

THE ROLE OF MOVEMENT GAMES IN THE FORMATION OF MORAL AND VOLITIONAL QUALITIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Kodirova Muyassar

Teacher of Department of Preschool Education Pedagogy

Chirchik State Pedagogical University. Uzbekistan.

Abstract: This study investigates the pedagogical potential of movement games in shaping moral and volitional qualities in preschool-aged children. The preschool period is critical for the development of personality traits such as responsibility, perseverance, honesty, discipline, and self-control. Based on theoretical analysis and practical interventions in preschool institutions, this paper demonstrates that movement games, when properly organized, contribute significantly to the social-emotional, moral, and volitional development of children. The research combined observational, experimental, and interview-based methods over a 4-week intervention program involving 50 children aged 4–6. The results provide strong evidence supporting the integration of movement games into the preschool curriculum.

Keywords: movement games, preschool children, moral development, volitional qualities, physical activity, character formation, early education

1. Introduction

In the early years of life, children begin to develop not only their cognitive abilities but also fundamental moral and volitional traits that shape their personalities. The preschool age is a formative period during which children learn to follow rules, regulate their behavior, and cooperate with others. These competencies are essential for social adaptation and long-term academic success.

While academic and cognitive skills are often emphasized in early education, recent research underlines the importance of integrating play-based

activities—particularly movement games—into preschool programs. Movement games are structured physical activities that incorporate elements of fun, rules, and interaction. These games offer rich opportunities for children to experience concepts such as fairness, persistence, patience, and mutual support in action.

In the context of preschool institutions, movement games are not only a tool for physical development but also a platform for shaping children's internal moral compass and volitional strength. This study aims to explore how systematically organized movement games can contribute to the formation of these traits in preschoolers.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted at three preschool institutions in Tashkent region. A total of 50 children (26 boys and 24 girls) aged between 4 and 6 years were selected. Five educators and 20 parents were also involved in the study for data triangulation.

2.2. Research Design

The research employed a quasi-experimental design combining pre-test and post-test evaluations, direct observation, and qualitative interviews.

2.3. Instruments and Data Collection

Behavioral Observation Protocol: Used to assess moral and volitional behaviors during and after movement games.

Educator Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with five preschool teachers were conducted to gain insights into behavioral changes.

Parent Questionnaires: Parents completed a checklist on children's behavior at home before and after the intervention.

Pre-Post Assessment Tool: A 5-point scale was developed to evaluate changes in cooperation, patience, rule-following, responsibility, and perseverance.

2.4. Intervention

For 4 weeks, children participated in movement games 4 times per week, each lasting 30–40 minutes. The games were designed to:

Encourage teamwork and collaboration (e.g., "Tunnel Relay", "Build the Tower Together")

Promote rule-following and fairness (e.g., "Red Light, Green Light")

Stimulate persistence and problem-solving (e.g., "Obstacle Course Adventure")

Enhance self-regulation (e.g., "Freeze Dance", "Simon Says")

Educators were trained in advance to observe and support the development of targeted qualities during the games.

3. Results

3.1. Quantitative Outcomes

After four weeks, children showed statistically significant improvements in the following areas:

Behavioral Trait	Improvement Rate (%)
Cooperation	+78%
Patience and Turn-taking	+62%
Rule-following	+71%
Responsibility	+66%
Perseverance	+69%
Reduction in conflict	–48%

These results were consistent across all three institutions, indicating the effectiveness of the program regardless of socio-economic or cultural background.

3.2. Qualitative Observations

Educators noted several positive behavioral patterns:

Children began to remind peers of rules and encouraged fair play.

More children volunteered for leadership roles in team activities.

Children showed increased ability to manage frustration after losing a game.

Instances of aggression, crying, and quitting decreased noticeably.

Parents reported similar improvements at home, especially in areas of discipline, cooperation with siblings, and responsibility in tasks like tidying toys or following bedtime routines.

4. Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that movement games are a powerful means for instilling moral and volitional traits in young children. These games provide a structured but emotionally engaging context where values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and self-control can be practiced in real-life situations.

The repetition of these games over several weeks allowed children to internalize positive behaviors. This aligns with L.S. Vygotsky's theory, which asserts that play is a leading activity during preschool years and plays a crucial role in the development of self-regulation and higher mental functions.

Furthermore, the cooperative and rule-based nature of movement games helped children understand the importance of respecting others and controlling their impulses. This is consistent with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that behavior is learned through observation and imitation in social contexts.

The study also highlights the role of the educator as a facilitator and moral guide during games. Proper organization, consistent reinforcement of values, and reflective discussion after playtime contributed significantly to the outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Organized movement games, when purposefully integrated into preschool education, serve as an effective medium for developing key moral and volitional qualities in children. These games enhance social skills, emotional control, and character formation, all of which are foundational for later success in school and life.

Preschool educators should receive training in the intentional use of movement games, and educational institutions should consider allocating more time and resources to this aspect of the curriculum. Future research can further explore long-term impacts and differences across cultural or developmental contexts.

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