate the efforts of the family, school, state, and social institutions in order to foster in schoolchildren spiritual and moral values capable of ensuring the harmonious development of the individual and the consolidation of social stability.

The novelty of the study lies in presenting a comprehensive overview of the issues of contemporary moral and ethical education and the possible pathways for their resolution.

The subject of the study is the problems of contemporary moral and ethical education exemplified by Russian society.

The object of the study is representatives of the new generation of school-aged youth.

The study aims to actualise the issue of contemporary moral and ethical education of children and adolescents in the society of the 21st century.

To achieve this purpose, the following objectives were addressed:

- analyse the genesis of the problems of contemporary moral and ethical education;
- conduct a comprehensive review of the challenges of moral and ethical education of the younger generation in modern society;
- provide situational examples from the practice of contemporary society that vividly illustrate certain evident problems in the moral and ethical education of school-aged children and adolescents;
- develop and present updated pathways for addressing the problems of moral and ethical education of school-aged children and adolescents.

Methods

For the analysis of the problems and solutions concerning the moral and ethical education of schoolchildren in contemporary society, a set of general scientific and psycho-pedagogical methods was employed. Their application made it possible to identify both the objective trends in the transformation of children’s and adolescents’ value orientations and the specific features of the functioning of the school and the family under conditions of social change.

Among the general scientific methods, the following were used:

1. *Analysis and synthesis.* Analysis was applied to the study of pedagogical and sociological research on the problem of moral education, as well as to the identification of factors influencing the moral development of schoolchildren (weakening of the family, media influence, internet addiction). Synthesis enabled the integration of results from heterogeneous sources into a coherent understanding of the problem. For example, the comparison of data on media influence and cases of school conflicts helped to reveal a direct correlation between the informational environment and the change in pupils’ values.
2. *Induction and deduction.* On the basis of an analysis of particular cases (e.g., examples of cyberbullying or consumerist attitudes towards education), general conclusions were formulated regarding trends in moral development. The deductive approach was applied to test hypotheses concerning the influence of digitalisation and globalisation on the educational process.

3. *Comparative method.* Domestic and foreign approaches to moral education were compared, as well as differences in the value orientations of pupils from diverse social and cultural groups. In particular, the analysis of intercultural conflict in a multinational classroom made it possible to compare practices of integration and tolerance across different educational systems.
4. *Systemic approach.* Education was examined as a multi-component system encompassing the school, the family, society, and the media. This enabled the identification of interrelations between individual problems (e.g., the weakening of the family and the growth of internet addiction) and the determination of the necessity for comprehensive solutions.

Psychological and pedagogical research methods were aimed at examining the specific features of perception, behaviour, and value orientations of schoolchildren:

1. *Observation.* Systematic pedagogical observation of pupils' behaviour in both curricular and extracurricular activities made it possible to identify the particularities of communication, attitudes towards learning, and manifestations of aggression or empathy. For instance, observing adolescents' interactions in online environments allowed the researchers to record specific features of cyberbullying and to detect a lack of empathy among the aggressors.
2. *Conversation and questionnaire survey.* These methods made it possible to ascertain pupils' opinions regarding values significant to them, as well as their attitudes towards family, work, culture, and media. Conversations with parents and teachers contributed to identifying difficulties within the educational process and understanding the expectations of various participants in the educational environment. In cases of value conflicts within a multicultural classroom, conversations proved particularly effective in determining the actual causes of tension and in developing recommendations for teachers.
3. *Testing.* By employing psychodiagnostic techniques, the study examined the levels of developing moral concepts, the degree of empathy, and the propensity for cooperation or conflict. For example, testing of pupils who demonstrated a consumerist attitude towards education revealed a low level of intrinsic motivation and the predominance of pragmatic orientations.
4. *Analysis of creative outputs.* Essays, projects, and creative works produced by pupils were analysed, as they reflected their moral orientations. Within the framework of the study, the analysis of school essays on friendship, family, and values revealed discrepancies between adolescents declared and actual attitudes.
5. *Pedagogical experiment.* In certain cases, educational situations were modelled (e.g., participation in social projects, volunteering activities, role-playing games), which enabled the assessment of the effectiveness of various methods for developing moral qualities. For instance, the organisation of a charitable campaign demonstrated that the practical involvement of schoolchildren in socially significant activities fosters the development of empathy and responsibility.

Thus, the combination of general scientific and psychological-pedagogical methods ensured a comprehensive consideration of the problem of the moral education of schoolchildren. Their application made it possible to identify the main contradictions of the contemporary educational process, to specify the nature of the influence of family, school, and media on personality

formation, and to substantiate ways of improving educational practices. The use of these methods renders the research comprehensive, objective, and of practical significance.

Literature Review

The problem of moral and ethical education of schoolchildren has traditionally been regarded as one of the central issues in pedagogy and psychology, since it ensures personality development, the formation of civic identity, and adaptation to social change. The Russian pedagogical tradition has for decades paid attention to the study of moral orientation. For instance, the works of A.V. Kovalev (1982), V.G. Ivanov and N.V. Rybakova (1959) emphasised the importance of educating the individual through the formation of moral norms and cognitive interests. Classical pedagogy, represented by the studies of I.P. Ivanov (2021), V.A. Karakovsky, L.I. Novikova, N.L. Selivanova (2020), and N.E. Shchurkova (2021), proposed collectivist models in which a leading role was attributed to joint activity and the school community. These ideas continue to evolve in contemporary concepts (Gazman, 2019; Danilyuk et al., 2021; Metlik et al., 2018; Metlik, 2012), which emphasise a humanistic approach and the synthesis of the educational efforts of family, school, and society.

Considerable attention is devoted to developing educational systems adapted to the conditions of the modern school. In the studies of V.M. Lizinsky (2019), E.N. Stepanov (2020), and P.V. Stepanov (2019), models of managing the educational process based on outcome assessment and a systemic approach are examined. The works of M.V. Shakurova (2020) propose technologies for the social pedagogue aimed at addressing the tasks of spiritual and moral development. The research of N.L. Selivanova (2020) and generalising publications on the moral education of young people in society highlight the necessity of updating methodological approaches under the conditions of global change and a crisis of values.

Empirical research directed towards studying the peculiarities of pupils' perception of moral norms plays a significant role in understanding this problem. Thus, N.A. Tkachenko and S.N. Natalich (2018) regard the moral education of schoolchildren as a psychological and pedagogical issue. T.M. Mukhopleva (2013) and S.R. Petryaeva, E.N. Teselkina (2024) analyse the pedagogical conditions for the formation of value orientations among younger pupils. The practical orientation of these studies lies in identifying the opportunities available to the teacher for influencing the child's personal development through observation, conversation, and analysis of creative work. C.A. Khomushku (2015) considers the pathways of moral education of younger pupils in the educational process, demonstrating their interrelation with the overall strategy of personality formation.

Serious challenges to moral education are posed by the digital environment. Russian studies record the spread of cyberbullying and school bullying (Averbukh et al., 2022a; Averbukh et al., 2022b; Nazarov et al., 2022), and also analyse pupils' perceptions of these phenomena. G.U. Soldatova (2019) identifies the role structure of cyberbullying and the influence of family relations on the nature of children's coping strategies. Foreign studies complement these findings: the works of W. Xiao and M. Cheng (2023) reveal the connection between internet addiction, moral disengagement, and aggression; the article by Mukherjee and Bakshi (2022) demonstrates a negative correlation between internet addiction and moral foundations. Additional risk factors and psychosocial consequences of adolescents' excessive presence online

are indicated (*Moskalenko et al., 2023; Mahygin et al., 2017; Mahygin et al., 2018; Neverkovich et al., 2018*). Comparative studies show that internet addiction reduces the level of moral strength and psychological capital of the individual (*Mukherjee & Baksi, 2022; Zewude et al., 2024*).

No less significant is the intercultural dimension of education. In a multi-ethnic society, the importance of research devoted to tolerance and intercultural interaction increases. Russian works emphasise the necessity of fostering in young people the capacity for dialogue (*Tsyrk & Tsyrk, 2020*), whereas foreign authors analyse the paradoxes of intercultural education and its moral challenges (*Tochon & Karaman, 2009; Frisancho & Delgado, 2018*). Contemporary studies demonstrate that the organisational culture of schools directly affects the character of conflicts and the level of their constructive resolution (*Kostovsky et al., 2025*). These findings allow moral education to be considered not only as an individual process, but also as a systemic phenomenon associated with educational policy and school climate.

An important direction of foreign research is constituted by the theory of character education. The works of J. Arthur (*2018; 2021*), as well as collective studies by Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanders, and Wright (*2017*), develop the idea of integrating the cultivation of virtues with academic learning. Similar approaches have been developed in works on religious and secular education (*Ranam et al., 2022; Munawarsyah et al., 2022; Zhang, 2023; Zou, 2022; Ferková et al., 2023; Jiang & Wang, 2019; Mareš, 2020*). These publications indicate a trend away from normative moralising towards activity-based models of education grounded in the formation of competences and critical thinking.

A review of the literature makes it possible to identify several key directions:

- the preservation and development of traditional approaches;
- the renewal of educational systems under conditions of digitalisation, with research on internet addiction and cyberbullying;
- the intercultural dimension of moral education;
- the introduction of foreign practices of so-called character education.

Russian studies are predominantly oriented towards the preservation of spiritual and moral foundations and collectivist forms of education, while foreign research focuses on the development of virtues, intercultural competences, and the prevention of deviance. The cumulative analysis of sources demonstrates that, for the successful resolution of the tasks of modern education, a comprehensive approach is required, combining traditional and innovative models aimed at personal development, digital literacy, and intercultural dialogue.

Results

The Issues of Contemporary Moral and Ethical Education

Key Challenges

The modern school faces a wide range of problems in the sphere of moral education. First and foremost, this concerns the erosion of traditional moral foundations in society. Children grow up in a context of value pluralism, where the very same actions may be assessed in diametrically opposed ways depending on the social environment or cultural context.

The influence of information technologies and social networks creates additional complications. Schoolchildren receive a vast amount of contradictory information, often lacking the necessary experience to comprehend it critically. Virtual reality frequently replaces face-to-face communication, leading to distortions in the understanding of moral norms governing interpersonal interaction.

Thus, contemporary sociology and pedagogy identify the following issues of modern moral and ethical education:

1. Transformation of value orientations among children and young people,
2. Weakening of the educational function of the family,
3. The impact of mass media,
4. Dependence on information flows within the Internet environment,
5. Loss of social communication skills,
6. Decline in cultural receptivity,
7. Crisis of authority,
8. Neglect of historical continuity between generations.

The subsequent analysis will consider these issues in the context of the transformation of contemporary Russian society. They clearly demonstrate a close intertwining and interconnection both in their genesis and in the general logic of their resolution, since despite the multiplicity of problem dimensions, the focal object remains the same—schoolchildren of various age groups.

Transformation of Value Orientations among Children and Young People

Contemporary Russian society is undergoing large-scale social and cultural transformations that directly affect the upbringing of the younger generation. Children and young people find themselves in circumstances where traditional reference points are gradually losing their significance, while new models of behaviour and values have not yet fully formed. This results in a number of problems in the sphere of moral and ethical education that demand close attention from educators, parents, and the state.

Historically, the family has been the principal institution of socialisation, where the child acquired the first notions of good and evil, justice and responsibility. However, in recent decades there has been a significant weakening of its role. The reasons include social stratification, rising unemployment, forced migration, and the erosion of traditional moral and ethical norms. Parents, preoccupied with the search for means of subsistence, often fail to devote adequate attention to their children. As a consequence, the child is deprived of emotional support, control, and positive role models, which adversely affects his or her moral development.

The media today function as one of the most powerful sources in shaping worldviews. Yet their influence is by no means always positive. Easy accessibility of information, together with the widespread use of the Internet and social networks, leads to adolescents being confronted with a vast stream of low-quality content. The popularisation of violence, aggressive forms of communication, consumerist values, as well as the idealisation of criminal and idle lifestyles distort young people's perceptions of normative behaviour. In many cases, the media effectively assume the role of "educators", displacing the family and school.

Globalisation and mass culture have led young people increasingly to orient themselves towards Western models of behaviour, fashion, and leisure. While this phenomenon is not inherently negative, excessive fascination with external attributes contributes to the erosion of national cultural traditions and spiritual reference points. Youth imitate patterns of consumption without reflecting on the underlying values of their people, which results in an identity crisis and estrangement from cultural roots.

Labour has traditionally been regarded as the foundation of personality development and a means of socialisation. Today, however, many adolescents prefer to spend time in virtual spaces, favouring computer games, social networks, and digital entertainment. As a result, interest in creative activity diminishes, and motivation to exert effort for the sake of achievement decreases. An orientation towards easy success and the immediate gratification of needs is formed, leading to the devaluation of labour as a vital value.

Contemporary young people increasingly perceive education solely as a tool for securing well-paid employment. Its educational and cultural functions, meanwhile, are often disregarded. Values such as responsibility, conscientiousness, respect for elders, and care for others recede into the background. Consequently, a pragmatic worldview is formed, in which personal gain predominates, while collective and spiritual orientations gradually lose their significance.

Traditional categories that for centuries served as moral guidelines have lost clarity and distinctness for many young people. In conditions of constant social change, concepts such as “duty” and “honour” are often perceived as archaic. The declining role of spirituality leads to an internal crisis and the loss of moral bearings, which is reflected in the psychological state of adolescents. All this creates fertile ground for cynicism, indifference, and aggressive behaviour.

Thus, the problems of moral and ethical education and the transformation of value orientations among young people are complex and interconnected. Their resolution requires a systematic approach, encompassing the strengthening of the family as an institution, the development of the cultural and educational function of schooling, the creation of a positive media environment, and the promotion of national spiritual values. Only in this way is it possible to educate a generation capable not only of adapting to contemporary challenges but also of remaining committed to the moral ideals that make society strong and resilient.

Weakening of the Educational Function of the Family

Contemporary Russian society, being one of the most multilayered within the global community, is undergoing significant social transformations, which inevitably affect the upbringing of the younger generation. The family, as the principal institution of socialisation, is gradually losing part of its functions, which results in the weakening of children’s moral and ethical orientation. Alongside positive processes of societal development, serious challenges arise, requiring the attention of educators, psychologists, and parents themselves.

High parental workload has become one of the key reasons for the deficit of attention to children. The pursuit of career advancement and material well-being compels adults to devote the greater part of their time to work. As a result, the child is often left to his or her devices or placed under the supervision of other relatives. Such circumstances weaken the emotional bond between parents and children, which in the future may lead to alienation and a lack of trust.

Another issue is excessive parental overprotection. In seeking to shield the child from hardships and life's trials, parents deprive them of the opportunity to learn to overcome obstacles independently. Constant simplification of tasks and protection from challenges lead to adolescents being ill-prepared for real-life conditions, unable to cope with stress and to take responsible decisions.

Excessive strictness likewise exerts a negative influence on personality development. Under conditions of constant surveillance of every step, the child loses the ability to show initiative and acquire independence. Deprived of the right to choose, he or she grows into a dependent individual, incapable of self-organisation and internal discipline. Such an approach fosters passivity and insecurity, which subsequently impede the realisation of personal potential.

Parental disagreement on child-rearing strategies constitutes yet another serious problem. If mother and father adhere to opposing approaches, the child finds him- or herself in a situation of uncertainty, which obstructs the formation of stable moral values. Children require a consistent position that would enable them to develop independence, the ability to overcome difficulties, and a clear worldview. The absence of unity in upbringing leads to internal contradictions and lack of self-confidence.

Equally concerning is dependence on digital devices. Modern children spend increasing amounts of time in virtual environments, replacing direct human interaction with screen-mediated communication. Although technologies can be beneficial, their excessive use harms mental health, diminishes emotional intelligence, and impairs the ability to establish genuine social relationships. Adolescents begin to encounter difficulties in communication, and information overload becomes a serious test for their psyche.

The growing number of divorces aggravates the problem. Increasingly, children are raised in single-parent families, where one parent is absent. These foster distorted perceptions of family life and deprives the child of a complete model of male and female roles within society. The absence of a stable family model may result in difficulties in forming personal relationships in adulthood and in mistrust towards the institution of the family itself.

To address these challenges, family upbringing must be based on respect, trust, and love. It is essential to revive and sustain family traditions, to instill in children a sense of belonging to their lineage, and to cultivate respect for parents and ancestors. Only when the family fulfils its educational function in its entirety can a harmonious personality be formed, capable of withstanding the challenges of modernity and preserving moral orientation.

Thus, the weakening of the family's educational role constitutes one of the most serious issues of contemporary society. Its resolution affects not only the well-being of an individual child but also the future of the nation as a whole, for it is precisely today's children who constitute tomorrow's society. The reinforcement of traditional family values, the creation of conditions for the harmonious development of children, and the strengthening of the moral and ethical foundations of the family must become priorities for the state as well as for each individual.

The Influence of Mass Media

Advanced modern society is increasingly confronted with challenges associated with the influence of mass media. The role of the media has undergone radical change in recent decades: under market conditions, it has lost much of its educational significance, having substituted it

with the function of entertainment and the satisfaction of consumer interests. Adolescents and young people find themselves in an environment where the principal value is not personality development and the cultivation of spiritual orientation, but rather the pursuit of easy pleasures and fashionable trends.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that in contemporary literature, cinema, music, and video culture, there is a notable absence of worthy role models. In earlier times, adolescents oriented themselves towards the heroes of books and films who embodied ideals of courage, loyalty, honour, and duty. Today, however, the leading figures are characters who display cynicism, the desire for success at any cost, material superiority, or aggression. Youth, in their search for role models, often imitate such attitudes, which undermines the moral foundations of their development.

An equally troubling factor is the frequent portrayal of violence and cruelty. From television screens and computer monitors, adolescents daily observe scenes of aggression, conflict, and criminal activity presented as a habitual part of life. This fosters the formation of a criminal subculture, cultivating tolerance or even interest in antisocial behaviour. Consequently, levels of empathy are diminished, humanistic values are eroded, and the risk of involvement in destructive practices increases.

Particularly dangerous is the fact that entertainment programmes create for young people the illusion of an ideal world. Vivid images, polished scenarios, and happy endings form false expectations and stereotypes that bear little resemblance to real life. Even death or tragedy is frequently presented as an element of spectacle, transformed into entertainment. Such an approach devalues notions of human dignity, compassion, and responsibility. Adolescents begin to perceive life as an endless stream of entertainment, in which any problem may be resolved instantly and without effort.

The virtual reality generated by the media also contributes to the degradation of communicative culture. Virtual contacts replace genuine human interaction, reducing the significance of sincere emotions and personal encounters. Young people increasingly resort to superficial forms of communication, where emotions are conveyed through emojis and short messages. Gradually, the skills of respectful dialogue, attentive listening, and empathy are lost. This has adverse consequences not only for adolescents' personal lives but also for their readiness for meaningful social and professional engagement.

Counteracting the negative influence of the media on children and youth requires joint efforts by parents, civil society organisations, and governmental institutions. Clear criteria must be established for the admissibility of certain forms of content in media and on the internet, and mechanisms of restricting access to questionable materials according to age must be developed. It is particularly important to legislate the responsibility of website owners and media platforms for the content of information products published. Only in this way can a balance be maintained between freedom of speech and the protection of the moral health of the younger generation.

Thus, while the media constitute an essential part of contemporary life, carrying vast potential for education and cultural development, they also pose serious threats to the spiritual world of children and adolescents. To neutralise these risks, society must develop effective measures of control and educational influence aimed at forming in youth stable moral values, critical thinking, and respect for traditional cultural norms. Only under such conditions can the

integrity of the individual be preserved and the harmonious development of future generations ensured.

Dependence on Information Flows in the Internet Space

The contemporary generation of children and adolescents is growing up within a digital society, where the internet has become an inseparable part of life. On the one hand, it provides immense opportunities for learning, creativity, and communication; on the other, it generates new risks for moral and ethical upbringing. Dependence on information flows produced in the internet environment exerts a profound influence on the consciousness and behaviour of youth.

Information oversaturation has become one of the principal problems. The World Wide Web continuously generates and transmits data, much of which is contradictory, unreliable, or ambiguous. An adolescent lacking sufficient life experience and critical thinking is vulnerable to this stream. Consequently, he or she may easily accept a distorted picture of the world as reality, forming negative perceptions of events, people, or phenomena.

The displacement of real communication by virtual interaction has also become a noticeable trend. Many schoolchildren prefer to spend their time on social networks or in messengers, substituting face-to-face communication with online interaction. Over time, this results in the loss of interpersonal communication skills, the ability to express emotions, and to read them in others. The need for real meetings and conversations declines, rendering adolescents more withdrawn and less prepared for life in a community.

Equally dangerous is the influence of certain internet resources. The web contains sites that promote violence, cruel games, or abuse of people and animals. Particularly alarming is the existence of platforms where adolescents are encouraged to inflict self-harm or are incited towards destructive actions. Such resources not only foster indifference towards the suffering of others but also damage the psyche of children themselves.

Manipulation of consciousness represents yet another serious threat. Hidden technologies of influence are actively employed online to involve adolescents in extremist communities, antisocial practices, or dangerous games. Frequently this is accompanied by the romanticisation of suicide, aggression, or law-breaking. Adolescents, in their quest for self-expression and recognition, are especially vulnerable to such influences.

These issues require solutions, first and foremost on the part of the family. Parents must nurture independence and responsibility in their children, while cultivating the capacity for empathy and compassion. The personal example of adults remains the primary means of transmitting moral values: it is in everyday situations that the child learns to perceive and understand kindness.

Parental control is also of great significance. It should manifest not as total surveillance but as genuine interest in the child's friendships, hobbies, and viewing habits. Rather than strict prohibitions, it is more effective to offer alternatives—engaging activities, creative clubs, sports, and outdoor leisure. This approach helps avoid conflict and broadens the child's range of interests.

Equally important is a trust-based dialogue. Regular discussions about social phenomena, or reflections on cartoons, games, or news videos foster in the adolescent the capacity to analyse information and to express personal opinion. Such a strategy not only strengthens the bond

between parents and children but also develops critical thinking, which is indispensable in the digital age.

Thus, the internet environment encompasses both opportunities and threats for the moral and ethical upbringing of youth. Information oversaturation, the displacement of real communication by virtual, the influence of harmful resources, and manipulation of consciousness constitute serious challenges. The appropriate response must consist in parental attention, personal example, the development of critical thinking, and the provision of alternative leisure activities. Only under such conditions will children be able to preserve spiritual orientation and be prepared for meaningful life in the modern world.

Loss of Social Communication Skills

One of the pressing issues of contemporary moral and ethical education of children and young people is their isolation from real-life interaction. Excessive involvement in the virtual domain results in a decline in social competences essential for building healthy and trustworthy relationships. Adolescents increasingly replace face-to-face dialogue with online correspondence in social networks, expressing emotions through emojis and stickers, which hampers the development of empathy, the capacity to discern the interlocutor's mood, and the ability to engage in constructive communication.

Family circumstances play a crucial role in shaping the personality of a child. In families where harmony, mutual understanding, and attentiveness towards children are absent, a deficit of communication and support is often observed. Parents, absorbed by work and their problems, may overlook the emotional difficulties of adolescents. Consequently, children seek substitutes for real interaction in the virtual environment, where it is easier to conceal their vulnerability and shortcomings. However, such substitution cannot compensate for the lack of human warmth and ultimately results in even greater alienation.

The social environment in which a child's worldview and behaviour are formed is no less significant. Peer influence and the broader milieu may become decisive factors. If consumerism, aggression, and individualism prevail in society, it becomes difficult for an adolescent to maintain moral orientation. They tend to conform to the norms of their group, even when such norms contradict universal moral principles. Under these conditions, spiritual development often recedes into the background, giving way to the pursuit of status and external markers of success.

Particular attention should be given to the internet sphere, which exerts a colossal impact on the consciousness of children and adolescents. Social networks, video platforms, and blogs frequently promote behavioural models based on the cult of strength, violence, or easy gain. The propagation of destructive and immoral lifestyles engenders distorted perceptions of friendship, love, and morality among young people. Adolescents lacking sufficient critical thinking are easily influenced by such patterns, accepting virtual reality as the normative framework.

All these factors lead to a series of negative consequences. Foremost among them are problems of self-identification. Young people without clear moral reference points struggle to determine their place in society and to construct a stable system of values. This may manifest as heightened anxiety, insecurity, and a lack of life goals.

Another consequence is aggressive behaviour. The absence of spiritual guidelines and appropriate role models fosters an increase in conflict, cruelty, and antisocial conduct.

Adolescents often replicate aggressive behavioural models from the internet or their environment without recognising their destructive repercussions.

Furthermore, diminished motivation for learning becomes a significant outcome. Lacking an understanding of the meaning of knowledge and its role in life, pupils lose interest in education as a value in itself. Schooling is increasingly perceived merely as a formality required to obtain a certificate or diploma, rather than as a pathway towards development and self-realisation. This undermines prospects for personal growth and reduces the competitiveness of the younger generation in the future.

Addressing this problem requires a concerted effort by parents and educators in the sphere of social and moral education. It is essential to build a unified system of aims and objectives, directed not solely towards academic achievement but also towards the child's spiritual development. Parents should devote more attention to direct communication, discussions of values, and real-life situations, while educators should foster children's skills of critical information appraisal and the ability to distinguish genuine values from superficial ones.

Equally important is counteracting the pernicious influence of the internet environment. The creation of positive media content, the development of children's and youth communities where mutual respect, creativity, and cooperation are valued, can compensate for the aggressive atmosphere of virtual culture.

Thus, isolation from real communication and the accompanying difficulties in moral and ethical education constitute a serious challenge of the present era. This problem can only be resolved through the unification of family, school, and society as a whole. Only through collective endeavour is it possible to educate a generation that is not only technologically proficient but also spiritually mature, capable of harmonious relationships and responsible engagement in shaping the future.

Loss of Cultural Sensitivity: Xenophobia and Tolerance

The problem of shaping moral and ethical attitudes among schoolchildren within a multi-ethnic state is among the most urgent tasks of contemporary pedagogy and sociology. In the context of globalisation and dynamic migration processes, educational institutions face the necessity of preparing the younger generation for life in a multicultural environment, where respect for other cultures and the capacity for intercultural dialogue are not merely desirable qualities but vital competences. The perception of other cultures by schoolchildren is a complex psycho-hygienic process, largely determined both by family upbringing and by the purposeful work of schools. Insufficient intercultural literacy may result in stereotypical thinking, prejudice, and, in extreme cases, xenophobia and nationalism. Hence, moral and ethical education in this aspect should focus on cultivating empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, and, above all, an awareness of the universality of human values despite cultural differences.

A key instrument in this process is not only the provision of information about the cultures of other peoples but also the creation of conditions for active interaction and immersion in their specificities. This may be implemented through the inclusion in curricula of elements of cultural studies, history, and literature of the peoples residing within the state, the organisation of joint creative and sporting events, as well as the establishment of discussion clubs where schoolchildren can address acute issues of intercultural interaction in a safe and respectful

atmosphere. It is important to emphasise that such an approach should not be reduced to formal instruction but should permeate the entire system of school life, from extracurricular activities to daily communication. Special attention should be devoted to fostering pupils' skills of reflection and self-analysis, enabling them to critically assess their prejudices and stereotypes.

Recent research in pedagogy and psychology confirms that the most effective methods are those grounded in the principles of dialogue, cooperation, and a learner-centred approach. The paradigm of authoritarian teaching, in which the teacher acts as the sole bearer of truth, proves largely ineffective in this context. Conversely, cooperative pedagogy, where pupils function as active subjects of the educational process, allows them not only to assimilate information but also to experience intercultural interaction at a personal level. This experience, reinforced by emotional engagement and reflection, forms the basis for the development of stable moral and ethical convictions. Thus, the task of the school is not merely to instruct but to educate citizens of a multinational society, capable of constructive dialogue and intercultural cooperation, which in turn ensures the stability and prosperity of the state.

An equally important aspect is the involvement of pupils' families in the educational process, as it is within the family that fundamental values and attitudes towards the surrounding world are instilled. Schools may act as a bridge between diverse cultural groups by organising joint celebrations, festivals, and parent meetings, where representatives of different ethnicities may share their traditions and customs. This not only broadens pupils' horizons but also helps to overcome stereotypes among adults, thereby creating a more favourable environment for child-rearing. Ultimately, the moral and ethical education of schoolchildren with regard to their perception of other cultures in a multi-ethnic state is a continuous, complex, and multi-level process requiring the joint efforts of educators, parents, and society at large. Its success depends on our ability to instill in the younger generation not only respect for foreign traditions but also a profound understanding that humanity, kindness, and mutual assistance are universal values uniting all people irrespective of their national and cultural affiliation.

Crisis of Authority

The 21st-century society is experiencing a profound crisis of authority, which directly affects the moral and ethical upbringing of children and adolescents. Traditional reference points are losing their significance, while new value systems have not yet acquired a solid foundation. This results in the deformation of the worldview of the younger generation and poses serious challenges for the family, school, and state.

The erosion of moral reference points has become one of the most evident problems. Under conditions of rapid social change, new attitudes and values have emerged, often imposed by external circumstances or the media. Young people acquire unfamiliar criteria for assessing actions, phenomena, and processes. This leads to a shift in value orientations, the weakening of previously established convictions, and the loss of a clear worldview framework in which concepts of good and evil, justice and injustice can be distinguished.

The weakening of the family's educational function exerts a significant influence on the younger generation. It is within the family that the child should receive the first notions of morality, responsibility, and spiritual values. However, social stratification, rising unemployment, and the disruption of traditional family structures increasingly undermine the capacity of parents

to act as genuine mentors. Parents preoccupied with subsistence issues often withdraw from the educational process, leaving the child to seek answers to vital life questions independently. As a result, adolescents are deprived of stable support in the form of the authority of their elders.

No less palpable is the influence of the mass media. Streams of content disseminated through television, the internet, radio, and the press frequently propagate behavioural models far removed from moral ideals. The cult of ease, aggression, consumerism, and permissiveness captivates adolescents' attention, instilling false notions of what constitutes normality. The virtual sphere becomes a kind of "school of life", where instead of traditional moral values dubious reference points are promoted.

Youth subcultures occupy a particular place in the formation of worldviews. While they may provide adolescents with a sense of belonging and support, they often become sources of alienation from generally accepted values. Within certain subcultures, behavioural stereotypes are established that position young people in opposition to society, encouraging the narrowing of interests and the rejection of any authorities inconsistent with the group's values. Adolescents begin to disregard the advice of parents, teachers, and elders, concentrating solely on the rules of their subcultural environment.

Another acute problem is the lack of obedience and respect towards parents. The foundation of harmonious family relations lies in mutual understanding, yet it is precisely this that is frequently lacking in modern families. Parents and children "speak different languages", possessing divergent systems of values and views of life. As a result, adolescents lose trust in parental experience and increasingly seek authority among peers or in virtual spaces. This disrupts the so-called intergenerational bond and further exacerbates the crisis of moral orientations.

Thus, all the aforementioned problems are interrelated and create a complex situation in which it becomes ever more difficult for the younger generation to find reliable reference points. Addressing this situation requires the development of new approaches to defining the priorities of civic, moral, and patriotic education. It is necessary to strengthen the family as a fundamental institution, to establish in the educational system conditions conducive to the development of stable moral values among schoolchildren, and to create a positive media environment that promotes examples of virtue, respect, and responsibility. It becomes evident that only comprehensive measures will enable the upbringing of a generation capable of preserving the spiritual wealth and resilience of society in the face of contemporary challenges.

Disregard for Historical Continuity between Generations

Disregard for historical continuity between generations represents one of the most acute challenges of contemporary moral and ethical education of children and young people in Russia. This issue is manifested not only at the levels of culture and education but also in the spiritual condition of society as a whole. Continuity has always played a crucial role in personality formation: the older generation transmitted life experience, accumulated knowledge, and values, while the younger generation assimilated them, adapting to new circumstances. Today, however, this natural process has been disrupted, leading to grave consequences.

The younger generation is deprived of the opportunity to emulate elders endowed with life wisdom and experience. Adolescents and young people often have little understanding of the

principles by which their forebears resolved life's difficulties, nor of the moral reference points that helped them to preserve dignity, cohesion, and inner strength. The absence of such knowledge renders young people more vulnerable to the challenges of the time and less resilient in the face of crises and temptations.

Children's perceptions of such fundamental moral categories as kindness, compassion, justice, civic-mindedness, and patriotism are gradually distorted. These notions lose their profound significance and are transformed into abstract terms, divorced from everyday life. As a result, adolescents are deprived of a solid moral foundation that would enable them to navigate complex situations, make responsible decisions, and build harmonious relationships with others.

The situation is further aggravated by the fact that young people increasingly orient themselves towards the parameters of mass culture, predominantly Western. External attractiveness, the cult of success, and consumerism frequently replace the values of spirituality and national tradition. Adolescents aspire to conform to models projected by the media, fashion, and the internet, while simultaneously losing connection with the cultural and historical heritage of their country. This results in a crisis of identity and a weakening of the sense of belonging to their people.

The reasons for the disregard of historical continuity between generations are largely associated with the disintegration and crisis of the family. Many contemporary parents themselves lack a sufficient level of moral and spiritual culture and, therefore, are unable to transmit it to their children. Often there is no understanding that upbringing requires not only the provision of material needs but also careful attention to the child's inner world. When parents are incompetent in matters of spiritual and moral development, children grow up without stable moral guidelines.

Another serious cause is the dominance of material values over spiritual ones. Contemporary society actively disseminates the idea that success is measured by wealth, possessions, and social status. Against this background, the values of honour, duty, responsibility, and service to society appear outdated and insignificant. Consequently, a consumer-oriented personality type is formed, for whom spiritual reference points are relegated to the periphery.

Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive approach. It is essential that state policy in the sphere of moral education of the younger generation be built on the principles of interconnectedness, interdependence, and continuity of generations. Programmes must be developed that will enable young people to familiarise themselves with their historical heritage, revive traditions of respect for elders, and foster an interest in national culture. Educational institutions should play a significant role in this process, as they are obliged not only to provide knowledge and professional skills but also to cultivate spiritual values in children.

Special attention must be paid to the family as the primary and most important institution of upbringing. Educators and social services should work with every family, explaining the importance of preserving and transmitting family traditions and supporting dialogue between generations. Only in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and continuity can a harmonious personality be formed, prepared to assume responsibility for oneself, one's family, and society.

Thus, the problem of disregarding historical continuity between generations is not merely a pedagogical but also a social challenge. Its resolution requires the concerted efforts of the family,

the school, and the state. Only by restoring the living connection between past and present can a generation be nurtured that is capable of preserving spiritual values and developing society on the basis of moral ideals.

Examples of Problematic Situations

Situation 1: Cyberbullying and Online Aggression

The case of cyberbullying in one of Moscow's schools vividly demonstrates the serious challenges of contemporary moral and ethical education of schoolchildren. In Year 8, a group of pupils created a chat in a social network, where they systematically ridiculed and humiliated a female classmate because of her appearance and her family's financial situation. The girl concealed what was happening from adults for a long time, which led to the development of anxiety, depressive states, and instances of self-harm. This case illustrates how rapidly and destructively negative manifestations can spread in the digital environment, where pupils often fail to recognise the consequences of their actions.

Cyberbullying differs from traditional school aggression in that aggressors remain anonymous, distanced, and shielded from the victim's immediate reaction, which reduces their sense of responsibility. As a result, a distorted understanding of behavioural norms is formed, where humiliation and cruelty are perceived as acceptable modes of interaction. Such a situation underscores the necessity of systematic efforts by both schools and families to cultivate in children's skills of empathy, respect for others, and conscious conduct in online spaces.

In addition to direct harm to the victim, cyberbullying adversely affects the overall atmosphere within the peer group, disrupts trust-based relationships among classmates, and intensifies fear in other pupils. Effective resolution of the problem requires not only educational measures but also psychological support for victims, awareness-raising for parents and teachers regarding the risks of online aggression, and the implementation of digital ethics programmes. This approach contributes to the formation of stable moral guidelines among schoolchildren and enhances their sense of responsibility for their actions in both real and virtual spaces.

Situation 2: Value Conflict in a Multinational Classroom

In a school with a multinational student body, a conflict emerged between children from different cultural traditions. Some pupils refused to participate in school events dedicated to folk celebrations of other cultures, referring to their religious beliefs. This led to the emergence of hostile groups and a rise in interethnic tension.

Such situations provide fertile ground for the creation of antagonistic groups, where each ethnic or cultural community seeks to defend its values and traditions, often coming into contradiction with others. Within the classroom, a conflict arises between the aspiration for collective integration and the preservation of individual cultural identities, which negatively influences the moral and ethical development of children. Pupils raised in such conditions risk internalising behavioural models based on intolerance and prejudice.

Addressing this problem requires deliberate efforts by teachers and school administration to establish an environment in which respect for cultural and religious diversity is harmonised with common moral principles. The development of intercultural communication skills, the

fostering of tolerance, and the engagement of parents in the process help to minimise conflicts and contribute to the harmonisation of pupils' value orientations.

Situation 3: Consumerist Attitude towards Education

In senior classes of many schools, there is a noticeable tendency towards the formation of an exclusively consumerist attitude towards education. For a significant proportion of pupils, school ceases to be a place for personal development and the acquisition of knowledge, becoming instead a kind of “service” to be obtained formally. Pupils often demand high grades regardless of their actual knowledge or effort, perceiving marks not as a reflection of work accomplished and skills acquired but as an inalienable right.

This approach undermines respect for the teacher, who begins to be perceived not as a mentor and guide to the world of knowledge but as service staff obliged to satisfy the demands of pupils and their parents. Such an attitude fosters a distorted understanding of the educational process: the value of effort, perseverance, and self-development is replaced by the expectation of easy results without exertion.

As a result, the principal meaning of schooling—the education of a responsible, reflective, and morally mature individual—is lost. A consumerist attitude diminishes motivation for learning, hinders the development of cognitive interest, and deprives children of the ability to value knowledge as the foundation for future achievements and life success.

Discussion

The results of the conducted study demonstrated that the moral and ethical education of schoolchildren in contemporary Russia constitutes a complex problem arising from a number of interrelated factors. The principal findings of our research confirm the general trends identified in both domestic and international academic literature, while simultaneously providing clarifications specific to the Russian context. In particular, we established that the key challenges—namely, the weakening of the educational function of the family, the negative influence of the digital environment, and the crisis of authority—are not isolated phenomena but are closely intertwined, thereby creating a systemic crisis in the formation of moral orientations among the younger generation.

The conclusions obtained regarding the predominance of a consumerist attitude towards education and the loss of social communication skills are reflected in the works of Russian scholars (*Tkachenko & Natalich, 2018; Khomushku, 2015*), who also note a decline in motivation for learning and the erosion of value orientations. However, unlike many classical pedagogical approaches (*Ivanov, 2021; Karakovsky et al., 2020*), which focused on collective forms of education, our study highlights the growing individualisation and atomisation of society, which necessitates new, more targeted pedagogical strategies. Particular attention should be given to our finding concerning the neglect of historical continuity between generations, which leads to the loss of national and cultural identity. While foreign research (*Arthur, 2021; Munawarsyah et al., 2022*) actively advances the concept of character education aimed at the cultivation of universal virtues, in Russia these approaches must be adapted with consideration for the spiritual and moral heritage and traditional values.

The theoretical significance of our research lies in its provision of a comprehensive analysis of the problems of moral and ethical education under the conditions of a digital society and in its proposal of systemic solutions that integrate the efforts of the family, school, and wider society. Its practical significance resides in the development of concrete recommendations for teachers and parents regarding the cultivation of digital hygiene, empathy, and critical thinking skills among schoolchildren. The proposed measures, such as social project work and volunteering, may serve as the foundation for effective programmes aimed at counteracting negative tendencies.

The relevance of this research in Russia is evident in the necessity of conducting large-scale empirical studies that would allow for the quantitative assessment of the impact of various factors (internet addiction, media content, family climate) on the moral and ethical development of schoolchildren. It is also important to examine how value orientations differ depending on region of residence, cultural environment, and socio-economic status of the family.

Based on the conducted research, we propose the following topics for further study in the academic community:

1. Comparative analysis of the effectiveness of Russian and foreign models of moral and ethical education: it is necessary to conduct a comparative study of approaches such as character education and traditional Russian educational systems in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses.
2. The influence of digital tools on the formation of morality: an in-depth study is required to examine how interactive platforms, online games, and social networks affect adolescents' ethical perceptions, as well as the development of methods for preventing destructive behaviour in the virtual environment.
3. Development and testing of intercultural education programmes: it is essential to design and pilot educational programmes aimed at cultivating tolerance and respect for cultural diversity in multi-ethnic classrooms.
4. The role and position of the teacher-mentor in the context of digital transformation: it is necessary to investigate how the role of the teacher is changing in the modern world and which competences are required for effective moral and ethical education.
5. Examination of the impact of family upbringing during the pandemic and post-pandemic period: an analysis is required of how isolation and the transition to distance learning have affected family relationships and, consequently, the moral development of children.

Such studies will not only facilitate a deeper understanding of the issue but also contribute to the development of new, more effective strategies for addressing the challenges of moral and ethical education in the conditions of modern society.

Conclusion

Modern moral and ethical education of schoolchildren constitutes a complex and multifaceted problem, the resolution of which requires profound rethinking and a systematic approach on the part of all social institutions. The conducted research has made it possible to identify the key challenges faced by the family, the school, and society in the era of digitalisation and global transformations. Among the most pressing issues are the shift in the value orientations of the younger generation, the weakening of the educational function of the family,

the negative influence of the media and the Internet, the loss of social communication skills, the crisis of authority, and the disruption of historical continuity between generations. These factors, being closely interrelated, form a complex threat to the harmonious development of the individual, rendering children and adolescents vulnerable to destructive phenomena.

In particular, the analysis has demonstrated that the weakening of the family's role, caused by the high level of parental employment and the shift in priorities, results in a deficit of attention and emotional connection. Consequently, children are deprived of essential support and stable moral reference points, seeking them instead in the frequently hazardous and anonymous online environment. The influence of mass media and internet addiction exacerbate the situation, contributing to the spread of aggression, consumerist values, and distorted conceptions of the norm. Practical examples, such as cyberbullying and the consumerist attitude towards education, vividly illustrate that without targeted work aimed at forming spiritual foundations, society risks producing a generation incapable of empathy, responsible behaviour, and constructive interaction.

Addressing these problems necessitates a systemic approach that unites the efforts of the family, school, and society into a single educational environment. The most effective solutions proposed include:

1. *Strengthening cooperation between family, school, and society*: the creation of a unified educational environment founded on trust and mutual understanding. This will not only synchronise educational efforts but also help parents realise their crucial role in shaping children's moral values.
2. *Developing emotional intelligence and empathy*: the integration into the educational process of programmes aimed at cultivating in schoolchildren the capacity for compassion, understanding the feelings of others, and engaging in constructive dialogue.
3. *Teaching digital literacy and ethics*: the formation in children of skills of critical thinking, conscious consumption of information, and responsible behaviour in virtual space. This is a key element in countering the negative influence of the Internet and cyberbullying.
4. *Social project work and volunteering*: involving schoolchildren in practical activities that enable them to apply moral principles in practice, to feel their belonging to society, and to appreciate the value of helping others.
5. *Supporting teachers and their professional development*: strengthening the role of the teacher as a bearer of moral values and creating conditions for professional growth in the field of educational technologies.

Thus, the resolution of problems in moral and ethical education is not merely a pedagogical task but a nationwide priority, upon the success of which the future of society depends. Sustainable development is possible only if society succeeds in shaping a generation capable not only of effectively adapting to contemporary challenges but also of remaining faithful to moral ideals, which constitute the foundation of a strong, cohesive, and resilient society. The adoption of these measures will not only compensate for the negative impact of the external environment but will also harness the vast potential of education and digital technologies for the comprehensive development of the individual. Only through joint efforts will it be possible to nurture citizens with a high level of moral self-awareness who are prepared for the responsible construction of their future.

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