

**ICEST 2021****II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society****FORMATION OF RURAL SCHOOLCHILDREN'S READINESS  
FOR MORAL CHOICE IN SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICES**

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**Abstract**

The article reveals the essence of the concept "readiness for moral choice," analyzes various views on the problem of this personality quality formation. According to the authors, the formation of schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice is a focused pedagogical activity aimed at enriching knowledge, realizing morality, mastering the skills to analyze and evaluate their actions and those of other people, and make a moral decision. Various types of interactive and collective-creative activities are recommended as one of the ways to solve the problem. In experimental work, the authors turn to three types of sociocultural practices: real-practical, game, organizational and leisure. The authors attach importance to sociocultural practices of local lore, initiated by the school museum. In accordance with the requirements of the time, students are offered activities in various formats: both in the real and digital educational environment. The article presents the diagnostic study results on manifestations of rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice at the beginning and completion of experimental work.

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## **1. Introduction**

In the conditions of the modern Russian school, the state has set the task for teachers to strengthen and accentuate the educational component of the domestic educational system. Personal learning outcomes in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard should include "education of Russian civic identity: patriotism, respect for the Fatherland", "development of moral consciousness and competence in solving moral problems based on personal choice."

In our opinion, one of the ways to solve this difficult task is to increase practical and new forms of interaction with schoolchildren. By organizing sociocultural practices, including those of a local history orientation, it is possible to construct situations of choice, thereby developing the schoolchildren's experience of moral behaviour. This is especially important when tragic events take place in schools: gross insults, violent fights, armed attacks.

The relevance of activities in this direction is determined by the contradiction between the order of the state, the demand of society for the formation the readiness of the younger generation for a moral choice in a rural school and insufficient attention of educational organizations to the potential of socio-cultural practices as a means of forming this readiness

## **2. Problem Statement**

The highlighted contradiction determined the research problem: what is the pedagogical support for the formation of the rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice in the process of sociocultural practices. Currently, there are scientific works in psychology and pedagogy that investigate the problem of moral (social) choice in various contexts. However, the consideration of this problem in the process of sociocultural practices is at the initial stage of development.

## **3. Research Questions**

It is necessary to answer several questions for a comprehensive study of the research problem.

- What is the essence and content of the notion "formation of the readiness for moral choice"?
- What are the criteria for the schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice?
- What are the characteristics of the rural educational environment?
- What are the role and possibilities of sociocultural practices in moral education?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of our research is to study the general phenomenological characteristics of concepts related to the problem of forming the rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice, to consider one of the possible ways to solve this problem - to involve rural schoolchildren in sociocultural practices, including local history, and to analyse some results of experimental work.

## 5. Research Methods

We used analysis, systematization and generalization of scientific literature on the problem of research. We carried out diagnostic work on the basis of a rural school in the process of sociocultural practices on local history and culture: observation, questionnaires, polls, conversations. Also, we used statistical methods - qualitative and quantitative analysis of research results.

## 6. Findings

The theoretical study and experimental work were carried out to obtain answers to the questions posed.

### 6.1. General phenomenological characteristics of key research concepts

Philosophers, educators, psychologists and other scientists, when analyzing the concept of "choice", always imply the action of preference. We study a conscious, responsible choice, the result of which is a moral act. In the Mandrikova's study (2006) choice is viewed as a moral and ethical "act of preference for one alternative from a number of choices given from the outside or constructed by the subject, not reduced to rational calculation" (par. 1). Leontiev and Pilipko (1995) believe that the choice is "not a one-time act, but a process unfolded in time with a complex structure" (p. 99). Many scientists are convinced that various factors influence the selection process. The task of forming readiness for choice in adolescence acquires great importance, when a person makes decisions that are important for many aspects of his future life. Vasilyuk (1997) describes the concept of "choice" as "the action of the subject, with which he determines the preference of one alternative over another on a certain basis (p. 287). This basis can only be values". Mironenkova (2017) also believes that "students, depending on the specifics of their personal potential, create alternatives (meanings for themselves and meanings of educational content) according to the criteria of value attitudes, the personal significance of the problem and orientation towards the meanings of the future (p. 33). Noskova (2008) is sure that the choice is "an assessment of one's capabilities in a specific life situation" (p. 61). We understand choice as an action of the subject, by which he determines the preference of one alternative over another on a value basis.

Various types of choice are known: moral, social, cultural, professional, and others. We study the formation of the rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice. When engaged in upbringing, the school should include the history and culture of the society in the educational activities. This is one of the factors for moral development of the personality and its successful socialization.

Questions of morality have always occupied an important place in domestic and foreign pedagogy. So, the primary goal of education determined as the formation of the heart is called moral education by famous Russian scientists. Soviet and Russian teachers developed their pedagogical systems on the principles of morality (Kuleshova et al., 2017): you need to educate a child so that he does good disinterestedly and feels joy at the same time.

Various researchers consider morality as the set of feelings, aspirations and actions; rules governing behavior; spiritual and mental qualities necessary for a person in society, as well as the implementation of

these rules, behavior; regulatory function of human behavior; a special form of social consciousness and a type of social relations; agreement with one's own conscience and more. We understand morality as a set of personal qualities of a person and his activities, in which universal human requirements coincide with the internal motives of his personality.

What is meant by the concept of moral (social) choice? We agree with Verbitskiy et al. (2018) that a person's choice is based on responsibility for their actions in front of other people. When a person consciously makes a social choice, bringing goodness to people, then this choice is moral. After analyzing various sources, we came to the understanding that moral choice is the action of the subject, by whom he determines the preference of one alternative over another on a value basis, where universal human requirements coincide with the internal motives of his personality.

The teacher who forms the child's readiness for moral choice must take into account that the readiness for any activity is a complex state of a person, when everything is done to start this activity, that is, knowledge, beliefs and the ability are formed to apply them in practice. We believe that the readiness for moral choice is an integrative quality of the personality, which is expressed in the activity preference of one alternative over another on the basis of the coincidence of universal human requirements with the subject's internal motives.

We consider the peculiarities of the rural educational space, which determine the conditions of the pedagogical process to form the rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice, but the goals and results of education are the same for all students in our country, as stated in the federal law "On Education". Thus, the concept of "rural schoolchildren's readiness for a moral choice" is identical to the above concept of "readiness for a moral choice. "This personal quality includes cognitive, evaluative and operational components. Thus, the formation of the schoolchildren's readiness for a moral choice in relation to the subject of our research is a purposeful pedagogical activity focused on enriching knowledge, awareness of moral norms, mastering the ability to analyze and evaluate the own actions and the actions of other people to make a moral decision, which is expressed in the ability to make independently a conscious responsible choice based on the coincidence of universal human requirements and the subject's internal beliefs in a variety of life situations.

## **6.2. Criteria for the schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice**

Since the rural schoolchildren's readiness for a moral choice is a complex structure, we distinguish several main criteria for diagnosing the formation of such readiness: cognitive (study, understanding, awareness, exchange of information about moral norms), evaluative (analysis, rethinking, orientation towards values), operational (decision-making, planning and committing deliberate activities). These criteria are characterized by different levels of manifestation. We concluded that it is advisable to distinguish three levels of manifestation of the rural schoolchildren's readiness for a moral choice: normative (typical for many characteristics), local (typical for several characteristics) and unified (untypical).

### **6.3. Some features of the rural educational environment**

When forming the rural school children's readiness for a moral choice, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the rural school and rural society. A number of Russian scientists note such features of the rural society as isolation, limitedness. Rural residents, whose number is much smaller than in cities, often know each other well. The production sphere is very poorly developed, there is a shortage of cultural and leisure opportunities. There are folk traditions, education by the whole world, mutual assistance. The villagers work a lot in their household plots, close to nature. The school is the educational and cultural center of the village. A huge role is assigned to the rural teacher, who is a mentor not only for children, but also for the adult population. It is well known that rural schoolchildren have a lower level of knowledge, and therefore they are less likely to enter universities. They are limited in additional education, extracurricular activities, pre-professional training. They are characterized by low motivation for active cognitive activity. A limited number of behavioral patterns leads to slowed down cultural development, instability of attention, poverty of speech and imagination. Rural schoolchildren have much worse inclusion in the digital educational environment: not only in schools, but also in many families, there is a lack of equipment and high-quality Internet. This is the reason for the low level of development of many competencies that are in demand in modern society. As noted by Lukina (2016) "objectively losing in institutional (number and variety of educational institutions) and information resources, rural society has a clear advantage in social and psychological" (p. 48). Along with common features, each rural school and rural area has its own characteristics.

At present, the creation of such an educational environment instead of individual educational measures, where it is possible to reduce the existing negative and effectively use the positive features, comes to the fore in a rural educational institution. It should be emphasized that when organizing educational work, rural teachers should rely on intellectual, cultural, folk and ethnic characteristics, traditions, and crafts.

### **6.4. The potential of sociocultural practices**

The tasks of creating an effective educational environment include mastering the skills of the 21st century (universal competencies) by schoolchildren, that is, the ability to solve both standard and especially non-standard tasks; learn throughout life; build relationships with other people; avoid conflicts and constructively get out of conflict situations; carry out emotional self-regulation.

It is very important to take into account the age-psychological tasks in the development of adolescence; understanding the problems of schoolchildren, their parents and rural society. In our opinion, sociocultural practices, including those of local history on the basis of a school museum, allow solving these tasks successfully. The concept of "sociocultural (cultural) practices" has not been sufficiently studied to date. We consider that sociocultural (cultural) practices are a complex phenomenon that includes methods of action, experience of activity, personal results and achievements, and more. In other words, sociocultural practices are a pedagogical phenomenon that reflects the independent or adult-initiated enrichment of activity and interaction in accordance with value meanings, the traditions of society, the students' creative aspirations and their environment in cognition, creation and transformation of the

surrounding reality. There are classifications of sociocultural practices on various grounds: the number of participants, deadlines, final product, etc. We have proposed a typology of sociocultural practices based on situations of activity (Ignatova & Kuzmina, 2020). On this basis, we distinguish real-practical (these include educational, design, research, cognitive, interactive, informational, inclusive, volunteer and others) practices; game (imitation, intellectual, theatrical, role-playing, mobile, experimentation and others) practices; organizational and leisure (applied, creative, competitions, circles, fairs, contests, discos, excursions, exhibitions and others) practices. Let us cite as an example some types of practices implemented in the municipal budgetary educational institution (the Shuvaevskaya secondary school of the Yemelyanovskiy district of the Krasnoyarsk Territory), which are presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sociocultural practices of different types (tested on the basis of the Shuvaevskaya secondary school, the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Russia, 2017-2020)

Types of practices	Implementation forms	Kinds of practices
really-practical	course of extracurricular activities "History and culture of the native village"	educational
	collection of local lore "The native area – the Shuvaevo land"	research
	unveiling of monuments to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War	volunteer
	preparation of materials for the websites of the school and the museum, pages in VK action "We are together" folklore meeting "Pokrov-father"	information inclusive imitation
game	puppet shows for kindergarten and elementary school "The Career - rural leaders"	theatrical plot-role
	making crafts from natural material "Harvest gifts" flashmob "Songs of Victory"	applied creative
	quest "Ecological puzzles of our settlement" "The golden ring of our area" "My pedigree"	competition interactive excursions exhibition
organizational and leisure		

The implementation of various sociocultural practices in the life of a rural school is a synthesis of educational, cultural and social activities. A significant component of the sociocultural complex is the school local history museum. It is of great importance for the formation of the individual's moral position to study the history of his village and its modern life, heroic achievements of his relatives and countrymen. It develops the person's desire for participation in social activities, readiness for independent choice based on democratic values and responsibility for his actions in front of himself and society. One of the most popular forms of sociocultural practices is sociocultural projects. It is especially relevant for adolescents experiencing difficulties in social inclusion. Furyaeva (2017) shows that socio-pedagogical support is necessary for adolescents who have health limitations, have difficulties in communicating with their peers, wish to engage in volunteer work or other new activities; she notes the importance of connections with structures outside the school (business, administration, etc.). By participating in community projects, schoolchildren develop both their individual abilities and the ability to work in a team. Various partners

and organizations located in a given area, schoolchildren's parents and relatives, who become active assistants of the school in the educational process, are involved in sociocultural practices.

### **6.5. Diagnostics of the readiness for moral choice among rural schoolchildren**

To study the level of formation of the rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice in the Shuvaevskaya secondary school, an experimental work was carried out, in which 169 students of grades 5-11 and 12 teachers took part. In the course of this activity, observations, questionnaires, conversations, monitoring of the personal development of students, diagnostics of value orientations of schoolchildren in development, self-assessment of the individual according to the answer sheets were used. Diagnostics was associated with the implementation of a variety of sociocultural practices. Schoolchildren, teachers, parents and other residents of the rural settlement took part in the practices for three years. In this article, we present the results of the experimental work with students in grades 9-11 (at the beginning there were 38, and at the end - 40 people).

Just as final exams are considered the outcome of schooling, personal outcomes can give a picture of the senior rural schoolchildren's readiness to make a moral choice as they enter an independent life. We share the Golovanova's (2016) point of view that the priority in the upbringing process is the formation of the value-semantic sphere, the self-concept, reflexive manifestations of one's relationship to the world. That is the readiness for life means the ability to act, make decisions, distinguish between good and evil and choose your place in these moral oppositions, to make a moral choice. High school students studied on special interactive modules and courses on the basics of the Russian spiritual and moral culture. Each student, after studying topics related to moral norms and basic concepts from the field of moral categories, prepared projects on the history of his family, the history of the village and the country. The children's works were called, for example, "My genealogical tree", "The fate of a family in the history of the village", "The participation of my relatives in the Great Patriotic War" and others. Telling about their heroes in school wall newspapers, our local history book "The native area - the Shuvaevo land", on the school's website, in the district newspaper, teenagers consolidated their knowledge of such universal values as kindness, sincerity, friendliness, tolerance, unselfishness, mutual assistance, self-sacrifice using specific examples from the life of their great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers. By the end of the experimental work, 100% (at the initial stage there were 86.84%) of the senior pupils possessed knowledge of moral norms and basic moral concepts. Thus, expanding and deepening the knowledge of universal human moral norms and concepts, we have increased the level of rural schoolchildren's readiness for a moral choice according to the cognitive (informational) criterion.

The characteristics of the children's value attitudes to the world, to people, to themselves and the stability of these attitudes was also diagnosed. As a result of the experiment, we found that the value of the family is highly significant for 55.6% of our school graduates who took part in various sociocultural practices. 30% of graduates demonstrated a sustainably positive, and 70% situationally positive attitude towards the Fatherland. That is, schoolchildren are proud of their country, realize responsibility for its fate, experience the feeling of the Fatherland as a feeling of home. 66.7% of graduates showed a fully developed ecological consciousness. It is natural for them to feel pity and empathy for any living creature; they are ready to clean the forest and water bodies, sincerely considering it is important. They have repeatedly shown

this responsibility for the world around them in environmental actions, helping the environment wholeheartedly, and not out of a desire to win a competition or earn praise from adults. By the time they graduate from school, many rural teenagers are distinguished by hard work. Almost 29% of schoolchildren do not consider it shameful to help their parents with the housework; they themselves can offer to do something. 57% of the children respect their parents' work. Many significant sociocultural events initiated by the school museum are prepared by all organizations of the microdistrict, guests from neighbouring municipalities are also invited. The younger generation sees cultural patterns of correct speech, beautiful movements, gallant behaviour in society and tries to follow them.

Cultural forms of behaviour are significant for 14% of adolescents, and are actively implemented by them in everyday life.

Rudeness, obscene turns of speech are alien to them, they are attentive and tactful in relation to others. Such guys value the heritage of their ancestors, do not accept vandalism. 71% of boys and girls accept the value of cultural forms of behaviour. 85.8% of alumni are very friendly towards other people, they recognize the rights of people to views and lifestyles different from their own. This is a very important positive result in the joint work of the family and the school.

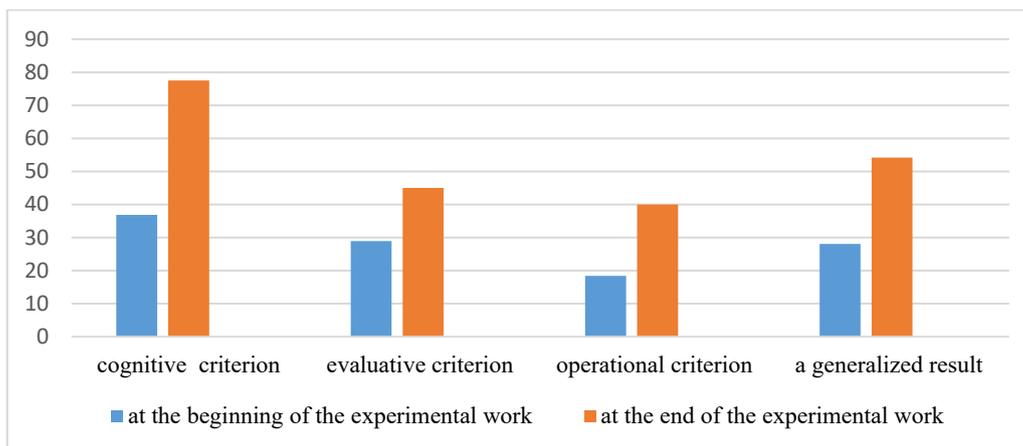
Summing up the diagnostic results of value orientations, tests of reflections on life experience and self-assessment sheets, according to the evaluative (emotional) criterion of the rural graduates' readiness for moral choice, we found an increase from 81.58% (normative and local levels combined) up to 90% as a result of the schoolchildren's participation in socio-cultural practices.

The procedure for evaluating the operational criterion was carried out according to the M.I. Shilova's method of studying the level of schoolchildren's moral education. Readiness to show self-control, will, the ability to make a decision, to commit a moral deed was shown by 40% (at the beginning of the experiment there were 18.42%) of graduates.

These students have a sincere desire to follow the traditions of the community; take an active part in different events, both family and public; provide all possible help to other people; show the qualities of a well-mannered person out of inner need, and not for the sake of praise. 47.5% of students show good manners, but in some situations, they can violate cultural norms, carry out instructions from their elders, but so far have little initiative.

That is, active participation in sociocultural practices helped students gain experience of moral deeds and repeatedly acting in various life situations in accordance with models, they acquired the skill of making moral choices with pedagogical help and support.

This allows us to hope that being face to face in a situation of moral choice, most adolescents will be able to make the right decision and commit a moral deed. The positive dynamics of the graduates' readiness levels can be clearly seen in the diagram (Figure 1):



**Figure 1.** Dynamics of changes in the rural graduates' readiness levels according to three criteria and a generalized result at the beginning and end of the experimental work

## 7. Conclusion

As a result of the analysis of the philosophical and psychological-pedagogical literature, the essence and content of the concept "readiness for moral choice" and the concepts "morality", "choice", "moral choice", "readiness" are identified, that is, the conceptual apparatus of the study is considered. We have substantiated that the readiness for moral choice is a complex structure consisting of cognitive, evaluative and operational components, where the level of these components and their interconnection play a role. We have explicated the concept "the formation of a rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice" in relation to the subject of research.

The pedagogical potential of sociocultural practices as a process of acquiring social experience, mastering moral norms and patterns of behaviour is revealed.

It has been verified empirically that sociocultural practices help the person's moral formation and self-determination, his ability to make responsible decisions in situations of moral choice. Various types and kinds of sociocultural practices neutralize the negative impact of the environment.

The necessity of creating a special program of sociocultural education for each rural school, taking into account local characteristics, including the activities of various modules - participants in the socialization of the individual, has been proved. A significant link in the sociocultural complex is the school museum of local history. The principles of national identity and multiculturalism are observed in the museum activities.

We have created methodological recommendations for rural schools which include the education and socialization program in patriotic and moral directions, the author's program "History and culture of the native village", an approximate program "Fundamentals of the spiritual and moral culture in the Yemelyanovsky district", the program of extracurricular activities "Museum Kaleidoscope", published three books (Kuzmina, 2017) of local lore for teachers and students. An attempt to change the way of school life has been made, including a new concentric model of students' education and socialization in the sociocultural practices, primarily of regional studies, for more effective formation of rural schoolchildren's readiness for moral choice.

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