

# Moral Development of Personality of Adolescents

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**Abstract** – The issue of the personality moral development becomes significant due to disregarding moral norms by adolescents. Therefore, it is important to study the role of emotional and behavioral component in this context. This study is aimed at the identification of the emotional and behavioral components level of the moral development of personality in adolescence and the dimensions in developing these components. The methods of the study were the questionnaire surveys and observation methods. The questionnaire surveys were offered to 79 adolescents involved in the experiment. The experiment was conducted in Secondary General School located in Shadrinsk, Kurgan Region, Russia. Based on the results of the questionnaire data the dimensions in emotional and behavioral component level were analyzed and described. The results showed: firstly, the empathy ability was identified as an emotional component core of moral development; secondly, the interpersonal competition and leadership were found out as the main orientations in behavior of adolescents; thirdly, creative learning techniques used in educational process had positive impact on the personality moral development. It was concluded that the emotional and behavioral component level dimensions of the personality moral development should be taken into account in order to enhance the moral development process efficiency in adolescence.

**Keywords** – adolescents, personality, emotional component, behavioral component, empathy, moral development

## I. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental moral values become more insignificant in the modern society. As a result, this fact disrupts the trust in kindness, fairness and mercy. The changes in economic, political and social development of society influence the personality moral development in adolescence.

Nowadays, the moral disorientation of some individuals becomes apparent. Some of them experience frustration and despair. All of these facts do not facilitate humanity, beneficence, mutual moral support, and do not lead to the moral development of personality.

Therefore, it is important to study the moral development of personality of adolescents exposed to negative impact of the crisis phenomenon. The adolescents sensibility to demonstrate

the immorality decreases in their real life, they show the absolute indifference to social moral standards.

The moral development of the personality of adolescents is the basis of future society. As outlined in the work [1], “adolescence is an important time in understanding the relationship between various aspects of moral development. During this period, a moral concept begins to integrate with moral emotion, enabling it to cultivate better”. For that reason, studying the moral development of adolescents is currently of great interest.

The analysis of the scientific publication in psychology showed that the problem of the personality moral development is studied on the basis of systematic approach (B.G. Ananyev, B.F. Lomov, V.D. Shadrikov); activity-oriented approach (L.S. Vygotsky, S.L. Rubinstein, A.N. Leontyev), person-centered approach (V.S. Mukhina, I.S. Kon, L.I. Bozhovich). [2-5]. Applying these approaches to the personality moral development the researchers focus on the social, cultural and historical determination.

The researchers A.I. Raev, N.A. Menchinskaya; A.V. Brushlinsky, L.V. Temnov, S.G. Jacobson; V.A. Yadov focus on the elementaristic approach. This approach is based on investigating single components of the system.

Within this context, the authors identified the following components of the moral development of personality:

- the cognitive component of the personality moral consciousness (moral knowledge, ideas, concerns and judgments);
- the emotional component of the personality moral consciousness (emotions, feelings), the ability to express feelings based on the internal acceptance;
- the behavioral component of the moral consciousness of personality (the attitude towards moral behavior norms and principles and the compliance with them).

In the theory of moral development the researchers A.E. Olshannikov, L.M. Friedman, B.I. Kochubey, M.I. Lisina, T.A. Markova, E.V. Subbotkiy emphasize the emotion

component development based on moral feelings and experience.

They reflect the emotion attitude of an individual towards the subject associated with external and internal needs. The feelings relate to certain persons, situations, subjects and activities.

As the presented study focuses on the emotion component of the moral development, it is necessary to take into consideration the concept of moral feelings concept.

The development of moral feelings and moral development are interrelated. As pointed out in the work [6], the feelings experienced by an individual allow changing the motives based on knowledge to real actions.

The moral feelings may be denoted as feelings experienced by an individual due to perceiving the behavior compliance or non-compliance with social morals. Therefore, the moral norms, principles and notions should be perceived, appreciated, assimilated and experienced.

The emotional development in early adolescence becomes richer in the content and emotional gradations. Moreover, emotional susceptibility, generosity and empathy improve among adolescents.

Emotional susceptibility is considered as the ability to feel and understand another identity through the perception of self-emotion experience called empathy. Empathy is associated with numerous emotional, psychological and social benefits [7]. It strongly relates "to compassion, pro-social behavior and moral judgments" [8]. Empathy in adolescence is essential for cultivating positive social interactions, promoting greater understanding, and increasing cooperative behaviors among all individuals in society.

On the one hand, emotional susceptibility may be evident as compassion and compersion. On the other hand, the emotional susceptibility is associated with self-righteousness and integrity of the environment assessment, demonstrative negation of moral behavior norms, principles as well as moral skepticism of adolescents.

The emotional component of the moral development of personality is based on individual evaluation of the subjects signification related to social world, attitude to moral norms, values and ability to express feelings according to the individual perception. The individuals perceive the world around and react to it in the way their mind functions. Therefore, "emotions generally arise spontaneously and automatically, without an immediately preceding conscious reflective process of any kind. It is hard to understand how it could be governed in the way required for something by normative reasons in order to be an attitude" without conscious reflective process that generates the emotion [9].

According to the Vygotsky theory the individual life consists of emotional experience. The emotional experience occurs from any situation or from any aspect of environment and determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on a person. From research point of view the concept of the emotional experience is an affective attitude

of a person towards the social and cultural environment interaction and influence [10].

As a rule, the positive or negative emotional experience obtained by individuals in adolescence may influence the attitude towards their life. Hence, the personality moral education is impossible without taking into account the individual emotions. As outlined in the work [11], "the emotions change the way we think, feel and behave". "As the individual has an understanding of the moral knowledge and behavior norms and accepts them" [12] the emotions influence

the development of new behavior motives changing them into the real ones as an adolescent gets older.

The behavioral component of the moral development is highlighted in works of L.N. Antilogova, D.I. Feldstein, L.M. Friedmann, A.N. Leontyev, S.L. Rubinstein, E.O. Smirnova, V.M. Kholmogorova, E.V. Subbotsky [13, 14]. Moreover, social psychological research on behavior focuses on two important factors regarding morally appropriate forms of behavior. Firstly, "people behave on the basis of their personal moral intuitions toward another person: what they feel to be morally right or morally wrong towards the members of a particular group in a particular situation. Secondly, behavior toward another person can also depend on the definition of one's moral community, that is, the demarcation of the boundaries within which personal moral values and rules apply [15-17]. Moral behavior is a result of moral conscience and feelings that provide readiness to implement the moral actions. It consists of certain actions characterized by moral standards accepted in society.

Therefore, the moral behavior may be studied within the framework of interpersonal and social relations. Moral behavior is a number of socially valuable actions of an individual in relation to society, other people, based on moral motives, actions regulated by social norms and a personal values and conscience [18]. Through the process of reasoning and judgment, an individual is able to evaluate and interpret a moral situation, formulate a moral ideal and choose a course of action that corresponds to moral values.

Thus, moral behavior primarily caused by social moral norms, principles, values may be considered as a number of moral valuable actions.

## II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The purpose of this study is to identify the emotional and behavioral components level of the moral development of personality and find out the components dimensions in moral development of adolescents.

The cognitive component of the moral development of personality was not taken into account, as the average age of participants involved in the experiment was 17-18 years. As a rule, the adolescents of this age were able to demonstrate the ability of applying the universal moral notions and knowledge based on social and cultural norms, principles and rules in daily life.

The purpose of this study is to find out how moral knowledge is applied by adolescents in their real life in order to

provide a guide for enhancing moral development process efficiency.

One of the Secondary General Schools located in Shadrinsk, Kurgan Region, Russia, provided a platform to conduct the experiment. A total number of participants were 79 adolescents, high school students. Half of them were female.

In order to collect data and gain a deeper understanding of the moral development of personality in adolescence the diagnostic and observation methods were used.

### III. RESULTS

In order to evaluate the level of the emotional component of the moral education of personality the “Empathy assessment” questionnaire survey method designed by A. Mehrabian and N. Epstein was offered to male and female participants involved in the experiment. Based on the questionnaire results the empathy level development of male and female participants was found out. 100% of all male participants had an average level of empathy development. The male participants did not show the low and the high level of empathy development. As to the female participants, it was determined that 28% of the participants showed the high level of the empathy development and 72% of participants - the average level.

To confirm the results mentioned above the “The personality moral feelings assessment” questionnaire survey method was used. The results showed that 13% of the male participants had a high level of the emotion component development, 67 % - an average level, and 20 % - a low level of the emotional component development. In relation to the female participants the following results were obtained: 23% of the participants have a high level; 64 % - an average level; 13 % - a low level of the emotional component of the moral development.

In the present study the “Express empathy diagnostics” method designed by I.M. Yusupova was employed. This method allowed us assessing the empathy level of the adolescents. 64 % of the male participants demonstrated a high level; 30% - an average level; 6% - a low level of empathy development. The female participants, in their turn, showed that 87% of the participants had a high level; 10% - an average level; 3% - a low level of empathy development.

In addition, the “The empathy level assessment” diagnostics method designed by V.V. Boyko was used. Due to this method, the following results were obtained: 8% of the male participants had an average level of empathy development; 92 % - a low level of empathy development. Nobody demonstrated the high level of the empathy development. Based on the questionnaire the predominant type of empathic behavior – “penetrating ability” was identified. 46% of the male participants demonstrated this ability.

The results showed that the male participants were characterized as communicative persons who were able to create an atmosphere of openness, trust, sincerity and build interpersonal relationships. The actions and the attitude of the young men towards the other persons encourage the verbal and emotional exchange or impede it. The partner’s relaxation

facilitated empathy and the atmosphere of tension, affectation, suspicious got in the way of empathy and self-disclosure.

The questionnaire survey method used above was offered to the female participants, too. The questionnaire survey resulted in that only 3% of the female participants showed a high level of empathy development; 33 % of female participants - an average level of empathy development; 64 % of the female participants – a low level of empathy development. The “Emotional Channel” as the main empathy externalization way was shown by 33 % of young women. The young women had an empathy ability to perceive and understand the emotions of another display the sensitivity and feel compassion towards other persons.

In this case, the emotional susceptibility is considered as a means of penetration into the thoughts and feelings of another person. To perceive and understand the mental world of a person, anticipate the behavior and have an impact on personal actions is possible only if there is an emotional bond to another person. As a rule, empathy is a link between an empathizing and empathic person and vice-versa.

The results of four diagnostic scenarios used in this study were summarized and the obtained data allowed identifying the emotion component level of the moral development of personality in adolescence. The results are presented in Table I.

TABLE I. EMOTIONAL COMPONENT LEVEL OF THE PERSONALITY MORAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>Emotional component of the moral development of personality</b>		
<i>Level</i>	<i>Male participants</i>	<i>Female participants</i>
High	19 %	35 %
Average	51 %	45 %
Low	30 %	20 %

To assess the behavioral component of the moral development of personality the “Attitude to the moral norms compliance” test designed by A.L. Zhuravljova, A.B. Kuprejchenko was offered to the participants engaged in the experiment.

10% of male and 13 % of female participants demonstrated the high level of moral behavioral component development. These adolescents believe that equity is one of the person’s main character features allowing them to be open-minded, honest, and responsible and make decisions according to the moral norms and principles. In their opinion, it is important not to put personal interest above all others.

72 % of male and 77 % of female participants showed the average level of moral behavioral component development. These adolescents are susceptible to behavior variability that is evident in choosing the opposite moral norms, principles and rules of behavior. Namely, their behavior depends on the situation.

18 % of male and 10 % of female participants featured the low level of moral behavioral component development. These young people were intolerable of other opinion and criticism. They showed inactivity and emotional indifference for violation of moral norms, behavior rules of other people and their own.

To confirm the data obtained due to the previous diagnostic method the “Attitude to the moral norms” questionnaire survey designed by E. N. Poroshinsky was used. According to this measure the following behavioral component levels were identified:

- *the high level* describes an active, conscientious, responsible and positive attitude towards moral norms. Only 8% of male students and 10% of female students involved in the experiment demonstrated this level.
- *the average level* indicates an active, but insufficient conscientious and responsible attitude towards moral norms. These persons may be ready to compromises. 72% of male and 74 % of female participants showed this level.
- *the low level* characterizes a passive, irresponsible, unconscious attitude towards moral norms. 20% of male and 16% of female students had this level. The adolescents did not have main moral qualities such as responsibility, criticism, conscientiousness, equity, sensitivity. Primarily, the adolescents showed these qualities depending on a situation.

To summarize the results, the “Complete the statement” test designed by I.B. Dermanov was offered to the participants. The responses given by the adolescents allowed justifying the behavior component level of moral development.

The high level of behavior component development was found out by 26% of male and 23% of female participants involved in the experiment. They expressed and justified their opinion based on the moral views and standards demonstrating the conscious attitude towards moral norms. They gave well-reasoned arguments and comments.

For instance, the adolescents with the high behavioral component level completed the statements in the following way:

1. *When I find difficult to make the right decision, then ...* T.O. answered: “I will ask for an advice from people being important to me (parents, relatives and friends) those ones I can rely on and trust. I think, my decision will be likely correct and successful”.

2. *Choosing between interesting but unnecessary and significant, but boring tasks ...* L.K. wrote: “I primarily do essential and necessary tasks, then those ones being interesting to me”.

3. *If I were a teacher ...* O.M. said: “I would be a gentle-hearted, sincere, honest, friendly teacher and praise the students for their diligence in the classroom and try to find an approach to any child” .

The average level of behavioral component development was showed by 56% of male and 62 % female students. The participants had some moral principles, but they did not try to follow them as they believed that moral principles were an inaccessible dream. Nevertheless, they gave reasonable assessment of their behavior. Their attitude to moral norms was insufficiently conscious.

For example, the adolescents with the average level of behavioral component development presented the following answers.

1. *When I find it difficult to make the right decision, then ...*B.I. wrote: “I can ask for an advice from somebody how to act better in the situation”.

2. *Choosing between interesting but unnecessary and significant, but boring tasks ...* I.N. answered: “I usually act in different way. My actions depend on my mood and desires”.

3. *If I were a teacher ...* A.K. wrote: “I would take on the role of a teacher that is why I would teach children”.

The low level of behavioral component development was identified by 18 % of male students and 15% of female students. The low level of behavioral component indicated the lack of clear moral guide among adolescents. The attitude towards moral standards was unconscious. They explained their actions incorrectly, or did not complete the statement, or their answer was: ‘I don’t know how to act’.

For instance, the adolescents with the low level of behavioral component development answered this way:

1. *When I find difficult to make a right decision,* M.S. said: “I don’t make any decision at all’.

2. *Choosing between interesting, but unnecessary and significant, but boring tasks ...* A.P. answered: “I choose nothing’.

3. *If I were a teacher ...* S.D. said; “I would not come to work”.

To confirm the research finding the observation method was used. The authors observed adolescents class activity, extra-curricular and social activity. The observation was carried out for one and half of the month with the interval of two days per every 40 minutes. Up to 10 assessments were made in this period.

The high level of moral behavioral development among adolescents was not detected. This level described adequate behavioral reactions, the active and conscious attitude towards moral standards. Moral behavior was demonstrated by adolescents in all kinds of activities mentioned above (adolescent class activity, extra-curricular and social activity).

The average level of moral behavioral development was identified by 44% of male participants and 54% of female participants. They had moral guides in their behavior. Their action assessments and emotional reactions were adequate, but the attitude towards moral standards was insufficiently conscious. The adolescents showed moral behavior in one or two kinds of activities.

The low level of moral behavioral development was typical for 56% of male students and 46% of female students. Such level pointed that adolescents had moral guides in their behavior, but young men and women did not try to comply with moral standards and demonstrate them in their behavior. Adolescents showed the moral behavior only in one of activities.

Based on the results of the diagnostics and observation methods mentioned above the following data were obtained.

The high level of the behavioral component development was identified by 11% of young men and 12% of young women. They showed deep knowledge of moral standards. Adolescents always followed the moral behavior regardless of a situation. Young men and women justified their choice based on moral attitudes. Their behavioral reactions were adequate. They demonstrated the moral behavior in all kinds of activities.

The average level of the behavioral component development was shown by 61% of male students and 66% of female students. They had moral guides and their assessment of actions and emotional reactions were adequate, but the attitude towards moral standards was insufficiently conscious. They did not demonstrate moral behavior in all kinds of activity.

The low level of the behavioral component development was determined by 28% of young men and 22% of young women. They showed superficial knowledge of moral standards. The attitude towards standards was passive and unconscious. They possessed such characteristics as hostility, anger, telling the story with immoral elements. They did not demonstrate moral behavior in a class activity, extra-curricular and social activity; they demonstrated moral behavior in one type of activity only, most of all in class activity. It was explained by the permanent control of a teacher.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

According to the research results, it was found out that the emotional component levels of the moral development of personality among adolescents were different. The female participants involved in the experiment had an emotional channel for empathy, while the male participants had a penetrating ability for empathy. To support the results, the mathematical method 'the student's coefficient' was used, which allowed identifying the differences in emotional component of the moral development of personality in adolescence. As "the student's coefficient" was equal to 5,537, the differences were clearly determined.

The essential differences in the behavioral component of the moral development of personality among adolescents were not found out. The average level of the behavioral component development and the inability to correlate knowledge and experience with the behavior in everyday life were typical for adolescents.

Thus, it is important to create conditions for the moral behavioral component development. It may be any type of activity, where adolescents will be able to demonstrate the care, help and support provided for people. Adolescents become motivated to act positively in activities that allow them applying knowledge related to moral behavior standards and show the moral qualities. As a rule, teachers should organize such activities.

Hence, it is necessary to use learning techniques, which adolescents can be interested in. For instance, one of such creative techniques is a discussion based on aphorisms. The use of aphorisms technique allows giving the reasons for the idea that influences the adolescents' consciousness and encourages

them to think and express their own opinion on moral standards and actions.

Moreover, the use of the art therapy technique, like making collages, pictures, facilitates the progress from the symbolic level to the concrete one and from the subconscious level to the conscious one.

In addition, the use of cinema therapy technique attracts the adolescents' attention and becomes the subject of their discussion. This technique influences the development of personal moral attitude and forms the esteem of the other person's standpoint. Parents, peers and favorite fictitious heroes, historical figures actions, both positive and negative behavioral scenarios may be used as an example.

Thus, these creative learning techniques allow determining the cause-and-effect relations between the person's behavior and the surrounding people's attitude towards an individual.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that the emotional and behavioral component level dimensions of the moral development of personality in adolescence obtained in this study are of great importance for organizing the education process.

It is necessary to take into account these dimensions by choosing an appropriate format of interpersonal communication with the adolescents and using different learning techniques in social, cultural and sport activity in order to enhance the moral development process efficiency in adolescence.

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